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truthout
annual report 2017-2018





MISSION STATEMENT

Truthout works to spark action by revealing systemic injustice and providing a platform for transformative ideas through in-depth investigative reporting and critical analysis. With a powerful, independent voice, we will spur the revolution in consciousness and inspire the direct action that is necessary to save the planet and humanity.

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE

Truthout is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing independent news and commentary on a daily basis. In order to remain free of bias and adhere to high editorial standards, Truthout accepts no advertising or corporate backing. Instead, we depend on our readers, and a handful of foundations who support our mission, to make our work possible: Readers and foundations who donate to Truthout do so in their knowledge that our editorial principles and judgment are in no way influenced by those donations.

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LETTER TO OUR READERS

For Truthout, our first full year of covering the Trump presidency was an exercise in dedication. This year challenged us to double down and find new reservoirs of courage, creativity, energy and perspective. When the GOP and Trump administration came for our health care, we faced the challenge with hard-hitting news stories breaking down the facts, and provided a vision for real health care for all with our Fighting for Our Lives series. As Trump's EPA worked to dismantle climate protections, we exposed the policy changes happening quietly below the surface – while continuing to investigate and report on all the ways in which climate disruption is already fundamentally altering our planet. As mass shootings devastated communities around the country and the Republicans stood steadfastly with the gun lobby, we provided fearless critiques, coverage of the growing youth-led movements against gun violence, and creative solutions that extended beyond the limited and often less-than-effective reforms offered by the Democrats. As draconian immigration policies threw millions of people's lives into chaos, we brought the words of immigrant activists to our pages, plunging below the surface to reveal both the ravages of current policies and those policies' roots in this country's long history of anti-immigrant governance. As the Trump presidency continued to fan the flames of far-right extremism and white nationalism, we provided trenchant analysis and reporting on the spread of fascist groups on college campuses and among other political movements, and highlighted activist opposition efforts at every turn. As the president barreled our country toward the brink of new wars and exacerbated our existing wars, we intensified our reporting on both the US's disastrous foreign policy actions and domestic military expansion – and provided a platform for longtime peace activists to put forth their own plans for how to shift power and foster a just world.

Though the 24-hour news cycle is whirring forward faster than ever before, we at Truthout have made a committed effort not to lose our long-term vision. We know that while the duration of a White House cabinet appointment or an abrupt policy change may be short these days, the struggle for social justice is always a long-term endeavor. Therefore, we're working harder than ever to bring the thoughts and inspirations of activists and visionaries onto our pages, to shine a light toward the future we're dreaming of.

In our Visions of 2018 series, launched in February, we've asked movement leaders to paint a portrait of what they'd like to build over the next year, in arenas from climate justice to disability rights to labor struggles to interpersonal relationships to mass incarceration to gender justice. We have also dedicated ourselves to covering direct action efforts playing out around the country, from teacher strikes to student walkouts to congressional disruptions to the hands-on movement to end money bail. Well beyond Standing Rock, we have reported on the ongoing anti-pipeline battles that have emerged around the country. And while the mainstream press has largely moved on from coverage of the Movement for Black Lives, we've remained dedicated to covering that movement and the many other racial justice struggles transpiring every day.

This year, we published our second book in Truthout's imprint with Haymarket Books: Noam Chomsky's *Optimism Over Despair*. It may seem like a strange time for optimism, but in our work, we take Chomsky's words to heart: "We have two choices. We can be pessimistic, give up and help ensure that the worst will happen. Or we can be optimistic, grasp the opportunities that surely exist and maybe help make the world a better place."

You, our readers, are our constant source of optimism and inspiration. For over 16 years your support has enabled us to publish the work needed to fight injustice and create a better world. We have a long way to go and hope that you'll continue to be there with us every step of the way.

Maya and Ziggy



Maya Schenwar
Editor-in-Chief



Ziggy West Jeffery
Managing Director

TRUTHOUT AT A GLANCE

2017 marked
16 years of **fearless,
independent news.**

C 81 percent of Truthout's budget
is funded by donations.



105 million
impressions &
2 million
engagements

across Facebook, Twitter
and Instagram

Our followers grew by **26 percent** to
nearly a **million fans** on Facebook,
Twitter and Instagram.



Truthout has readers in
nearly every country

Top 10:

United States
Canada
United Kingdom
Australia
France
Germany
India
Mexico
Netherlands
New Zealand

**MORE THAN 5.8MM READERS
FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD**

5,878,561

Unique visitors

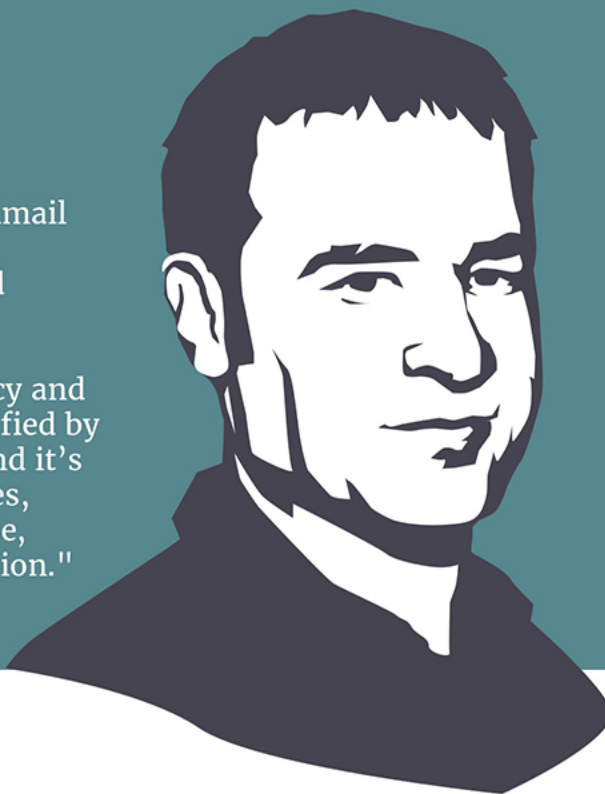
20,306,328

Pageviews

THE IZZY AWARD

In March 2018, Truthout staff reporter Dahr Jamail was awarded the Izzy Award for Excellence in Independent Journalism for his exemplary and in-depth coverage throughout 2017.

As the judges commented, "There is an urgency and passion in Dahr Jamail's reporting that is justified by the literally earth-changing subject matter. And it's supported by science and on-the-scene sources, whether covering ocean pollution, sea level rise, deafening noise pollution or Fukushima radiation."



"Truthout is a place where we can go with confidence to find the key ingredient often missing in the mainstream press: the truth."

-Medea Benjamin

"Truthout [provides] a very valuable service for those who hope to understand the world, and for activists committed to changing it in the ways that are essential for a livable future."

-Noam Chomsky



ECONOMY & LABOR



In the past year, there has been an unprecedented movement of red state teacher strikes — seriously challenging post-recession education cuts. Kate Doyle Griffiths commented on the West Virginia spark that ignited a nationwide movement, spearheaded by women: “The teachers’ victory, after a nine-day strike, is a clear victory for women in the state, as well as for everyone else in West Virginia: It shows the power of women workers in motion.” Staff reporter Candice Bernd reported on how the walkouts spread to Kentucky, where teachers called in sick and closed schools in more than 20 counties, and to Oklahoma, where strikers managed to pass a tax increase package providing about \$450 million to teachers, school staff and state workers, raising the average teacher’s pay by about \$6,100. As the teacher revolt grew, Bernd covered the first statewide strike ever held by educators in Arizona, where teachers demanded the legislature’s immediate concession of any new tax cuts. Sarah Jaffe interviewed music teacher Noah Karvelis with Arizona Educators United,

who commented: “It is a grassroots, educator-led movement, and the union has been incredibly respectful of that and they realize that there is a lot of power in that and they let us stay in that spot.”

As Trump nominated a group of union-busting, anti-worker politicians to his Labor Department in November, Michael Arria commented, “It seems probable that the labor movement will soon have committed enemies in high places.” All too soon, he proved to be right. In an attack of Obama’s Fair Labor Standards Act, Arria reported, Trump’s

“Immigrant rights and labor rights are explicitly tied together. You can’t have one without the other.”

Labor Department said that employees don’t own their tips. The president’s tip-pooling move gave more power to businesses in an industry where wage theft is already rampant. Arria also covered the Supreme Court’s *Janus v. AFSCME* case, which he called the most important labor

case in decades. Exploring the racist history of “right-to-work” laws, he wrote: “In many ways, the *Janus* case is the culmination of a specific legal attack that the right has been launching against unions for the past decade.”

Poverty is deepening and the standard of living is declining in the US, even as the national unemployment rate has hit historically low levels, gathered C.J. Polychroniou in an interview with economist Robert Pollin. Pollin debunked Republican claims of “labor market flexibility” boosting employment, and called it a euphemism for business owners’ freedom to “do with

their workers as they wish.” Polychroniou also interviewed professor of economics Gerald Epstein, who commented on the repeal of the Dodd-Frank

Act: “We are more likely to see souped-up versions of the toxic, speculative activities that led to the great financial crisis.” Jonathan Rosenblum reported on the strides of the Poor People’s Campaign, envisioning justice beyond the Fight for \$15: “In embracing today’s Poor People’s Campaign, we can live up to the call of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for a radical movement, a struggle to redistribute not just goods, but power.”

The multifaceted labor movement fought not only exploitative policies, but also internal divisions. On May Day, C.J. Polychroniou interviewed Professor Jayati Ghosh, who commented: “The trouble is that, instead of workers everywhere uniting against the common enemy/oppressor, they are turned against one another People are persuaded that their problems are not the result of the unjust system but are because of the ‘other’ — defined by nationality, race, gender, religion, ethnic or linguistic identity.” Despite such neoliberal divide-and-conquer rhetorics, workers achieved solidarity by organizing across difference. Reflecting on Fred Glass’s *From Mission to Microchip: A History of the California Labor Movement*, David Bacon highlighted the long history of alliances in the state: “Glass sees racism, discrimination against women and anti-immigrant pogroms as the fundamental social barriers that had to be fought in order for a progressive change to take place.” Encouraging addressing these intra-class

differences, Bacon concluded: “Perhaps the lesson here is that left-wing politics, debate and class conflict are not harmful to workers and unions, but in fact the very things that help them find direction and organize.”

