



Peace Notes

Editorial Board:

Tom Oswald, Editor
Jim Detjen
Terry Link
Becky Payne

Nate Jemison, Designer
Peace Notes is a publication of the Peace Education Center. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board.

PEC Board of Directors

Terry Link · CO-CHAIR
Becky Payne · CO-CHAIR
Jim Detjen · SECRETARY
John Masterson · TREASURER

Board

Paul Brun Del Re
Kathie Kuhn
John Masterson
Nola Warner
Nelson Brown
Tom Oswald
Nate Jemison
Gabby Kindig
Quinn Jiles

PEC Task Forces

Cost of Militarism
Education Team
Youth Outreach! Program
Young Visions Video Project

Sponsoring Organizations

Edgewood United
Church of Christ
First Church of the Brethren
Greater Lansing Unitarian
Universalist Church
MSU Mennonite Fellowship
Red Cedar Friends Meeting

Affiliated Organizations

Greater Lansing Network Against
War & Injustice
Meta Peace Team
Greater Lansing United Nations
Association
Michigan Coalition to Prevent
Gun Violence

Peacemakers honored at PEC annual meeting

The Peace Education Center honored nine individuals, including four Lansing high school students who made national headlines by refusing to stand during the playing of the national anthem prior to a football game, with its annual Peacemaker Awards. The awards were presented May 19 during the PEC's annual meeting.

In all, eight of the nine honorees were area high school students.

“This was a great year for young people,” said PEC co-chair Becky Payne. “In looking at candidates, we were very impressed by the commitment and determination of several area high schoolers who acted in somewhat controversial ways to support causes they believed in.”

Peacemaker of the Year Award

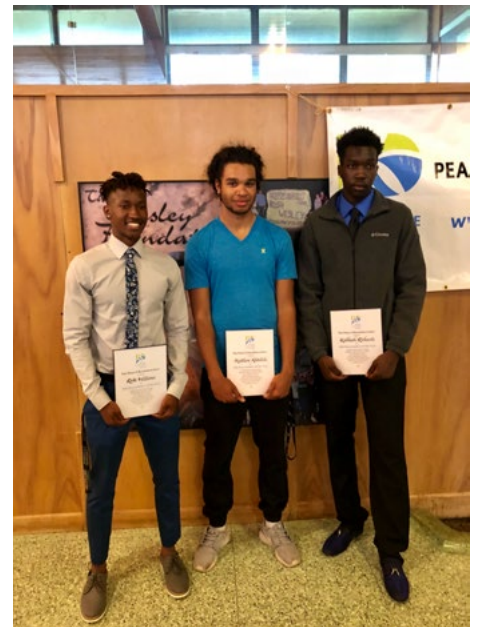
Each year the PEC selects one or more area residents for the Peacemaker of the Year Award, honoring those who have stood out for their work to support peace and justice. This year's awardees were:

RoJe Williams, Matthew Abdullah, Mikey Lynn III and Kabbash Richards, the Lansing Catholic High School students who “took a knee” prior a football game to protest racism. These four subsequently faced criticism from the school and community for their effort to peacefully protest injustice.

Alex Hosey, an East Lansing high school student who chose not to stand for the national anthem prior to basketball games and whose essay, “Why I Sit,” prompted the East Lansing City Council to apologize for past racist policies.

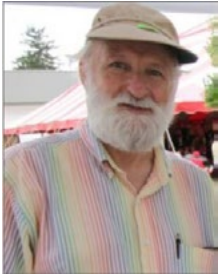
RoJe William (left), Matthew Abdullah (center), Kabbash Richards (right), and Mikey Lynn III (not pictured) were recipients of this year's PEC Peacemaker Awards.

Photo by Jim Detjen.



“We hope these awards serve to thank those who stood for their beliefs and inspire them and others to know that working toward a better world does not go unnoticed,” said PEC co-chair Terry Link.

Peacemakers honored (cont.)



The Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award

This scholarship is for graduating high school seniors from Ingham, Eaton or Clinton counties who apply or are nominated. Recipients are chosen based on their passion and commitment toward building a more peaceful and just world.

