



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

FEBRUARY 2003

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Dr. Helen Caldicott Annual Peace Conference Speaker

World-renowned anti-nuclear and environmental activist Dr. Helen Caldicott will be the keynote speaker at the 2003 Annual Peace Conference Saturday, February 15 on the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln. Dr. Caldicott, who last appeared in Lincoln 20 years ago at the height of the Nuclear Freeze movement, will speak on the subject of her most recent book, *The New Nuclear Danger*.

Copies of the book will be for sale at the conference, and a book signing will be held following her morning address.

This year's event, which begins at 9:00 a.m. with registration and concludes with the organization's membership business meeting at 4:00 p.m., is co-sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work, Nebraska United Methodist Congregations and Institutions and Nebraskans for Peace. The advance registration cost of \$20 for adults (\$10 for students and low-income people) includes lunch at the Nebraska Wesleyan cafeteria as well as the afternoon's "Peace & Justice Workshops".

Workshop topics include the "War on Terrorism" and the threat to civil liberties, nuclear waste transportation across Nebraska, economic globalization, LB 775 and the state budget crisis, the meatpacking industry in Nebraska, nonviolence education, Gay and Lesbian humans rights and Whiteclay. Four-and-one-half CEUs are available for Social Workers and License Mental Health Practitioners who attend all the educational sessions. Registration information can be obtained by contacting the NFP State Office at 402-475-7616.

The single most articulate and passionate advocate of citizen action to remedy the nuclear and environmental and

nuclear crises, Dr. Helen Caldicott has devoted the last 25 years to an international campaign to educate the public about the medical hazards of the nuclear age, and the necessary changes in human behavior to stop environmental destruction.

In 1971, Dr. Caldicott played a major role in Australia's opposition to French atmospheric nuclear testing in the Pacific, and in 1975, worked with the Australian trade unions to educate their members about the medical dangers of the nuclear fuel cycle, with particular reference to uranium mining.

While living in the United States from 1977 to 1986, she founded the Physicians for Social Responsibility, an organization of 23,000 doctors committed to educating their colleagues about the dangers of nuclear power, nuclear weapons and nuclear war. On trips abroad she helped start similar medical organizations in many other countries. The international umbrella group (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985. She also founded the Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament (WAND) in the U.S. in 1980. Returning to Australia in 1987, Dr. Caldicott ran for Federal Parliament as an independent. Defeating Charles Blunt,

leader of the National Party, through preferential voting she ultimately lost the election by 600 votes out of 70,000 cast.

She has received many prizes and awards for her work, including 19 honorary doctoral degrees, and was personally nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Linus Pauling—himself a Nobel Laureate. *Ladies Home Journal* named Dr. Caldicott as one of the "100 Most Important Women of the 20th Century" (May 1999). She has written for numerous

publications and has authored five books, *Nuclear Madness* (1979, revised edition by W.W. Norton in 1994), *Missile Envy* (1984, Bantam), *If You Love This Planet: A Plan to Heal the Earth* (1992, W.W. Norton), *A Desperate Passion: An Autobiography* (1996, W.W. Norton) and *The New Nuclear Danger: George Bush's Military Industrial Complex*, published in April 2002 by The New Press.

She also has been the subject of several films, including "Eight Minutes to Midnight", nominated for an Academy Award in 1982, and "If You Love This Planet", which won the Academy Award for best documentary in 1983.

Dr. Caldicott was an instructor in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, specializing in cystic fibrosis, and on the staff of the Children's Hospital Medical Center, Boston, Massachusetts until 1980, when she resigned to work full time on the prevention of nuclear war. She founded the Cystic Fibrosis Clinic at the Adelaide Children's Hospital in 1975.

In 1995, she moved back to the United States, lecturing at the New School for Social Research on the Media, Global Politics and the Environment, and hosting a weekly radio talk show on WBAI (Pacifica). Returning to Australia in 1998, she resumed the practice of medicine at the Sydney Children's Hospital, but in 1999 Dr. Caldicott resigned to return to her responsibilities of global preventive medicine. She currently divides her time between the U.S. and Australia where she lectures widely. She is also the Founder and President of the recently established Nuclear Policy Research Institute, whose headquarters are currently in Los Angeles.

It is an honor to have a person of Dr. Caldicott's reputation as the featured speaker of the Annual Peace Conference, particularly given the fact that Offutt Air Force Base—the home of STRATCOM and the newly relocated U.S. Space Command—is the nerve center for nuclear war-fighting on the planet. Her urgent message is one that all Nebraskans, regardless of their political inclination, need to hear and come to terms with.



Dr. Helen Caldicott

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Nebraskans for Peace Phone: 402-475-4620/Fax: 475-4624
941 'O' St., Ste. 1026 E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com
Lincoln, NE 68508 www.nebraskansforpeace.org

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Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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Latin America Briefs

compiled by Sarah Disbrow



Venezuelan's President Weathers Opposition

An opposition strike that began on December 2, calling for Venezuela's populist president Hugo Chávez to resign immediately, began losing momentum in January. On January 21, 70 percent of the oil tanker pilots quit the "national civic strike". A day later Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president and 2002 Nobel Peace Prize winner, announced two proposals for resolving the crisis: a constitutional amendment requiring early elections in which Chávez could run again, or a binding referendum on August 19, halfway through Chávez's six-year term, whereby voters could recall him. Chávez has consistently supported the idea of an August referendum, which is upheld by the constitution. One opposition leader admitted that the Carter plan was the same as Chávez's proposal, but told the *New York Times* that "it was positive because it came from Carter." The Bush Administration, which had backed the opposition's demands for Chavez's immediate resignation, also expressed support for Carter's proposals. Secretary of State Colin Powell called the plan "a way out of the current impasse."

Zapatistas Break Long Silence

After almost two years of self-imposed silence, Zapatista rebels marched in San Cristóbal de las Casas, the capital city of Chiapas, on January 1 to mark the anniversary of their 1994 uprising. The peaceful march was a symbolic "re-taking" of the city, which the rebels seized in a surprise attack on January 1, 1994.

Demonstrators from indigenous communities throughout Chiapas listened as Zapatista commanders denounced Mexico's main political parties, the government of President Vicente Fox, globalization, and the terrorism of Bush and bin Laden.

The march officially marked the end of the year and a half of silence the rebels maintained after Congress passed legislation that was unacceptable to the Zapatistas and most indigenous groups.

Teachers Lead Protest in Guatemala

Guatemalan teachers, joined by workers and students, led a nationwide protest in January, occupying buildings, blockading highways, and staging marches to denounce the policies of President Alfonso Portillo. The protests coincided with the first day of a national strike called by the National Teachers Assembly. Striking teachers demanded that the government increase the budget for the Ministry of Education, grant teachers a 100 percent salary increase, build and equip schools, provide free textbooks and give more attention to school meals, among other issues.

Otto Reich Redux

President Bush has appointed Otto Reich to be his special envoy to Latin America, after the Senate refused to confirm the Bush nominee as Assistant Secretary of State for the Western Hemisphere. Reich's new position did not require Senate approval.

The Cuban-born Reich was involved in the Iran-Contra scandals of the 1980s, allegedly backed Cuban-American terrorists like Orlando Bosch, is a fanatical supporter of the embargo against Cuba and was in close contact with instigators of the coup against Venezuela's president last April.

Populist Wins Presidential Race in Ecuador

Voters in Ecuador elected a populist candidate, retired Col. Lucio Gutiérrez Borbúa, in November's presidential elections. Gutiérrez defeated billionaire banana magnate Alvaro Noboa, receiving much of his support from the Pachakutik indigenous movement and the January 21 Patriotic Society, which was named after a movement led by Gutiérrez to oust President Jamil Mahuad in 2000 during an economic crisis fueled by a banking scandal and a switch to the U.S. dollar. Gutiérrez has not indicated whether he supports the use of the dollar, but his Pachakutik supporters oppose it and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Nebraska SOA Protesters Charged

Former Creighton University Professor and NFP member Kate Brown, who now lives in Rhode Island, was sentenced to three months in prison and a \$500 fine for committing civil disobedience at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia last November. Three Creighton students—Peter Jessup, Kelly Simmons and William Slattery—are awaiting sentencing. For more information visit www.soawatch.org.



ANTI-WAR MARCH ROCKS LINCOLN

by Mark Weddleton

A thousand strong, marching from the State Capitol down Centennial Mall to the UNL Student Union, our spirit was undeniable as we chanted, “No war! We will be heard! No war! We will be heard!” A torrent of banners and placards, mixed in with strollers and bullhorns, stretched out four blocks long behind our lead sign declaring what brought us all together that frigid January 18, “In the Spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: March Against War on Iraq.”

No War on Iraq. Blood for Oil—Now That’s Evil. This War is Unnecessary. Bombs Kill Kids. Violence Begets Violence. Mothers and Daughters for Peace. Schools Not Bombs. War is Not Healthy for Children and Other Living Things. War is Barbarous. The river of protest was awash with handmade signs.