While spontaneous, social media-coordinated efforts have stood out in the past year, the fight for unions has continued alongside them. Truthout amplified the voices of organizers who have reimagined a modern unionization movement. In New York City, George Miranda, president of the 120,000-member Teamsters Joint Council 16, said

“People are persuaded that their problems are not the result of the unjust system but are because of the ‘other’ — defined by nationality, race, gender, religion, ethnic or linguistic identity.”

to Jaffe: “Immigrant rights and labor rights are explicitly tied together. You can’t have one without the other.” Working towards becoming a “sanctuary union” to fight deportations of members, Teamsters “are not going to cooperate with the immigration service whatsoever in going after our members.” Andrew Tillett-Saks explored the victories of the Hilton Stamford workers in Connecticut, who obliterated the company’s anti-union campaign in voting 110 to 5 for the union in December 2017. He wrote: “To begin a real process of rebuilding and growth, unions must first look internally as the Stamford hotel workers’ union did. Without a democratic and militant internal organization, unions will continue to be unable to mobilize the number of rank-and-file organizers needed to create a real movement.” Tatiana Cozzarelli interviewed Hilton Stamford housekeeper Maria Inés Orjuela, who said: “The union is just the first step. Now we need to fight for the contract. The union is a tool we can use to get better wages, have less rooms to clean and more benefits.”

Cozzarelli commented: “Stamford Hilton workers — while smaller in number than the West Virginia teachers that went on strike — express many of the same sentiments. They know they must trust in their own strength as workers to win the contract they want. They know that class unity across racial and language barriers is the key to winning, and just like in West Virginia, women are leading workplace struggles.”

EDUCATION & YOUTH



In February 2018, seventeen students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, were murdered by yet another angry young white man with an AR-15 rifle. The student-led movement that followed, brandishing slogans like #NeverAgain and #MarchForOurLives, rekindled a nation-wide gun violence debate. Truthout columnist William Rivers Pitt commented on the massacre's background: "The psychological and physical effects of the US's permanent state of militarism have created a siege mentality that is caustic to all of us. When all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." Given the National Rifle Association's close ties to Congress, he called the military and the NRA "two members of the Untouchable Class in the hierarchy of American power."

While the widespread protests focused on increased gun control, Truthout explored the comprehensive changes needed to challenge the roots of gun violence. Keeanga-Yamaguchi Taylor made clear that the Struggle for Black Lives is an integral part of the struggle against gun violence. However, in order for the protests to "grow into a social movement capable of fundamentally changing the gun violence and militarism that pervades American society and culture ... they will have to take up the ways that

Black people are disproportionately impacted by these phenomena." While the Movement for Black Lives has been received with skepticism among liberals for years, not least by demonizing the murder victims of police, these same progressives welcomed Parkland students with open arms. Taylor highlighted this juxtaposition, arguing that "radicals and activists shouldn't abandon the young people coming into political consciousness: they need to engage and educate these young people and, most importantly, be there. We have a role to play in expanding the discussion and forcing a discussion of race into the public conversations about gun violence and its tremendous range of victims."

Increased policing in schools does not make students safer, Truthout writers gathered, particularly not students of color. Kelly Hayes, reporting from Chicago, explored how some students demand community transformation: protestors holding signs stating bluntly that "Gun Control Is Not The Answer." Henry A. Giroux wrote that schools "have become zones of social abandonment — often modeled after prisons — that appear to exist in a state of perpetual danger and fear, especially for students marginalized by race and class, for whom violence operates routinely and in multiple ways." At the same time, he critiqued "the notion that schools are

simply black boxes mired in structures of domination,” and argued for the importance of critical pedagogy in an age of increasing authoritarianism. While “education can all too easily become a form of symbolic and intellectual violence that assaults rather than educates,” Giroux wrote, there is radical potential in critical pedagogical practices “rich with possibilities for understanding the classroom as a space that ruptures, engages, unsettles and inspires.”

Giroux also commented on Trump’s continuing attacks on immigrant youth, marking them as disposable and undeserving: “The call to end DACA is part of a broader racist anti-immigration agenda aimed at making America white again. The

current backlash against people of color, immigrant youth and those others marked by the registers of race and class are

not only heartless and cruel, they also invoke a throwback to the days of state-sponsored lynching and the imposed terror of the Ku Klux Klan.” Looking at the big picture, connecting guns with US culture of violence as a whole, he wrote, “there is more at stake here than an epidemic of gun violence, there is the central idea of the US as defined by carnage — violence that extends from the genocide of Native Americans and slavery to the rise of mass incarceration and the instances of state violence now sweeping across the US.”

White supremacy and fascism gained a foothold on colleges and universities in the past year, primarily through the younger “alt-right” movement — a movement spearheaded by Richard Spencer. Elizabeth King reported how “Operation Homeland” was launched in the beginning of December 2017 by Spencer, taking its inspiration from the “identitarian” movement in Europe. Instead of vulgar racism, the “alt-right” talks about the “right to difference,” and argues for “ethno-pluralism,” which they call a “nationalism for all people.” While the image of college campuses is one of progressive elitism, Shane Burley explored how white nationalism has always hid in academia. He and Kristina Khan continued, commenting on the spread of young fascist organization Turning Point USA: “The ‘alt-right’ targets universities because most are unable or unwilling to prohibit white nationalist and white supremacist ideas without serious legal battles.” In lieu of administrative

resistance, students refused the expansion of campus fascism and the increased policing that comes with it. “Students of color and leftist student groups are usually at the forefront of organizing against campus police,” reported King. On the same note, Maximilian Alvarez clarified: administrators didn’t defeat Richard Spencer, campus and community organizers did.

Youth organizing continued to go far beyond gun violence. As Dawson Barrett pointed out, teenagers were on the front lines of much of the widespread dissent characterizing the Trump era — despite having little political capital or economic power. From protesting Trump’s Muslim travel ban

“Millennials are far more likely to recognize the social injustices perpetrated against themselves and most Americans by a political economic system that increasingly benefits the wealthy few, while minimizing democracy and marginalizing the masses.”

in New York, to standing up against his Sanctuary ban in Texas, to showing up at the Women’s March in DC, young people kept defying the president’s agenda. Benjamin Balthaser, member of the South Side Chicago Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) Steering Committee, reported that a surge in membership of young people has made the DSA the largest socialist organization in the US since World War II. In Anthony DiMaggio’s words: “millennials are far more likely to recognize the social injustices perpetrated against themselves and most Americans by a political-economic system that increasingly benefits the wealthy few, while minimizing democracy and marginalizing the masses. Indeed, millennials are the key to any humane and democratic future for this country.”

Without a doubt, those of us coming of age under Trump have many reasons to be disillusioned with the United States’ so-called democracy — not least because of the education system itself. Carmela D’Amico wrote, “More than 65 years after the Supreme Court deemed racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional, the US’s education system remains a breeding ground for inequality.” Creston Davis, reporting that American student loan debt is now \$1.5 trillion, explained that “in today’s toxic neoliberal context; indeed today’s younger generation may be the first to earn less than their parents’ generation.” Protesting their educational institutions as well as society at large, millennials have proved a force to be reckoned with.

ENVIRONMENT



Under Scott Pruitt's first full year of leading the EPA, Truthout witnessed some truly devastating environmental policy changes. Daniel Ross delved deep into the dangers of toxic chemical exposure, investigating the ways in which waste harms already marginalized communities. He reported on how nuclear waste still smolders in sites across the US, how Pruitt has seriously delayed chemical safety rules, and how the government has refused to remove thousands of tons of potentially toxic chemical weapons dumped off US coasts. In a groundbreaking investigation, Ross exposed that millions of Americans are ingesting a chemical some experts believe has no safe exposure level. In other words, the invisible dangers of toxic chemical exposure have been largely ignored by our administration — "yet another symptom of how in our country we always put profit ahead of safety" according to Dr. Sally Hayati.

Staff reporter Mike Ludwig called attention to the Trump administration's under-the-radar environmental deregulation. While hurricanes devastated coastal communities and wildfires raged across the West, House Republicans were eagerly working to gut environmental regulations: Congress pushed nuclear energy without a clear plan for radioactive waste and Pruitt's EPA ruled to allow fracking waste dumping in the Gulf of Mexico and considered gutting lead rules even as water in schools tested positive. Ludwig reported on scandals in Trump's interior department, staff claiming that climate science is still "subject to debate" and other indications of the administration's inner chaos. In March 2018, not unrelated to such turmoil, it became clear that the US is poised to become the world's top oil producer and may dominate fossil fuel production globally by 2023.

Truthout highlighted the racialized dynamics of environmental degradation — as Mike Ludwig wrote, "reams of data show

that sources of industrial pollution are more likely to be located near low-income communities and neighborhoods of color." Devi Lockwood covered activists in Buzzard Point, DC, who vocalized the connections between environmental racism, health, and gentrification. And Mark Karlin interviewed Ashley Dawson, author of *Extreme Cities*, who explained that "the term 'climate apartheid' alludes to the retreat of global elites (who are responsible for the lion's share of carbon emissions) into various forms of lifeboats, while the global poor are left to sink or swim." The entanglement of mass incarceration and climate change became crystal clear as incarcerated firefighters fought California wildfires for wages at a fraction of minimum wage — in firefighter Selena Sanchez's words: "I'm not going to paint a pretty picture of it, they ran us like dogs."