The awardees were:

Danny Kaplowitz, East Lansing High School
Ella Signs, Bath High School
Maricela Tapia, Waverly High School



Pictured with PEC co-chair Terry Link (left) are Ella Signs of Bath High School (center) and Maricela Tapia of Waverly High School (right). Photo by Jim Detjen



David Wiley was the recipient of this year's Lifetime Peacemaker Award. Photo by Jim Detjen

The Lifetime Peacemaker Award

Michigan State University Professor Emeritus David Wiley received the Lifetime Peacemaker Award. Wiley was the long-time director of MSU's African Studies Center and co-founder and leader of the Concerned African Scholars Association. Under his direction, the center became one of the top African studies programs in the country. Wiley also led local efforts toward ending apartheid in South Africa. He is very active with Edgewood United Church's Justice and Peace Team, the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team.

Remembering Elise Harvey

By Becky Payne

We're sad to report that Elise Harvey died on May 31 at the age of 84.



Elise was a beloved, if sometimes cantankerous, member of the Peace Education Center's board for many years. She will long be remembered for her intense devotion to peace.

A colorful character, her van was decorated top to bottom with peace and justice-related bumper stickers. At events, she would teach all comers to fold peace cranes while explaining the purpose behind the folded cranes.

She sang and played the autoharp, she gardened with a passion for the earth, and she spoke of her personal journey toward peace from hearing a talk by the Peace Pilgrim when she was young.

Elise also described coming to terms with the multiple sclerosis from which she suffered for many years. Despite the weakness that ensued, she kept active and involved for many years.

A personal note: Years ago, when I worked at the Eaton Rapids post office, miles from Lansing, I was surprised one day to see Elise out back communing with the giant oak tree that was slated to be removed to expand parking. She organized rallies to save the oak and even contacted National Public Radio, which did a story on the issue. The tree was not cut!

Calendar

Regularly Scheduled Events:

Every Friday, noon to 1 p.m.:
Peace Vigil in front of the State Capitol Bldg., Lansing

1st Thursdays: Peace Education Center Board Meeting, 7 p.m., at University United Methodist Church, 1120 Harrison Road, East Lansing

1st Sundays: Islam 101, Islamic Center, Harrison Rd., East Lansing

1st Wednesdays: Lansing Environmental Action Team Meeting, 6 p.m., Working on reducing fossil fuel use and addressing climate change 1407 Rensen St., Lansing

3rd Mondays: Greater Lansing Network Against War & Injustice (GLNAWI) planning meeting, 7 p.m., at University United Methodist Church, 1120 Harrison Road, East Lansing

2nd & 4th Thursdays, Cost of Militarism Education Team (Book Club), 7-9 p.m., at Everybody Reads Bookstore, 2019 E. Michigan Ave., Lansing

Check the PEC website:

<http://www.peacedcenter.org/>
for calendar updates

Upcoming Events:

Mon., July 9, 6-7:30 p.m.: Dr. Jim Withers, the Founder of Street Medicine: Withers will share his experience serving the homeless community. Presented by Spartan Street Medicine (Student Events). MSU Fee Hall E105, DMC G029, Macomb UC3 208. Free.

Thurs. July 12, 6:30 p.m.: Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, Meet & orientation for newcomers; 7-8:30--Team mtg

Tues. July 17, 6pm.: Legislative Candidates Forum for 68th and 69th House Districts. Lansing Public Media Center 2500 S. Washington, Lansing

August - December: Exhibit: Year of Global Africa: "From Nsukka to Now: The History of African Studies at MSU." Traces the origins and history of African Studies at MSU, beginning with the founding of the University of Nigeria Nsukka in 1960. Focus on: partnership, innovation, and activism. MSU Main Library.

TOGETHER FOR THE COMMON GOOD BBQ POTLUCK

AT PATRIARCHE PARK



1100 ALTON RD, EAST LANSING



SUNDAY 12TH AUGUST, 2018
3PM - 6PM

**A community wide gathering
bringing together organizations
and individuals to strengthen our
network for the common good.
Please bring a dish to pass.**

Meet the candidates nights set

Arrangements have been made to meet with each of the two U.S. House primary candidates for the 8th District to discuss peace, war, militarism, guns and foreign policy.

These sessions are open to the members of the following groups who agreed to cooperatively request the meetings – the Peace Education Center, Friends Committee on National Legislation Lansing Advocacy Team, GLNAWI, Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, and Greater Lansing United Nations Association. They will not be advertised beyond those groups.