Money for tuition, Not ammunition! Hey, hey, ho, ho, Bush’s war has go to go! We say no to war, peace is what we’re calling for. What do we want? Peace for all! When do we want it? Now! Money for healthcare, not for war. Big oil gets rich, Iraqi children die. The air was filled with vibrant chants, voices blending together in demands for Peace and Justice.

But more than any one theme that united march participants, it was the one struck by Nebraskans for Peace President Carol McShane as she welcomed participants to the opening rally in the shadow of the statue of Abraham Lincoln on the west steps of the Capitol: “We will be heard!”

As we neared the Federal Building organizers at the front of the procession, enthused by the size of the turnout, spontaneously decided to lead the marchers in forming a giant ring of protestors around that symbolic structure. From there we moved on to the steps of the Student Union for another impromptu rally and then up to the ballroom to visit the informational booths, participate in the children’s activities and listen to poetry, musicians and speakers.

Affirming the Value of Iraqi and American Lives

The speakers shared a common sentiment as expressed by Lincoln High School student Mollie Moorhead at the Capitol: “Let’s march today out of love, for our brothers and sisters here in the U.S. and also in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

At the Student Union, emcee Cindy Asrir of the Nebraska Green Party made the first of many references to Dr. King’s landmark 1967 “Beyond Vietnam” speech, which expressed his eloquent opposition to the U.S. war on the Vietnamese people his belief that the United States has become “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today.” (See <http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/publications/speeches/contents.htm> for the full text of this speech, with its still-relevant perspectives for us 35 years later.)

Speakers like longtime Civil Rights activist Lela Shanks in her speech at the Union agreed with Dr. King that “there comes a time when silence is betrayal... Now is such a time,” she said.

Intoxicated with its military machine and profits from overseas investments, Shanks stated the United States government has become a war machine.

To a standing ovation, former Nebraska Governor Frank Morrison expounded upon our government’s distorted sense of priorities. In the America today, he said, battered women’s shelters are being closed, education is being cut, thousands of children to are being permitted to die of preventable disease and malnutrition in order to finance yet another “killing operation” in Iraq. And our justification for doing this, he stated, is that “we are afraid Saddam will keep on doing the same things he was doing when we were subsidizing him, together with the fear that he may someday acquire the same weapons we have.”

Tareq Khedir Al-tiae, an Iraqi-American representing the UNL Muslim Students Association, brought our attention to the desperate plight of the Iraqi people who

“have endured 12 years of bombing and the most comprehensive and devastating sanctions recorded in modern history.” Calling the economic sanctions “weapons of mass destruction” that are undermining the prospects for change in Iraq, he asked, “How can we expect a nation, a culture, an entire people, mom and dad to change their circumstances if they are focused on filling their child’s stomach?”

True, lasting change in Iraq, Tareq explained, can only occur if the sanctions are lifted and the Iraqi people are allowed to determine their own fate.

Lincoln City Council member Terry Werner vowed to speak out against injustice on a local, state, national and international level and said that—for him—the issue was simple. “How can I as an elected official stand by as my country carries out an illegal war?”

How We Did It

What adrenaline pumped us up that day! Exhilarated longtime activists breathlessly exclaimed, “There hasn’t been an action like this in this town for as far back as I can remember!” Folks experiencing their first protest felt the rush of empowerment that comes from joining together for a common cause, demanding to be heard.

But how did we get here from that late November afternoon when half a dozen activists met to set out an ambitious plan for a full afternoon of anti-war activities? New to working with each other, mostly unaffiliated activists without substantial resources behind us, we wondered: could we really pull this off?

Others might have been more daunted by such a prospect. We had an advantage, though, of being a mostly young bunch, fresh to this with no assumptions of what can’t be done. Fueled by the awareness that there is a huge segment of the population that thinks this war is just plain wrong and that desperately wants its voice to be heard,

we thought big. We adopted a stance that we would reach out beyond the “usual suspects,” assume people would be behind us and that if we asked, they would want to be involved.

We built a coalition focused on the one clear central demand that united us—*No war against Iraq*—while respecting that we represent diverse views on other issues. We acted and thought inclusively from who we asked to have informational booths, to the openness with which we invited people to our planning meetings.

Soon our circle of chairs began to grow ever wider at the planning meetings. High school students, members of organized groups and re-energized veteran activists began to show up. Meetings became genuinely exciting, beginning with focused organizational reports and then breaking into smaller work groups. Folks liked staying around afterwards for the rich political discussions. Word got around that these meetings were the place to be.

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photo by Steve Williams

Excerpts from the Anti-War Speeches

Tareq Khedir Al-tiae

I represent the Muslim Student Association. I am an Iraqi-American, but I am here as a citizen of a global community concerned about the welfare of America and the 20 million Iraqi citizens who have endured 12 years of bombing and the most comprehensive and devastating sanctions recorded in modern history.

It is hard for us to imagine such sanctions since we have 24-hour grocery stores, Wal-Marts, Kwik Shops. Accessibility is everywhere.

Now, imagine for a moment, no toothpaste, no books, notebooks, insulin, let alone the syringes to deliver it, baby formula, and the list goes on. All of these products have been prohibited by sanctions. Even notebooks, and we stand here in an institution of higher learning—imagine going to class unable to take notes.

These sanctions have completely crippled a nation. Daily activities that we take for granted are a difficult achievement in the life of an Iraqi.

As I look out into this crowd of concerned citizens I see many families with healthy and vibrant children. What a blessing it is seeing your children running around with no cares in the world, going to school, drawing pictures of a sunny day, Fido, mom and dad, all with gleaming smiles on their faces. What a blessing it is indeed.

As parents and caregivers we will go to any lengths to see to it that our children are well-fed, ready for a day at school. We encourage our children to join the choir, a soccer team, art club or the school band.

Because of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, parents a world away spend their entire day searching for bread to feed their children. The silent pain they go through hearing their children crying at night, "Mommy, I'm hungry!" Or fathers who spend day and night in the hospitals watching their own child deteriorating before their eyes.

I hope as I express this reality in the daily life of an Iraqi, we don't look at this situation as "their" problem, but rather that we look at it and see our children, our family, our friends and other individuals of our global village.

You see when we cease to sympathize with suffering, pain and devastation, we in fact lose our humanness.

Change, brothers and sisters, comes from within. We cannot look to the outside for help. We must clean our hearts, establish a clear vision and start here.

Nobody is suggesting that Saddam Hussein is an elected official, kind to his people, etc. Quite to the contrary. However, because of sanctions the Iraqi people have become the ultimate victims.

How, I ask, can we expect lasting change in a country without the people not only initiating change but maintaining this change.

One need only look at the history of every nation on earth. All changes came

from within. Our own country began from amongst the people. The pioneers of freedom gave of themselves, their whole selves, dedicated to the cause of change.

Iraq is no different. It was the first country to remove foreign colonial powers, namely the British. They were the first country in the region to have a coup d'etat and remove the king. The list goes on. Nevertheless the fundamental point is that change happened from within. What makes us think that Iraq today is any different?

I ask you, how can we expect a nation, a culture, an entire people, mom and dad, to change their circumstances if they are focused on filling their child's stomach?

Change comes from within my people. Change comes from us. We as Americans, as members of a global village, must be the first to commit ourselves to justice and see to it that core values of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness do not end at the Atlantic's skirt. We, together, must call for the end of sanctions as a weapon of mass destruction, again—a weapon of mass destruction.

I am convinced I cannot change the world. That was the work of prophets. But I do believe and affirm that I can change my world.

You see brothers and sisters change come from within.

Change comes from us.

Former Nebraska Governor Frank Morrison

I've spent 40 years of my life in the courtrooms of this nation seeking justice. I believe the present policy of the nation I love is one of the most dangerous policies in the history of mankind. One thing I learned in grade school was how to read. One thing I learned in law school was the law. And anybody who thinks that the president and Congress can delegate the authority to wage war to the president of the United States hasn't been able to read. Either that or they do not belong in the Congress of the United States.

I'm here today because I love my country. I believe Thomas Jefferson and John Locke, whose philosophy created this nation. I believe that human life flows from our Creator and that the business of government is to protect it and not to injure it. I wrote a treatise recently pointing out the illegality of this war against Iraq and the dangers in it.

I want to read this statement I gave to the *Lincoln Journal Star* today:

Martin Luther King dedicated his life to ending an injustice in this great country. You march today to awaken the conscience of the nation we love. Since the end of World War II, we have bombed some 20 nations. The world is far more dangerous today than when we started. The last time we terrorized Baghdad it is estimated that we killed either by direct hits or the destruction of life-support systems some

25,000 innocent children. Today we are closing battered women's shelters, cutting back on education, allowing thousands of children to die of preventable disease and malnutrition in order to finance another killing operation in Iraq. The excuse being we are afraid Saddam will keep on doing the same things he was doing when we were subsidizing him, together with fear that he may someday acquire the same weapons we have. I have written a 25-page treatise pointing out the dangers and illegality of our present course of action.