Amid immediate crises, we never lost sight of the big picture of resistance. In an op-ed, Tim DeChristopher discussed the futility of "Big Green" activism. He called for protest to be "more localized, more diverse, more people involved, more experimentation. No goddamn mono-crop social movements!" C.J. Polychroniou interviewed economist Robert Pollin, who imagined ways to achieve zero emissions even if the federal government won't help, and highlighted how state policies can provide "just transitions" for workers and communities who will be affected by the necessary environmental transitions. William Rivers Pitt, reflecting on Katrina, Sandy, Harvey, Irma and Maria, encouraged us to take action in the face of rising seas: "Odds are better than good that you know someone who knows someone who has lost everything to the sea recently, who knows what salt tastes like in their bedroom, who can tell you all about the stench of the water when our pollution becomes weaponized by the merciless tide. Cholera has appeared in Puerto Rico. This is what happens when the ocean comes." After lawyer David Buckel performed an act



of self-immolation at a park in Brooklyn just before Earth Day, Dahr Jamail wrote: "To the average person who understands anthropogenic climate disruption, Buckel's act might seem extreme. It is extreme ... but within the context of how truly far along the planet already is, it becomes less so."

While many media outlets stopped reporting on pipeline battles beyond Standing Rock, Truthout covered the past year's Indigenous-led resistance protecting water and land. In June of 2017, Floridians mobilized against the Sabal Trail natural gas pipeline. As Florida Indigenous leader Bobby C. Billie watched the pipeline companies tear through culturally and environmentally important areas, he told Truthout: "If we do not do something, the rich people making the money off of oil and gas, they are going to kill us all." Jen Deerinwater reported on November's intensification of law-enforcement intimidation at Camp White Pine as land defenders fought the Mariner East 2 pipeline in Pennsylvania. On the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, water protectors began shaping the movement to shift the reservation away from its dependence on fossil fuels and toward renewable energy. In Miami, activist Kaithleen Hernandez stated, "It's important we don't lose sight of what we are fighting for. We are the light at the end of the tunnel. This isn't just about one pipeline. It's up to us to come together and keep this movement going." Or as her colleague put it, "We aren't a bunch of isolated independent struggles, we are united in this effort, not only in this country but worldwide. We are living victory. We know what the future is going to be and it's not going to be fossil fuels."

There is no doubt that more and more seems lost. Perhaps that's why the truth about what's still possible to save is more important than ever.



Acclaimed Truthout staff reporter Dahr Jamail has continued to carry out extensive original reporting on the impacts of anthropogenic climate disruption, as well as round-ups of the latest scientific data, as part of his ever popular Climate Disruption Dispatches series.

Jamail reported on the current climate disruption recreating the conditions that caused the Permian mass extinction approximately 250 million years ago, annihilating 90 percent of life on Earth. Juxtaposing the deterioration of the four elements as we know them – earth, water, air and fire – with the Trump administration's reckless denial-based politics, Jamail illustrated the urgency of political action.

A 2017 published study reported that warming oceans are losing their oxygen much faster than previously believed, and predicted there will be no glaciers in the contiguous US by 2050. Instead of taking studies like this one seriously, most global governments, with the Trump administration leading the charge, remained loyal to the agenda of the oil and gas industry. Reporting that it is literally raining in Antarctica, Jamail asked on Memorial Day that year: "Will we have a Memorial Day for all the lost, wild places? Will we have a Memorial Day for all the glaciers that used to be here?"

As worst-case predictions were confirmed earlier this year, Jamail foresaw future oil wars and an unprecedented surge in climate refugees. He warned us: "It is made more clear with each passing month that humans have pushed the planet off a precipice, and nothing short of immediate, global actions on a dramatic scale will be able to even slightly mitigate runaway ACD."

HEALTH



When the Congressional Budget Office released its score of the GOP's contemptible House bill last May, confirming, among other things, that it would add 24 million to the ranks of the uninsured and raise premiums for seniors by 800 percent, the public erupted with anger. Kelly Hayes clarified the severity of the bill: "As someone who has long organized against state violence, I can say this is one of the most sweeping acts of state violence I have ever witnessed." In the summer that followed, intensifying a long struggle for health care, communities all over the country marched for their lives.

Truthout reported extensively on the struggle for single-payer health care. As Dana Brown made clear, real health equity means tackling economic disparities. In her words, "With 'social determinants' like housing, employment and education accounting for a full 40 percent of health outcomes and the quality of the built environment we live in accounting for another 10 percent, it quickly becomes apparent that economic, social and geographic issues are health issues, and that creating the conditions for health and well-being requires a lot more than insurance." Truthout took a comprehensive look at health care and its intersections,

investigating what it would take to achieve true justice for our bodies and minds. Authors like Noelle Sullivan explained that market logics can never solve the US health care crisis — in fact, our unique laissez-faire system produces some of the worst health outcomes of any high-income countries. In an op-ed, Adjoa Agyeiwaa asked whether Liberia is outstripping Louisiana when it comes to health care.

Mike Ludwig investigated Big Pharma's policies, exploring how companies raise drug prices to accommodate large rebates paid to third-party middlemen and insurance companies, creating a system of kickbacks that pads profit margins while sending prescription drug prices through the roof. Essentially, the sick are paying for the healthy. Trump revealed his approval of this cruel system by picking Alex Azar II, the man who jacked up the price of insulin by nearly 8 percent during his years in Big Pharma, as his health secretary. As insulin prices skyrocketed, Amy Faith Ho put it bluntly: "If you can't afford \$4,500 for a dose of medicine, you don't get to live." She wasn't joking: Nicole Smith-Holt buried her 26-year-old son because he couldn't afford insulin. As she described in an op-ed, he died only

27 days after his coverage ended. Karyn Wofford told us about how she's forced to skip her insulin doses to make ends meet, explaining that only a single-payer system would make care available for the 1.25 million individuals in the US living with Type 1 diabetes (and beyond). However, Big Pharma can be beaten. In response to the success of Nevada's Culinary Union, whose grassroots campaign pressured Gov. Brian Sandoval into signing the nation's toughest ever drug-pricing law, Fran Quigley described it as "the most significant victory to date for the movement to hold pharmaceutical corporations accountable for their record-setting profits gathered from the skyrocketing prices on essential medicines."

Some communities were made extra vulnerable by Trump's health care backlash. Mike Ludwig explored the president's hindrance of much-needed addiction medication programs for federal prisons. The death rate among prisoners within two weeks of release is already 12 times that of the general US population, but their chance of dying from an overdose is 100 times higher or more. The Sentencing Project used Truthout's research in their report on the opioid crisis, which made waves in criminal justice communities. Meanwhile, Destiny Lopez asked in the face of Trumpcare, "Are we going to let 13 men deny reproductive health care to millions of women?" Katie Klabusich covered the ban restricting self-administered abortions and the widespread closure of independent clinics. She also reported on Congress's attempt to use the Las Vegas massacre to push an unconstitutional abortion ban. Rochaun Meadows-Fernandez reported on worsening maternal mortality rates in the US, which disproportionately impact Black women and women of color, while the birth industry is disproportionately white. In her words, "For Black women, we need birth workers who understand we exist at the intersection of history, race, gender and reproductive health."

Noam Chomsky summed it up for Truthout: "Insurance companies are in the business of making money, not providing health care, and when they undertake the latter, it is likely not to be in the best interests of patients or to be efficient." The fight for single payer is far from over, along with the economic, political and cultural shifts required to make it happen. In Kelly Hayes's words, "To truly defeat Trumpcare, in all its zombie forms, we must create a culture of care in the US, wherein caring for people who are sick and/or disabled is no longer a topic for debate, but a forgone conclusion."



In this ongoing series, Truthout covered the front lines of the campaign for single-payer, the history behind it, its intersections with other movements, and the millions upon millions of lives it affects. Michael Corcoran delved deep into the implications of the campaign, writing that "winning this battle against single-payer's powerful enemies would not only be good for the health of the nation; it would serve as an enormous victory for the movement for social justice."

The failures of the Affordable Care Act, in combination with the threat of the draconian American Health Care Act, spurred major national support for the universal publicly financed health care system, National Improved Medicare for All in the past year. As the fight for single-payer spread from California to Nevada to Massachusetts to Vermont last summer, Congress resisted alongside its friends in the health sector and the 1 percent.

The release of Bernie Sanders's Medicare for All Act injected a "remarkable jolt of energy into the movement," wrote Corcoran, illustrating the trickle-up effect of grassroots support penetrating the establishment. Nearly 60 percent of Americans supported Medicare for All, yet progressives still stood divided in their debate between "the public option" and single-payer. Corcoran commented: "Whether progressives want single-payer or a public option, accomplishing either goal will depend on a vibrant movement that is pushing for nothing short of Medicare for All."

Many looked abroad in the face of declining US health levels. Sanders went to Canada for inspiration, and Corcoran learned lessons from Taiwan's rapid turnaround in the early 1990s. Trumpcare — cruel and punitive according to health professionals — mocked the increased public demand for health care. As the campaign kept recognizing intersections, for example with the reproductive justice movement, it became undeniable that everyone has a stake in a single-payer system. As Barbara G. Ellis wrote looking ahead to the 2018 midterms: "The timing for Medicare for All is right now."

RIGHTS & FREEDOMS



In the past year, Truthout reported on the Movement for Black Lives, which continued to make political, economic and cultural strides toward racial justice. William C. Anderson took a stand against mainstream media's equalization of "hate groups" across the political spectrum, asking: "How can anyone in good conscience list responses to white supremacy by Black, Native or any people of color as 'hate' alongside white supremacists? This isn't just an irresponsible mishap, this is a manifestation of white supremacy itself." In an exclusive Truthout interview, Mumia Abu-Jamal encouraged racial liberation movements to continue transcending electoral politics: "We must develop a deeper, refined analysis that gives us all a clear vision of the inherent repression of the state against Black life, a historical continuum that shows no sign of abatement. Or we can play 'Republicans bad/Democrats good' like children looking for shadow plays."

