

Barb's Notes, January 16, 2025

===== Podcast 1, Fighting Back

Now that the fascists have taken control of the United States government, the working class--both those who voted for Trump and those who didn't--are going to suffer and perhaps start recognizing that they're actually on the same side of this struggle and join forces to fight back.

How do we know there's more suffering for us commoners in sight? Because Trump is filling his executive branch with billionaires who are going to literally rob Fort Knox and chip away at our already-small American social safety net.

The unofficial Department of Government Efficiency, nicknamed DOGE, is an attempt by Musk/Trump to take the power of funding away from the Legislative Branch—never mind that the US constitution specifically gives that power to Congress. Musk and Trump will simply refuse to spend the money on social programs that has already been allocated by Congress to the working class, and see if any Republican Senators or Congressmen dare try to stop them. Democrats will try to stop them, but it will require Republicans in congress to join with Democrats to be successful. I'm talking to you,

Global inflation in the aftermath of Covid toppled 70% of incumbent administrations within Democratically-elected countries.

What does this mean? The working class are suffering on a global scale, and they're blaming whoever is in power. We saw that play out in Germany a couple of months ago and in France and South Korea last month.

Democracies are in trouble if people lose faith in their country's institutions, and people lose faith if they can't afford to meet their family's basic needs. Taxing the extremely wealthy as a way to help the working class meet their basic needs seems so simple, and yet, we are electing politicians who aim to do the opposite of that.

In fact, as we see our own federal government over the next four years run by corrupt and unqualified officials harming everything they touch, Americans will have to rely on their states more than ever for the government services they used to take for granted.

What you can do now to Fight Back

From Indivisible

Tell your senators to nix the nominees and oppose the cabinet nominations of sycophants and extremists. Use our new webpage and call/email tools to contact your senators and demand that they oppose the nominations of Patel, Hegseth, Vought, and Kennedy -- and any other MAGA zealot who wants to weaponize federal power and push their radical agenda. <https://www.nixthenoms.com>

Brace for Impact with Indivisible's co-founders every Thursday in January at 3pm ET/12pm PT. Trump's inauguration is Monday, and a new MAGA Congress is now in session. Electeds, corporations, and mainstream media are already capitulating to

Trump's agenda, but we're seeing a wave of new energy from folks who are ready to fight back. Join Indivisible's Leah and Ezra every Thursday in January for a live discussion and Q&A session on how to prepare for what's ahead and what we know about this new congress.

https://indivisible.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0Hi379iPTNeI3-7Ch1UCAg#/registration

The Op-ed Project

A relatively easy and impactful way to get attention for an issue in your local newspaper is by submitting an op-ed or a letter to the editor. Newspapers typically have submission guidelines for each, so be sure to read and follow those. *The Op-Ed Project* has some great suggestions for writing op-eds and getting them published.

Op-ed Writing, Tips and Tricks: <https://www.theopedproject.org/resources>

A letter to the editor is sent to a publication in reaction to a recently published story or to bring up issues or concerns from dedicated readers. Elizabeth Warren's campaign provided a quick and easy guide to writing letters to the editor and getting them published. <https://2020.elizabethwarren.com/toolkit/write-lte>

===== End of Podcast 1, Fighting Back

===== Podcast 2, The Texas Legislature

The Texas Legislature

"If you're not a Texan, you can view from afar one of the most important engines of conservative policy generation in the country. If you call Texas home, the Legislature is also the political body that most touches and shapes your daily life. That often comes as a surprise to Texans, who may think of it as a kind of middle management between the Congress they hate and the local government they hate. But it is the Legislature that banned nearly all abortions here and decides how much money your child's school district has. It is the Legislature that sets the state's tax structure, the conditions of the hospitals, what counts as a crime, how much it costs to go to state college, what federal money we take, and what rules cities must follow. There's a good chance you're mad at the feds or your city council for something for which the Legislature actually bears primary blame. (For example, [property taxes](#).)"

"Texas is flush with cash—Comptroller Glenn Hegar reported a surplus of a little less than \$24 billion—only a slight decrease from the historic surplus of last session."

Perhaps the most consequential issue before the lege is the debate over whether to use public money to subsidize private school tuition at [predominantly Christian academies](#) through a statewide voucher program—a measure that has long been held at bay by Democrats and [rural Republicans](#) in the Texas House whose communities depend on the health of their public school districts.

"A coalition of powerful political forces supported by [Governor Greg Abbott](#), [Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick](#), and [Attorney General Ken Paxton](#), and backed by Christian nationalist and Midland oilman [Tim Dunn](#), unseated or replaced more than a dozen of those meddlesome Republicans, seeming to pave the way for

vouchers of some kind. As such, the question is now whether the governor gets a small program that serves to open the door to future expansion or whether the House goes in whole hog. Whether the Lege goes in for a little or a lot will have huge consequences for the future of public education in Texas, which is already struggling with structural shortfalls and state neglect.”

The issue on which the most money is being spent by lobbyists is the question of whether to legalize casino gambling and sports gambling in Texas. The Las Vegas Sands Corporation alone has more than a hundred lobbyists. Gaming legislation is likely to fall short again this year because it needs a two-thirds majority in both chambers to pass, and many Republicans, including Patrick, who controls the Senate, are steadfastly opposed.

There probably will be some hot debates over the Trump administration’s desire to make state police officers and national guardsmen a part of federal immigration police.

Dan Patrick rules the Texas Senate. If he likes a bill, it passes. If he doesn’t, it’s dead. In the House, the Speaker has power because he manages complex coalitions and transactional relationships with most of the 150 members.

<https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/how-to-watch-texas-legislature-2025>

===== End of Podcast 2

Local Offices, <https://graysondemocrats.org/resources>

New tool for finding elected offices currently open for your address:

<https://app.ballotready.org/run>

How to File for Office in Texas:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rt4lv0FVbpb5S7xW9VDj1uGMq43u78W6Yrlp41-zwPM/edit?tab=t.0>

Precinct Chairs, Oath, Duties, Maps:

<https://graysondemocrats.org/officers>

Find your precinct on the wall map

County Executive Committee

First Name	Last Name	Email	Precinct*
Amy	Hoffman-Shehan	amychs17@gmail.com	101
Karen	Spencer	karen.spencer7@verizon.net	102
Pamela	McGraw	pamela@pamelamcgrawpc.com	203
Fred	Meyer	f3meyer@gmail.com	301
Debra	Rushing	debra.jane23@gmail.com	304
Jan	Fletcher	jans_melodies@msn.com	305
Obie	Greenleaf	o.greenleaf@sbcglobal.net	401
Mark	Ewig	coinman@sbcglobal.net	402
Lynne	Duggan	yellowdoglynne@gmail.com	403
Ron	Briggs	randjbriggs@netscape.net	404