President Eisenhower warned us against the political influence of the military-industrial complex and gave us a program to end the barbarism of war if we would but use it.

Our mission today is to demand that our nation return to the ideals announced in our founding document which gave it birth. May our Creator bless you in your efforts to save our country from its dangerous, illegal and immoral action.

Lela Shanks

If Dr. King were alive today, this would be his 74th birthday. He would be younger than I am. In his historic speech when he came out against the Vietnam War he said, "Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, we do not easily assume the task of opposing our government's policy, especially in the time of war." But Dr. King decided that a higher calling than his

Want To Stop This War Before It Starts?

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NFP Omaha Coordinator
PO Box 3343
Omaha, NE 68103
402-453-0776
nfpomaha@aol.com

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Nebraskans for Peace is also
participating in several coalitions
opposing the war on Iraq. For more
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government's policies he had to answer to. And he joined with other clergy and concerned laypeople who stated, as some of the other speakers have mentioned, that a time comes when silence is betrayal and that time is here today for us.

My beloved country, America, is a nation born in denial. Since its beginning, its tradition is to talk the talk, but just don't walk the walk. President Bush's office used the word 'compassionate' to describe himself and his policy. He has also spoken of his great concern for the Iraqi people at the hands of Saddam Hussein. But if the truth be told, intoxicated by military might coupled with the desire to protect immense profits of overseas investments, America has become the war machine of the world.

Dr. King in that fateful speech on Vietnam warned against what he called the giant triplets: militarism, racism and materialism. Lest we forget, America is a republic and that means that we the citizens hold the supreme power, not the president. We do not have an emperor. We the people are the government. We do not have to permit ourselves to be brainwashed and whipped up into a frenzy for war no matter how many troops are sent to the Persian Gulf. Bring our children and our grandchildren home. War is not an answer.

Peace is possible if you and I and Americans all over this country will call and write our Congresspeople and our president and tell them that there is an inner revolution going on among Americans all over this country, that we have evolved behind the primitive need to settle all differences with war. And that the time has come to sit down and to talk and talk and stay there until we have talked ourselves into a peace.

We also have to tell them that getting control over the oil in the Middle East is not worth one American life or one Iraqi life. Already in the previous war on Iraq, by our own General Accounting Office figures, 100,000 Iraqi children, men and women died. Have we so soon forgotten that we killed that number of human beings when we dropped the Bomb on Hiroshima, not to even mention Nagasaki? And with today's new war technology of carpet bombing we can cause massive casualties on civilian populations without ever even using the Bomb.

We speak so proudly of Desert Storm as a clean war. We refer to the 100,000 Iraqi people we killed as 'collateral damage'. But my friends, I'm here today to tell you that there comes a day of reckoning for all of us, and in the spirit of Dr. King and in the good and the right that is in America, I ask you to stand up and speak out against the war.

Terry Werner Lincoln City Council

I stood before you in October of 2001, one month after 9/11. I asked then if meeting violence with violence would make us a safer nation? I asked if the bombing in Afghanistan would only breed more terrorism? I think we now know the answer to those questions.

Today, as we honor Dr. Martin Luther King, I must again ask questions again. How can I as an individual stand by and consent to my country waging an illegal war against another nation? How can I as an

elected official stand by and consent to our president driving this country into financial ruin? How can I as a humanitarian stand by while 10 million children suffer from the AIDS virus in Africa; while our country spends my tax dollars to support dictators and murderers around the world; while our own state of Nebraska discriminates against gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered people; and while our own city does not even guarantee that workers be paid a living wage? I will not stand idly by and I will take every opportunity to speak out against inequality and injustice, whether it be at the city, state or national level.

Walter Mosley, a mystery writer, recently wrote in *The Nation* magazine (1/27/03) about his view of "universal ideas as the rules of fair treatment... to live by." He lists them:

"First, I cannot be free while my neighbor is wearing chains.

"Second, I cannot know happiness while others are forced to live in despair.

"Third, I cannot know health if plague and famine thrive outside my door.

"And last, but not least, I cannot expect to know peace if war rides forward under my flag and with my consent."

Mosley goes on to say, "I believe the institution of these simple statements would halt the rampant onslaught of the haves, in whose numbers many of us are counted, against the have-nots."

If only we as a nation could begin to live by these simple truths. We certainly would not be talking about the use of first-strike nuclear force and pre-emptive military action!

The *Washington Post* in an article by Michael Dobbs (12/1/02) estimated that the dollar cost of the war in Iraq could exceed \$200 billion. This is on top of the \$396 billion annually spent for defense in the United States. Compare this to the meager \$3.3 billion spent for the AIDS virus programs in our country, or the \$54 billion spent annually spent for education. How about the millions of working men, women and children in our country without health care? Again, I must ask another question, where are our priorities? \$54 billion for education or \$400 billion dollars for the military? And again I must ask, do you feel more secure? Are we safer?

Under George W. Bush our country has gone from a budget surplus to a budget deficit. Our state is short nearly \$700 million. Our cities and schools are struggling, and he wants to spend \$200 billion to invade Iraq. I say that we need to speak up now and stop this war before it even gets started.

The financial burden on this country will be great, there is no doubt, but what about the people of Iraq? The United Nations predicts that as many as "500,000 Iraqis could require medical treatment as a result of serious injuries." (*Global Network*, 1/9/03) They estimated that another 3 million could be driven from their homes, a third of those into neighboring countries. Basic medical services will essentially be eliminated in their country, and the "outbreak of diseases" could be in "epidemic if not pandemic proportions".

In closing, I have one final question to ask. Are we as a nation ready to accept responsibility for these actions done in our name?

I am not.



ANTI-WAR MARCH, conclusion

Networks were activated, especially through e-mail. Reports on the weekly planning meetings were sent to an ever growing e-mail list, many of which were forwarded on to other lists in an expanding web of activists who were making this action their own. This activated building efforts way beyond those directly carried out by the organizers.

Excitement generated. Ideas tossed out in brainstorming became action. The coalition made flyers in English, Spanish and Arabic, from quarter-sized ones to posters. Mock-ups of the flyers were attached to e-mails so folks far and wide could print them out and begin their own distribution network. A filmmaker started shooting footage for a documentary. A high school student asked for a button maker for Christmas and put out buttons for the event. A minister began circulating a call from clergy for peace.

As momentum built in the context of an escalating U.S. military presence in the Middle East, new openings developed among broader layers. Elected officials like State Senators Don Preister and Ernie Chambers of Omaha spoke at a widely-covered press conference to call for the community to come to the march. Even *The Coffee News*, a local Lincoln 'zine', was asked to include a public service announcement, which they did! Everywhere we were told, "I'm so glad you're doing this!" People wanted to be heard.

Were We Heard?

But were we heard? Asked about the anti-war protests that occurred that day throughout the United States and in cities around the world, President Bush responded

with condescending platitudes about "Isn't democracy grand!", and then went on to continue his war escalation.

Had he heard?

He sure didn't show that he was listening.

But the most important audiences for our message heard.

We heard each other. We heard our voices blended as one. Didn't we each come away from this as changed people? Didn't we grow that day, with a greater confidence and determination that "We will be heard!", even if those in power don't want to listen? And didn't we come away with a greater sense of our own potential power?

There was another audience that heard the anti-war cry January 18. Others—who haven't yet come to view themselves as the type that will come out into the streets—heard us, felt just that much less alone in their private opposition to the war, and came a step closer to the day when they will join us.

And there were those who heard us that aren't sure what they think about the war, who have only had a chance to get the perspective offered on TV talk shows from white male talking heads, the former military and government officials touted as 'experts'. Seeing a mass march made up of loud and confident voices speaking out for peace can't help but open up others to consider our alternate viewpoint.

They need to continue to see us. My daughter Sydney and I were energized by this experience. We won't be waiting for the next big action, whenever that may be. We'll be at the Federal Building in Lincoln every Tuesday from 4:30 to 5:30 vigiling against the war. We hope to see you there. But whatever way you choose to keep the momentum building—do it, use that energy, continue to insist, "We will be heard!"

SKEWED PRIORITIES

The National Priorities Project Report on the Federal Budget

2002 Federal Budget Year In Review

Fiscal year 2002 ended with the federal budget in a \$157 billion deficit.* This bleak situation comes after several years of record-setting surpluses. And it would look even worse if not for the huge Social Security surpluses off-setting deficit spending elsewhere in the budget.