On Black feminist traditions in the age of Trump, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor told Tasasha Henderson in an interview: "When we tell the truth about the experiences of Black women, we tell the truth about the United States. And in doing so, it reveals [...] that Black women will never be free within capitalism." Andrea J. Ritchie reflected upon the 2015 Baltimore uprising, reporting that Black women's experiences of policing still go unnoticed by authorities and activists alike. In April, she remembered the murder of Decynthia Clements, demanding safety, not police bullets, for Black women in distress. Lamont Lilly interviewed activist Ashley Yates of Ferguson, Missouri, who reflected on Black queer leadership: "I can't imagine a movement without Black queer people, whether we're talking 2014 or 1965." Laura Flanders spoke

with Cazembe Murphy Jackson on Black, queer, socialist practice in the South: "I think also it's a very Southern — it's a very Black, it's a very Baptist thing to do to — share meals, to help raise our kids together, to help really get to know each other and spend time outside of our organizing work also, so that we just really have these genuine relationships."

Echoing the days of COINTELPRO, FBI's counterterrorism division published a report titled "Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Officers." Flint Taylor reflected on the 48th anniversary of Fred Hampton's murder, writing that rampant surveillance of Black Liberation movements continues — and that "we must remain vigilant and informed." Candice Bernd reported on the government's ongoing case against Black activist Christopher Daniels, which became the first prosecution of a person tracked under the new FBI classification of "Black Identity Extremist."

Nicholas Powers reflected on the duality of heightened police brutality and voter suppression: "Renewed governmental enthusiasm for mass incarceration and voter suppression has created a vortex in which Black citizenship, already second tier, is further ground down." At the same time, Black women are reshaping the electoral landscape, wrote Eisa Nefertari Ulen, building on a deep organizing history. Truthout reported on how Connie Johnson, aspiring to become the first Black woman elected as governor, ran for office in Oklahoma and Black Lives Matter activist khalid kamau ran for city council in Georgia. Sarah Jaffe interviewed Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson of the Highlander Research and Education Center, who commented: "I think that what has become ever more real in the Southern-specific context is that even with

the achievements of Black liberation movements before us – specifically around voting rights and civil rights – that we deserve more than what policy ever gave us. I think that the Movement for Black Lives is ... calling for what we have always deserved and not just what we would concede to.”

In the past year of intensified settler colonial state violence, Indigenous communities continued a centuries-long struggle for decolonization — resisting legacies of genocide throughout the Americas. Thanksgiving distorts history and sugarcoats continuing state violence against Indigenous people, wrote Jaskiran Dhillon, who encouraged readers “to think critically about what it would mean to support political sovereignty and self-determination for the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, upon whose land all of us reside.” On Indigenous Peoples Day, Jennifer Denetdale called for decolonial action beyond symbolic commemoration: “As the growing Indigenous liberation movement has emphasized, reconciliation and healing cannot take place until the US stops celebrating Indigenous genocide.” Four Arrows reflected on the power of utilizing Indigenous thought to cope in an age of crisis, writing: “As we move forward in the era of Trump, facing vast structural problems, let us remember that Nature is and always will be the ultimate teacher if we heed it accordingly.”

Truthout also reported on attacks on Indigenous communities throughout Latin America, fueled by US corporations. Martha Pskowski reported on how Coca-Cola sucked wells dry in Chiapas, Mexico, forcing residents to buy water: “We have been asking the government to install a deep well in the community for 12 years,” Communal Territory president Juan Urbano explained. “We’ve gone to the municipal, state and federal governments, but they’ve done nothing.” Santiago Navarro and Renata Bessi explored how the International Labor Organization’s Convention 169 helps legalize land grabs on Indigenous territories. Broran tribe member Pablo Sivar, from the Térraba-Boruca Indigenous territory in Costa Rica, said to Truthout: “In Térraba, there used to be a lot of water, but not anymore. And they wanna finish off the main river we have, the Térraba River, also known as river Diquís, which in the Boruca language means ‘big water’.” After the 8.2 magnitude earthquake that hit Mexico in September, causing around 100 deaths, militarization and “shock doctrine” policies followed. In the Amazon, authorities touted aid while laying groundwork for exploitation — all part of the US Southern Command’s “silent occupation” according to Navarro and Bessi.

Trump’s Muslim travel ban sparked nationwide protests throughout 2017. As Hoda Katebi put it: “Islamophobia, or, more accurately, anti-Muslim racism, is systemic. Created,

upheld and enforced by the state, the Muslim ban has emboldened Customs and Border Protections officers, validated anti-Muslim violence, and added to a further loss of already minimal feelings of safety for Muslims across the country.” Lisa Hofmann-Kuroda pointed out that the ban imposes white supremacist definitions of kinship on Muslim immigrants, and John Knefel reported that the US resettles more Christian refugees than Muslims, as overall numbers plummet. Trump’s Muslim ban 3.0 is still unconstitutional, Marjorie Cohn reflected, violating the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. As the president’s administration stood by his decision, Mike Ludwig wrote that courts could become a crucial buffer against executive power. After the president posted anti-Muslim propaganda videos in December, Ludwig continued, “It will likely be the Supreme Court that decides the ban’s ultimate fate. Expect Trump’s Twitter account to take center stage in the courtroom.”

Katebi, on the other hand, encouraged us to look beyond the courts. In her words, “Challenging the ban means challenging the attempted establishment of new norms of violence, and moving beyond a reliance on institutions for liberation. Understanding the legacies of systemic discrimination upon which such executive orders and Supreme Court rulings are built — and will continue to be built — is integral for developing a strategy to truly move forward.”



In her weekly column, “Human Rights and Global Wrongs,” legal and political analyst Marjorie Cohn wrote about Trump’s lawbreaking, the dangers his administration posed to civil rights and civil liberties, and his judicial nominations. In the past year, Cohn has reported on attempts to constrain the president’s war-making alongside his bombastic and frightening threats against North Korea; the massacres in Gaza following his recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel; and his continuing attacks on the right of asylum. Trump’s recklessness illustrates the frequent contradiction between human rights and US foreign policy.

MEDIA JUSTICE



In 2017, we held our breath as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under Republican Chairman Ajit Pai voted to roll back Obama-era rules on equal access to the Internet. Rushing to gut net neutrality may leave Internet providers with no federal oversight, Mike Ludwig warned. William Rivers Pitt reflected: "I believe the powerful few who seek this monumental and dangerous change are doing so because ... words provide liberty in dark places. The internet is all the words in one place, for the first time in human history. Such a mighty tool is a threat to those who have so much but want more, and they know it full well." As Michael Corcoran put it, Trump's FCC has spent the year waging war on democracy and the press — "The public faces the frightening combination of Pai's radical, free-market absolutism and Trump's authoritarian impulses and deep contempt for the media." Bizarrely, Ludwig noted, conservatives like the editors at Breitbart started accusing big web platforms like

Facebook and Google of censoring and discriminating against right-wing websites. "In casting themselves as victims," he wrote, "conservatives seem to be missing the point." Net neutrality is now on life support, but it's not dead yet, Ludwig explained in the spring: "With all the political uncertainty and public discussion, it's unlikely internet service providers will start violating net neutrality in major ways anytime soon."

The journalists arrested during the #J20 protests against Trump's 2017 inauguration were tried in the fall — including Truthout contributor Aaron Cantú. They were being prosecuted merely for being in the proximity of a protest on which they were reporting, threatened with potentially decades of incarceration. Truthout published a message of

"The public faces the frightening combination of Pai's radical, free-market absolutism and Trump's authoritarian impulses and deep contempt for the media."

solidarity with the journalists, verbalizing our outrage over Trump's press suppression: "This regime has undeniably accelerated and heightened the crackdown, openly declaring itself to be at war with certain elements of the media." Standing in solidarity with the arrested members of the media, we repeated our call for the dropping of all charges.

As Facebook changed its algorithm to allow further corporate influence over our feeds, Truthout published another staff-wide message to our readers: "The only way forward, given the extremity of this corrosion, is to be intentional about recreating connections between ourselves as publications, writers and readers — and the need to build these connections has never been more urgent." Facebook's turmoil continued in April when, ironically, Zuckerberg was grilled by the same lawmakers who repealed online privacy protections. "Zuckerberg has built an empire on data gathered from Facebook users and used to sell targeted ads — and the scandals are piling up," wrote Mike Ludwig.

"Perhaps 'media' should be a verb instead of a noun — in flux, moving, responsive instead of isolated. At its roots and at its heart, 'media' just means a mode of connection, an intermediary, a channel between people."

