

Manchin claim that we can't afford \$3.5 trillion holds no water



By John Wojcik

What determines how much the government spends and on what depends on who is in political control, not on how much money there is in a mythical government pot.

When Republicans were in control, they were able to afford the \$2 trillion tax cut for the rich. When the Democrats were in control, they were able to afford the \$2 trillion-plus COVID-19 rescue package.

In the last year alone, the total amount spent in response to COVID was almost \$5 trillion, more than what the reconciliation package currently being debated will cost over the next ten years. All signs are that approval of the package can end the problems that have plagued this country for many decades. Even what was spent on one single thing, the \$300 tax credits for each child in a family, had the incredible effect of lifting almost half the nation's children out of poverty.

Among many other things, the \$3.5 trillion soft infrastructure reconciliation package would continue those credits. Are Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W. Va., and his GOP pals saying it is OK to throw them all back into poverty? Over ten years, the cost of that to the economy—and more importantly the cost in human misery that will result—far outweigh the cost of the entire package.

The estimated GDP for the next ten years is \$300

trillion, meaning the reconciliation package is only one percent of that overall product of the country's economy.

It is a small cost to pay for the biggest transformation of the economy since the New Deal. The argument that it is too expensive is totally ludicrous. No one who has said that has bothered to explain why it is too expensive because, quite simply, it is not.

The Republicans of course oppose the package

T H I S W E E K :

- **Manchin claim that we can't afford \$3.5 trillion holds no water**
- **Organized labor denounces violent expulsion of Haitian migrants**
- **Heavyweight lawmakers back safe staffing in nursing homes**
- **Ese ambientalismo que llevamos por dentro**
- **Workers win, ending Mondelez Oreo cookie strike**

READ MORE NEWS AND OPINION DAILY AT WWW.PEOPLESWORLD.ORG

because they fear incurring the wrath of the rich, who may have to pay more of their fair share in taxes for it. So they call it socialism. They ignore the fact that many of the advanced capitalist countries around the world already provide their people with the things Americans would get from the

Only those who favor destruction of both people and the planet can oppose a reconciliation plan that could be our last chance to make the changes that will save our future.

reconciliation package: health care for Medicare recipients that includes dental and vision care, affordable daycare so folks can go back to work, child tax and living credits, schools in buildings that are not crumbling, free college education at least up to a certain level, higher minimum wages, union organizing rights, and so many other things that are in the package.

The centrist Democrats who oppose the reconciliation package have not made the case that the spending will be harmful to the economy, Stephanie Kelton, an economist at Stony Brook College in New York, said on MSNBC this weekend. She even rejected the idea that spending to meet people's needs causes inflation, a claim now being made by many in the GOP.

"All signs are," she said, "that as you spend to increase productivity you will decrease inflation and increase the spending power of everyone, thereby helping the economy. If a bill gives money up front to people who spend it and lifts half the children out

of poverty—why not pass this package and lift the rest of the children out of poverty? It was so easy to lift up half, why not go further?

The truth is there is no good economic, political, or moral reason not to proceed with the full \$3.5 trillion reconciliation plan. Opposition means you favor continuing to let the wealthy in this country completely off the hook. You favor allowing them to destroy both people and the planet to keep their positions of privilege. It is wrong and it cannot be allowed to continue.

Organized labor denounces violent expulsion of Haitian migrants

By Fred Redmond

Working people in the Americas face increasing levels of displacement due to extreme push factors such as political instability, natural disasters, violence, lack of decent work, and failure to protect fundamental human and labor rights. In the face of escalating forced migration, governments in the region have two core obligations: to address the root causes driving working families from their homes and to provide humanitarian support to desperate people on the move.

In the face of relentless political, public health, and economic crises in Haiti, government responses have been woefully inadequate on both fronts. While countries such as the United States, Brazil, and Chile have undertaken some important measures to protect Haitian migrants, those steps have been uneven and partial.

And now, despite the severity of last month's earthquake, the U.S. government has resumed large-scale deportation of Haitian migrants back to a devastated nation many of them left more than a decade ago. This is an outrage.

