



Passing Sweeping Democracy Reform

BY CHRISTINE WOOD

It's been hailed as the most transformational reform legislation since Watergate. The groundbreaking democracy reform bill, or the For the People Act (H.R. 1), was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 3.

“With the passage of the For the People Act, the House has demonstrated a deep commitment to taking on dark money and corporate influence on elections, racially motivated voter suppression, and the spread of viral disinformation,” said Lisa Gilbert, executive vice president of Public Citizen. “With trust in government at a historic low, the For the People Act is a critical next step to

rebuilding American democracy and restoring faith in our system.”

Only by prioritizing dealing with big money in politics, cleaning up the ethics quagmire of Washington, and improving access to voting can we restore trust in our system. The months leading up to the passage of H.R. 1 saw a groundswell of support as activists across the country mobilized for democracy-themed actions in their communities.

Throughout the week of Jan. 11, local and state voting rights and advocacy organizations hosted virtual rallies and other events in over a dozen states. Titled “Democracy Week,” the eventful

see **Democracy**, page 8 ▶



A mobile billboard circles the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., during “Democracy Week” to underscore the importance of the For the People Act to ensure a robust democracy. Photo courtesy of the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition.

What it Costs to Vaccinate the World

BY RHODA FENG

Twenty-five billion dollars. That is the amount that Public Citizen estimated the U.S. government would need to invest in COVID-19 vaccine production to produce enough vaccine for developing countries, potentially shaving years from the global pandemic.

In a recent analysis, Public Citizen found that producing eight billion doses of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-Moderna vaccine can be done for just over \$3 per dose. Public Citizen calls on Congress to swiftly approve the urgently needed funds and for President Joe Biden to instruct his administration to quickly implement a scaled-up, worldwide vaccine manufactur-

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Graphic courtesy of Zach Stone.

Black and Latino Workers Impacted by Failed Trade Policies

BY MARIANA LOPEZ AND SARAH SPURGIN

In his 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump hijacked progressives’ critique of corporate globalization and job offshoring, but reframed it into a narrative of resentment with racialized appeals to target white working class voters. Contrary to the message Trump advanced – that the white working class suffered the most from “trade” policies such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – research conducted by Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch

see **Trade Policies**, page 7 ▶



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GET TO KNOW PUBLIC CITIZEN AZZA ABUDAGGA

An ongoing series profiling Public Citizen leaders and staffers



Originally from Palestine, Azza AbuDagga has been a health services researcher with the Health Research Group (HRG) at Public Citizen for seven years. A Fulbright Scholar, AbuDagga's master's degree in health administration from the Ohio State University laid the foundation for her interest in health services research.

AbuDagga then received a doctorate in health policy and administration from Pennsylvania State University and has worked in health research ever since. Using her strong background in data analytics, AbuDagga is an expert at analyzing both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Adverse Event Reporting System and the National Practitioner Data Bank for her research. In her free time, she enjoys taking long walks, cooking Mediterranean food, trying new fruits and vegetables, and growing indoor herbs.

What led you to join Public Citizen's Health Research Group?

AbuDagga: After working in the for-profit consulting sector, I realized the influence of industry funding on the research evidence that ends up being disseminated in the medical literature. I looked in the nonprofit sector for a research position that would not be driven by industry funding. When I interviewed for my current position, I knew that this was the place I wanted to spend the next phase of my career! I have enjoyed every day of my work since then because it makes a difference.

How did you become interested in health care professional accountability?

AbuDagga: My first assignment when I joined the Health Research Group was to analyze national-level data about physician sexual misconduct of patients because there were not any studies on

this issue since a 1998 HRG peer-reviewed study. This issue became – and will continue to be – a major focus of our work until U.S. regulators and the medical community embrace a zero-tolerance standard against it. As with all Public Citizen's work, we use a research-based advocacy approach to bring greater public awareness to this problem and prompt implementation of solutions to it.

What does your work look like as a contributor to *Worst Pills, Best Pills News* and *Health Letter*?

AbuDagga: I do some initial research to figure out what topics to write about based on the recent literature and websites of regulatory organizations, focusing mainly on potentially ineffective or unsafe oral medications and dietary supplements. Once the topics are finalized, I start extensive research on each topic and draft my articles. The process is a really a team effort because my colleagues and I all work together to ensure that each newsletter issue is well-researched and clearly presented.

What has been the biggest change to your work since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?

AbuDagga: I am grateful to have a job at this difficult time. I admit that working from home full-time is hard and isolating. However, I have the support I need from my supervisor and team to get things done.

How did your experience as a Fulbright Scholar influence your career path?

AbuDagga: It is hard to believe that was over 20 years ago! I am appreciative of the Fulbright scholarship: It brought me from my beloved village in the Gaza Strip to the U.S., laid the foundation for my graduate studies, and set my path in the world of health services research – “using good data to answer good questions,” as one of my professors used to say. ■

– Compiled by Eva Gonzalez

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Public Citizen is a national nonprofit membership organization based in Washington, D.C. Since its founding by Ralph Nader in 1971, Public Citizen has fought for corporate and government accountability to guarantee the individual's right to safe products, a healthy environment and workplace, fair trade, and clean and safe energy sources. Public Citizen is active in Congress, the courts and government agencies.

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CONNECT ONLINE
WITH PUBLIC CITIZEN



John Lewis and the Democratic Imperative

March 7 marked the 56th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when the late civil rights leader and eventual member of Congress John Lewis led a 600-person march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.

Lewis and the marchers were met by a phalanx of state troopers, who attacked and beat them. Lewis was beaten to the edge of death.

That event led directly to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which for generations worked to widen and improve American democracy.



PRESIDENT'S VIEW
ROBERT WEISSMAN

The Voting Rights Act enabled Black people and other people of color, in the South and throughout the country, to exercise their franchise and to run for and hold elected office.

It made America better.

In 1982 and again in 2006, Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act. The Senate vote in 2006 was unanimous.

George W. Bush proudly signed the 2006 reauthorization into law, heralding John Lewis's heroism and honoring the three women leaders for whom the 2006 law was named, Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, essentially on the grounds that racism was just a thing of the past.

Immediately, Republican state legislators across the country started imposing barriers to voting, barely concealing their intent to deter Black and brown people from voting.

Now, in 2021 – 56 years after Bloody Sunday and subsequent passage of the Voting Rights Act – Republican state legislators are rushing ferociously and with nakedly racist intent to make it harder, much harder, to vote.

These moves are a reaction to the record voter turnout in 2020 that was facilitated by expanded early voting and voting-by-mail rules adopted to respond to the pandemic.

Right now, more than 40 states are considering more than 250 voter-suppression bills.

To make the point very clear, the entire purpose of these bills is to make it harder for people of color to vote.

Examining an emblematic North Carolina law that cut back on early voting, ended same-day registration and imposed voter ID requirements, a federal appeals court found the measures “target African Americans with almost surgical precision.”

Most of those 250 bills probably won't become law, but quite a few likely will.

In the face of this horrifying, racist attack on the hard-won right to vote, on the foundation of our democracy, what would John Lewis

have us do?

Well, we know he would exhort us to make “good trouble” – to rise up in protest and to defeat these measures.

But we also know what he would say with more particularity.

In March 2019, John Lewis gave the closing argument in the House of Representatives for passage of H.R. 1 – the For the People Act – which would truly democratize elections in this country, including through automatic voter registration and small-donor, public financing of elections.

I had the honor to be in the gallery at the House of Representatives to watch and hear Lewis.

In his powerful voice, he said: “You have heard me say on occasion that the right to vote is precious – almost sacred. In a democratic society, it is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have. In my heart of hearts, I believe we have a moral responsibility to restore access for all citizens, who desire to participate in the democratic process. Many people marched and protested for the right to vote. Some gave a little blood, and others gave their very lives.”

