



UUJEC News & Views: Autumn 2026

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

UUJEC Web Seminars: Issues that Affect Us All

Sept. 24: The Military University: How Universities Embed Students into the Military-Industrial Complex

At every stage of higher education, undergraduate to advanced degrees, research universities attract young scholars by the hundreds of thousands, promising a chance to work on intellectually stimulating questions and credentials for building a lifelong career. This becomes more pronounced as students gain specialized skills and work on tougher, unanswered problems. So, we are faced with an alarming precedent in which research universities collude with the military-industrial complex in increasingly invasive ways.



Students' technological advances are integrated into life-ending rather than life-affirming equipment, and schools funnel graduating students directly into corporate defense. Even worse, in the U.S.A. the average university stands as a byproduct of colonialism by default, built atop stolen indigenous land. Whether the university is rotten at its core or whether it is becoming tainted, the wielded knowledge and collective voice of its primary participants, the students, can bring change toward a more peaceful world.

Crystal Kim is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served from 2013 to 2019. In 2016, she was stationed as a Marine embassy guard at the U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem. During that experience, she witnessed the Israeli government's mistreatment and apartheid against the Palestinian people, especially during her trips into the West Bank. After leaving service, Crystal educated herself on the politics and history of Palestine and became aware of the degree of U.S. military's involvement in the Middle East and everywhere else. She is now a Ph.D. student in physics at the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB). After the current genocide in Palestine began in 2023, Crystal, along with a large group

from Students for Justice in Palestine, helped to found UCSB Researchers Against War (RAW), a majority-graduate-student group seeking to unveil and sever the ties between university research and militarism. RAW has both presented information on UCSB's hidden military ties to hundreds of student and dampened the military-industrial complex's ability to recruit on campus.

Oct. 14: National Single Payer Town Hall



National Single Payer is hosting a town hall to discuss their campaign for the reform that was not quite achieved with 'Obamacare', the Patient Protection-Affordable Care Act in 2010. They say,

On this 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, we declare it is time for the people to rise up, organize, take control of the health care system, and run it in the interest of the people instead of in the interest of profit. It is time we declare our independence from the medical-industrial complex keeping us in chains.

What is the medical-industrial complex? A sprawling alliance of insurance companies and middlemen stealing from the public coffers, pharmaceutical companies holding us hostage, private equity and venture capital owning the delivery of care, profit-generating "non-profit" health and hospital systems, compromised academic centers and endowed non-governmental organizations, unprincipled medical organizations that choose expediency over patients, and all politicians who accept financial contributions to work for the industry instead of for the people. Their profits depend on keeping health care commodified and the rest of us in chains.

Our lives depend on declaring our independence from their profits.

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Register at <https://tinyurl.com/uujecthursdays>. One registration for all events!

Our calendar of events is at <https://uujec.net/calendar>.

Text of Starbucks Workers United Letter Calling for a Boycott—supported by unions!



Just before Labor Day Weekend, Starbucks Workers United put out a call for a boycott, something they have resisted doing since the first stores were unionized. They wanted to protect what could be good jobs. However, patience has worn thin. This text was posted to Twitter/X. Along with the Chicago Teachers Union and the Connecticut AFL-CIO, UUJEC supports these workers. Here is the SWU statement:

We, the 12,000 & growing members of Starbucks Workers United, call on everyone who stands with working people to boycott Starbucks until they finalize a contract with union baristas and stop union-busting.

WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR IS SIMPLE: a minimum \$17/hr wage, enough hours to live on, better staffing in our stores, and basic workplace protections. Every year, our living costs rise but our wages don't keep up—a growing pressure many American workers are feeling as corporate greed accelerates unchecked in our country. Starbucks is banking on customers' blind loyalty to the integrity and values this company once stood for in order to keep squeezing them for profits. At a time when working-class people across the country are struggling in a challenging economy, it is no longer possible to be both a Starbucks customer and in support of workers; choosing to spend money at Starbucks is choosing a law-breaking corporation over the baristas who make your coffee everyday exactly as you ask for it.