Each meeting will give the candidate an opportunity to discuss these focused areas and to answer questions regarding policies related to these issues. We hope that both citizens and candidates are there to listen to each other and better understand each other's positions.

There is no endorsement expected or suggested by any of the sponsoring organizations through this issue-education process. No filming or recording of the sessions will be permitted.

The meeting with Chris Smith is at 7 p.m. Monday, July 23, at the East Lansing Public Library.

The meeting with Elissa Slotkin is at 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 31, at the East Lansing Public Library.

PeaceQuest to expand this year

PeaceQuest 2018 will expand this year to the entire month of September.

The events are being organized by a coalition of peace and justice groups in the Lansing area, including the Peace Education Center, the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, the Shalom Center, the Niagara Foundation, and the Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.

This fourth annual collection of events include the Sept. 21 International Day of Peace, the Concert Across America, a rally at the state capitol, an art contest, a series of films, a Model UN demonstration, a Java Café on peace and the UN, and many other events now being planned.

Details are being posted on the [PeaceQuest website](#) as they are available.

If you are aware of other events that month that might relate to peace and justice, please let us know so we can add them to the growing calendar.

Contact your Representatives

Senator Debbie Stabenow

1-202-224-4822

731 Hart Senate Office Bldg

www.stabenow.senate.gov/?p=contact

Representative Mike Bishop

1-202-225-4872

428 Cannon House Office Bldg

<https://mikebishop.house.gov/contact>

Senator Gary Peters

1-202-224-6221

724 Hart Senate Office Bldg

www.peters.senate.gov/content/contact-gary

Representative John Moolenaar

1-202-225-3561

117 Cannon House Office Bldg

<https://moolenaar.house.gov/contact/email>

Representative Tim Walberg

1-202-225-6276

2436 Rayburn House Office Bldg

Washington DC 20515

<http://walberg.house.gov/contact/>

War and Climate Change

By Becky Payne

As the impact of climate change increases, we brace ourselves every summer for what's become the annual norm of fires, floods, droughts and hurricanes. Since fossil fuel use is a major driver of climate change, we at the Peace Education Center decided to focus on the environmental impact of war.

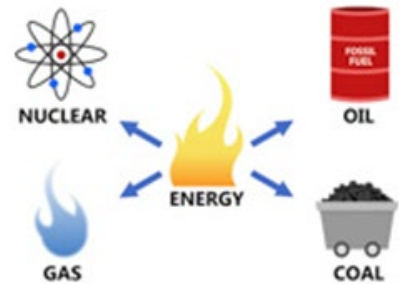


All's fair in love and war. The U.S. military uses vast quantities of resources, sets up shop most anywhere it wants, and bulldozes land for its own uses.

Since 2004, the military has been exempted from environmental impact studies. Suffice it to say that war and militarism are major contributors to climate change. Once war is announced, no creature, no national treasure or habitat – nothing – is safe. Resources are diverted to the cause. Civilians are forced out of their communities in droves. Weapons blast apart buildings, roads, factories, farmlands, anything that might be seen as an aid to the enemy of the moment.

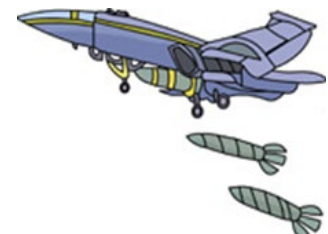
Fossil fuel use. The U.S. military is the world's largest user of fossil fuels – and largest polluter, using about 100 million barrels of fossil fuels a year. The military mostly uses jet fuel (kerosene), which is what the tar sands oil is best used for. Therefore, that controversial oil will largely be used by the Pentagon.

Bombs and weapons. Our built-up environment has energy embedded in its construction. Bombing our human-made environment means we not only lost that embedded energy but will have to expend even more to haul away the rubble and then build it all again. In recent decades, there have been massive bombings in Iraq, Syria, Bosnia, Libya, Afghanistan and Sudan, just to name a few.