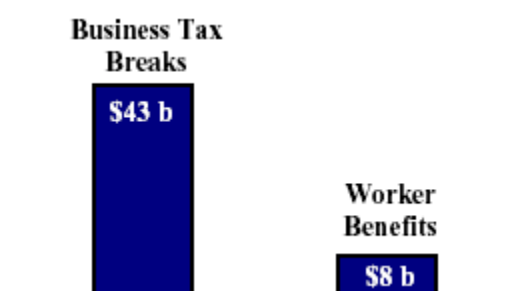
Economists generally claim that deficit spending during a sluggish economy is an appropriate tool to stimulate economic activity. However, tax policies aimed at the wealthy and spending on the military indicate that the Bush Administration's deficit spending is not about saving the economy. Rather it appears to seek a return to the growing inequality and militarism of the 1980s, with the potential for even more devastating consequences. Meanwhile, as Americans search for security in a post-September 11 country, it remains unclear whether the current security strategy will meet those needs.

Americans Losing Out

As the Bush Administration focuses on war, economic conditions at home continue to deteriorate. In spite of the administration's claims that the recession ended, the unemployment rate has continued to grow. With 1.4 million jobs lost in 2001, and another 180,000 lost in 2002, jobs are getting harder to find. The rise in the number of people experiencing *long-term* unemployment bears this out. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, by the end of the year, 3.2 million jobless workers experienced long-term unemployment with the average number of weeks unemployed rising to almost 19 weeks.

The number of families living in poverty and households threatened with food shortages is on the rise, according to recent government reports. More than one in ten families is living with one or both of these crisis conditions. Affordable housing is also in short supply as housing costs rise at a faster pace than wages. Today, about 40 percent of renters do not have affordable housing. (Poverty and housing data is from the Census Bureau; food insecurity data is from the USDA.)

Fiscal crises confronted nearly all state governments last year and led to budget cuts and tax increases. As the fiscal crisis continues into 2003, states have a growing challenge to meet the needs of their residents, and the federal government has failed to provide an adequate response.



So-Called Stimulus

Congress passed the 'Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act' early in 2002 with the claim that it would address the economic difficulties faced by the country. However, this piece of legislation leaned towards tax breaks for business with very little relief for working families. Compared with \$8 billion in extended unemployment benefits, the package gave \$43 billion

in tax breaks for businesses. Defenders of the bill claimed that tax cuts would stimulate investment. However, as many economists attested, businesses do not undertake investment during an economic recession because they already experience excess productive capacity.

Until they can expand their markets—the economy improves—it does not make good business sense to assume new investments.

By the end of the year, when it was clear that one-and-a-half million workers would lose their unemployment insurance if Congress did not act immediately, Congress adjourned without taking further action. But, one significant piece of legislation impacting workers did pass—a new department for homeland security was created, which reduced labor rights for 170,000 federal workers.

An Expensive Foreign Policy

Spending on national security has clearly won out over meeting the needs of working families. Out of the 13 spending bills in the annual budget process, Congress managed to pass only two, both of which relate to military spending. And while military spending is set to increase by 11 percent, other discretionary spending will actually shrink by 1 percent. (This assumes that Congress will eventually pass a budget similar to the president's budget proposal, and these figures take inflation into account.)

Surprisingly little of the military operations is actually aimed at what

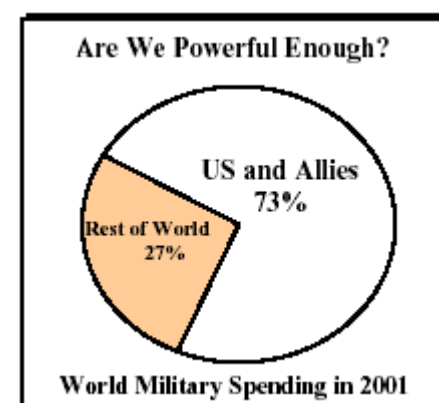
Americans fear most—terrorism. Out of the *entire* Pentagon budget of almost \$400 billion, only \$20-\$30 billion will be spent for combating terrorism and homeland security in FY2003. (Kosiak, S., 'Funding for defense, homeland security and combating terrorism since 9/11: where has all the money gone?' in Security Policy Working Group, *Security after 9/11: Strategy Choices and Budget Tradeoffs*, January, 2003.)

This year's proposed military spending increase of \$46 billion comes as part of the overall national security agenda published by the Bush Administration in a September document. This new policy replaces the long-standing strategy of 'containment' with a more aggressive, military stance, including the option of unilaterally and preemptively attacking any country deemed a threat.

Many experts question whether this policy will result in a safer America. And it would be costly: invading Iraq is likely to total at least \$100 billion, and the cost to Nebraska taxpayers alone is estimated at \$412 million. (www.nationalpriorities.org/iraq.pdf)

Looking to the Future

By the end of 2002, the Bush Administration could no longer claim that the U.S. was out of recession. Two high-level administration officials, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Bush's top economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey, were forced to resign in order to instill more confidence in the administration. And instead of offering a real economic stimulus package, the White House has returned to the drum-beat of more tax cuts for the wealthy. His proposal to eliminate the tax on stock dividends will, according to the Brookings Institute and Urban Institute, cost more than \$300 billion and give millionaires on average \$27,000 a year while families earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 will save an average of only \$84.



*All figures relating to the budget or estimates of tax cut packages are from the Congressional Budget Office or Office of Management of the Budget.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Federal Budget & Its Impact on Nebraska

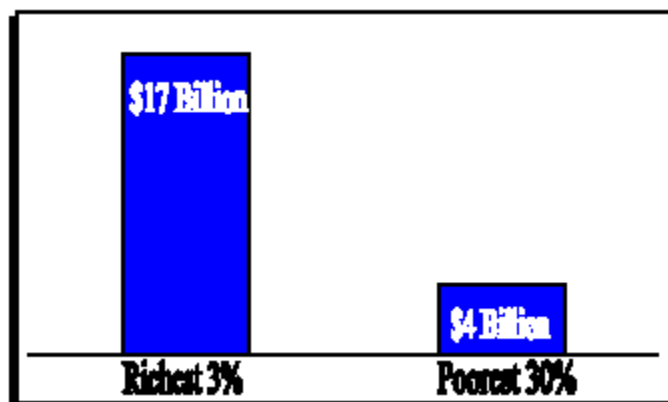
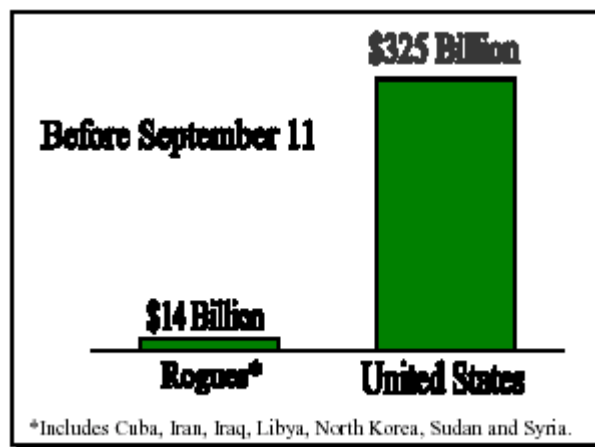
Threats to Federal Domestic Spending

Despite a \$157 billion deficit, the Bush Administration is pursuing two expensive policies—a military build-up and making the tax cuts of 2001 permanent.

The Pentagon versus Everything Else

This year, while the military benefited from an 11 percent increase, after inflation has been taken into account, all other discretionary spending combined was cut by 1 percent.

Cuts include energy conservation, pollution control, funding for highways and community development, higher education and training and employment. Spending on national security clearly won out over meeting the needs of working families. The Bush Administration proposed a \$46 billion increase in military spending for 2003. But even before September 11, the United States already spent two and a half times more than all of its adversaries combined—including Russia and China. Many experts question whether this money is buying Americans more security or simply a larger deficit and cuts in domestic programs.



Tax Cuts for the Wealthy

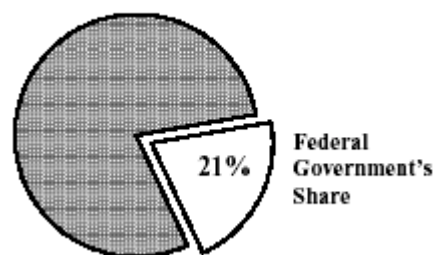
The Bush Administration also seeks to make permanent the 2001 tax cut, a 10-year package aimed primarily at the wealthy. In 2003, while the top 3 percent will save \$17 billion on their tax bills, the poorest 30 percent will only save a collective \$4 billion.

The administration claims that making the tax cut permanent will help the economy. Instead it will favor the wealthy at a tremendous cost to the federal budget. In its current version, it will cost \$1.3 trillion by 2011.

What These Skewed Priorities Mean for Nebraska

In Nebraska, the federal government contributes 25 percent to our state budget. This money pays for schools, public assistance, roads and other programs important to Nebraska residents. While most states struggle through fiscal crises and budget cuts, the federal government's spending cuts threaten to make it even more difficult for Nebraska to meet its people's needs. Over 1 in 10 Nebraska families live in poverty (15 percent of Nebraska's children are poverty-stricken). Ten percent of our state's citizens go without health insurance. Unless we get our priorities straight soon, conditions will only worsen.