As mainstream media failed to mention climate change in their coverage of the Southern California floods in the first weeks of 2018, Justin Theodora asked: "Given the abundance of evidence suggesting that anthropogenic climate change may have had a major role to play in the Southern California floods, and the urgent need to curb anthropogenic climate change in the here and now, why hasn't the mainstream media seen fit to mention anthropogenic climate change in its coverage? Political self-censorship is not beyond reason." Charles Derber urged

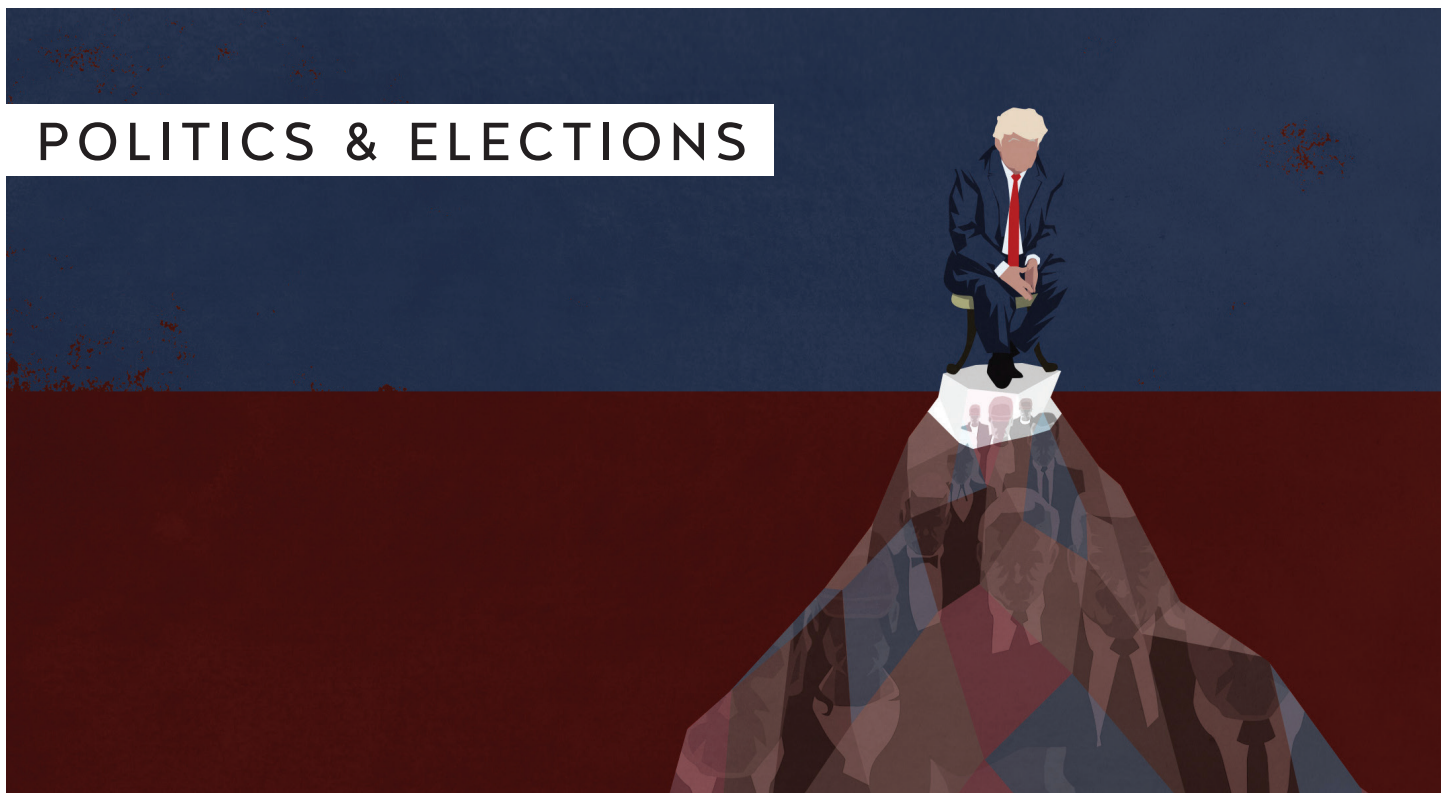
mainstream media to not lose sight of the GOP's atrocities amid cheeto-themed critiques of the president, writing: "Much anti-Trumpism legitimates institutions needing serious liberal and left critique while diverting attention from the Republican Party that is actually ruling the nation."

Maya Schenwar encouraged us to stay critical of mainstream media under Trump. As the president attacked even big establishment outlets, she wrote: "The overall perception of the mainstream media's relationship to the White House shifted. Suddenly, journalists of nearly all stripes were seen as rebels and heroes, standing up against authoritarianism." Instead of attempting to "preserve democracy" through institutions that have traditionally upheld the government's status quo, she urged us to ask: "Whose democracy? For so many people in the US, democracy has never been believable — it is not in danger of dying, because it has never lived." Now more than ever, we ought to reconsider what we mean by "media."

She wrote: "Perhaps 'media' should be a verb instead of a noun — in flux, moving, responsive instead of isolated. At its roots and at its heart, 'media' just means a mode of connection, an intermediary, a channel between people." This is precisely how Truthout wants to do media — as a mode of connection with our readers. Rather than take a defensive stance while under attack, we want instead to transcend old notions of what media can incite and achieve.

With support from our readers, we can.

POLITICS & ELECTIONS



"None of this is normal," wrote William Rivers Pitt on Trump's first State of the Union. Truthout's first full year of covering Trump has been a challenge in believing our own eyes while it seems like we're hurtling down the rabbit hole.

In his exclusive interviews with Truthout's C.J. Polychroniou, Noam Chomsky offered powerful analyses of the past year's "Trumpocracy." In Chomsky's words, "Whether by design, or simply inertia, the Republican wrecking ball has been following a two-level strategy. Trump keeps the spotlight on himself with one act after another, assuming (correctly) that yesterday's antics will be swept aside by today's. And at the same time, often beneath the radar, the 'respectable' Republican establishment chips away at government programs that might be of benefit to the general population, but not to their constituency of extreme wealth and corporate power." John Knefel also commented on the Trump-GOP relationship, writing that "the key dynamic at play is not Trump 'radicalizing' the GOP, but rather a feedback loop of mutual radicalization in search of the farthest right position possible."

Calling Trump's rise to power "a complete disaster," Chomsky pointed out: "'Make America great' means great at destroying, and that's where the greatness ends." Prompted by Polychroniou to imagine a way out of neoliberalism, Chomsky responded: "An immediate objective of moderately progressive policy should be to sharply cut the huge military budget, well over half of discretionary spending and now expanding under the Republican project of dismantling

government." Nevertheless, "all is not bleak by any means," he continued, calling the energy surrounding Bernie Sanders's campaign, "the most spectacular feature of the 2016 elections." He concluded by grounding critical political hope in grassroots action: "Offshoots of the Sanders campaign are doing valuable work on many issues, including electoral politics at the local and state level These, along with significant efforts on other fronts, face very difficult barriers, which can and must be overcome."

As the FBI's investigation of the Trump-Russia love story continued to unfold, Henry A. Giroux commented on the president's firing of James Comey: "Under the Trump regime, consistent narratives rooted in forms of civic illiteracy and a deep distrust of the truth and the ethical imagination have become the glue of authoritarian power." The appointment of Special Counsel Robert Mueller that followed, possibly investigating both Trump and Trump Jr. for conspiracy to violate the Federal Election Campaign Act, prompted Marjorie Cohn to write: "Donald Trump should be very worried." However, she continued: "We cannot postpone consideration of impeachment until Mueller finishes his criminal investigation. It is time to pressure the House of Representatives to bring articles of impeachment against Trump for his abuse of power. We must stop this president before he launches a new civil war and/or nuclear war."

Pitt commented on the December 2017 passing of the monstrous trillion-dollar Republican tax bill: "With this bill,

they establish a permanent inheritor class whose wealth will be so vast and untouchable that they can buy every election — local, state and federal — from here on out. This is not simply a tax bill: It is the last stage of a corporate coup that has been slow-walking its intentions for decades.” How had they planned on paying for it, in addition to slashing budgets on health care, education and virtually every single welfare program still left in the US? Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Mike Ludwig revealed. As hell broke loose in the wake of the bill, the federal government shut down under one-party rule for the first time in history. In Pitt’s words: “The government is shut down because the president is too racist to cut a deal for the Dreamers, and because the congressional Republicans who coddle him for his precious signature could not govern their way down a short hallway with one door.” Nicholas Powers explained the racist origins of Republican tax cuts: “The GOP cannot credibly take a race-neutral position when the overarching history of its politics is based on racism. The effects of its policies are race specific. And class specific. And deadly.”

As the far right made proud strides into the open in 2017, Truthout relentlessly covered Trump-era fascism and anti-fascism. We were ahead of the curve in a lot of ways, not least by sounding the alarm about the August “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville — Spencer Sunshine urgently asking, “Can the Left unite against it?” Despite his warning, we couldn’t help but be stunned by the torch-lit parade of white supremacists and other horrors those 24 hours presented. William Rivers Pitt commented on the car plowing into a crowd of peaceful anti-fascist counterdemonstrators killing Heather Heyer and wounding 19 others: “This was terrorism. By the book.” Greg Palast wrote in response to the attack on school teacher Deandre Harris caught on camera: “Don’t look away. Four white neo-Nazis are beating a Black man, crawling on the ground, with their metal poles and a yellow hunk of lumber. The beating continues — there’s blood on the pavement ... Welcome to Charlottesville, USA. Trump’s America, month eight.”

As former KKK leader David Duke proclaimed they were “going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump” in Charlottesville, the “coward-in-chief,” as William Rivers Pitt called him, responded with a lukewarm tweet about violence from “many sides.” According to Kelly Hayes, this rhetoric originated with “respectable liberals” who “have repeatedly echoed that Nazis and the KKK should be starved of attention, but the truth is, the liberal plan of ignoring fascists until they go away helped deliver us to this moment.” Meanwhile, members of the Campus Antifascist Network warned against the mainstream demonization of

antifascist organizers, describing it as “an age-old attempt of the political elite to divide a social movement into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ protesters”; and William C. Anderson called for self-defense in the face of white supremacy.

While many of us cried for Trump’s impeachment, William C. Anderson urged us not to lose focus of the larger forces that enabled his rise: capitalism and white supremacy. In his words, “Until we confront the systems that enabled Trump’s rise to power, we’ll always be at risk of seeing someone like him empowered again.” Covering both the unpredictable moves of our coward-in-chief and the political currents allowing his treachery, Truthout stood by Anderson’s words. We remained focused, we remained angry, and we remained convinced: None of this is acceptable.



We asked activists to address the question: What would you like to see created, built or begun this year? Their responses resonated deeply in their calls for collectivity.

Ai-jen Poo urged us to fight for home care for all, Barbara Ransby imagined a revitalized radical feminism in the midst of Hollywood symbolism, and James Kilgore envisioned a national organizing effort to challenge mass incarceration. Tim DeChristopher suggested realism in the face of climate change, and Maya Schenwar encouraged media to truly listen to one another as truth-seekers. Ejeris Dixon highlighted the importance of prioritizing relationships within our movements, so that we can hold each other accountable beyond the prison. Similarly, William C. Anderson argued for broader channels into activism in an increasingly narrow call-out culture. To survive the “Trumpocalypse,” Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha wrote, we need wild disability justice dreams.