STARBUCKS HAS VIOLATED U.S. LABOR LAW MORE THAN ANY OTHER COMPANY IN MODERN HISTORY—the NLRB and its judges have found that Starbucks committed hundreds of labor violations and there are currently more than 550 unresolved unfair labor practice charges still pending against the company. Instead of finalizing a fair and reasonable union contract, Starbucks has repeatedly demonstrated a lack of care for the workers who fuel the company's profits by wasting millions of dollars on AI and technology that doesn't work, launching countless gimmicky drinks designed to distract from real problems, and inventing pointless policies that do nothing but make our jobs harder. This ongoing, irrational behavior by Starbucks and its refusal to settle a fair union contract with workers leaves us with no other choice than to call for a boycott.

We know when working people stand up together, we win.

NO CONTRACT? NO COFFEE.



SWU DEMANDS:

- Starbucks must finalize a fair union contract with 12,000 local baristas and growing.
- Workers must be able to survive on a Starbucks paycheck. That starts with a union contract that locks in better pay, better staffing, and enough hours to live on.
- Starbucks has to stop breaking the law. They remain the biggest violator of U.S. labor law in modern history.

<https://www.boycottstarbucks.net/#union-coffee>

Labor Notes

Movie Review: Coyote vs. ACME

If you're looking for an appropriate labor-oriented movie—not too heavy, please—try *Coyote vs. ACME*.

The movie is about cartoon characters who sue the largest corporation in the world because of defective products. Economic-justice advocates will appreciate the satire.

There may be a story behind the story, as Warner Brothers is involved with the movie and is trying merge with Paramount to become part of one of the largest corporations in the United States. According to some reports, Warner Brothers tried to suppress its own movie in order to claim a business loss on its corporate taxes. This maybe just an urban legend. You can do your own investigation.

—Rev. Robert Murphy,
UUJEC Advisory Board

Pay Ratios

Although the SWU statement does not talk about this, the annual AFL-CIO Paycheck report notes that Starbucks CEO had an annual income of almost \$31 million, the median Starbucks worker pay was \$17,279. That is a ratio of 1794:1. The CEO–median-worker gap has been increasing each year. This year's AFL-CIO Paycheck report notes that the average ratio among the SP500 companies was "only" 285:1, still an increase from the prior year's 268:1. These figures do not include the pay for Elon Musk for the past year, which would have increased the gap into the stratosphere. You can check out your favorite company at <https://aflcio.org/paywatch>.

| David Delk, UUJEC Board

**Next Peace-Equity-Climate TF meeting:
September 15, 5:30 P.M. EDT (4:30/3:30/2:30)**

Update: Healthcare Task Force

The struggle for wellness and health equity continues. A recent study by National Public Radio and Boston University indicates that as many as 9,000 people per year may die because of heat-related causes. This is 5 times the estimate reported by national government sources. Heat-related deaths are associated with inadequate medical care, inadequate housing, occupational exposures, and the impact of climate change.

At the 2026 General Assembly, UUJEC asked congregations to remain active during the summer months. A video about mutual aid and community health protection was presented. During a season of heat waves, wildfires, tornadoes, and other disasters, congregations can be useful. Wellness checks, community meals, and other activities can be encouraged. Churches and other religious organizations can develop cooling stations.

The very young, the very old, and people with disabilities and chronic conditions are on the frontlines for the impact of climate change. Many of these people are unhoused or living in inadequate housing. Systemic racism, poverty, attacks on migrant workers, and other social and political problems make a bad situation even worse. The United States government has reduced its support for health and safety programs.



The United States has a punitive culture in which individuals with disabilities are often locked into institutions because of their disabilities. The Unitarian Universalist Association is drafting a major social-witness statement about prisons. Healthcare advocates are preparing testimony. UUJEC members recognize 3 major needs. There is a need to provide adequate mental and physical health services for people with disabilities and for other individuals in the United States. Adequate health care services are needed for people who are institutionalized. When individuals are released from prisons and similar places, the need for health care continues.