Radiation. Depleted uranium (DU), left over from nuclear power plants, is repurposed in bombs that the U.S. explodes indiscriminately across the Earth. Radiation from DU does not go away. It may stay in the soil or become airborne in clouds that float slowly in ever-widening circles around the earth. For millions of years, we will suffer the consequences of our nation's DU infatuation. Cancer rates soar after a bombing, with huge numbers of malformed babies.

Left over munitions. One big bomb may contain hundreds of cluster bombs that are released mid-air to spread over a wide area. Some explode on impact, but up to 30 percent do not explode but remain deadly long after the war has moved on. The U.S. cleans up barely any of its leftover cluster bombs.



Poisons and chemicals. We saw the use of poisons most clearly with the use of Agent Orange and napalm in Vietnam, but there are many less-well-known poisons still being used. And there are indirect poisonings (like spilled fuels or blown-up chemical plants) that pollute water and land. Because of pollution and leftover weapons, Iraq has gone from a lush food exporter to an importer, now importing 80 percent of its food.





Damage to people. A rule of thumb is that 10 civilians are killed in war for every one soldier. But even that horrific number is dwarfed by the numbers of people forced from their homes. It is hard to quantify the total number; counting civilians killed or maimed is not a priority. Refugee camps house millions, whose livelihoods and properties may never be regained.

Military training damage. The 25 million U.S. acres controlled by the military are used just the same as a war zone; bombs are exploded, radiation and poisons are unleashed, there is pollution from fuel, and even noise. Recently, it's come to light that whales are being harmed by loud underwater sonic blasts. Wildlife is disrupted from migratory routes and their habitats are frequently wiped out. People who live near training bases suffer higher cancer rates from the chemicals and radiation unleashed.



Solutions? The U.S. military, with its might, money and infrastructure, could be put to use in aiding our country's fight against climate change. Soldiers could be tasked with building solar fields and wind farms, repairing damage from storms and fires, cleaning up polluted areas, and yes, even developing climate-change mitigation.

What can we do? Vote wisely and hold politicians to task. Funding for the military far outpaces what is reasonably necessary. Military contractors funnel huge campaign contributions to those running for office, fearing they would go out of business if there were no need of weapons. And politicians, desirous of those dollars, vote against our common good.

Our government is supposed to be the backstop between people and greed. Unfortunately, our backstop is crumbling.



Congressional Briefing Book

“Promoting Peace, Projecting Strength: The U.S. and the UN”

The Better World Campaign and the United Nations Association-USA just published an important and succinct Congressional Briefing Book, “Promoting Peace, Projecting Strength: The U.S. and the UN”.

The 50-page report gives a good overview of the many ways the UN works to support peaceful resolution of conflict through both peacekeeping, diplomacy, and development. And it shows how the U.S. supports, or more recently has reduced support for those activities.

One of many very important points is made from a 2018 U.S. Government Accounting Office study that found that it would cost the U.S. nearly eight times as much to implement the peacekeeping mission to Central African Republic for the same duration as it cost the UN. One sees from reading this report what a bargain for the U.S. strengthening and supporting UN efforts truly is.

The \$2.6 billion we contribute (2016) to UN peacekeeping is less than U.S. citizens spend on Easter candy. You can [read the report here](#). Share with your members of Congress and ask them to fully fund our commitments to the international community of nations.

Oppose Proposed Changes to Michigan's K-12 Social Studies Standards

By Jack Smith

Changes to Michigan's K-12 social studies standards recently proposed by Sen. Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton) are problematic in process and their content.

The State Board of Education will decide on the proposed changes; there are four Republican and four Democratic members of the Board. After offering public comment, express your concerns to your legislators, especially your state senators.



Problematic Process: The engagement of Sen. Colbeck and the other conservatives he has invited into the review were not matched by any similar engagement of politicians and policy analysts representing other points of view. In principle, Colbeck and colleagues have taken “seats at the table” in discussions that have not involved political agents in the past.

Problematic Content: Different readers who conduct a page-by-page review of the changes will compile different lists of concerns, but those listed here would be questioned by many. The document proposes striking “democratic” from references to “core democratic values,” leaving the term “core values,” which appears frequently. Colbeck indicated that its inclusion was a partisan act. Similarly, “democracy” has been replaced by “republic.” The proposal removes or dramatically reduces references to (1) gender diversity and the gay rights movement, (2) the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, (3) the role of the NAACP in the nation’s civil rights movement, (4) climate change, and (5) civil rights for immigrants and people with disabilities. The Klu Klux Klan is described as an “anti-Republican organization at its inception.” Overall, the proposed changes substantially increase the American focus of the document and decrease references to other countries, their histories and practices.