Adrienne Maree Brown concluded: “perhaps we can stop being a million small voices making demands of each other; perhaps we can become a solidarity, a wave of voices and bodies and hearts shaping a world that works for all of us.”

PRISONS, POLICING & RESISTANCE



In 2017 and 2018, Truthout reported on the myriad ways the prison-industrial complex targeted marginalized communities – through police brutality, mass deportations, and abject living conditions behind bars. Lacino Hamilton offered Truthout a first-hand account of the inhumane institution of solitary confinement, writing: “Risking understatement, I am buried alive inside Michigan’s Marquette Maximum Security Prison ... For all intents and purposes, I am dead to everything but melancholic anxieties and horrible despair. This is torture.”

In August 2017, Mike Ludwig explored how Trump jump-started the war on drugs that’s actually a war on immigrants. The president invoked the MS-13 gang in yet another attempt to paint his administration’s crackdown on immigrants as an effort to control gang violence – calling them “animals.” On this, Ludwig commented: “First launched by President Nixon 40 years ago, the war on drugs has failed to deliver on its promises, and instead has destroyed millions of lives.” As the Trump administration announced its plan to end DACA in September 2017, Reyna Montoya wrote: “We have to understand the power we have built in the past five years and leverage it. We have to wrap each other in love and remember that this

battle was lost but we have not yet been defeated.” In January, she reported on the continuing fight for DACA: “It is up to us and the conscious of this nation to remember that silence is complacency. Now, more than ever, we need to cry out for the protection of Dreamers.”

As the mainstream Me Too campaign exploded in the fall, focusing on sexual assault in Hollywood, Victoria Law shed light on how Black survivors often face criminalization and incarceration for defending themselves. Black feminist Tamara Burke, who coined Me Too a decade ago to spark intragroup conversations for young survivors of color, pointed out how Black

“A world without prisons is also a world without Exxon and a world without Pfizer and a world without B2 bombers at \$20 billion a pop.”

women are disproportionately impacted by both interpersonal and state violence. Behind bars, sexual violence committed by prison officials is rampant. As Law asked, “what happens when the assailants are the people who literally hold the keys to their lives?” The brutality facing many incarcerated women, especially transgender women, illustrated the limitations of many states’ interpretations of the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

In the midst of Trump's continued carceral expansion, we never lost sight of unrelenting resistance by prisoners, abolitionists and immigrant rights organizations. Joseph Dole wrote a "plea from the inside" – urging Illinois lawmakers to offer college classes to incarcerated people in order to promote wellbeing and decrease recidivism. He also reported on the necessity of having sentence reform bills, such as Illinois's House Bill 531, act retroactively, writing that "we have been falsely demonizing and falsely labeling our youth as permanently incorrigible when they are not." In April, Colleen Hackett and Ben Turk reported, 25 years after the Lucasville uprising its survivors led a new prison resistance movement. Outside solidarity action and media coverage was of utmost importance to support strikers on the inside. As Lucasville survivor Imam Hasan put it: "The fear that the prison authorities [put] into prisoners is preventing them from standing up and rising up to bring about corrective changes. Some people don't want to get involved because they understand the retaliation.... They might get abused, assaulted, beat with hammers, choked out, some prisoners get choked to death – many things might happen." By building networks of support that focus on challenging state repression behind bars, supporters helped buffer against retaliation and reduced the legal consequences that prisoners faced by participating in the movement. Truthout stood in solidarity with prison strikers, letting officials know that the world is watching.

The broader movement for prison abolition made tangible action toward decarceration in 2017. During New Years', abolitionist Mariame Kaba initiated a campaign called #FreeThePeople Day to raise money for people who are incarcerated simply because they cannot afford to post bail for themselves. To Kaba's surprise, almost a quarter of a million dollars was raised for bail funds in just one day. In James Kilgore's words: "I want us to recognize that in the US a world without prisons must mean a world that is not dominated by the drive for corporate profits and military power. A world without prisons is also a world without Exxon and a world without Pfizer and a world without B2 bombers at \$20 billion a pop."

Truthout has investigated immediate impacts of Trump's volatile policies as well as direct grassroots action, but we never lost sight of our broader vision for justice. Encouraging "a jailbreak of the imagination," Mariame Kaba and Kelly Hayes wrote: "We live in a society that has been locked into a false sense of inevitability. It's time to look hard at how this system came to be, who profits, how it functions, and why – and it's time to imagine what it would look like to see justice done without relying on punishment and the barbarity of carceral systems." By refusing to let the atrocities of our prison nation go unnoticed, Truthout laid the groundwork for imagining true justice and a world without cages.



The prison-industrial complex devastates communities and the environment, taking serious and sometimes life-threatening tolls on human health. Truthout and Earth Island Journal investigated sites of abject environmental injustices, reporting on the casualties of extreme heat and contaminated water in prisons, morbid conditions endured by prisoners living under lockdown after Hurricane Harvey, and the environmental racism facing climate refugees in toxic immigrant jails. Responding to years of public outcry, EPA added prison locations to its environmental justice mapping tool – "huge" according to Panagioti Tsolkas.



This series probed the impact of incarceration on families, loved ones and communities, demonstrating how the incarceration of more than 2 million people also harms many millions more — including 2.7 million children. Truthout explored the hidden costs of prison visits making it nearly impossible for family members to see each other, the racialized system of monetary bonds keeping Black people behind bars, and how the prison rips babies from the arms of their mothers. In the words of incarcerated mother Geneva Philips: "They tore us apart and threw us away."

WAR & PEACE



"The United States is absolutely the most dangerous country in the world," said Noam Chomsky in an interview with Daniel Falcone. Highlighting US tensions with Russia, Iran and North Korea, as well as discussing US airstrikes on Syria, Chomsky commented on the duality of war and environmental degradation: "Every part of [the world] is trying to do something. The United States alone is trying to destroy [the planet], and it's not just Trump, it's the whole Republican Party. You just can't find words for it. And it's not reported. It's not discussed." Heeding his call, Truthout tried our very best to find words for the president's terrifying foreign policy.

As the Trump administration pushed its narrative of North Korean aggression in 2017, Truthout explored the US's historic wrongs against Korea to establish a deeper understanding of the current crisis. "US bombing of North Korea was not confined to military targets during the Korean War," Ted Snider reminded us – "US bombs killed 20 percent of the entire population." Furthermore, Gareth Porter clarified, North Korea reached agreements with both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations that could have averted today's threat. In his words, "A group of Bush administration officials led by then-Vice President Dick Cheney sabotaged

both agreements, and Pyongyang went on to make rapid strides on both nuclear and missile development." Contrary to popular belief, Snider pointed out, North Korea is willing to give up its nuclear deterrent if there is no longer a need for a deterrent.

In the face of US military expansion in South Korea, the local peace movement refused to give up. In Simone Chun's words: "It's time for Koreans and Americans to unite in a people's movement of broad-based 'fire and fury' against any attack on human security from any force in the Korean Peninsula." Christine Ahn highlighted the role of women in the Korean peace process, writing: "What we do know from three decades of experience is that a peace agreement is more likely with the active involvement of women's peace groups in the peacebuilding process." However, a peace treaty will be difficult to achieve without US cooperation – especially if Trump refuses to address past diplomatic wrongs. Ahn continued: "To achieve what will hopefully lead to the eventual nuclear-free Korean peninsula, including the halting of US-South Korea war drills with B-2 bombers and a US nuclear umbrella over South Korea, will require the signing of a peace treaty to replace the 1953 Armistice

Agreement, a ceasefire signed by military commanders from North Korea, China and the United States that forced both sides to put down their guns but never formally resolved the Korean War as promised."

Trita Parsi commented on Trump's terrifying betrayal of the Iran nuclear deal: "If changing Iran's regional policies is the goal, Trump's strategy is doomed to fail. The pattern of US-Iran relations in the past decades is clear: Hostility begets hostility, goodwill begets goodwill. To change Iran's stance, Trump must be open to changing Washington's." However, he is not the first president to betray Iran, Parsi continued. Disillusioned by decades of Washington hostility, he wrote, "rather than responding to Trump's renewed pressure on Iran following the killing of the nuclear deal by returning to the negotiating table, Tehran is more likely to counter-escalate and try to amass leverage against the United States either by re-expanding its nuclear program or by advancing its regional position." Trump's volatile nuclear politics continued to spread fear of escalation on the Korean Peninsula, in Iran, and in extension, the whole world. In an interview with C.J. Polychroniou, Noam Chomsky commented on the nuclear deal: "Effective withdrawal might provide an opening for the new national security adviser, [John] Bolton, a genuine war criminal who publicly calls for bombing Iran, presumably in collaboration with Israel and with tacit Saudi approval. Consequences could be horrendous."

Meanwhile, Robert Naiman continued his incisive analysis of US participation in the Saudi war in Yemen, scrutinizing the US's direct involvement in the massive number of civilian casualties and widespread famine. As the conflict has gone from bad to worse, Naiman's work has been essential in ensuring that the extent of the atrocities in Yemen do not go unrecognized.

Dahr Jamail explored domestic military expansion in the Pacific Northwest, connecting it to environmental degradation, economic inequalities and expanding health issues. In the summer of 2017, the navy introduced toxins to drinking water in Washington State's Whidbey Island, telling residents they were "collateral damage" to the war on terror. Jamail also reported on the HB 2341 bill threatening Washington State, which would allow commanders of military bases the power to impact land use planning anywhere in the state. He called this a "slide down the slippery slope of allowing the military free reign to do what it wants – wherever it wants to do it – within the state, with little or no recourse by the citizens it could impact." Washington House Rep. Kristine Reeves happens to also be the executive

director of the Washington Military Alliance, the taxpayer-funded institution set up to lobby for the bill. In Jamail's words, her double-dipping politics reveal "Washington State's deep political and economic alliance with the Pentagon." In the immediate wake of Truthout's running Jamail's story, it helped get the word out to a very large number of concerned citizens across the state. Enough spoke out to their political representatives about the bills, so fervently that neither of them made it out of committee to even be voted on – a significant success for all seeking environmental justice in Washington.