Total State Budgets in the US



Contact Congress

Sen. Chuck Hagel

346 Senate Russell Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-4224
202-224-5213 (FAX)
402-476-1400 (Lincoln)
402-758-8981 (Omaha)
308-632-6032 (Scottsbluff)

Sen. Ben Nelson

Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Room B40-5
Washington, D.C. 20510
202-224-6551
202-228-0012 (FAX)
402-391-3411 (Omaha)
402-441-4600 (Lincoln)
ben_nelson@bennelson.senate.gov

Rep. Doug Bereuter

1st Congressional District
2184 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4806
202-225-5686 (FAX)
402-438-1598 (Lincoln)
402-727-0888 (Fremont)

Rep. Lee Terry

1728 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-4155
202-226-5452 (FAX)
402-397-9944 (Omaha)

Rep. Tom Osborne

507 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6435
202-226-1385 (FAX)
308-381-5555 (Grand Island)
308-632-3333 (Scottsbluff)

Capitol Hill Switchboard

202-224-3121

President George W. Bush

The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Capitol Contacts

State Senator, District

State Capitol
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

State Capitol Switchboard

402-471-2311

Governor Mike Johanns

PO Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848
402-471-2244

The National Priorities Project, of which Nebraskans for Peace is a member, offers citizens and community groups the tools and resources to shape federal policy and budget priorities. For more information about your state visit the NPP Database at www.nationalpriorities.org/database or contact us: 17 New South Street, Suite 302, Northampton, MA 01060, 413-584-9556

CLIMATE CHANGE REFORMS MOVE AT GLACIALLY SLOW PACE

by Mark Zimmermann
Treasurer, Nebraska Green Party

As the Bush White House has become increasingly more isolated from international and domestic opinion (and scientific fact) on the issue of global warming, it is finding it more and more necessary to keep up the illusion of accomplishment. Expect some official sounding pronouncements this winter and spring, but keep in mind that cosmetics is a \$4 billion industry in this country.

First, some recent science. According to the World Meteorological Association, 2002 has surpassed 2001 as the 2nd warmest year on record (58.35 F compared to a long term average of 57.2 F). Nine of the top 10 hottest years have occurred since 1990. And the rate of temperature increase keeps climbing. Before 1976, it was 1 degree per century; now it's 3.

At a recent meeting of the American Geophysical Union, scientists reported record amounts of ice sheet melting in the Arctic and Greenland. NASA scientists, who have been observing the amount of ice in the Arctic Ocean for more than 20 years, say that about 9 percent of it (an area the size of Alberta) is disappearing every decade and that it will be completely melted before the end of the century.

Also, in the January 2 issue of *Nature*, a Stanford University team published a meta-analysis of 143 scientific studies about the impacts of global warming on various plant and animal species (e.g., their migration and reproductive patterns). The combined reports surveyed 1,473 species and concluded that global warming was having a "statistically significant impact" on 81 percent of them.

Against this background a major UN summit was held at the end of August in Johannesburg, South Africa to assess progress since the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 and to further attempts at implementation. While some modest targets in relation to water, sanitation and biodiversity were reached, most people agreed that nothing substantive emerged from the conference. President Bush

was the only major world leader to not attend, but he did send Secretary of State Colin Powell who was greeted with boos and catcalls when he claimed the U.S. was committed to reducing greenhouse gases.

There was one piece of good news at Johannesburg, however, as Russia announced its intent to ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Though a report alleged recently that Russia is now stalling on ratification, a Greenpeace official based in Moscow said no one has come out in opposition and attributed it to Russian bureaucracy. With Canada and New Zealand signing on in December, Russia is that last country needed to bring the treaty to implementation. That would leave the U.S. and Australia as the only developed countries outside the treaty.

The Bush Administration is apparently taking this all very seriously, as this is the only environmental issue thus far on which they have felt a need to "greenwash" their true position. Consider: rollbacks on Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act provisions; the opening of sensitive federal lands like the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge to drilling; overturning a hugely popular 'roadless rule' to permit more logging on federal land; undercutting requirements for scientific reviews and public input—all these have been done in a brazen, almost imperious, manner without debate or even much in the way of explanation. (The National Resources Defense Council has produced an excellent annual summary of these abuses, see nrdc.org).

Yet on global warming the administration feels compelled to soft sell its true position, which is, of course, even more business than usual. For example, just a month after the latest round of climate negotiations in New Dehli, the administration convened its own workshop of 1,200 agency officials, scientists, economists and lobbyists to explain its draft of a four-year plan to be released this spring. A draft version of the 170-page "Strategic Plan for the Climate Change Science Program"

can be found at www.climate.science.gov. Basically the plan only calls for more research on how much of global warming is from human activity and "economically benign" ways to mitigate its effects. And even at that, a number of scientists in attendance said the proposal contains no firm commitments for adequate funding, which, coupled with rising deficits and a Republican-controlled Congress, doesn't promise to add up to much.

The other area the plan seeks to address is increasing coordination among the various federal agencies working on climate change. Toward that end President Bush announced last February the creation of a new agency to do this—the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP). Curiously though, there has been just such an agency already in existence since 1990, when Congress established the Global Change Research Program. Bush's new program will "oversee" the activities of the congressionally mandated program. In explaining why a second coordinating agency was necessary, the CCSP literature states, "we are now ready to move into a new period of differentiation and strategy investigation" and refers to a need to "reestablish priorities for research". Apparently this is better accomplished with an agency directly answerable to the White House rather than to Congress.

Another example of greenwashing is the administration's global warming plan itself. They actually do have one. It was announced about a year ago after withering criticism from the international community for pulling out of the Kyoto Protocols. Its target is a voluntary reduction in emissions intensity of 18 percent over ten years. It's a phrase that's meant to sound good and produce a nice chart. But there are two large reasons why it will not work and, coupled with the Bush-Cheney energy plan of greater dependence on fossil fuels, will actually increase greenhouse gas emissions.

First, there is a ten-year record showing that voluntary programs

2003 The Winter Lecture Series *will focus on* Global Food: Poverty and Equity

Each two hour session begins at 7:00 p.m. with the first hour featuring a presentation by our guest lecturer, followed by a refreshment break and an open opportunity for questions and dialogue. The seven lecture sessions will be capped off by a 6:00 p.m. dinner and a panel discussion at 7:00 p.m. on the eighth and final evening. Please join us for all eight of these informative, thought-provoking sessions at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street, Lincoln.

(Additional parking is available in the NORTH parking lot of the Clark Jeary Retirement Center across Eldon Drive west from the church.)

February 2

Overcoming Hunger & Poverty: Finding the Political Will
Don Reeves, Interim General Secretary (CEO), American Friends Service Center, former Economic Policy Analyst for Bread for the World.

February 9

Indigenous Peoples' Land Rights & Challenges of Global Treaties
James Riddell, Retired Chief, Land Tenure Service, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Rome.

February 16

Local Paths to Sustainable Futures: Stories from Southern Africa
Lorna Michael Butler holds the Henry A. Wallace Endowed Chair for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University.

February 23

The Role of Trade in Food Security and Poverty Reduction
Wesley F. Peterson is a Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

March 2

Local Farmer Knowledge & External Development Forces
Juan Paulo Ramirez is a geographer and agronomist doing research with the National Institute of Agricultural Research in Chillan, Chile. Dr. Ramirez has been designated as the Leslie Hewes Scholar for the Winter Lecture Series.

March 9

Poverty and Opportunity In Rural Nebraska
Chuck Hassebrook is the Co-Director of the Center for Rural Affairs, Walthill, Nebraska, and a member of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

March 16

Food Insecurity and Policy in the Global Rural/Urban Landscape
David Iaquinta is a Professor of Sociology at Nebraska Wesleyan University and a consultant for the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

March 23

Dinner (6:00 p.m.) and Panel Discussion (7:00 p.m.)
The dinner will be provided by the Sudanese Refugee Community and funds will go to assist refugee and immigrant programs in Nebraska.