Background: Michigan’s K-12 standards for social studies outline the content that should be taught to our children in school. The social studies standards are a state effort, more so than the standards in English language arts and mathematics, which closely resemble the Common Core state standards. Standards for school subjects do not necessarily dictate what teachers actually teach but they strongly influence it.

Colbeck is also a candidate for governor. His action to engage himself and invite other colleagues into the process is highly unusual for our state. But it does reflect the greater role the Legislature has recently played in setting educational policy—on curricular content, teacher evaluation and annual testing.

Public comment on the proposal was being accepted until June 30. For more information on that visit <https://fs28.formsite.com/pf98Hd/form7/index.html>.



Bridge magazine has covered this issue very well. For a collection of short articles on the issue, go to: <https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/history-gets-conservative-twist-michigan-social-studies-standards>

(Jack Smith is a professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education, College of Education, at Michigan State University.)

The Trump administration wants to make it easier to sell U.S. guns abroad. Here's what you need to know.

by Susan Waltz

The Trump administration has [proposed](#) making it easier for U.S. gun companies to sell their firearms abroad, including [AR-15s](#), which were used in both the Sandy Hook and Parkland school shootings. The regulatory changes are likely to go into effect later this year after a typical period of public comment, with some additional time for industry to adjust to the final rules.

Here are four things to know about the administration's effort to facilitate gun sales abroad.

Semiautomatic weapons would no longer be regulated as military equipment

The proposed changes would transfer responsibility for licensing exports of certain small arms and light weapons away from the Department of State and into the Department of Commerce. The switch reflects the administration's desire to draw a bright line between military and nonmilitary weapons.



This isn't just a bureaucratic reshuffling. Semiautomatic weapons would no longer be considered military-grade equipment — and thus would face fewer export hurdles. In revising the rules, the administration is abandoning the controversial term "[assault weapon](#)," which until now has figured prominently.

The new rules would instead distinguish between weapons that are fully automatic — capable of firing more than one shot by a single pull of the trigger — and those that aren't. Export sales of automatic firearms would still go through the State Department's tougher licensing process, as would sales of big guns such as mortars and howitzers. However, export sales of semiautomatic guns and rifles, including large-caliber sniper rifles, would now be handled by Commerce — even though such weapons have military uses and can readily be converted to automatic.

In principle, weapons can't be exported just anywhere; some destinations will still be off limits, and even selling guns to Canada will require a license. But getting licenses to export these weapons will be much cheaper and simpler. The Commerce Department doesn't have a registration process, and unlike State, it doesn't charge a fee for licensing. According to the [government's proposal](#), about 10,000 license applications will transfer to Commerce.

Both firearms manufacturers and the attorneys who represent them welcome the changes — not least because manufacturers will shift the cost of licensing to taxpayers.

It'll be harder to control the spread of firearms abroad

The proposed changes may have some unintended consequences, as Congress over the years has drawn its own bright line in a different place. Federal laws make a crucial distinction between defense articles on one hand, and commercial or dual-use weapons on the other.

Based on this distinction, the U.S. has built an elaborate regime for controlling small arms and light weapons, which it has [touted as a global gold standard](#). In this complex system, a small change in one area will significantly affect others. The switch from State to Commerce, for example, will mean that the brokers and financiers who arrange shipments of semiautomatic firearms will no longer have a statutory requirement to register and obtain a license. That will make it easier for [unscrupulous dealers](#) to escape attention.

Further, Congress will no longer be automatically informed about sizable sales of these weapons. That will limit its ability to comment on related human rights concerns, as it recently did [on Turkey](#).

Human rights advocates worry that it will be easier for rebel groups and armed gangs to acquire military-style weapons such as the AK-47, which — whether semi- or fully automatic — are [often used](#) in war crimes and human rights atrocities, as they have been in civil conflicts from Liberia to Afghanistan to Yemen and Colombia.

3-D-printed weapons could become widely available

But the provision most likely to catch everyone off-guard has to do with 3-D-printed weapons.