While Trump's energy secretary Rick Perry said, "We want to make nuclear cool again," Jamail delved deep into the lasting impacts of the 2011 Fukushima disaster – calling it "the single worst industrial accident in human history." The Japanese government and the International Olympic Committee attempted to normalize the situation by planning 2020 Tokyo Olympics games to be held at Fukushima. As former nuclear industry senior vice president Arnie Gundersen made clear, however, "The disaster at Fukushima Daiichi will continue for more than 100 years." When TEPCO announced that it would dump 770,000 tons of radioactive tritium water into the Pacific Ocean, Jamail drew our attention to the terrifying public health crisis posed by Fukushima – ignored by lawmakers.

Trump's enthusiasm in continuing a perpetual war on terror left us extremely concerned for the escalating conflicts in Syria, Afghanistan and Libya. The devastatingly bloody war in Syria, which the US has already been involved in for years, has left more than 1 out of every 10 Syrians killed or wounded, Jamail reported in May 2017. As it became clear that the Trump administration planned to keep US troops in Syria indefinitely, Gareth Porter commented: "The new Pentagon model is taking advantage of a malleable president to prolong the war bureaucracy's extraordinary increase in control over resources and power." Mike Ludwig broke down the numbers after 16 years of war in Afghanistan, reporting that about 104,000 people have been killed as a result of armed conflict since 2001. The war killed children in record numbers in 2017, wrote Ruchi Kumar. In Gareth Porter's words, "Afghanistan, the first of the United States' permanent wars, is in many ways the model for all the others that have followed – wars that have no other purpose than to serve the US war system itself." Reflecting on 16 years since Bush's launching of the war on terror, Jamail asked, along the same lines, "how many more people will die as this empire fights a losing battle to maintain its dominance?"

LOCAL & NATIONAL COVERAGE

CALIFORNIA Activists in the Golden State fought state violence on many levels in the past year — demanding decarceration, health care, and affordable housing. In the fall, Dahr Jamail reported, raging wildfires forced roughly 8,000 people to evacuate as out-of-control fires destroyed homes and threatened thousands of other structures. Sammy Didonato and Ryan Harvey wrote about the incarcerated firefighters who attempted to control the fires for a fraction of minimum wage — making clear the connection between mass incarceration and climate change. After years of grassroots struggle, California senators voted to replace private health insurance with a single-payer system in the summer of 2017, C.J. Polychroniou wrote. Sarah Jaffe interviewed Los Angeles health care organizer Anastasia Bacigalupo, who concluded, “The fight is getting really real, for lack of a better word. Our lives are on the line, so we are really pushing it.” Victoria Law continued her coverage of the state’s vast prison landscape — writing about new legislation that would soften foster care rules that tear extended families apart, and incarcerated trans people’s fight against barriers to changing their legal names and gender markers. As rents kept skyrocketing throughout California, Adam Hudson wrote, the fight for rent control strengthened — thanks to tenant-led activist efforts, rent control measures passed in Richmond and Mountain View.

WASHINGTON STATE In Washington State, amid the coastal waters and evergreen trees, people fought for a better future on many fronts — and information is key to winning the struggle. Truthout’s Dahr Jamail revealed the existence of US Navy war games and environmental destruction, shedding light on the state’s deep political and economic alliance with the Pentagon. Martha Baskin reported on climate activists’ fight against construction of the world’s largest methanol refinery — rallying outside a regional office of the Department of Ecology in Bellevue. C.J. Polychroniou interviewed economist Robert Pollin on Washington State efforts to achieve zero carbon emissions, even if the federal government won’t help. The Lummi Nation, with millennia of history on the Northwest coast, partnered with The Natural History Museum to grow the climate justice movement, wrote Baskin. “Indian nations are saying ‘no more,’” said Jewell James of the Lummi Nation. “We’re protectors, protecting the land and the water for everyone.” Polychroniou interviewed re-elected Seattle City Council member Kshama Sawant, an avowedly open socialist, who commented on the city’s housing crisis: “Rents in Seattle have been rising faster than in any other major US city. Working people and people of color are being driven out because they cannot afford the high rents.” Whether rural or urban, resistance against state violence in Washington stayed strong.

TEXAS Texans organized against crackdowns on immigrants, prison living conditions and state neglect of Hurricane Harvey’s victims. Mike Ludwig spoke with immigration activist Maru Mora Villalpando, who pointed out that “refugees have the right to ask countries to take them in. The US and Mexico are part of international agreements that are supposed to be followed and respected.” As grassroots organizers kept making clear, the US government continues to ignore international law at the border. The abuses are so rampant that “the ACLU’s Border Rights Center recently released a smartphone application called ‘MigraCam’ designed to help residents send video evidence of enforcement actions to their family members and loved ones over email and text,” reported Candice Bernd. She also noted how Texas prisoners faced deadly heat and contaminated water after the extreme weather. As Hurricane Harvey’s devastation intensified, wrote Ludwig, so did resistance to Big Oil in the gulf. In September, Indigenous and environmental activists demonstrated at Energy Transfer Partners corporate headquarters in Dallas, against the company’s pipeline projects. Sarah Jaffe interviewed Austin city councilman Greg Casar who commented on post-Harvey relief work: “Texans have been helping strangers, have been opening up their homes and their hearts and their wallets. There has been really inspirational collective action even in the devastation.” Texans united to push back against borders, prisons and pipelines.



NEW YORK Last year, New Yorkers spoke out against dangerous environmental exploitation, mass incarceration, and conservative tax cuts. Dennis Higgins and Ellen Cantarow criticized the planned \$900 million power plant in Orange County, completely undermining the state's 2015 fracking ban – “Cuomo’s seemingly ambitious plans for greenhouse gas reduction may be a lot of hot air.” Ese Olumhense explored the hidden costs of prison visits that tear families apart, made worse by the city’s decision to end its free bussing program to upstate facilities. David George urged Governor Cuomo to change the Parole Board system that cements racial carceral control, demanding that he remove commissioners “who embody an obsolete ‘tough-on-crime’ era that permanently punishes people in prison.” While some celebrated the passing of Cuomo’s “Raise the Age” Bill, Rosa Libre called it out for what it was: tame liberal reformism. “As South Bronx residents,” she wrote, “we see this bill as a toothless reform which does not really address the state actors who are actively involved in the criminalization of our youth.” The governor went to war against the Republican tax plan, wrote Dean Baker, lauding this first step towards less exploitative taxation. In his words, “when the federal government is controlled by the far right, it is important that liberals use the levers available to them to fight back.” Truthout stood by upstate and big city activists alike – refusing to lose sight of justice in the Empire State.

ILLINOIS Activists in Illinois resisted violence and exploitation – demanding racial justice, decarceration and health care. On May Day, a day with origins in Chicagoans’ fight for an eight-hour work day over a century ago, Barbara Ransby covered the “Resist. Reimagine. Rebuild” (R3) Chicago coalition rally, which included “30 grassroots organizations primarily led by Black, Latinx, Arab, Muslim and Asian-American activists.” Thanks to a sustained push by activists, Sharlyn Grace reported, Cook County became the largest jurisdiction in the country to implement a rule that states people should not be incarcerated pretrial for not posting money bail. Debbie Southorn and Erin Glasco spoke with activist Larry Dean about Chicago’s proposed \$95 million police academy: “it’s part of a larger strategy by Mayor Rahm Emanuel to continue to facilitate the school-to-prison pipeline – to take buildings that were dedicated to education in underserved communities and Black communities – and turn them into uses for the police.” Kelly Hayes interviewed organizer Benji Hart, who commented on the #NoCopAcademy campaign: “This is about ... pushing out and allowing violence to continue against populations the city doesn’t value.” Michael Corcoran reported a setback for health care activists as state senator Daniel Biss, who ran for governor on a platform supportive of single payer, lost against billionaire J.B. Pritzker. Despite this, organizers in Illinois never lost sight of justice – and Truthout never lost sight of their efforts.

LOUISIANA Resistance in Louisiana ranged from protecting water and land, to protesting mass incarceration, to taking action against monuments of white supremacy. Mike Ludwig reported on activists launching “a colorful flotilla of boats, kayaks and rafts” on a bayou in southern Louisiana in September to raise awareness about their fight against the Bayou Bridge Pipeline, a proposal to pipe oil from East Texas across much of southern Louisiana, including sensitive wetlands in the picturesque Atchafalaya Basin and southern coastal plains. The struggle continued throughout the year — in January, three water protectors were arrested after refusing to leave a pipeline construction site. Christine Baniewicz covered the state’s attempt to further criminalize peaceful protesters, sparking local outrage. Ludwig also reported on how the large-scale privatization of New Orleans’ schools continued to uphold economic inequality, how New Orleans strippers fought back against police raids during Mardi Gras, and how organizers pushed back against the \$2 billion bail industry. After years of protest, Ludwig wrote, the city of New Orleans finally began the process of removing four monuments dedicated to heroes of Confederate efforts to uphold white supremacy. From swamp to city, Louisiana kept demanding racial and environmental justice — continuing the intertwined struggle more than a decade after Hurricane Katrina.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TRUTHOUT



It has been a difficult year for independent and online news media. While journalism has been under sustained economic assault for decades, with newspapers shuttering or being bought out by massive media conglomerates, the past twelve months have shown the vulnerability of even the so-called “new” media, as websites have either laid off large numbers of staff or closed down entirely. Many online publications that pinned their financial hopes to advertising have discovered that it is not, in fact, a sustainable source of revenue, and now are scrambling to find other solutions for funding.