Then, in December of the same year, he served as the Speaker Pro Tempore (the temporary speaker) as the House voted to pass H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act – a bill to restore the Voting Rights Act.

John Lewis was a lead author on the voting rights and access sections of the For the People Act.

Those sections would, among other things:

- Provide for automatic voter registration;
- Restore voting rights to the formerly incarcerated;
- Expand early voting; and

- Expand voting-by-mail opportunities.

Meanwhile, H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act has been renamed the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

These bills, Lewis said, “are on the right side of history.”

In March, the House again passed the For the People Act. Later this year, pushed by grassroots pressure, it will pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

The fate of these bills rests in the Senate. What John Lewis would tell us now is: Find a way to make the Senate pass those bills into law.

That's our charge.

To take on today's racist voter suppression, we don't have to face down billy club-wielding state troopers.

We don't have to summon the political courage of those who marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

We don't have to risk beatings and burnings, torture or death.

We just have to build enough political power to force the Senate to pass the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, filibuster or no.

We do that by coming together, raising our voices, demanding action and refusing to take no for an answer.

Public Citizen is leading the charge to get these bills passed.

Let's honor the bravery of those who marched 56 years ago by defending what they won, by upholding their ideals, by protecting the right to vote. ■

Robert Weissman



The late John Lewis being honored at Public Citizen's 2015 gala. Public Citizen file photo.

► **Vaccine**, from page 1

ing program. The analysis was published the day before the G7 summit where Biden spoke about the need for a global response to the pandemic and recommitted to multilateral engagement.

“The U.S. can help lead the world out of the pandemic if our government acts now,” said Peter Maybarduk, director of Public Citizen’s Access to Medicines program. “A \$25 billion investment could support the manufacturing of vaccines for more than half the world’s people, in time to spare them years of needless suffering.”

A \$25.2 billion investment would fund retrofitting and building manufacturing facilities around the world (\$1.9 billion for 25 production lines, according to a paper by Imperial College engineers), materials and labor (\$19.8 billion), and technical assistance and compensation for technology transfer (\$3.5 billion). This would allow the U.S. govern-

ment to leverage the considerable investment the U.S. public already has made in COVID-19 vaccines, including the ownership rights the U.S. government has in the NIH-Moderna vaccine. It would also ensure fair compensation to vaccine makers.

Maximizing Vaccine Production

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized use of two mRNA vaccines: NIH-Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech. Because mRNA vaccines are developed using synthetic processes instead of living cells, they require smaller production facilities than other kinds of vaccines and are cheaper and faster to scale-up.

The U.S. government can maximize vaccine production by sharing vaccine manufacturing technology and building or retrofitting manufacturing facilities both in the U.S. and in regional centers across the world. While this cannot be done overnight, it can help start production in as few as six months and

shorten the pandemic,

particularly for low- and middle-income countries which otherwise may wait several years for enough doses to successfully vaccinate their populations.

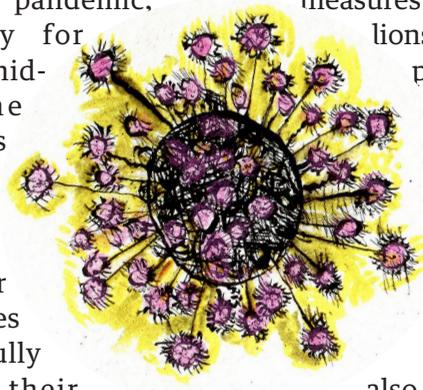
Public Citizen contends that Biden should designate the government’s Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to lead the worldwide vaccine manufacturing effort. BARDA has the necessary experience to manage an initiative of this scale and can build on the pandemic flu vaccine program it launched in 2006 to help developing countries build influenza vaccine manufacturing capacity.

“In shortening the pandemic, this proposal would pay for itself many times over,” Maybarduk added. “It would save hundreds of thousands of lives. It would shorten the period of mitigation

measures which are costing trillions in lost economic output. It would make it possible to produce booster shots and reduce the risk of new, vaccine-resistant variants emerging and traveling to the U.S.”

The proposal would also reestablish U.S. scientific, technology, humanitarian and foreign policy leadership. In February, experts and activists, including PrEP4All and Public Citizen, also sent a letter to members of the Biden administration calling for the federal government to increase global availability and supply of the mRNA vaccine.

In December, Public Citizen issued a report that outlined three actions Biden can take – mobilize, share, and build – to quickly supply the world with a coronavirus vaccine. Public Citizen is part of the People’s Vaccine Alliance, which calls for COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine technology to be made available to all as a global public good. ■



Drugmaker’s Collaboration with FDA is Dangerous for Americans

BY MIKE STANKIEWICZ

To properly protect the public health, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) review and approval process for drugs and devices must be objective, science-based and independent from corporate or sponsored entities eager to sell their products.

This is how the FDA should operate to fulfill its mission to protect American consumers and preserve its own integrity. In the case of the agency’s review of Biogen’s aducanumab, it did not.

In November, Public Citizen testified before the FDA’s Peripheral and Central Nervous System Drugs Advisory Committee, advocating that the agency not approve the drug aducanumab for treatment of Alzheimer’s disease due to lack of evidence of its effectiveness.

Ahead of the meeting, the FDA released a briefing document that showed the agency had worked closely with Biogen, the maker of aducanumab, during the analysis of clinical data to rush to market the unproven treatment.

“FDA staff and Biogen now are trying to convince advisory committee members and the public that the negative study should be ignored and that the drug should be approved based on the one positive study,” said Michael Carome,

director of Public Citizen’s Health Research Group.

“Approving aducanumab despite the lack of evidence of effectiveness would raise false hope for millions of Alzheimer’s patients and their families, potentially bankrupt the Medicare program because of the drug’s projected exorbitant price, and impede for years the development of other experimental treatments for the disease.”

Fortunately, the panel overwhelmingly recommended against approval of the treatment due to the clinical trials failing to demonstrate efficacy and noted more research was needed.

In December, Public Citizen asked the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Inspector General (OIG) to investigate the unprecedented and inappropriate close collaboration between the agency and Biogen before and after the submission of the company’s application for approval of aducanumab.

Public Citizen told the OIG that by engaging in this collaboration with Biogen, the FDA dangerously compromised its objectivity and independence during the review process for the drug.

In a separate letter to then-FDA Commissioner Dr. Stephen

Hahn, we asked the agency to temporarily remove the head of the office that collaborated with Biogen pending the completion of the investigation, reassign all further review and decision-making regarding aducanumab to staff not involved in the collaboration with Biogen and assess whether any similar collaborations between the agency and other drug companies have occurred.

With no response, in January 2021, Public Citizen then urged the FDA’s new Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock to endorse our call for an OIG investigation. Public Citizen urged her to publicly disclose whether she was ever made aware of, or whether she ever endorsed or facilitated in any way, the FDA’s close collaboration with Biogen prior to her assignment to Operation Warp Speed.

We also proposed that to ensure the integrity of drug reviews, a firewall be created between the FDA staff involved in any pre-submission interactions with companies and those involved in the review and decision-making for related new drug applications subsequently submitted to agency.

Soon after, Biogen announced that the agency had extended

the review period for the companies’ application after the agency requested more data on the drug, to which Public Citizen demanded the FDA reject the current application entirely and conduct a new clinical trial.

“Additional flawed statistical analyses of data from the previously conducted trials of the drug will not be sufficient to establish that the drug is effective,” said Carome. “To restore that integrity, the agency must assign staff not involved in the tainted collaborative effort to salvage aducanumab to conduct any further review of the application for approval of the drug.”

In a response, Woodcock defended collaborations between drugmakers and the agency, and told Public Citizen, “the firewall you propose would significantly reduce the efficiency of FDA’s review process and cause delays in drug development ... nor is a firewall necessary to ensure the integrity of FDA’s decision-making.”