NFP 2003 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Whiteclay

- SUPPORT** **LB 426** (Sen. Don Preister) Establishes a five-mile-deep "buffer zone" around dry Indian Reservations, in which the sale of alcohol is prohibited
- SUPPORT** **LB 523** (Sen. Matt Connealy, et.al.) Amends the State-Tribal Cooperative Agreements Act to enable Tribal police to provide law enforcement in specially designated areas
- SUPPORT** **LB 691** (Sen. Don Preister) Creates a "Liquor Control Law Enforcement Fund" to provide full-time law enforcement in unincorporated villages adjacent to dry Indian Reservations located in an adjoining state

LB 775

- SUPPORT** **LB 98** (Sen. Paul Hartnett) Requires qualifying companies to pay wages at least 125% of the county average or 100% of the regional average
- SUPPORT** **LB 224** (Sen. Roger Wehrbein) Requires the legislature to place reimbursements for tax incentive in the state budget
- SUPPORT** **LB 517** (Sen. John Synowiecki) Requires qualifying companies to provide health care benefits
- SUPPORT** **LB 576** (Sen. David Landis) Disqualifies meatpacking from the list of industries eligible for tax incentives, and raises qualification standards for investment and job creation
- SUPPORT** **LB 578** (Sen. David Landis) Creates a "review board" to ensure that incentives are granted only if investment would not occur without them
- SUPPORT** **LB 579** (Sen. David Landis) Places a surcharge on businesses that receive state tax incentives
- SUPPORT** **LB 608** (Sen. David Landis) Discloses more information about a tax incentive project's beneficiary and benefits, starting three years after the date granted
- SUPPORT** **LB 651** (Sen. Paul Hartnett) Disallows refunds of local sales taxes for future projects and permits municipalities to budget for refunds on existing ones
- SUPPORT** **LB 668** (Sen. Nancy Thompson) Requires qualifying companies to provide health care benefits
- SUPPORT** **LB 677** (Sen. David Landis) Establishes the "Tax Incentive Sunset Commission" to review LB 775's performance and ends the program by July 1, 2005 without further authorization from the legislature
- SUPPORT** **LB 731** (Sen. Matt Connealy) Requires qualifying companies to pay wages at least 125% of the county average and to provide health care benefits
- SUPPORT** **LB 749** (Sen. Chris Beutler) Requires companies receiving tax incentives to pay a "living wage"

Turn Off the Violence

- SUPPORT** **LB 38** (Sen. Marian Price) Prohibits unauthorized access to firearms by children 16 years of age and younger
- OPPOSE** **LB 265** (Sen. Gene Tyson) Repeals the state's 127-year-old ban on concealed weapons

Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual Human Rights

- SUPPORT** **LB 441** (Sen. Ernie Chambers) Amends the Nebraska Fair Employment Act to include "sexual orientation"
- SUPPORT** **LB 671** (Sen. Thompson) Adds "domestic partnership" to the list of parties eligible to decide on disposal of remains
- SUPPORT** **LB 746** (Sen. Landis, et.al.) Amends the Nebraska Fair Housing Act to include "sexual orientation"

Economic Justice

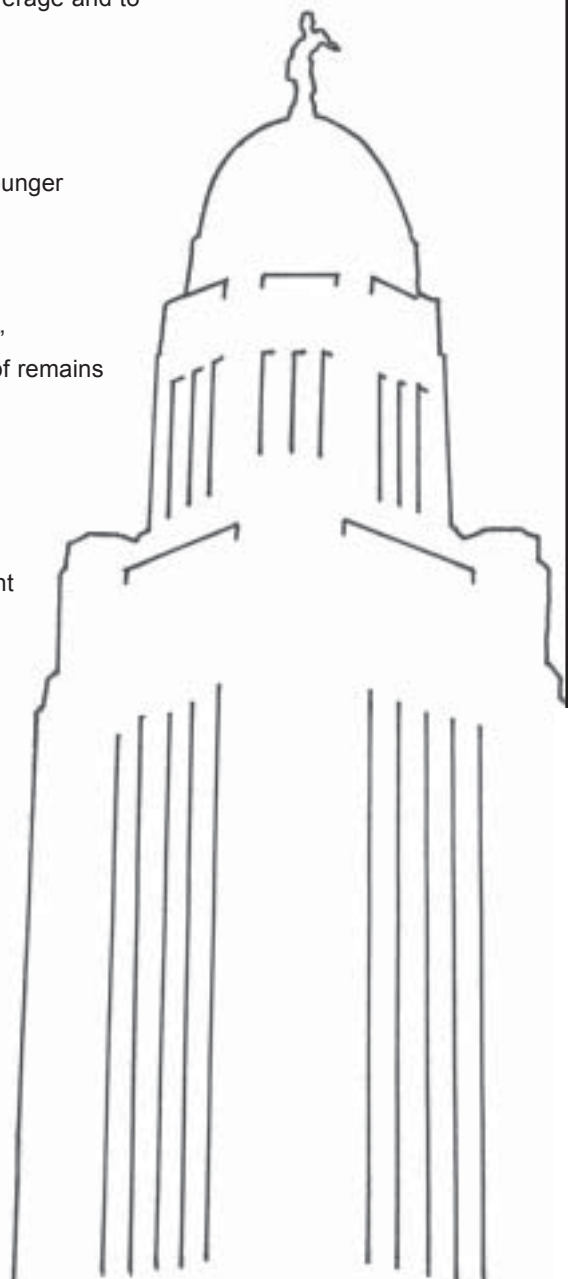
- SUPPORT** **LB 256** (Sen. Chris Beutler) Raises the minimum wage for state employees to \$8.70 per hour for those with health care and to \$9.57 per hour for those without by September 2003
- SUPPORT** **LB 286** (Sen. David Landis) Calls for raising the state income and sales tax rates an indeterminate amount to address the state revenue shortfall
- SUPPORT** **LB 435** (Sen. Chris Beutler) Raises the state minimum wage to \$6.30 an hour by April 1, 2004
- OPPOSE** **LB 725** (Sen. Floyd Vrtiska, et. al.) Requires injured workers to use physicians selected by the employer in a worker's compensation claim
- SUPPORT** **LB 750** (Sen. Chris Beutler) Provides aid to political subdivisions to pay living wages to single-parent or farm family second-earners employed by the subdivision

Death Penalty

- OPPOSE** **LB 526** (Sen. Phil Erdman, at the request of the governor) Changes the method of execution from electrocution to lethal injection
- OPPOSE** **LB 528** (Sen. Tom Baker) Limits the number of post-conviction appeals for capital sentences
- SUPPORT** **LB 781** (Sen. Lowen Kruse) Forbids the imposition of the death penalty on the basis of race
- SUPPORT** **LB 791** (Sen. Ernie Chambers) Abolishes the death penalty

Good Government

- SUPPORT** **LB 312** (Sen. Ernie Chambers) Prohibits former legislators from becoming lobbyists for one year after they leave office
- SUPPORT** **LB 433** (Sen. Chip Maxwell) Requires all state officials to report personal income by monetary brackets





NFP Year in Review



by Tim Rinne
State Coordinator

With our government looking to start a war and the state in the worst fiscal crisis in half a century, it's hard to take much satisfaction in your accomplishments. It seems no matter what we do, it's not enough to change the course of history or to create a more peaceful and just world.

Nevertheless, no one can accuse Nebraskans for Peace of not doing its part. 2002 was arguably NFP's most active—and effective—year on record. And one shudders to think how much worse it might have looked had we not held up our end of the bargain.

Working for Peace

True to our roots, we led the public protest in Nebraska against the “War on Terrorism” and its seemingly boundless militarization of the earth. Already at the 2002 Annual Peace Conference in Omaha last February (where nationally recognized peace educator Colman McCarthy addressed a record crowd of 300 people) and at a follow-up rally at the State Capitol on the six-month anniversary of 9/11, we ticked off the failures of this global war to bring peace to Afghanistan, apprehend Osama bin Laden and increase our national security. In fact, with a war on Iraq set to occur any day, who today would even try to argue that as a nation we are more secure than we were before the invasion of Afghanistan? Despite an unprecedented defense build-up, al-Qaida terrorist attacks have proliferated around the world. Our bullying, unilateralist posture has alienated virtually the entire international community. Uncontrolled military spending has plunged the government back into debt, wreaking havoc with the nation's economy. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration seems bound and determined to finish the job in Iraq regardless of the consequences.

It's been an incredulous, mortifying chain of events. And yet, had it not been for NFP's leadership here in the state though, there would have been no local, organized opposition to this headlong rush to war. Starting last summer, NFP was instrumental in alerting Nebraskans to the White House's plans to make war with Saddam Hussein the centerpiece of its mid-term election strategy. Our public rallies and vigils, editorials and letters in

the *Omaha World-Herald* and the *Lincoln Journal Star* helped provide the “political cover” for Sen. Chuck Hagel's calls for caution and restraint over the administration's incessant saber rattling. That a busload of Nebraskans—from “America's heartland”—would come to Washington, D.C. for the huge October 26 anti-war rally, for example, raised so many eyebrows among the national media that it merited mention in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

And it all paid off. The ad-hoc efforts of anti-war groups just like ours from around the country and the international community at large succeeded in stopping the outbreak of war before last fall's November election. Whether we can do so again, in the midst of the massive troop deployments to the Persian Gulf, remains to be seen. But the movement is clearly growing. The thousand-person anti-war march held in Lincoln on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday last month, sponsored by over 25 groups and organizations, was the largest march of its kind in Nebraska memory. It's a sign of hope, and it couldn't have been more timely.

Working for Justice

Taking to heart Dr. King's words that “True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of justice,” NFP though worked to do more than stop a war. In 2002, we embarked on its most ambitious legislative agenda in the organization's 32-year-old history. We were actively working for—or against—ten different pieces of legislation, running the gamut from economic justice to human rights.