As the first country to revolt against colonialism, Haiti is well recognized for its central role in

the liberation struggles in this hemisphere. This proud history led to reprisals from the U.S. and other foreign powers that have compounded the injustices that Haitian people have had to endure and overcome. Now is the time to write a new chapter in relations between our nations.

Trade unions in the region remind our governments that the only way to achieve true security is through humane policies that uphold the rights and dignity of all working people, regardless of where we were born or the color of our skin. We call for an immediate end to the forced return of asylum seekers to harm's way and we call for robust humanitarian aid to provide food and shelter to the Haitian people and support union efforts to rebuild their country.

As a labor movement fighting for democracy, racial justice, the rule of law, and human and trade union rights, our unions will continue to push our governments to do right by the Haitian people and by all working people in the Americas. We will also continue to organize for mutual aid and defense, and take action to help Haitians and other forced migrants access the support and protections they need and deserve.

The U.S. government is violently deporting Haitian migrants back to a devastated nation many of them left more than a decade ago. This is an outrage.

Heavyweight lawmakers back safe staffing in nursing homes



By Mark Gruenberg

National Nurses United’s long campaign for safe staffing in U.S. health care picked up heavyweight congressional supporters in early September. Reps. Richard Neal, D-Mass., and Frank Pallone, D-N.J., want to mandate safe staffing in nursing homes.

The backing of the two lawmakers is important. Neal chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. It writes Medicare and Medicaid legislation, and the two programs account for huge shares of nursing home operators’ income.

Pallone chairs the Energy and Commerce Committee, which writes most House health care legislation. They join Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden, D-Ore., whose panel handles Medicare and Medicaid, and Senate Aging Committee Chairman Bob Casey, D-Pa.

Their Nursing Home Improvement And Accountability Act is also important. While NNU, the nation’s largest union of registered nurses, has concentrated on—and often been successful at—mandating safe staffing ratios of nurses to hospital patients in several states and many individual institutions, the measure would extend staffing to nursing homes.

They need it. The coronavirus pandemic has killed 135,000-plus people in nursing homes, mostly patients, among a total U.S. death toll approaching 650,000, the two said. And they cited a non-partisan congressional study showing 71% of the nation’s 15,295 nursing homes have not been surveyed for

quality and consistency of care since the plague began.

“Nursing homes have been at the epicenter of the pandemic, making an already vulnerable population even more susceptible to illness, insufficient care, and, for far too many, neglect,” Neal said in a statement as he introduced the measure.

“Americans deserve to know their loved ones will be safe and well-cared for while staying in long-term care homes,” added Pallone. This legislation will increase oversight of nursing homes and provide the resources necessary to improve the quality of care across the nation.”

He also said the measure would “help prepare long-term care facilities for future public health emergencies, and provide a much-needed raise for long-term care workers.” He didn’t say how much the raise would be. Long-term care nursing home workers, most of them women, of color, immigrants, or both, are among the most-exploited U.S. workers.

The bill would require nursing homes “to meet minimum staffing standards, ensure an RN is available 24 hours a day, require homes to hire a full-time infection control and prevention specialist,” and provide more money through Medicaid to support the improvements, a fact sheet says.

“The bill also takes a number of steps to increase transparency and accountability by improving data collection, providing better information to residents and their families,” and financing state surveys and monitoring of nursing homes, it adds.

Another milestone in National Nurses United’s long campaign for safe staffing of U.S. healthcare facilities.

Workers win, ending Mondelez Oreo cookie strike

By Mark Gruenberg

You can buy Oreo cookies again. Just make sure they're made in the U.S.A., especially in Portland, Ore., not in Monterrey, Mexico.

The reason we specify Portland is it's where Mondelez workers, at that Nabisco cookie and snack plant, fed up with company refusal to bargain a new and better contract at a time of record earnings, started what became a national walkout by the firm's workers, all Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) members.

The workers at the firm's five U.S. snack plants, including Portland and Chicago, didn't get all they wanted, but they got an overwhelmingly ratified contract, said union President Anthony Shelton.