Public Citizen continues to contend that the relationship between Biogen and the FDA was inappropriate, and a new clinical trial is needed before the agency gives any further consideration to approving aducanumab for treatment of Alzheimer’s disease. ■

FOIA Lawsuit a Victory for Immigrants, Open Government

BY RHODA FENG

WIN! In a significant victory for open government advocates, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled in February that people can sue to enforce the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirement that federal agencies post certain documents online so that they are accessible to the public.

The decision was issued in *New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) v. Board of Immigration Appeals*, in which Public Citizen Litigation Group served as lead counsel.

“The court’s ruling is an important step toward greater government openness,” said Public Citizen Attorney Scott Nelson, who argued the case. “The decision will help ensure that FOIA’s requirement that agencies make important documents publicly available online is not a toothless tiger that agencies are free to ignore.”

The court of appeals held that FOIA’s “electronic reading room” provisions, which mandate online posting of a wide range of documents that Congress wanted to

“The [court’s] decision will help ensure that FOIA’s requirement that agencies make important documents publicly available online is not a toothless tiger that agencies are free to ignore.”

—Scott Nelson, Public Citizen attorney

make readily accessible to members of the public, can be enforced in court.

The case arose when NYLAG, which provides free legal services to immigrants in New York, requested that the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) post all its opinions in immigration cases in its electronic reading room.

Since 1996, FOIA has required agencies to provide public, online access to all opinions and orders they issue in cases they decide, but the BIA posts only a tiny fraction of the thousands of opinions it decides each year. The inability to access all of the BIA’s opinions hinders NYLAG’s efforts to provide legal assistance to immigrants.

The BIA denied NYLAG’s request and claimed that NYLAG could not sue to enforce FOIA’s requirement that agency decisions

be posted online. Represented by Public Citizen Litigation Group and its own staff attorneys, NYLAG sued.

After a federal district court in New York agreed with the BIA’s view and dismissed NYLAG’s case, NYLAG appealed. In a strong opinion, the court of appeals reversed the district court and reinstated NYLAG’s case.

“The Second Circuit’s decision handed a critically important victory not only to NYLAG, our co-counsel Public Citizen, and other immigration advocates but also to all members of the public who seek government transparency and accountability,” said Beth Goldman, NYLAG president and attorney-in-charge.

“This litigation is not over, but we are optimistic that we will achieve our goal of BIA transparency. We are especially grateful

to our dedicated co-counsel at Public Citizen – this victory could not have been achieved without their partnership.”

As the court stated in its decision, “[t]he text of FOIA’s remedial provision and the 1974 amendment to it, considered in light of FOIA’s history and purpose, make clear that Congress gave courts the authority to enforce an agency’s obligation to make certain documents publicly available.”

Rejecting the government’s argument that FOIA’s proactive disclosure provisions are not enforceable, the court found that FOIA’s text, structure, and purpose require the conclusion “that Congress intended to give district courts the authority to order agencies to make documents available for public inspection when they fail to comply with their affirmative obligations” to do so. ■



Graphic courtesy of Shutterstock.

Challenging a Dangerous Rule for Truck Drivers

BY ADINA ROSENBAUM

Truck drivers' working hours affect the safety of America's roads. To reduce fatigue-related crashes, since the late 1930s, the federal government has regulated the hours of service of commercial motor vehicle drivers.

For most of the second half of the twentieth century, hours-of-service regulations stayed largely unchanged. Over the years, however, the American transportation system changed dramatically, with much higher traffic speeds and volumes.

In 2003, in response to a congressional mandate to address various fatigue-related issues pertaining to commercial motor vehicle safety, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) revised the hours-of-service rules.

Rather than alleviating fatigue by curtailing the hours that drivers could drive, however, the rule allowed drivers to drive more consecutive hours.

In 2003, Public Citizen sued on behalf of a group of safety organizations to challenge FMCSA's revised rule, which failed to take drivers' health into account.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for

the District of Columbia ruled in our favor and vacated the rule.

After the agency issued a new rule that was almost identical to the first one, Public Citizen sued again, and the court again struck down the portions that allowed for increased driving time, because FMCSA both failed to provide an opportunity for comment on the methodology it used to analyze crash risks and failed to provide an explanation for the methodology. Public Citizen subsequently sued over two later iterations of the rule as well, with the last case ending in 2012.

In 2019, towards the end of the Trump administration, FMCSA issued a new hours-of-service rule that weakens the hours-of-service regulations. Among other changes, the rule expands the hours certain short-haul drivers can work and the distance they can drive during that time.

In general, truck drivers are required to keep logs recording when they are driving, when they are on-duty but not driving, and when they are off-duty. These logs, which are now usually electronic, are vital to the enforcement of the hours-of-service rules.

However, certain short-haul drivers, who go short distances and

make multiple stops throughout the day, are exempt from the log-keeping requirements.

Before the 2019 rule, to be exempt from the requirement under the short-haul exemption, drivers operating a vehicle requiring a commercial driver's license had to stay within 100 air-miles of their normal work reporting location and return to the work reporting location and be released from work within 12 hours.

The 2019 rule expands the permissible driving radius for this short-haul exemption from 100 to 150 air-miles and the time within which drivers must return to their work reporting location from 12 to 14 hours.

In this way, it extends the workday for drivers using the short-haul exemption, despite research showing that driving later in the workday has negative safety consequences, and expands the number of drivers that are exempt from the record-keeping requirements, which are important to ensuring that drivers follow the hours-of-service rules.

In addition, the 2019 rule eliminated a requirement that long-haul truckers take an off-duty break of at least half an hour

if they have not taken an off-duty break of at least that length in the previous eight hours.

The rule replaced the rest-break requirement with a requirement that drivers take a break from driving of at least half an hour if they have not taken a break from driving of at least that length in the previous eight hours.

Under the new rule, the break does not need to be an off-duty rest break; it can be spent doing on-duty, non-driving work.

Accordingly, drivers can end up working for their entire work window, including both driving and doing strenuous work such as loading and unloading, without receiving any time to rest.

On behalf of the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, the International Brother of Teamsters, Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways, and Parents Against Tired Truckers, Public Citizen filed a petition for review of the new hours-of-service rule in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit.

In late February, we agreed to put the case on hold to give the Biden administration time to become familiar with the issues and consider how it wishes to proceed. ■



Picture courtesy of Shutterstock.

found that Black and Latino workers have been disproportionately impacted by these policies.

While decades of corporate-rigged trade have harmed American workers of all races and ethnicities, the new study documents how Black and Latino workers are overrepresented in industries and concentrated in regions that were hardest hit.

Black and Latino workers were represented in nine out of the ten manufacturing industries hardest hit by import competition. For example, while Latinos comprised 8.9% of the labor force, they represented 12.3% of workers in the manufacturing of fabricated metals, 11.4% of furniture, and 10.5% of plastics and rubber.

While Black workers comprised 10.6% of the overall labor force in 1995, they represented 13.5% of the workforce in paper manufacturing, 11.4% in chemicals, 11.3% in transportation equipment, and 11.1% in primary metals. African Americans and Latinos represented 13% and 15.4%, respectively, of the workforce in the beverages industry.

Rapidly growing trade deficits in these manufacturing industries – along with threats of job offshoring as corporations relocated production in low-wage countries – contributed to the stagnation of wages in sectors employing significant numbers of Black and Latino workers.

Whereas earnings in highly

“The Biden administration must now seize the opportunity to show working class voters that Democrats recognize the real damage of past pacts and policies and that President Biden will fix the underlying problems with new approaches to trade that prioritize the wellbeing of working people of all races and ethnicities.”

—Daniel Rangel, research director of Global Trade Watch

trade-impacted industries have remained virtually flat, workers’ earnings in all manufacturing and hospitality and leisure have had some yearly real earnings growth.

