



UUJEC News & Views: Summer 2023



| newsletter@uujec.org | Sally Jane Gellert, editor

On Demand at General Assembly: June 21 to 25 (See page 2 for details.)

Our Action of Immediate Witness

CODE RED for Humanity

US military spending is nearly half the world total, even without war, making it the world's largest institutional emitter of Greenhouse Gases. Therefore, UUs are urged to demand better monitoring and reporting of these emissions and to join coalitions to reduce, not just warfare, but US military activities, bases, and production, both in the US and abroad.

Proposed by Dick Burkhart, partnering with Cindy Piester; UUs for a Just Economic Community (lead group); Veterans for Peace Climate Crisis and Militarism Project; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 'US Earth Democracy Committee', also its 'International Environmental Working Group'.

Many UU groups have supported prior work on this project, including UUs for Social Justice, UU Service Committee, UU Ministry for Earth, UU Young Adults for Climate Justice, UU BIPOC Caucus on Climate Justice, the UU Peace Ministry, and the UUA Create Climate Justice Net.

The link to the full AIW text and GA information is at <https://uujec.net/ga-2023>

UUJEC's 1989 Founding Expanded Principles Statement

Have you seen the expanded principles that were created at UUJEC's founding in 1989 at the Rowe Center? Check out our new video with history and new information about us, where they are articulated: <https://youtu.be/iwgVePIGj04> (the video is also in our Whova exhibit booth).

Meet Us at GA!

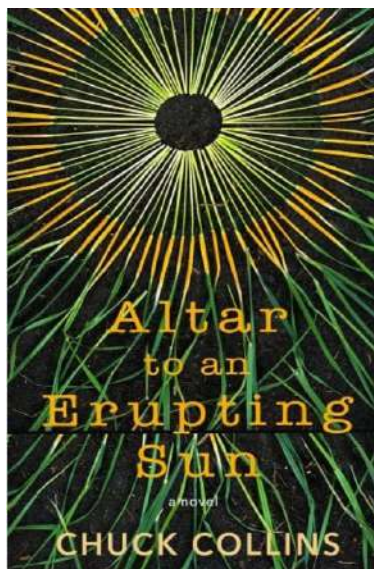
There are at least 3 ways to chat with us at General Assembly:

- At our booth: live at #203, and in our "booth" in the Whova Virtual Exhibit Hall
- At a Meet-Up—watch Whova's Meet-Up section for the specifics
- Community section of Whova; use the interest for a Just Economic Community or search for us by name.
- We're on discuss.org, though not in a particular space. We are fairly active, though, so our paths are likely to cross. Enjoy!

Annual Meeting: Chuck Collins

UUJEC Advisory Board Member Chuck Collins knows a lot about income and wealth inequality. He has written a number of books and many articles on the subject and its injustices, including unequal distribution of environmental harm, and the greed of much of "the 1%", which has stalled emergency action to limit climate chaos. He addresses that issue in his latest book (his first novel) *Altar to an Erupting Sun*.

Chuck will join us at the UUJEC annual meeting, Saturday, July 15th at 2 P.M. EDT (1/12 NOON/11 A.M.) to discuss the moral necessity of taking action, and where the limits are—how far is too far? Is there a "too far" at all? What would you consider doing?



Save the Date!

The UUJEC is working with other UU groups focussed on climate to plan a conference around the Farm Bill and related urgent climate issues—watch our social media and e-mails for info.

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UUJEC @ GA! Booth 203 & Whova

Our Workshops

Next Steps into Antiracism and Reparations

Speakers: UUJEC Board Member **Carl W. McCargo (M.S.), Rev Dr. Kristen L. Harper, and Nina Kavin** We'll explore our society's "isms", such as racism, sexism, classism, etc. These are mere symptoms of our culture's real pathology: refusal to face its legacy of chattel enslavement. We'll show individuals, congregations, and antiracism teams, healthy concepts and strategies in this introduction to our 6-part workshop, which begins the healing from that past legacy of crimes against humanity. Join us at GA and beyond to come to the rescue of our ailing culture.

Gray Panthers & Raging Grannies

Speakers: **Randy Block, Rev. Barbara Meyers, Cindy Piester, and Sally Jane Gellert; Moderator: Terry Lowman** Focused on senior citizen radicals and with an emphasis on UU elders who are working on the programs that interest the UUJEC. The list includes antimilitary campaigns, antiracism, and the Green New Deal. Encourage multigenerational understanding as your congregation works for justice. In this program, radical elders who are active in Unitarian Universalist programs for social justice focus their attention on anti-racism work, economic justice, climate change, and LGBTQ concerns. How can young and old help each other?