Our highly publicized protests against LB 775 in particular helped focus political attention on the outlandish costs of these corporate welfare programs. Between wearing T-shirts in the Capitol Rotunda that, letter-by-letter and number-by-number, spelled out R-E-P-E-A-L-L-B-7-7-5, holding a Big Business “Employee Appreciation Day” (complete with a cake) for all its loyal employees in the Nebraska Unicameral who spared LB 775 from the budget axe and kept that corporate welfare coming, and sponsoring a “martinis and protesting” cocktail party for LB 775 beneficiaries on the west plaza of the Capitol to lobby for more tax breaks for rich people, we succeeded in capturing the public imagination. These corporate tax-giveaway programs, while

still on the books, are finally being targeted by senators for everything from greater restrictions to outright repeal.

NFP's unapologetic support for Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered (GLBT) human rights also garnered major attention. Although legislation to end employment discrimination against these citizens failed during the short, 60-day session, the lobbying campaign jointly organized by NFP, Nebraska Advocates for Justice and Equality and Citizens for Equal Protection set a new standard for awareness about GLBT issues in the Unicameral. Coupled with the wildly successful educational ‘road shows’ that are being held throughout Greater Nebraska, we are laying the groundwork to build a more tolerant, more inclusive future.

And as always, NFP stood four-square with our friends in Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty to abolish state-sponsored killing. Following the lead of Sen. Ernie Chambers and NADP over two legislative sessions (including the unnecessary and politically motivated special session called last October), we watched in awe and admiration as Sen. Chambers thwarted the governor's efforts to change the method of execution from electrocution to the more ‘humane’ (and more constitutionally defensible) lethal injection. To talk of “humane execution” though, as supporters of lethal injection are wont to do, is the height of Orwellian “doublespeak”, ranking right up there with “War is Peace” and “Freedom is Slavery.” Killing is killing, and our senators should not be allowed to disguise what they're doing by playing semantics.

Our long-standing commitment to “turn off the violence” took an educational (as in K-12 education) bent as well. Under the auspices of the Turn Off the Violence Project, the Nebraska State Board of Education is developing guidelines that would effectively require every public school district in the state to adopt an “anti-bullying policy”. School bullying has reached almost epidemic levels in our country. Oftentimes motivated by homophobia, it frequently takes the form of gay bashing. Implementing anti-bullying policies in our schools represents a watershed for educational policy in Nebraska, and we are deeply grateful to Sen. David Landis for introducing the legislation that impelled the State Board of Education to address this growing problem.

We are also grateful to Sen. Don Preister for personally keeping the issue of Whiteclay in the public eye. The State of Nebraska—from the Governor's Office to the Liquor Control Commission to the State Patrol to the legislature itself—would like nothing better than to have this issue just fade from view. But by introducing the “Whiteclay bill” in the 2002 Session, Sen. Preister not only guaranteed that Whiteclay would not ‘go away’, but that it would become a national issue over the succeeding months.

The hearing on the Whiteclay bill (and the State of Nebraska's flagrant shortcomings in enforcing the law there) set the stage for the threat of legal action against the Liquor Control Commission and the State of Nebraska if the problems in Whiteclay weren't quickly addressed. The commissioner's continued indifference, however, in turn led to a series of three civil disobedience actions, when NFP activists deliberately drank beer in the commission's hearing room, the Governor's Office and on the lawn of the Governor's Mansion. Charges were filed against the seven protestors who drank on the governor's grass, necessitating court appearances, which dragged the issue out even further and generated even more media for a protest action that had now attracted a national, as well as regional, audience. By the time the Unicameral's General Affairs Committee held its Interim Study Hearing in Rushville in October, the Liquor Control Commission itself was itself ready to request that the legislature appropriate money for full-time law enforcement in Whiteclay to stop the illegal activities there.

Working for the Future

This issue, like the threat of war with Iraq, like the LB 775 corporate tax giveaways that are still fleecing our state treasury, like abolition of the death penalty, GLBT human rights, bullying in our schools and the impending threat of thousands of tons of nuclear waste being transported across our state for years to come, is far from settled. Indeed, the job of peacemaking and justice-working is never-ending—there's always something that needs to be done next. But can you imagine how awful it would have been had Nebraskans for Peace not held up its end of the bargain this past year?

That's why, come what may, you'll find us on the job again in 2003.

Promoting Equality Before the Law

Nebraska Advocates For Justice and Equality (NAJE) and Citizens For Equal Protection (CFEP) are supporting four main bills in the 98th Nebraska Legislature.

Employment Non-Discrimination Act, LB 441, introduced by Sen. Chambers

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act would rename and change provisions of the Nebraska Fair Employment Act to include "sexual orientation" among the list of factors an employer can't consider in employment decisions (the list currently includes "race, color, religion, sex, disability, and national origin"). An employer would be prohibited from using sexual orientation ("a state of being heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual") when making an employment decision (hiring, firing, etc.). This legislation would only apply to employers with 15 or more employees. Senator Chambers carried this legislation in the last session of the Nebraska Legislature when it was designated as LB 19. Note, this legislation would NOT mandate affirmative action based on sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is exempted from that portion of the statute. This Business & Labor Committee will have a public hearing on this bill, TBA.

Housing Non-Discrimination legislation, LB 746, introduced by Sen. Dave Landis and co-sponsored by Sens. Aguilar, Byars, Chambers, Connealy, Kruse, Price, Raikes, Schimek, Synowiecki, Thompson.

The laws of the Nebraska Fair Housing Act don't include language to prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation. Currently, discrimination on the basis of "race, creed, religion, color, national origin, sex, handicap, familial status, or ancestry" is prohibited. This legislation would add "sexual orientation" to the above list. The legislation would apply to discrimination in the rental of an apartment or house or the sale of a house. The Judiciary Committee will have a public hearing on this bill, TBA.

LB 441 and LB 746 are basic civil rights bills. They protect everyone's sexual orientation from discrimination—heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual. Sexual orientation has nothing to do with a person's ability to work or the right to have basic shelter.

According to polling data taken in 2000, while Nebraskans oppose the idea that homosexual people should be allowed to marry, more than 70% support the idea that homosexuals should have the same basic civil rights, including employment rights, as heterosexuals.

Funeral Rights/Anatomical Gifts legislation, LB 671, introduced by Sen. Nancy Thompson

The Nebraska laws governing disposition of remains of a deceased person and donation of organs of deceased persons determine the order and precedence of surviving persons who can make these decisions. Currently, the list and hierarchy is as follows: 1) surviving spouse, 2) adult child, 3) surviving parent, 4) adult sibling, 5) adult kindred as per estate law, etc. LB 671 would define "domestic partner" as "a person who was in a committed relationship with the deceased person," add "domestic partner" at the level of spouse (1), and set a list of criteria that would contribute to the determination of a "committed relationship." These criteria include, but are not limited to: longevity of the relationship, joint ownership of a home, joint rental, joint loan, joint bank account or credit card, joint holding of investments, etc. Please refer to LB 671 for a complete list. The Health & Human Services Committee will hear public testimony on this bill, TBA.

Update of Hate Crimes legislation, LB 270 (Brashear, Chambers)

The US Supreme Court decision *Apprendi vs. New Jersey* struck down that state's hate crimes law in 2001, setting the stage for the successful challenge of Arizona's death penalty sentencing process, which was overturned in *Ring v. Arizona* last year. Nebraska's sentencing process, like New Jersey's, allows a judge to consider an increased penalty for a hate crime, even though the jury may not have heard the argument for a hate crime. Because of *Apprendi*, Nebraska's hate crimes law (which includes sexual orientation along with race, ethnicity, etc.) was rendered useless. LB 270 would update the law to comply with the *Apprendi* decision. The Judiciary Committee heard public testimony on this bill on January 29th.

Please take the time to contact your senator about all of these bills. For more information or updates on the status of these bills, please inquire with NAJE lobbyist Carter Van Pelt at 730-6735 or carter@cfep-ne.org.

CLIMATE CHANGE, conclusion

do not work in this area. From G.H.W. Bush's "National Energy Strategy" of 1990 to the voluntary targets of the 1992 Rio treaty under the auspices of the U.N., to the "Climate Change Action Plan" and "Climate Challenge" programs under Clinton, these voluntary programs, while perhaps well-meaning, have utterly failed. U.S. emissions of greenhouse gases have risen 14 percent during the last ten years. Nor are the voluntary reports verifiable, even though the Bush plan states such claimed reductions must count toward any mandatory plan which might be passed in the future. A recent story in the *New York Times* (1/20/03) reported that senior administration officials were traveling around the country trying to round up voluntary commitments from industry for a big promotion in early February.