Additionally, states and cities with the largest Black and Latino populations have been hardest hit by the economic and social fallout of failed U.S. trade policies.

The 15 states that are home to 58% of the Black population account for 2.9 million of the 4 million total manufacturing job losses documented by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics during the NAFTA-WTO era.

Fifteen states, which are home to 85% of the Latino population, account for more than half of trade-related job losses certified by the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program – 1.6 million of the more than 3.2 million U.S. jobs lost – from the start of the NAFTA-WTO era in 1994 to the latest TAA certifications covering most of 2019. TAA, which provides qualified workers extended unemployment benefits and retraining funds, represents a significant undercount of trade-related job loss, given that it only covers certain types of jobs, and workers

need to know to apply and then must fill out lengthy applications that prove the trade connection.

The report discusses how job offshoring and the decline of manufacturing have especially affected Black and Latino workers because of broader patterns of structural racism in the United States.

Damaging disparities in educational opportunities result in Black and Latino workers being overrepresented in the non-college educated workforce for which the share of quality jobs has been greatly diminished by manufacturing job loss. And increased competition for a reduced number of quality jobs available for non-college educated workers exacerbates underlying racial biases in hiring, promotion, and retention.

The outcome: Latino and Black workers impacted by “trade” deals struggle harder to find new jobs and face larger pay cuts when they do. This entrenches and widens significant income and wealth inequality between Black and Latino families relative to their white counterparts, contributing to the racist economic structure prevalent in the United States.

For example, the report reveals

that Black and Latino workers who lose their jobs are less likely to find a replacement job than their white counterparts. When Black and Latino workers do find work again, they often face disproportionate pay cuts. In general, Black and Latino workers in manufacturing are paid, respectively, 23% and 25% lower than white workers.

“Whether these working-class voters of diverse races and ethnicities will stick with the Democratic Party depends on whether their lives and livelihoods measurably improve over the next four years, which means the Biden administration must enact economic policies designed to do just that and break from the corporate-rigged, job-killing trade policies supported by Republican and Democratic presidents alike over the past few decades,” said Lori Wallach of Public Citizen’s Global Trade Watch.

“The Biden administration must now seize the opportunity to show working class voters that Democrats recognize the real damage of past pacts and policies and that President Biden will fix the underlying problems with new approaches to trade that prioritize the wellbeing of working people of all races and ethnicities,” said Daniel Rangel, research director of Global Trade Watch.

As people throughout the United States struggle to confront the deep-seated structural racism that for too long has been a cornerstone of the American experience, this report aims to elevate how the outcomes of our trade policies and agreements have reinforced a racially biased system, while also hurting working people and communities of all races and ethnicities.

Unpacking the outcomes of the current policies is a critical first step in trying to understand the causes of the racial disparities the data reveal.

What is clear is that rethinking our trade agreements and policies should not be limited to aiming to halt the decline of manufacturing in the country or making our economy more resilient to crises, but also to contributing to the fight for a more just and inclusive society. ■

50% of Government-Certified Trade-Related Job Losses (1.6 Million) Are in These 15 States Where 85% of the Latino Population Resides

Total Trade Adjustment Assistance-Certified Job Loss: 1,604,779



Source: U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance data provided with geomapping via Public Citizen’s Trade Adjustment Assistance Database

► **Democracy**, from page 1

week was the brainchild of the Public Citizen-hosted Declaration for American Democracy coalition, a group of over 190 organizations from the labor, racial justice, faith, women's rights, environmental, good government, and many other important communities.

Activists across the country came up with their own creative events in the era of social distancing. For instance, student activists in New Jersey organized a car caravan outside of U.S. Rep. Mikie Sherrill's (D-N.J.) office, with each car covered in posters thanking her for her previous support of H.R. 1. Similar events were held in Oregon, hosted by the Western Farm Workers Association, and in Florida, hosted by the state-wide March for Our Lives chapter.

Arizona Democracy Collaborative, a coalition of state-based groups, including LUCHA Arizona and Arizona Advocacy Network, hosted a statewide rally with Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs and U.S. Rep Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.).

In total, over 65 press conferences, virtual rallies, banner drops, car caravan events, and virtual meetings with members of Congress were held nationwide, demonstrating broad support for H.R. 1. In addition to grassroots events, a mobile billboard circled the U.S. Capitol throughout the week reading "We Demand Democracy. Pass the For the People Act."

The events took place in the aftermath of a dark chapter in U.S. history: a militant insurrection at the U.S. Capitol in January, which many viewed as the foul apotheosis of the out-of-control corruption of the Trump administration.

In response to thousands of Trump supporters breaching the U.S. Capitol building, Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, said: "Donald Trump incited a militant attack to advance his hapless coup attempt and erode confidence in our democracy. But the attack on the U.S. Capitol is a symptom of a deeper problem with our democracy and only further underscores the urgency with which we need to transform our political system into one that

works for all Americans."

Democracy Reform Redux

For years, democracy advocates have been fighting to combat a tide of voter suppression unleashed by the gutting of the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby v. Holder*, as well as the damage to our political system as a result of the disastrous ruling in *FEC v. Citizens United*.

In response to these blatant attacks on our democracy, Public Citizen partnered with other organizations to form the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition in 2017. Advocates and policy experts discussed what an ideal democracy would look like and what policies would help get us there, helping to lay the foundation of the For the People Act. This sweeping democracy reform package will expand and protect voting rights, end partisan and racial gerrymandering, curb the influence of big money in politics, and improve election security, transparency and accountability in our government.

In 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives



The For the People Act

passed the For the People Act with unanimous Democratic support and was co-sponsored by every member of the U.S. Senate Democratic Caucus in the 116th Congress. Despite having every Democratic senator sign on to the bill in the Senate, then-Majority Leader Mitch McConnell refused to bring it up for a vote, sending the For the People Act to his “senate graveyard.”

“Because of the refusal to take action around voter access and democracy reform more broadly, the United States and our democracy was left vulnerable when an unprecedented global health crisis put everything at risk,” noted Gilbert. “The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted just how outdated our current voting systems are, as many states scrambled to expand early voting sites, recruit poll-workers, and create vote-by-mail systems in a matter of months.”

States like Texas doubled down on voter suppression by limiting drop-boxes and setting strict restrictions on who is eligible to receive mail-in ballots, making people choose between

protecting themselves from COVID and voting. States like Texas showed that unless the federal government steps in, entire swaths of voters will continue to be disenfranchised.

The For the People Act would break down barriers to voting by setting a national standard for voting to ensure every voter has access to ballot. It would implement reforms to modernize our voting system and prevent blatant attempts of voter suppression, including nationwide automatic voter registration, simplified vote-by-mail, secure paper ballots, and expanded early voting. The Act also tackles corruption and reforms our campaign finance system by amplifying the power of small dollar donations and ensuring more transparency by shining a light on anonymous campaign money.

Finally, the bill also includes a small donor matching system, modeled after successful systems in cities and states across the country, which will reduce the influence of special interests and empower regular Americans to have a meaningful voice in their democracy. It would allow more people from diverse backgrounds to

run and win competitive campaigns for office, and it would be fully paid for by penalties levied on corporate lawbreakers and wealthy tax cheats.

After “Democracy Week,” the momentum to pass the For the People Act gained steam. In the following weeks, countless activists, voting rights experts, and leaders have taken action in support of the For the People Act, calling their representatives, submitting letters to the editor, and hosting events across the country. In the weeks leading up to the House vote, local and state organizations hosted democracy-themed rallies and roundtables in Florida, Arizona, Virginia, New York, Colorado, Maine, and other states.

Unlike in 2019, the new Senate Majority Leader has expressed his enthusiastic support of the legislation. His choice to designate the For the People Act as “S. 1” in the Senate is an indicator that passing the bill will be amongst his most urgent priorities. While S. 1 has yet to be introduced in the Senate, we can expect an introduction and a vote in the coming months. ■



reveals who's
funding dark
money groups.