In 2013, gun rights activist Cody Wilson produced a fully operable 3-D-printed pistol. Wilson claims to have plans for an AR-15 [ready to distribute](#) when legal hurdles are cleared. For Wilson, the [most formidable legal obstacle](#) has been the federal requirement that all U.S. weapons manufacturers register with the State Department.

In 2012, Wilson set up a nonprofit called Defense Distributed, which posted online instructions for 3D-printing weapons. The State Department charged him with violating arms export laws, since his open-source posting made it possible for anyone with access to a 3-D printer, anywhere, to produce a lethal weapon. Defense Distributed lost the ensuing [legal battle](#).

The proposed regulatory changes, however, may give Defense Distributed a new opportunity to distribute those instructions. The Commerce Department will apply [its own rules](#) to open-source technology, and will not invoke arms export law.

That means that unless Congress intervenes to limit 3-D printing of weapons, as Philadelphia has, once semiautomatics are regulated by the Commerce Department, Wilson and others who line up behind him will be free to distribute their instructions — and anyone with a 3-D printer can use them to make their own guns.

Why is the Trump administration acting now?

From one perspective, the proposed changes are simply part of a [continuing effort launched by the Obama administration](#) to reform the arms export regime, streamlining the regulatory processes and distinguishing between military and clearly nonmilitary items. Since 2012, 18 categories of firearms have been updated without substantial controversy.

But the Obama administration shelved rules changes on the remaining three categories — the ones under consideration here — after the Sandy Hook shooting. There is no particular reason for reviving them now — except one. [Trade groups](#) representing arms manufacturers have [lobbied hard](#) for these changes in hopes that they will ease the costs of doing business and boost [flagging sales](#).

(Susan Waltz is a professor of public policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, and long-time friend of the Peace Education Center. This article was originally published in the Washington Post on June 4.)



Group photo at PEC Annual Meeting
Photo by Jim Detjen

PEC board re-elects officers, welcome new members

At its June 7 meeting, the Peace Education Center Board of Directors reelected its current slate of officers.



Becky Payne and Terry Link were reelected co-chairs; John Masterson was reelected treasurer; and Jim Detjen as recording secretary.



In addition, the board welcomed four new members – Gabby Kindig, Nate Jemison, Tom Oswald and Quinn Jiles. Quinn agreed to join the board after it voted to add the YVVP as a PEC task force.


In other activities, the board discussed plans for this year’s Alternative Holiday Sale, set for Nov. 16 and 17, and the PEC’s involvement in this year’s PeaceQuest, which will take place in September.



The PEC board meetings are usually the first Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. (exception this month, meeting July 12th) at the PEC offices, located in the University United Methodist Church, 1120 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing. Everyone is welcome to attend.

New Member Introductions

  **GABBY** An MSU student studying psychology and political science, Gabby won the PEC’s Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award in 2017. Gabby says she has a particular interest in both firearm legislation and educational policy, as well as more general issues of inequality.

  **NATE** Nate is a long-time supporter of the PEC. He has architectural training and an interest in studying strategies to address climate change, including how to transform or replace industries that are the largest contributors to this global challenge.

  **TOM** Tom is retired from Michigan State University where he spent 30 years as a communications specialist. A volunteer at a number of PEC events, Tom’s interests include the gun-violence issue, as well as homelessness and hunger.

  **QUINN** Quinn is an artist who is a facilitator with the Young Visions Video Project, a free program that teaches Lansing-area teens how to use video and film as communication tools. She has 14 years of video experience as an artist with an emphasis on arts education.

PEC thanks donors

The Peace Education Center would not exist without the generous donations of its supporters.

We’d like to thank some of our most recent donors, including:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| James Clift | Ruelaine Stokes |
| Sherrie Guess | Joan Tirak |
| Beth Montieth | |

PEC thanks former members

We’d like to thank some of our former board members, Luke Roy and Lila Gituskey for their service to the Peace Education Center.



Military spending continues to accelerate

As we mention in nearly every newsletter. Republicans and Democrats are mostly in lock-step in increasing, without restraint, the military budget, even more than the Administration has requested.