Wellness & Mutual Aid

Speakers: **Astoria Nickerson, Nancy Hoffman, Rev. Barbara Meyers, and Rachel Myslivy; Moderator: Rev. Robert Murphy** Congregations are organizing for personal, social, and environmental wellness. Mutual aid moves congregations beyond paternalism and charity and towards partnership, empowerment, and political change. The wellness concept encourages healthy relationships. Be the change that you want to see in the world. This program provides helpful resources.

Working with Labor

Speakers: **Clayola Brown, Denise Moorehead, Terry Lowman, and Carlos Jimenez; Moderator: Terry Lowman** Clayola Brown, tells her life story that led her to be President of the A Philip Randolph Institute. Carlos Jimenez, Denise Moorehead and Terry Lowman discussed how unions are leaders in human rights and social justice.

For Pride Month

This little TikTok clip (<https://bit.ly/3Moi1f>) says so much about where we are as a culture. As adults fall all over themselves to protect those "innocent children" from the concept that two people can love each other, no matter the gender, the kids already know that is O.K. There's merchandise galore (<https://bit.ly/3Oc6FHi>) from Target, Walmart and almost everyone else—and the commercials (YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3pIydcQ>) have gotten a lot more gay.



Some politicians are trying to get votes by beating up the LGBTQA community, but they're merely making it a little more challenging, particularly for those without computers and internet. The numbers (Gallup poll: <https://bit.ly/453bl8g>) aren't going down, either. In the late 90s, no one had given much thought to same-sex marriage, but all of a sudden laws were being passed banning gay marriage. Unwittingly, politicians promoted same-sex marriage by banning it.

It's good to be in the company of UUs who are working hard to respect the dignity and worth of every person. Hate can beat people up quickly, but it doesn't stick very well. Love wins more hearts in the long run.

*Terry Lowman, pronouns he, him, his
Gay father and grandfather
(patriarch of three generations
in the LGBTQA community)
Co-chair, UUJEC*

Medicare for All Reintroduced

Senator Bernie Sanders, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell just reintroduced Medicare for All in the U.S. House and Senate along with 112 House cosponsors and 14 Senate cosponsors!

More than half of the House Democratic Caucus has cosponsored Medicare for All, which is supported by a large majority of the population: 69% , more than two-thirds, are in favor.

COVID-19 has exposed how vulnerable we are without a program such as Medicare for All. While health insurance remains tied to employment as a "benefit", workers are much less free to change jobs or to speak out about issues at work.

From Public Citizen:

One out every 11 Americans does not have health insurance.

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Medicare Advantage plans restrict our choice of doctor, make us seek prior authorization for medically necessary care, and hit us with high out-of-pocket costs.

That's a problem.

The Medicare for All Act offers free choice of doctor, zero insurance paperwork, and zero out-of-pocket costs.

That's more like it.

PNHP Physicians for a national health program

Medicare for All

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Think about the people you know.

Co-workers. Neighbors. Folks from church. Your children's classmates and their families. The school bus driver. Everyone who works at the coffee shop, the grocery store, the movie theater. Your own family and friends.

Statistically, 1 out of every 11 people you know does not have health insurance.

Many, many others have only inadequate, bare-bones coverage.

And — as of last week, with . . . COVID-19 [no longer considered] a health emergency — millions more are losing coverage they had received through Medicaid during the pandemic.

Farm Bill & Climate Conference: September 24–26, Washington, D.C.

Bernie Sanders says,

The function of a rational and humane health care system is to provide quality care for all as a human right. Yet in America today, our health care system is designed to make tens of billions of dollars every year for the insurance companies and the drug companies while people go bankrupt trying to afford their medical bills.

At a time when every other major country on earth guarantees health care for all, it is time for the U.S. to do the same.

See this article from *The Nation* about dangerous Medicare "Advantage": <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/medicare-advantage-health-care/>

Letters!