Graphic courtesy of the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition.

Corporations Funded the GOP Seditious Caucus

BY DAVID ROSEN

It was a dark day for our democracy.

On the afternoon of Jan. 6, egged on by the former U.S. president, Trump supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol building, leaving at least five people dead – including one police officer – and forcing members of Congress and former Vice President Mike Pence to flee for their lives. Later that night, 147 Republican lawmakers voted to void the results of the 2020 presidential election.

These lawmakers have received huge support over the years from Big Business. Corporate political action committees (PACs) contributed \$170 million since 2016 to the campaign war chests of these 147 members of Congress, known as the “seditious caucus,” according to Public Citizen’s report, “Bankrolling the Disenfranchisers.”

Nineteen of these PACs gave at least \$1 million to these lawmakers, and 46 of the PACs donated to at least half of the lawmakers, the report shows.

The five largest political contributors were the National Association of Realtors, the American Bankers Association, the National Automobile Dealers Association, the National Beer Wholesalers Association, and AT&T.

Subsequent Public Citizen reports showed that Big Tech companies poured nearly \$2 million directly into seditious caucus campaign coffers, and Big Polluters contributed nearly \$9

million over the past five years.

In the wake of the insurrection on Jan. 6, several corporations announced that they would temporarily revise their political spending policies.

Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, and JPMorgan announced that they would pause all their political giving. And Marriott, BlueCross BlueShield, and Commerce Bank told Popular Information they were suspending contributions to all 147 members of the seditious caucus.

A temporary suspension of contributions is not enough, Public Citizen insists.

“These corporations cannot simply wait for the dust to settle and then resume business as usual. Our democracy may not survive the next insurrection,” said Mike Tanglis, a research director at Public Citizen and one of the authors of the report. “Without additional steps and permanent change, Corporate America’s

scramble to put themselves on the right side of history will be little more than a smokescreen and a PR stunt.”

Public Citizen has called on corporations and trade associations to close their political spending operations, dissolve their political action committees, and pledge not to make contributions to unregulated super PACs or outside groups that spend money to influence elections and keep their donors secret.

In late January, more than 50 public interest groups, investment firms, and religious organizations led by Public Citizen sent a letter to Corporate America urging corporations to end their political operations entirely.

“It’s time for Corporate America to reckon with its role aiding and abetting a movement and a system that has sought to undermine the voters’ voices in Washington and state capitols,” said Lisa Gilbert, executive vice

president of Public Citizen. “Corporate executives need to publicly voice their support for sweeping reforms, like the For the People Act (H.R. 1), that will restore power in our democracy to the people.”

In addition to Congress passing legislation to strengthen our democracy and restore the rule of law, the Biden administration should act quickly to enact an anti-pay-to-play executive order requiring federal contractors to disclose the expenditures they make to influence elections.

And the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission should restart its work to implement a rule requiring publicly traded companies to make comprehensive disclosure of their political activities.

The events of Jan. 6 should sound the alarm that it’s time to get corporate money – and corporations generally – out of our politics. ■



Graphic courtesy of Zach Stone.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Can Be Neglected No Longer

BY MIKE STANKIEWICZ

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is in desperate need of an overhaul and the Biden administration must install strong leadership, increase its seriously underfunded budget, and implement much-needed safety standards.

That is the recommendation of former Public Citizen president Joan Claybrook, who led NHTSA from 1977 to 1981 and is the author of a new report released on the 55th anniversary of Ralph Nader’s book “Unsafe at Any Speed.” The report, “Safer Vehicles and Highways: 4.2 million U.S. Lives Spared Since 1966,” outlines how the White House can recharge this

vital agency.

The importance of a strong NHTSA, which is responsible for the safety of over 320 million people who drive or ride in more than 288 million registered vehicles, cannot be overstated. Under the Trump administration, the agency never had a congressionally approved leader and many safety standards remain backlogged and unimplemented, leaving drivers at risk. Americans need renewed confidence that the agency puts drivers’ safety at the forefront of its mission. The Biden administration is in a position to reinvigorate the agency, the report argued, and outlined specific steps the White House should take.

Biden first must select a tough,

independent Administrator, who does not have ties to the auto industry and has the capacity to revitalize the agency and restock its depleted technical personnel. The vehicle safety budget of \$194 million (or less than \$0.70 per American) should be increased by five times to \$1 billion a year.

“One of the most exciting recent developments has been new crash avoidance technology that guides and assists drivers. To better protect highway safety, NHTSA should embrace this life-saving technology, and require all new vehicles to have Advanced Driver Assistance Systems,” said Claybrook.

Such technology works automatically to lower crash rates

by 20 to 55%, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. These innovations include automatic emergency braking, forward collision warning, lane departure warning, and blind spot warning, that will protect not only vehicle occupants, but also pedestrians. With pedestrian and bicycle fatalities at their highest level in almost 30 years, these systems would save many lives and avoid horrible injuries.

Yet the auto industry has opposed countless commonsense safety standards over the years, even those that protect vulnerable children, such as brake transmission interlocks and back-up cameras, despite the minimal cost to

see [Traffic Safety](#), page 11 ►

Meatpacking Industry Fought Pandemic Safety Measures

BY RHODA FENG

Newly released documents paint a grim picture of the meatpacking industry's efforts to avoid safety measures during the pandemic. In March, Public Citizen obtained hundreds of pages of documents from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, revealing the industry's resistance to the few attempts by the Trump administration to stop the spread of coronavirus in meatpacking plants last spring.

"It is heartbreaking to see the callousness of the meatpacking industry, pushing back against basic safety measures that could have saved hundreds of lives and helped contain the COVID-19 pandemic," said Adam Pulver, attorney at Public Citizen Litigation Group.

A previous cache of documents obtained by Public Citizen in

September, also through a FOIA request, showed that the meatpacking industry intensely lobbied the White House and USDA for immunity from liability to workers injured because of the companies' actions and inactions. The documents revealed a startling level of collaboration between USDA and an industry eager to downplay and disregard risks to worker health during the pandemic.

The new documents reveal more troubling information. They show that the industry rebuked common-sense reporting and public-health measures designed to stop the spread of the deadly virus. For instance:

- In April 2020, the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) protested USDA's decision not to send Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) inspectors who were exposed to COVID-19 into

other meatpacking plants. On April 15, 2020, one NAMI official stated, "We can't start sidelining individuals at FSIS or in the industry because they may have been exposed. We all may have been exposed at this point."

- Later in April 2020, the National Chicken Council complained to USDA that FSIS was asking too many questions about COVID-19 testing at poultry processing facilities, stating the "questions seem to be unnecessary."
- Similarly, in May 2020, officials at Tyson Foods complained to USDA that the company had to "spend significant resources ... each day when reporting [COVID] positive team members."
- In late-March 2020, the Food and Beverage Issue Alliance developed guidance for industry members

stating that, unless state or local governments stated otherwise, physical distancing should not be required.

- Industry officials reported to USDA on FSIS employees who warned their friends and families about plants with cases of COVID-19, specifically forwarding a personal Facebook post and asking USDA to take disciplinary action against the inspectors.
- As of February 2021, at least 45,000 positive cases of COVID-19 have been tied to meat and poultry processing facilities in the U.S., along with at least 240 worker deaths. Documents previously obtained by Public Citizen and released in February showed that the Trump administration did not involve the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration in its response until nearly a month after outbreaks began and, even then, did so reluctantly. ■

► Traffic Safety, from page 10

manufacturers.