The Center for Responsive Politics [notes](#) there at 647 registered defense industry lobbyists in D.C. We can thank the arms lobby's deep pockets as the recent PEC sponsored talk by William Hartung succinctly made clear. You can watch this informative talk [here](#).

The combined waste, lack of audit, and cost overruns are almost daily making news if you read the work that those who follow the industry share, but that almost never make the major media. What follows is a brief guide with links to sources you can use to track the militarism gone amok in our country.

We at PEC will be working more in the coming year to both highlight those issues and to advocate to our elected officials and candidates for Congress to reduce the wasteful military spending and redirect it to human needs. If you want to help us in this effort to raise awareness please contact our co-chair, Terry Link link@msu.edu to join us in this important work.



Friends Committee on National Legislation

www.fcnl.org

is a Quaker-based social justice advocacy organization which has become a leading citizens lobbying organization on peace and justice issues. A local FCNL advocacy team (contact Margaret Nielsen msunielsen@yahoo.com to get involved) is one of nearly 100 teams, including five in Michigan communities, that are actively engaged with members of Congress on a wide array of peace and justice issues, including military spending. They have great resources available at their website.



PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Project on Government Oversight

www.pogo.org/straus/

houses the Center for Defense Information, a team largely composed of former military officers who help us see through the waste, fraud, arms lobby, and flawed military policy. This site is updated at least weekly and you can sign up for a free frequent newsletter.



TomDispatch

www.tomdispatch.com

Edited by Tom Englehardt who, with a stable of excellent writers and analysts, looks deeply into many aspects of militarism. Former military officers William Astore, Andrew Bacevich, along with noted author and arms industry scholar William Hartung, are joined by Maj. Danny Sjursden, Nick Turse and other excellent writers examining the underbelly of militarism, war and violence. Worth a daily visit.



National Priorities Project

www.nationalpriorities.org

covers the budgetary issues of military spending and creates useful sets of data of how those funds might be utilized for human needs.



Defense One - www.defenseone.com

"Defense One delivers news, breaking analysis and ideas on the topics and trends that are defining the future of U.S. defense and national security. We give national security professionals, stakeholders and citizens what they need to know, from senior leaders in Washington to commanders abroad and next-generation thinkers far from the political scrum." A free daily update of news and analysis is available for interested readers.

There are many international organizations and research institutes focused on these topics should you want to delve deeper into the global impacts of war and militarism. For one guide to some of these visit [here](#).

Middle East activist returns to native Michigan for series of talks

Michigan's Cody O'Rourke returned home last month to present a series of talks on his recent efforts to promote peace in Palestine, Israel and other volatile regions in the Middle East.

Speaking at a number of places around the state, including Lansing, O'Rourke advocated for a single-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one that would offer citizenship and equal rights for those living on the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Israel. That, he said, is made more difficult by the Oslo Accords, which call for a two-state solution.

All were in agreement when O'Rourke said there needs to be a political solution, not military or violent. However, he said the systems of oppression by both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority need to be confronted before that can happen.



Cody O'Rourke
cody@holylandtrust.org



Originally from Gladwin, Mich., O'Rourke has spent the last 13 years of his life promoting peace in the Middle East, particularly in Palestine and Israel.

O'Rourke began working in the Holy Land in 2005 when he made his first trip to Hebron with the Christian Peacemaker Teams. He has worked for the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, the Christian Peacemaker Teams, Defense for Children International and Holy Land Trust.

He has worked all across the West Bank and Jerusalem, but the majority of his work in the field has been in the old city of Hebron and the surrounding villages facing Israeli settler violence.

Much of O'Rourke's talks focused on the village of Um al-Khair, a small Bedouin village located in the South Hebron Hills on the West Bank.

Currently, 151 buildings in the village have demolition orders, which encompasses all the buildings in the village except two. Every building has already been demolished at least once and rebuilt by the community. According to the United Nations there have been 20 home demolitions since 2011 that have displaced 154 people, of which 103 were children.

O'Rourke grew up in the Beaverton Church of the Brethren but has most recently been attending the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem, where he had spent a year on the church council.

Sponsors of O'Rourke's visit included the Lansing Church of the Brethren, the Peace Education Center, Meta (Michigan) Peace Teams, Red Cedar Friends, the Islamic Center of East Lansing, Pax Christi Michigan, the Unitarian Universalist Church of greater Lansing, the Edgewood United Church of Christ, Lansing Pax Christi, and the Greater Lansing Network Against War and Injustice.