Second, this is a proposed reduction in emissions "intensity", meaning emissions are measured as a ratio against the Gross Domestic Product. Because the economy over the past decade has become more service-oriented vs. industry-oriented, and because it has grown largely through gains in productivity, the ratio of emissions to the economy has already been going down. Consequently, even though actual emissions went up 14 percent in the 1990s, the ratio shows emissions intensity went down by 16 percent. Under this formula, actual emissions are projected to rise to 30 percent over 1990 levels by 2012 even if the Bush goal of intensity reduction is met (the Pew Center on Global Climate Change and the NRDC both have studies available on this). Wasn't it G.H.W. Bush who coined the term "fuzzy math"?

One further example of greenwashing occurred in November when the administration leaked a proposal that it planned to call for a 1.5 mpg increase in fuel efficiency standards for SUVs between 2005 and 2007. Ford has already planned to achieve more than that two years sooner. According to David Friedman, a senior analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists "Off-the-shelf technology could improve the fuel economy of light trucks by 30 percent, which would save drivers an average of more than \$300 a year at the pumps."

Even though the White House is not doing anything serious to combat global warming, it certainly seems as though they want to appear to be doing something. And the reasons why aren't hard to find. Not just public sentiment, but public action is beginning to flow around and past them.

This is especially true at the state level. In May, New Hampshire became the second state to regulate CO2 when Governor Jean Shaheen signed the New Hampshire Clean

Power Act (with bipartisan support). The act will establish a cap and trade system on existing power plants. Massachusetts has already enacted a similar plan. In July California Governor Gray Davis signed a landmark bill making that state the first to regulate CO2 emissions from autos under a federal loophole that allows states to independently set air quality standards. The law, which goes into effect in 2009, exempts commercial vehicles but includes pickups and SUVs and requires the Air Resources Board to obtain "maximum feasible" cuts in greenhouse gas emissions from the vehicles. New York is considering similar measures.

In July as well, 11 attorneys general from California, New York, New Jersey, Alaska and seven New England states sent a four-page letter to President Bush denouncing his climate change policy. Nine of those states, primarily in the east, filed suit against the EPA to prevent implementation of "new source review" revisions of the Clean Air Act hours after the administration quietly announced them on New Year's Eve. New source review requires power plants to install pollution safeguards when facilities are expanded or upgraded.

But state agencies are not the only entities showing resistance and initiative to the Bush Administration's feeble plans. Various economic sectors are beginning to worry as well. The insurance industry, wracked by large payouts resulting from severe weather events, has been pressing for more action and less talk (*Reuters* 9/6/02 and 10/8/02). And it's not a difficult prediction to say that tourism and agriculture aren't far behind in realizing what severe climate change could do to their industries. Even the coal and oil industries may not be immune. It was reported in the *New York Times* (8/18/02) that the environmental head of the New York state attorney general's office is looking at the possibility of suing air polluters similar to the suits which states brought against the tobacco industry. The cities of Boulder and Oakland have joined in a lawsuit with Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth against the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Council for failing to include climate change considerations in their environmental reviews as required under the National Environmental Policy Act when financing fossil fuel projects.

It might still be a stretch of the imagination to think the Bush administration is feeling pressured on this topic, but not much of one. By giving the appearance of doing something, they seem to be trying to draw a line on climate change action before it is drawn for them or around them.

Barriers to Peace...

In the 2002 election, less than one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of the American public made 83 percent of the itemized campaign contributions.

Source: Center for Responsive Politics, www.opensecrets.org

BULLETIN BOARD

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., weekdays, except holidays.

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|-------------|--|
| February 15 | Annual Peace Conference in Lincoln with Dr. Helen Caldicott, sponsored by NFP and the UNO School of Social Work. |
| March 1 | American Indian Movement (AIM) national protest in Lincoln over Whiteclay on Nebraska Statehood Day. |

To list an event in the CALENDAR, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event. Mail to Nebraskans for Peace — Calendar, 941 "O" Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508. E-mail: nfpstate@aol.com. Announcements published on a space available basis.

A Drought of Drought Aid

The U.S. is suffering the largest natural disaster since the Dust Bowl. In 2002, the USDA declared 85 percent of all U.S. counties disaster areas. Minnesota and North Dakota farmers saw crops washed out by floods, and the eastern Corn Belt experienced excessive early rains. Much of the Great Plains—including every one of Nebraska's 93 counties—has suffered searing drought over the past two years.

Drought on the Great Plains is compounding the greatest crisis in income for agricultural producers since the Great Depression. The farm bills of the 1980s and 1990s stripped away farmers' price-impacting tools. The value of all commodities to producers has fallen by 30-40 percent since the mid-1990s. U.S. farmers forced to sell at below the cost of production for a generation are out of equity—many now owe more than even the inflated value of their land. This double crisis is creating a watershed for many farmers and ranchers—and the community of businesses that serve them. Unless stricken producers get the help they need, many will not survive.

The Bush Administration understood the situation last fall, even as the president stonewalled on disaster aid to agriculture and refused to budge. Team Bush wants any federal assistance to come out of already lean farm bill appropriations.

The unfairness of this should make your blood boil. When we the people send relief to victims of hurricanes, floods and other natural disasters, we do not

garnish their wages. Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) has called attention to this issue by naming the drought, as tropical storms are named. Nelson insists the name David was chosen to match the D in drought, but I cannot help thinking of David in the Bible who was a livestock producer in an arid land.

Unlike David, Team Bush is not about fighting off bigger guys or thinking deeply or governing wisely in the interests of the people and the land. The Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans bet that they could refuse to pass emergency drought aid last fall, and ag producers would still vote Republican. In Nebraska, the GOP bet paid off. Sen. Chuck Hagel was re-elected in a walk. His campaign, like that of Governor Mike Johanns, featured the Republican candidate as a team player, and Hagel has certainly lived up to his promise.

Sen. Hagel voted last fall for a Daschle/Baucus amendment, which would have covered all producers' losses in both 2001 and 2002 with true emergency funding—that is, funding which does not raid the farm bill or other federal program spending. In the first weeks of the 108th Congress this January, Sen. Hagel reversed himself and supported the most unfair of the disaster plans. Hagel's plan not only raided farm program funding, it gave producers in counties with disaster declarations a percentage of past program payments, whether or not they had actually suffered a drought loss! And, Hagel's plan provided even less assistance than the \$3.1 billion in the omnibus appropriations bill passed in the Senate on January 24—an amount ten major farm organizations say is less half what's needed.

Rep. Tom Osborne's ignorance of the farm economy has seemed at times overwhelming. His willingness to side with agribusiness over rank and file producers has been so sad. But even the "coach" gets it on drought disaster aid, particularly the matter of targeting assistance.

The Hagel plan's failure to target assistance is particularly puzzling. The senator found himself unable to vote for the last farm bill, according to many newspaper accounts, because that bill did not adequately target benefits to the producers who needed them most. Maybe Sen. Hagel's philosophical commitment to targeting benefits has dwindled.

More likely, Sen. Hagel is just showing his true colors—party loyalty before all. Despite his early role as a voice of prudence in Middle Eastern affairs, Hagel has lined up in support of an administration that will not take "Yes" for an answer and is clearly hell-bent on a war to appropriate Iraq's 10 percent of known world oil reserves. Sen. Hagel is there for the rich, supporting permanent tax breaks for them through the president's economic stimulus package, but he can only support temporary benefits to low and middle-income families.

Sen. Hagel needs to hear from his constituents, and he needs to listen. Despite Republican control of Congress, the nation remains evenly divided between the major parties. There has been no Republican landslide. Team Bush ascended to power in a disputed election, with no mandate.

There is a 57 percent majority of eligible voters so tuned out and turned off that they don't come to the polls. Of the 43 percent who do vote, 11 percent are Republicans so rock-ribbed that they will

vote for anything with an 'R' in front of its name, no matter what. Another 11 percent are Christian Jihad types so locked up by single issues that they will vote any way their church tells them, period. 11 percent plus 11 percent makes 22 percent, which beats the remaining 21 percent. Until Democrats quit trying to field pseudo-Republican candidates (for example, hawkish free-trader Joe Lieberman), the silent 57 percent will surely stay the course.

Bush and Hagel share more than a team. They share cowboy good looks—handsome crows-feet, graying, virile—a mask of traditional values, and an apparent moral emptiness that lets them take advantage of people who are down. Nebraska agriculture is the number one industry in the state, and it is the engine that drives not only our state economy, but also the household economies of our family farmers and ranchers and the rural business communities that serve them.

Borrow-and-bomb Republicans have turned the Clinton administration's budget surplus into a snowballing \$300 billion deficit. Team Bush is promoting the corporate takeover of agriculture at home and leading us to war abroad.

While he supports ag policy that continues to squeeze family farmers and ranchers out of business, Sen. Hagel wants to say he supports family values.

Spin is not leadership. Spin is not governing. Spin is just smoke and mirrors, worse than useless in real crisis. Rarely have such loyal voters been so poorly repaid as rural Nebraskans who voted for Republicans in the past two election cycles. I wonder—what would David the shepherd do?



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin

The real political spectrum isn't right to left... it's top to bottom.