Today the agency is in a vital position to prevent one of the industry's most heartbreaking tragedies: child vehicular heat-stroke. At least 39 precious children die trapped in hot cars every year, but this tragedy is preventable with readily available and cost-efficient technology, according to the report. Advocates have recently been calling for occupant detection and alert technology installed in all new vehicles so that children are not inadvertently left in cars where they die from excessive heat exposure. A bill requiring this standard was passed in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2020, but following pushback from the auto-industry - which blamed neglectful parents - the bill did not pass committee in the U.S. Senate. NHTSA under Biden must implement this standard and do a better job of saving the lives of families.

Even more can be done to make our highways safer. To reduce drunk driving, the installation of nonintrusive alcohol measurement technology (including driver monitoring, eye tracking, and hands on-wheel monitoring) could save up to an astounding 9,000 lives per year, and NHTSA has the authority to lead on these initiatives.

The Biden administration also has the arduous task of implementing a massive backlog of key motor vehicle safety standards. Many of

"One of the most exciting recent developments has been new crash avoidance technology that guides and assists drivers. To better protect highway safety, NHTSA should embrace this life-saving technology, and require all new vehicles to have Advanced Driver Assistance Systems."

—Joan Claybrook, former Public Citizen president and former head of the NHTSA

these standards were mandated by Congress but the Trump administration ignored vital rulemaking. For large trucks, these include mandatory event data recorder requirements, state inspection of vehicles, motor carrier safety fitness determinations, and evaluation of truck drivers for obstructive sleep apnea.

"The new Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, faces the daunting task of revitalizing an agency that has saved hundreds of thousands of lives since being created in 1966," said Claybrook. "It has been neglected by the White House for far too long. However, a strong leader focused on the future of motor vehicle

technology can bring NHTSA back to life and prevent unnecessary deaths, injuries, and needless suffering and pain for millions of Americans in car crashes every year."

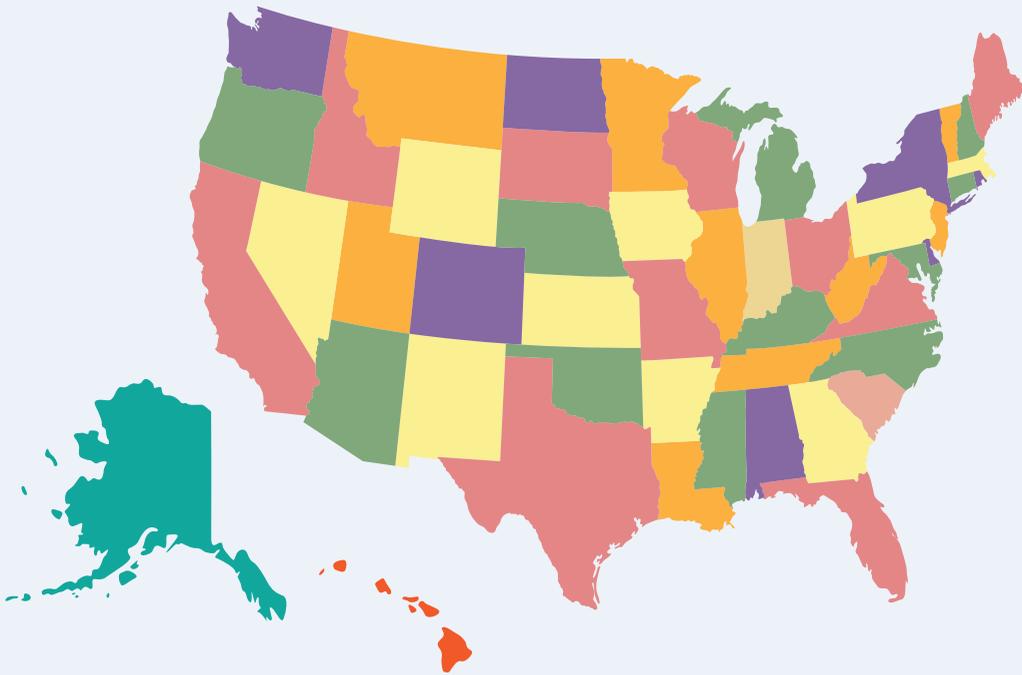
To read the full report, visit: <https://bit.ly/3bAHXg4>. ■



Graphic courtesy of Joan Claybrook.

PUBLIC CITIZEN IN YOUR STATE

Much of Public Citizen's work focuses on federal policies, but the organization also works in the public interest at the local and state levels. Here's what Public Citizen has been doing in your state lately.



Virginia Supports an Amendment to Overturn *Citizens United*

In January, Virginia took a critical step towards fixing our broken democracy by becoming the 22nd state to support an amendment to overturn *Citizens United*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that has enabled corporations and wealthy individuals to spend unlimited amounts to influence our elections. The passing of this resolution is particularly notable in Virginia, which is one of five states with no limits on campaign contributions. Political spending in Virginia has reached record highs, with \$382 million spent during the 2020 election cycle, nearly double that of 2016.

"Today, despite living in a state where there is almost no regulation of big money in elections, we Virginians have joined countless other Americans in sending the resounding message that we will not tolerate big money in our politics," said Ilana Beller, a Public Citizen organizer and a resident of Virginia. "We must use this momentum to ensure that the U.S. Congress votes to enshrine this protection of our democracy in our Constitution." Virginians, and Americans as a whole, agree that we need to get big money out of politics. Nearly 90% of Americans agree that big money is undermining our democracy, and three in four Americans back a constitutional amendment allowing Congress and the states to regulate campaign finance.

On Jan. 28, Virginia joined 21 other states and over 800 municipalities in supporting an amendment to overturn *Citizens United*. This state resolution comes at a pivotal moment: the U.S. House of Representatives has introduced H.J. Res 1, the federal joint resolution that proposes the constitutional amendment that will regulate election spending and overturn *Citizens United*.

For the past 11 years, Public Citizen has led efforts to overturn *Citizens United*. In Virginia, Public Citizen worked with American Promise and other partners to build and lead a grassroots coalition of 51 state and local organizations across the Commonwealth in support of the resolution. The coalition generated thousands of emails from residents urging legislators to vote in favor of the resolution. Residents also wrote letters to the editor, organized online, and called their legislators.

— Rhoda Feng

Confronting a Blackout Disaster in Texas

When Texas weather services began predicting freezing temperatures over Valentine's Day weekend, it seemed life could get uncomfortable for Texans, but no one could have predicted just how bad it would get.

As Texans struggled to stay warm amid subfreezing temperatures beginning Feb. 14, electricity demand skyrocketed. At the same time,

the amount of available electricity plummeted, with almost 90% of the loss coming from coal, natural gas, and nuclear sources. The resulting strain on the state's largely unregulated power grid led to rolling blackouts designed to keep the entire grid from crashing. At least 4 million Texans lost power – some for four days or more. Water treatment plants also lost power leading to water shortages and warnings to boil water.

At the same time, frozen and bursting water pipes prevented the flow of clean drinking water to about 13.5 million residents of the state and flooded thousands of homes. Meanwhile, Covid-19 relief efforts – including testing and vaccinations – were postponed.

Even as the crisis worsened, Public Citizen's Texas team worked from Austin, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth on behalf of Texans. Public officials seeking credible information called on our expertise in energy and climate policy, and dozens of members of the local and national media sought interviews with the Public Citizen staff.

"Those of us who could – who had power and water during the disaster – were sharing information about the ongoing crisis with everyone we could," Shelley said. Shelley wrote an op-ed published in the state's largest newspaper – the *Houston Chronicle* – that countered a false narrative that wind turbines were to blame for the crisis. Shelley noted that all energy sources struggled in the freezing cold, but gas and nuclear accounted for the largest percentage of the failure.

"Transitioning to clean, renewable energy and away from dirty, polluting fossil fuels was always going to be difficult in Texas, where oil and gas have long reign," Shelley wrote. "But this week has shown that providing reliable power isn't a clean energy problem. It's a Texas energy problem."