Action Alert: Crisis on the Southern Border

By Paul Brun Del Re

“Zero Tolerance” Policy

As a result of families from Mexico and Central America fleeing violence in the form of domestic abuse, gang and drug violence in their countries, and the “zero tolerance” policy rolled out in April 2018 by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, there is a crisis on the southern border of the United States that has been ripping families apart.

The “zero tolerance” policy means that anyone crossing the border without documentation will be detained, prosecuted and most likely deported. This was a change from previous administrations that would allow for “prosecutorial discretion”.

“Prosecutorial Discretion” & Criminalizing Border Crossings

“Prosecutorial discretion” is the authority of a law enforcement agency or officer to decide on what degree to enforce the law in particular cases.

What changed under the “zero tolerance” policy was the administration’s handling of asylum cases. Undocumented immigrant families seeking asylum previously were released and went into the civil court system. But now the parents are being detained and sent to criminal courts while their kids are resettled in the United States as though they were unaccompanied minors. Hence the separation of very young children from their parents/caretakers.

This is not a matter of law as Trump and many in his administration have asserted. Sessions has been using his “prosecutorial discretion” to criminalize crossing the border without documents.

Contrary to popular belief, the recently signed executive order does little to help the situation. The executive order does not end family separation and keeps more asylum seekers, families and vulnerable individuals unnecessarily detained.

Republican “Compromise” Bill (HR 6136)

The Republicans had two bills in Congress: one called the “conservative” bill did not pass. The second, called a “compromise” bill, has some provisions that would be helpful to DACA recipients and lead to possible citizenship, but there are cuts to legal immigration. The bill would end the immigration of adult children and siblings of U.S. citizens — including people who have been waiting for several years for their applications to be processed under current visa restrictions. It would also eliminate the diversity visa for immigrants from countries that don’t typically send many people to the U.S. The bill also increases the militarization of the border by appropriating \$25 billion in advance for border security funding, predominantly for expansion of the border wall.

This legislation purports to end family separation, but actually expands family detention and changes law so that children can be detained indefinitely with their parents. Members of Congress should reject these proposals and others like them.

Trump’s executive order is not the answer to family separation. As with the House and Senate bills, it allows for children to be held for long periods of time in jail-like facilities.

The administration does not need Congress to pass legislation to end their “zero-tolerance” policy, but vocal opposition from members of Congress is important for pressuring the administration to reverse this practice.

As followers of Jesus we need to welcome the strangers in our midst and those seeking asylum or refuge. Separating families from their children or holding them in jail-like facilities is inhumane and immoral. Family detention centers are detrimental to physical, mental and family health.

[Action Alert: Crisis on the Southern Border \(cont.\)](#)

Please write, e-mail or call your elected officials in Congress.

Tell them to put pressure on the president, the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to stop separating families and end their policy of zero tolerance.

Tell your representative and senators to vote NO on the House Republican compromise bill (HR 6136) and Senate bills that purport to end family separation. These bills will allow the U.S. government to hold immigrant children indefinitely in punitive jail-like conditions.

The Church of the Brethren is a member of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition (IIC) that prioritizes family unity, wants to create a process that leads to legal status and citizenship and improve access to the legal immigration system.



ELPL program helps youth understand social justice issues

Out of the mouths of babes.

About a year-and-a-half ago, a five-year-old began asking some questions, hard questions that adults were hard pressed to answer.

Those questions, focusing on war and hate and other issues that plague our society, were the impetus for the start of the Social Justice Reading Group, which has become one of the East Lansing Public Library's flagship programs.

The reading group is designed to engage youth in critical exploration of social justice topics. The group explores these issues by reading children's literature, followed by small group discussions and a themed craft activity.

The group, aimed at ages 4 through 11 (pre-school through fifth grade), meets the third Saturday of the month from 10:30-noon at the ELPL, 950 Abbot Road, East Lansing.

Topics have included race/ethnicity, gender, social class, indigenous rights, mental health, and many more. Schedules, topics, booklists, discussion questions, photo albums, and more are can be found here:

https://www.elpl.org/browse_program/social-justice-reading-group/