The workers demanded an end to forced 12-to-16-hour shifts, often back-to-back, known as "suicide shifts," and six-or-seven-day workweeks. They wanted better wages and benefits, restoring their pensions, which Mondelez had replaced with "an inferior program" in 2018, and improved overtime and health insurance provisions.

BCTGM did not disclose specifics of what it won. But moreperfectunion.us, a pro-worker video website, reported the contract includes a 60-cents-per-hour wage increase for each year in its four-year term, a \$5,000 signing bonus for all employees, and eliminating two-tiered health insurance.

BCTGM argued Mondelez can afford to be generous, as the coronavirus pandemic drove the country indoors, snacking away. Its revenue last quarter was \$6.64 billion, 12% more than the equivalent quarter of a year before, and its year-on-year revenue increased 3%.

Ese ambientalismo que llevamos por dentro

By FABIÁN CAPECCHI

Estamos hechos de tierra, viento y agua del río.

Si pudiéramos asomarnos a simple vista dentro de nosotros, notaríamos de inmediato cuán natural y cercano nos resulta a los Latinos la idea de la conservación y justicia medioambiental. Es algo que llevamos impreso en nuestro ADN, tatuado en el alma desde hace muchas generaciones y que a veces nos damos cuenta que continúa allí.

La relación de los pueblos originarios de América con el medio ambiente es tan antigua y estrecha como la historia misma. La madre tierra, Pachamama en lenguaje Quechua, Qtxu' Tx'otx' para los Mayas o Tlaltenana para los Nahuas, son deidades que representaban a una poderosa relación espiritual, social y económica los unía a sus tierras ancestrales.

Ese cordón umbilical invisible que une a todos los seres vivientes con el medio ambiente, representa el equilibrio entre el sol, el cielo y la tierra, es la conciencia de que todas las cosas, hasta el más minúsculo ser, las montañas, ríos, el océano, animales, plantas y rocas tienen su importancia y están inseparablemente conectados.

Nuestros pueblos originarios utilizaban los recursos que proveía la tierra, como la madera o el agua, de manera moderada; cazaban, pescaban o recolectaban lo estrictamente necesario para la supervivencia de sus pueblos, teniendo el cuidado de no sobreexplotar los recursos, y siempre agradecían lo que tomaban. Comprendían, no sin errores, cuánto dependían de ese medio ambiente, y si éste era degradado simplemente ellos mismos sufrían las consecuencias.

Los métodos vigentes para prote-

ger las áreas naturales utilizados han resultado muy controversiales. Estos ignoran completamente a las comunidades que viven en las áreas protegidas como si no existieran o peor aún, los expulsan, de forma abierta o encubierta, despreciando sus costumbres y el valioso conocimiento que les había permitido mantener ese equilibrio donde naturaleza y comunidades conviven en armonía.

Las prácticas ecológicas ancestrales, por ejemplo en la agricultura tradicional han demostrado ser más eficientes y respetuosas del medio, pues no están basadas en obtener renta sino en la sustentabilidad de las comunidades: es la forma natural para preservar la tierra, el agua y el aire.

El concepto de justicia medioambiental no es nuevo, solo que ahora viene con un nuevo envoltorio y otro nombre. Siempre ha estado entre nosotros, creciendo, nutriéndose, esperando volver a ser invocado a través de la educación y el activismo, a fin de reunir de nuevo el mundo natural con el nuestro, pues somos uno solo.

Las comunidades indígenas de todos los países deben ser consideradas parte del medio ambiente, y por lo tanto ser protegidas. Somos parte de ellas. Nuestra cultura, costumbres y esa relación ecológica no debe ser olvidada, ni sustituida por otras.

Durante estas próximas cuatro semanas celebramos la hispanidad y los pueblos Indígenas y el Sierra Club se integra como uno solo para apoyar la diversidad, el respeto por nuestra herencia ancestral, la igualdad de derechos y la necesaria integración de esa riquísima cultura como un valioso aporte a esa unidad indivisible que aspiramos a ser como nación.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523

Email: contact@peoplesworld.org