Public Citizen's Texas staffers fielded a deluge of interview requests ranging from CNN to Reuters to energy trade publications to local TV and newspapers. Our San Antonio Climate Organizer DeeDee Belmares testified at a Monday board meeting of San Antonio's municipal utility – CPS Energy – to demand answers about their power failures.

Stephanie Thomas, Public Citizen's Houston-based climate organizer, quickly convened a virtual town hall with state lawmakers from the Houston area to inform the public on the coming legislative response to the crisis. Kaiba White, Public Citizen's energy policy specialist in Austin, worked to identify the root causes of the energy crash and begin putting together proposals to help ensure it wouldn't happen again.

Our social media accounts (including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) shared up-to-date information on the disaster, including public aid resources and news updates. We also generated commentary on social media calling out Republican officials in Texas – including U.S. Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) and John Cornyn (R-Tex.), Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton – who were responsible for failed policies, spreading misinformation, or missing in action when Texans needed them most.

Public Citizen's Energy Program Director, Tyson Slocum, also jumped in to help. Slocum told *The New York Times* it was unfathomable that the Texas energy grid regulator – the Public Utility Commission – had approved licenses for energy distributors whose variable rates had suddenly led to utility bills of thousands of dollars for residential Texas consumers.

In the weeks and months ahead, Public Citizen's Texas office will work to ensure that policies that led to the Texas blackout are changed, and that public officials responsible for the crisis are held responsible.

— Michael Coleman ■

Public Citizen salutes . . .

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The following are highlights from our recent media coverage.

Robert Weissman, Public Citizen president

On Trump revoking the five-year lobbying ban for presidential appointees: *The Washington Post, Politico, Raw Story*. **On the GameStop stock trading:** *The Washington Post*. **On Jeff Bezos stepping down as Amazon's CEO:** *The Associated Press, Politico, The Christian Science Monitor*. **On stock trading app Robinhood:** *USA Today*. **On Democrats using the Congressional Review Act to repeal Trump-era policies:** *The Wall Street Journal*. **On Facebook's free speech policies:** *Bloomberg Law*. **On President Joe Biden's son-in-law's potential conflict of interest:** *CNN*. **On Trump's cheapening of the Medal of Freedom:** *The Los Angeles Times*. **On the Trump legacy:** *HuffPost*.

Lisa Gilbert, executive vice president

On the need for new ethics laws: *The New York Times*. **On the GameStop stock trading:** *Reuters*. **On the second round of stimulus checks:** *NBC News, The American Independent*. **On Trump's roll in the Jan. 6 insurrection:** *The American Prospect*. **On Biden's likely pick of Gary Gensler to lead the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission:** *The Wall Street Journal*. **On the Democrats' embrace of the Chamber of Commerce:** *Politico*. **On the U.S. Chamber of Commerce reevaluating their political donations:** *Roll Call*. **On Trump revoking the five-year lobbying ban for presidential appointees:** *Roll Call*. **On Trump's post-presidency:** *USA Today*. **On the For the People Act:** *Public News Service*. **On Biden's plan for ethics reform:** *Common Dreams*. **On Trump's acquittal:** *Common Dreams, City Watch LA, Truthout*.

Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch

On U.S. trade policies disproportionately harming Black and Latino workers: *The Washington Post, Daily Kos*. **On President Biden's trade policy proposals:** *The Washington Post, the Associated Press*. **On how former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer changed trade policy:** *The Atlantic*. **On Biden's actions to protect union workers:** *The Los Angeles Times*. **On Biden's "Buy American" plan:** *The Washington Post, The Associated Press, CBS News*. **On a trade dispute between two Korean firms:** *HuffPost*.

Dr. Michael Carome, director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group

On Janet Woodcock leading the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): *The Wall Street Journal*. **On Biogen's Alzheimer drug:** *Bloomberg*. **On some retirement communities using the COVID-19 vaccine as a marketing tool:** *NBC News, Kaiser Health News, The*

Chicago Tribune. **On the Trump administration's last-minute weakening of medical product regulation:** *Medscape*.

Peter Maybarduk, director of Public Citizen's Access to Medicines Program

On Biden's COVID-19 executive orders: *Roll Call, Healthcare Finance News*. **On the global vaccine distribution:** *The Hill*. **On President Biden's global vaccine distribution comments:** *Common Dreams, In These Times*. **On the Biden administration joining the World Health Organization's COVAX initiative:** *Common Dreams, Healthcare Finance News*.

Adrian Shelley, director of Public Citizen's Texas office

On Texas' electric grid: *Reuters, Bloomberg, The Washington Post, The National Review, E&E News, Free Speech TV, The San Antonio Current, The Dallas Observer, The Austin American-Statesman, The Young Turks, American Greatness, Ohio Star*. **On halting donations to Republican lawmakers in Texas:** *Politico*. **On Texas' opposition to President Biden's methane regulations:** *Politico*. **On the Railroad Commission of Texas' controversial oil rules:** *Houston Business Journal*. **On Texas' ethics laws:** *The Texas Tribune*. **On the next Texas legislative session:** *The Austin American-Statesman*.

Craig Holman, government affairs lobbyist with Public Citizen's Congress Watch division

On corporations halting donations to lawmakers who objected to President Biden's win: *The Washington Post, The Associated Press, Bloomberg, OZY, Daily Kos*. **On Facebook pausing political donations:** *The Washington Post*. **On the influence of casino magnate Sheldon Adelson:** *Business Insider*. **On Trump's abuse of the U.S. Department of the Treasury while in office:** *Roll Call*. **On Surgeon General nominee Vivek Murthy's conflicts of interest:** *The Washington Post*. **On U.S. senators' ties to fossil fuels:** *The Guardian*. **On the return of earmarks:** *Roll Call*. **On President Biden's "Golden Parachute" ethics ban:** *Business Insider*. **On how COVID-19 has impacted lobbying:** *Bloomberg*. **On holding senators accountable for voting to overturn the presidential election:** *The Kansas City Star*. **On New Jersey's pay-to-play laws:** *Gothamist*. **On Democrat's use of PACs:** *RealClearPolitics*.

Public Citizen Litigation Group

On Public Citizen's USPS lawsuit: *Federal News Network*. **On using civil action to punish Trump:** *Courthouse News Service*.

Flatten the Curve! BY JIM QUINLAN

Across

1. *The epitomy of rarity
5. *Violet Beauregarde turns into one in Willy Wonka's factory
10. *Kind of stock
14. "Veep" actress Chlumsky
15. Nebraska district that went for Biden in November
16. Like some juicy steaks
17. Gumshoes, in old crime fiction
18. "That's fantastic!"
19. Famous __ (cookie brand)
20. Lock of hair
22. Mix, as paint
23. Show signs of exhaustion
24. Some remote batteries
26. Sanfrancisco's __ Hill
28. Cuomo's charge (abbr.)
29. Norm, Cliff, Frasier, and Lilith at "Cheers" e.g.
34. What a definition defines
36. Flat tire's need
37. Praise highly
39. Abounds (with)
42. *Twangy style of music featuring the banjo
44. *Team player from Toronto
45. *Navy pilot putting on a show
46. Mister in Mexico
47. Colorado resort
49. Fresh sounding animal?
50. Went platinum?
52. The coronavirus, or

- Black Lives Matter, e.g.
54. Kit __ bar
 56. Champ, to Joe Biden
 58. Request
 59. Quite a bit
 61. Obnoxious kid
 64. Like an aggressive personality
 68. Emulate a bedbug
 69. Grammatical no-no
 71. Sound like Winthrop in "The Music Man"
 72. Racetrack shape
 73. Start of many a college course
 74. "Oh woe is me!"
 75. *Showy wildflower
 76. *Irving Berlin song of 1926 covered by Wille Nelson in 1978
 77. Like Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania in 2020, or a word that is missing from the answers to the starred clues