Many of those short-lived solutions are alienating news readers. Paywalls or subscription-only content effectively block underrepresented communities from accessing the news they need most, sponsored editorial content undermines the quality and integrity of stories that are published, and selling user data to third-party advertisers is widely considered to be a breach of reader trust. Truthout, on the other hand, does not employ any of these tactics in order to keep our journalism funded and our site online.

Our relationship with our readers goes deeper than clicks and, in return, our readers support a significant amount of our budget (individual donations made up 81 percent of our annual revenue in FY2017). Truthout’s audience is comprised of deeply engaged, politically savvy people from across the United States and around the world. Readers include educators, legislators, elected officials, organizers, advocates and influential authors and thinkers who bring a unique value to the conversation around the most urgent issues of our time: from climate disruption to human rights, threats to press freedom to campaigns to reform the US health care system, foreign policy to the economy and beyond. By inspiring these influencers, and by keeping these topics at the front of people’s minds with daily articles, we anticipate that these key players will help drive forward positive changes in policy and practice, as we continue to raise public consciousness and shift the tenor of conversations at the grassroots level.

READY TO GET INVOLVED?



Truthout relies on the support of those who care about the survival of intrepid, trustworthy journalism. Here are a few ways to support Truthout's truly independent news:

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

A monthly or one-time donation is one of the most meaningful ways to support Truthout's work in 2019 and beyond. Your gift provides the kind of sustainable funding publications like ours need to survive, and ensures we can continue amplifying the voices of activists, scientists, scholars and truth-tellers from across the nation. Visit truthout.org/donate to explore the many ways to contribute.

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If you'd like annual reports or other materials to share, get in touch with us at info@truthout.org.

MEET OUR TEAM

Truthout could not operate without our dedicated and talented staff of editors, writers, reporters, artists, fundraisers, technical and marketing experts, administrative staff, interns and fellows. Truthout made history when it became the first online-only news publication to unionize in 2009, and our staff have been proud members of The NewsGuild-CWA ever since.



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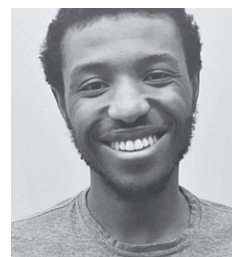
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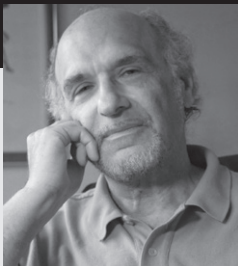
ROBERT NAIMAN is Policy Director at Just Foreign Policy. He is president of the board of Truthout. He wrote the Syria chapter in *The Wikileaks Files: The World According to US Empire*. Naiman has worked as a policy analyst and researcher at the Center for Economic and Policy Research and Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch. He has Masters' degrees in economics and mathematics from the University of Illinois and has studied and worked in the Middle East.

LEWIS R. GORDON is Professor of Philosophy at UCONN-Storrs; Honorary President of the Global Center for Advanced Studies; the 2018–2019 Boaventura de Sousa Santos Chair in Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra, Portugal; Honorary Professor at the Unit of the Humanities at Rhodes University (UHURU), South Africa; and Chair of Global Collaborations for the Caribbean Philosophical Association. His most recent books are the forthcoming *Fear of a Black Consciousness* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux in the USA and Penguin Book in the UK), *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought* (NY: Fordham UP; London: Hurst; Johannesburg: Wits UP, 2015; in Swedish, *Vad Fanon Sa*, Stockholm: TankeKraft förlag, 2016), and, with Fernanda Frizzo Bragato, *Geopolitics and Decolonization: Perspectives from the Global South* (London, UK: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018). His public Facebook page is: facebook.com/LewisGordonPhilosopher/ and he is on Twitter as @lewford

HENRY A. GIROUX currently holds the McMaster University Chair for Scholarship in the Public Interest in the English and Cultural Studies Department and the Paulo Freire Distinguished Scholar in Critical Pedagogy. His most recent books are *America at War with Itself* (City Lights, 2017); *The Public in Peril: Trump and the Menace of American Authoritarianism* (Routledge, 2018); *American Nightmare: Facing the Challenge of Fascism* (City Lights, 2018); and his forthcoming *The Terror of the Unforeseen* (Los Angeles Review of Books). His website is www.henryagiroux.com and he's on twitter as @HenryGiroux

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Mark Karlin Receives the Flame of Truth Award

In 2018, after eight wonderful years with Truthout (and many at BuzzFlash before that), our esteemed friend and colleague Mark Karlin announced his retirement.

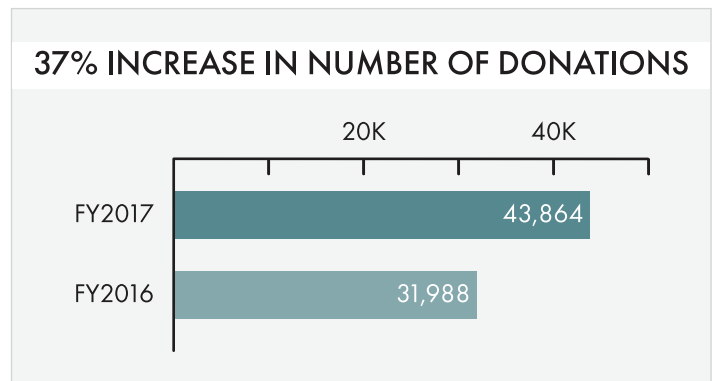
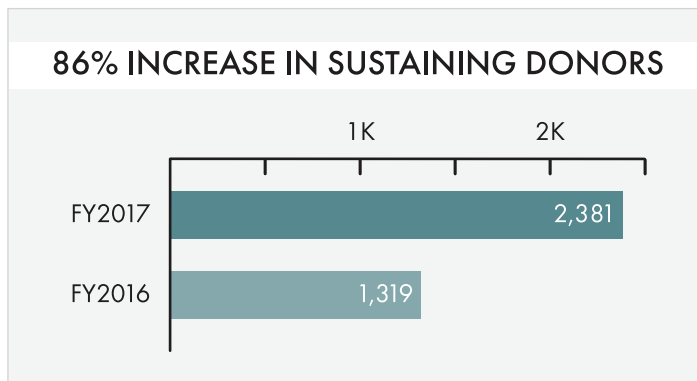
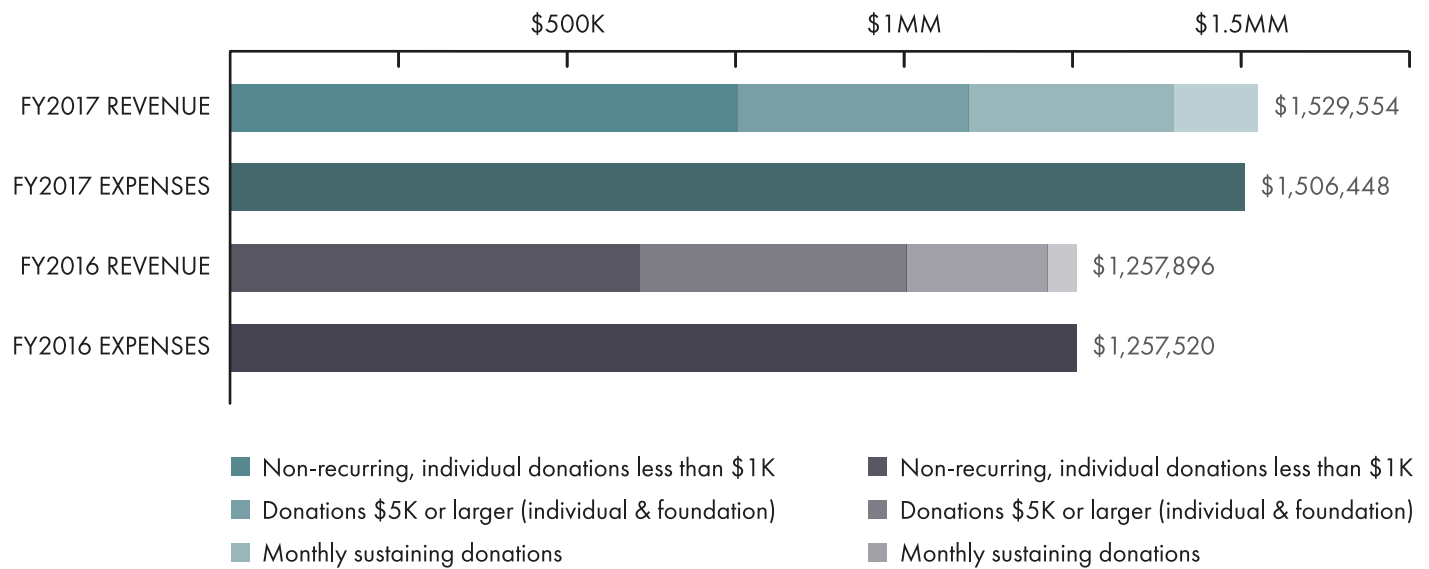
In appreciation of Mark's contribution to the organization we awarded him with the third-ever Flame of Truth Award, in recognition of his commitment to the principles of truth and justice that drive Truthout's work.

Mark joined Truthout in 2010, bringing his own organization, BuzzFlash, with him. BuzzFlash, which Mark founded, was a trailblazer — one of the first sites of its kind — and had achieved a wide readership and longtime loyal audience. In joining Truthout, Mark played a unique and important role in growing our organization. Since then, in addition to serving as the managing editor of BuzzFlash, he has written incisive commentaries on a near-daily basis, initiated and managed our Progressive Picks program, conducted scores of interviews with authors and activists, reported on the drug war from the US-Mexico border, helped grow Truthout's outreach strategy and reader base, and served as a key player in this organization's evolution.

Mark has brought so much passion, joy and dedication to Truthout and we will be forever grateful to him.



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