If you would like to testify on the UUA's proposed social witness statement about prisons, please contact Rev. Bob Murphy at murphydalzell@aol.com. Bob has information about prisons, people with disabilities, and the need to create a culture that works for wellness.

The UUJEC is an advocate for economic justice. In addition to calling for universal medical insurance for all people in the United States, the UUJEC works for affordable and safe housing, food justice, and labor-union and tenant organizing. Several congregations involved with the UUJEC celebrated the 2026 Labor Day weekend by expressing support for working people. The Sunday service for the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tampa focused much of its attention on women in the workforce. Gloria Steinheim, Carla Jeffrey, and Dolly Parton were three of the women, recently deceased, who were advocates for justice in the United States.

Next Healthcare Task Force meeting: October 14, 5:30 P.M. EDT (4:30/3:30/2:30)

Dolly Parton, whose generosity and compassion is a model for all, will be missed. With her support of education and literacy, of healthcare and medical research, her singing, including Nine to Five lyrics for labor rights, and the Dollywood Foundation have done much to make the world a better place.

Medicare Open Enrollment—Confusing Comparison Shopping

Every year, Medicare's Open Enrollment period runs from October through early December, and new 65-year-olds must make decisions that will affect their healthcare access for decades to come. We have committed to an annual Web seminar with a health professional or advocate to separate the facts from the advertising—and there is a lot of advertising, particularly of what the insurance industry calls "Medicare Advantage"—though it is neither Medicare nor an Advantage. These are private insurance policies masquerading as our public program. They offer a lot of shiny trinkets, but for serious illness,

coverage varies widely. This year, we are joining National Single Payer for their National Town Hall. For more information and to register for the program on October 14th at 8 P.M. EDT, visit <https://nationalsinglepayer.org/>). Other good sources are <https://justcareusa.org> (Just Care USA), and <https://www.healthcare-now.org/> (Healthcare-Now!). Also recommended are the official SHIPs in each state—the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs, which are designed to be unbiased. Join us and NSP on October 14th, and check our YouTube channel, @uujec, for our programs from previous years.

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 the following letters:

- Faith-Based Sign on **Opposed to Enforcement-Focused Reconciliation Bill**,
- Endorsing the **Banking on Climate Chaos 2026** Fossil Fuel Finance Report Card,
- Telling RWE to stand firm against the Trump Administration and NOT abandon its **off-shore wind** leases,
- Calling on Defense Committees to **Oppose Pentagon Budget Request**,
- Urging **microplastics monitoring** as well as including microplastics in the CCL 6 (Sixth Contaminant Candidate List),
- Joining the **DOGE Accountability** campaign launched by Stop the Money Pipeline, Communications Workers of America (CWA), and Tesla Takedown,
- Opposing a Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy (DCE) coastal-use permit for the **Rome Pipeline**, which would ship oil from Kaskida, BP's first new oilfield project in the Gulf since Deepwater Horizon, drilled at even greater depth
- Expressing national concerns for California's **Carbon Capture Rules** as California Air Resources Board is starting a process to allow carbon capture infrastructure across the state,
- Asking Congress to **strengthen pipeline safety** protections
- Saying NO to FERC's **proposed blanket certificate regulations**,
- Calling on Congress to protect consumers and **stop fossil-fuel industry profiteering**,
- Uplifting environmental-justice concerns with EPA **National Environmental Protection Act** (NEPA) regulations,
- Endorsing the **Afghanistan TPS Act**,
- Supporting the **House Cure Hepatitis C Act**,
- Asking Congress to **reject funding cuts to the Chemical Safety Board**,
- HCV Coalition Letter asking Congress to pass the **Cure Hepatitis C Act of 2025**,
- Asking the Senate to include in the federal spending bill measures to **block any future attempts to use partisan rescissions**,
- Rejecting the House Homeland Security Committee's **Unfounded Inquiries into 200+ Nonprofit Organizations**.

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