Down

1. Groening of "The Simpsons"
2. Unique individual, slangily
3. "__ Upon a Time in Hollywood"
4. Capital of The Bahamas
5. Winner of four World Series in this century, on scoreboards
6. Australian avians
7. Attentive, and then some
8. River through Deutschland
9. Peter of Peter, Paul

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| | | | 24 | | 25 | | 26 | | 27 | | 28 | | | |
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| 72 | | | | | 73 | | | | | | 74 | | | |
| 75 | | | | | 76 | | | | | | 77 | | | |

- and Mary
10. "Oh fudge!"
11. Breakfast staple at a diner
12. O. Henry specialty
13. Annoyances
21. Professional pitcher?
25. Lisa Simpson plays it
27. Plant manager?
29. __ to riches
30. Dublin's land
31. The whole amount, including ax
32. Indian chief
33. /
35. Stimp's animated pal
38. Theres one in this clue
40. What scanning a QR code at a restaurant

- might bring up these days
41. Pivot around an axis
43. What makes the Impossible Burger possible
48. "What's your __?" ("When are you gonna get here?")
51. Waste
53. Bygone space station
54. Meat on a skewer
55. Not dead
57. Feature of an elephant
60. Show's partner
62. Pro's counterpart
63. Ripped up
65. Jagged Little __ (Broadway musical last performed

- 3/12/20)
66. Jacob's biblical twin
67. Recessed area in a church
70. Thumbs-down responses

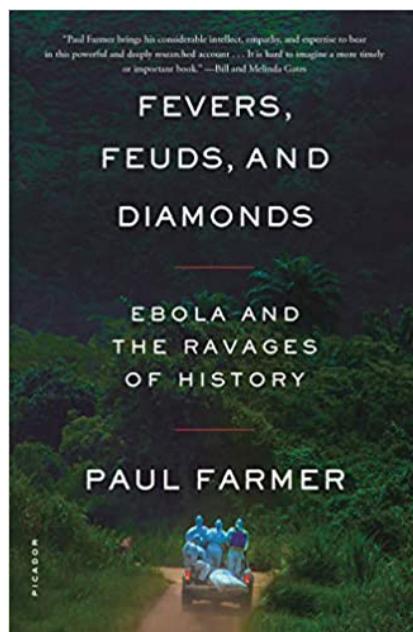
Jim Quinlan constructs the crossword gratis. Public Citizen appreciates his generous contribution.

Public Citizen Recommends ...

'Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds: Ebola and the Ravages of History'

By Paul Farmer; \$21.00; Farrar, Strauss and Giroux

Throughout his career and again in this magisterial work, the relentless humanitarian Dr. Paul Farmer insists on making the West confront hard truths. In "Fevers, Feuds, and Diamonds," he notes that while the media-driven popular conception of Ebola is of an untreatable, science fiction-like disease, in fact most patients die simply from loss of fluid and most patients treated in modern,



Western hospital survived.

Why, then, he demands, did so many patients in various West African outbreaks die? His answer is simple: lack of care. Underlying that direct answer are two dominant themes. First, centuries-long exploitation of African nations by the imperial powers has impoverished them and left vast clinic deserts, especially in rural areas. In West Africa, this chronic condition was made much more acute by a series of horrible and cruel civil wars, themselves entangled with the global diamond trade. Second, the global public health establishment refused to invest in care for Ebola patients (a story

initially true for HIV/AIDS, among many other diseases), focusing only on prevention by isolating patients. That strategy was not only inhumane for the patients, it was self-defeating; there was no reason for patients to leave their families and come to Ebola centers if doing so would only mean they die miserable and alone.

This is a story rich in profiles of local heroes of the Ebola outbreaks, tear-jerking accounts of lives lost and moral demand to treat people in poor countries as people - by affording them treatment when sick. ■

— Robert Weissman

To order books, contact the publisher or visit your local bookstore or library.

Fossil Fuel Industry Funds Seditious Caucus, Biden Opposition

BY ALAN ZIBEL

Though the fossil-fuel friendly Trump administration left Washington, D.C., in January, the oil and gas industry is still trying its hardest to scare the public about the impact of climate change.

Two reports by Public Citizen early this year sought to shine a spotlight on efforts by the fossil fuel industry to ensure its influence is felt despite President Joe Biden administration's efforts to build a cleaner, greener future.

“The fossil fuel industry is still failing to come clean about the danger it poses to the planet, while engaging in disinformation campaigns and leveraging its political power to sabotage measures to protect the planet,”



Graphic courtesy of Zach Stone.

said Public Citizen President Robert Weissman.

One Public Citizen analysis (see story, page 10) found that the fossil fuel industry’s political action committees have bankrolled the “seditious caucus” of Republican lawmakers who supported overturning the 2020 election. Fossil fuel industry political action committees contributed about \$8.8 million over the past three election cycles to the campaign's of 132 out of 147 members of Congress who did former President Donald Trump’s bidding and voted against certifying the election results.

Throughout the Trump administration, the fossil fuel industry was a close ally of the White House. In the 2020 election alone, Public Citizen’s research found that 29 fossil fuel executives contributed more than \$18 million to America First Action and Trump Victory, political groups that worked to re-elect Trump.

Additionally, 45 fossil fuel corporate executives also donated more than \$8.5 million to five political groups dedicated to supporting Republican Congressional candidates.

With Trump gone, the industry has been scrambling to adjust, and distorting the truth about the transition to clean energy.

Another Public Citizen report scrutinized fossil fuel campaign contributions to 29 U.S. House of Representatives lawmakers who oppose Biden’s order to pause new oil leasing on federal lands and offshore waters. Employees of those companies and their PACs contributed a combined \$13.4 million to those lawmakers over

their careers, the analysis found.

Public Citizen found that two top House Republicans, Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.), were the top recipients of oil and gas donations with \$2.1 million and \$1.8 million respectively, in total career contributions from fossil fuel interests.

McCarthy called Biden’s oil leasing decision “a political stunt” and Scalise claimed Biden “chose left-wing activists over American workers and affordable energy costs.”

In addition to McCarthy and Scalise, many members of the Congressional Western Caucus, touted a misleading study promoted by an industry trade group exaggerating the scale of job losses likely to result from the Biden administration’s pause in oil leasing.

Public Citizen also found that the political action committee for Western Energy Alliance, an oil industry trade group that filed a lawsuit against the Biden administration seeking to overturn the oil leasing pause, donated nearly \$405,900 to House and Senate lawmakers in the past three election cycles, 94% of which went to Republicans.

The Western Energy Alliance has been aggressively promoting claims of massive job losses from the Biden plans, with inflammatory rhetoric.

Kathleen Sgamma, the group’s president, accused Biden of “calculating that he won’t pay a political price while satisfying radical climate activists” and

“sacrificing the livelihoods of thousands of westerners throughout many sectors of the economy.”

The American Petroleum Institute, through an astroturf front group calling itself “Energy Citizens” aired a misleading advertising campaign claiming that the Biden oil and gas leasing policy would curtail funding for local schools.

However, the fast-growing clean energy sector is rapidly adding jobs and employs 3.3 million workers nationwide, compared with 1.2 million fossil fuel jobs. The environmental entrepreneurship group E2 has found that a \$99 billion in federal clean energy stimulus would create 860,000 full-time jobs for at least five years and generate \$330 billion in economic activity.

“It’s time to stop listening to Big Oil and its allies,” Weissman said. “Smarter energy policies, such as the ones the Biden administration is developing, are essential and long overdue.” ■

Crossword Answers



IN THE NEXT ISSUE...

Public Citizen reports on corporate contributions to state lawmakers who are advocating voter suppression efforts.

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| 75 | 5.4% | \$540 | 4.6% | \$460 |
| 80 | 6.5% | \$650 | 5.4% | \$540 |
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