UUJEC gets requests from various organizations to sign on to a variety of letters. Independently-active board members also suggest sign-ons for consideration by the UUJEC. Recently, we have signed letters that

- support the **EPA Toxics Release Inventory**, created by Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986.
- ask Congress to zero out funding to **end fossil-fuel leasing** by the **Bureau of Land Management** and **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management** in FY2024 (lead groups: Center for Biological Diversity, Climate Hawks Vote, Food and Water Watch, Friends of the Earth, and Oil Change International).
- support **Oregon bill SB 85-1**, which would enact a moratorium on the permitting of certain new and expanding confined animal feeding operations (**CAFOs**).
- urge Representatives to categorically oppose H.R. 1, the so-called **Lower Energy Costs Act**, a sweeping attack on this country's bedrock environmental laws and an unequivocal rejection of every principle of **environmental justice**. Rather than attempt to cover every attack, the letter tried to highlight some of the worst attacks.
- Oppose **carbon capture** as nonviable, a move by the fossil-fuel industry to continue

to increase profits; most carbon-capture proposals use the carbon for extracting more fossil fuels, rather than actually sequestering and storing the carbon.

- call on the **Biden administration** to take meaningful action ahead of the **United Nations Secretary General's September Climate Ambition Summit** by using your executive authority to stop expanding oil, gas and coal production, the core driver of the climate emergency.
- ask USDA Sec'y. Vilsack not to make changes to the **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** that would systematically advantage factory farm gas and wood biomass projects, giving priority to these harmful projects if they are in "disadvantaged" or "distressed" communities, thereby exacerbating **environmental injustice**.
- call on the Biden administration to ensure that the **G7** gathering does not endorse investments in liquified natural gas (**LNG**).
- support the Earth Act to Stop Climate Pollution by 2030, a.k.a. "**The Earth Bill**", introduced as HR 538.
- support the confirmation of Julie Su as Secretary of Labor.
- urge President Biden to declare a **climate emergency**.
- request that Ambassador Tai work to ensure that the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) support the dignity of work and put people before profit

Hospitals, Nursing Homes, & More Fixing U.S. American Hospitals

We have all heard about the shortages of medical professionals, doctors, nurses, and aides are retiring in large numbers as a result of stress from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as proper protection was often lacking. In addition, cost of education, reduced autonomy in corporate settings, and



sometimes fear of lawsuits have cut the ranks. The graphic above is from a flyer advertising a screening of *American Hospitals* by Northwest Bronx Indivisible Health Justice. Although the discussion is “NewYork-centric”, the problems are national, so the discussion might be valuable to all; the film surely should be. The screening of this documentary, which sheds light on the state of the US Hospital system, is also sponsored by Our Revolution and NYPAN. Following the movie (which is less than an hour) there will be a panel discussion about the issues raised in the

film, what we can do to change this system, and in particular how the NY Health Act is the solution that we all need.

See the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqUs1GUgHB4> and register at this link: <https://actionnetwork.org/events/free-screening-of-american-hospital>.

Nursing Home Staffing

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care has put out an issue brief on the importance of safe staffing ratios in nursing homes, particularly the number of registered nurses (RNs), including the finding that a minimum of 4.1 hours per resident day (hprd) is important to ensure quality care. Facilities that adhere to this standard make up the vast majority of highest-rated facilities.

They report that most residents need a minimum of 0.75 hours of care performed by an Registered Nurse (RN) and 0.55 hours of care performed by a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), with the remaining 2.8 hours of care performed by a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Needs vary by patient acuity, with many patients needing more care than the minimum—the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services itself acknowledges this with their Patient-Driven Payment Model, which assigns payment levels based on a resident’s care needs. Despite this difference in payment, CMS does little to assure that this extra care is provided.

The brief concludes that “[i]t is essential that [the new federal] standard provide minimum staffing levels based on resident acuity and be broken down into nursing staff to resident ratios. A minimum staffing standard will save countless lives and result in better health outcomes for nursing home residents across the country.”

Join UUJEC at GA— we’re on Whova and at Booth 203 in the exhibit hall



It’s a busy GA for us; not only do we have the Article II proposal and Actions of Immediate Witness, the usual workshops and Actions of Immediate Witness, but we also have a board member running for office, and all the events we have added a new video to our Whova booth. We will be having a meet-up during GA, and we have a booth in the in-person Exhibit Hall, where you can find good discussion and information about our annual meeting on July 11th. Please stop by!

We are supporting—

Actions of Immediate Witness: **CODE Red** for Humanity • Organizing for Health Equity

UUJEC Board Member Dick Burkhart for Nominating Committee