



Poor People's United Fund

645 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 262-5922
e-mail: fran@ppuf.org

Boston's Spare Change Community

Spring 2019

"No prophet can call us to a change of heart more powerfully than the oppressed, the exiled,
the alienated, the outcasts." *Kip Tiernan*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

What a ride we are on. Every day seems to bring another stream of news that makes us think we have lost our minds. Our 'leader's' moral wanderings, disregard for truth and incompetence have no limit. No one seems to be able or even possess the desire to make the president accountable. The Republican party appears to have abandoned any dissatisfaction with White House goings on. They have chosen that path so they can put in place the chess pieces (judges) needed to enact the cultural shift they desire ... curtailing women's reproductive rights, eliminating LGBTQ rights, ignoring Immigrant rights.

Since we last wrote to you, we have seen college admission cheating, hate murders in places of worship both here and abroad, plane crashes caused by negligence, food recalls, Brexit mess, North Korean mess... It's hard to just keep up. And of course the Mueller Report.

In the midst of all of this PPUF refuses to lose sight of the poor and homeless people calling us for assistance. The dozens of people who call us each month receive a personal return call and a conversation. Perhaps we can't pull people out of poverty but can at least alleviate some of the stress people are experiencing due to lack of food, or power shut offs, or eviction on the horizon, or bus fare to get to a new job or clothes for the kids.

And thanks to your support PPUF's help doesn't end when a new state or federal budget comes out cutting benefits to poor people. When a person in need calls, we respond.

Recently, a woman called to say her rent was just raised. She is disabled and has very limited income. Her landlord decided to increase rent \$250. She lives in subsidized housing but the housing department won't recertify her for the increase until July. In the meantime, she has to pay it. She has had to cut back on everything to try to make the rent payment. But she has fallen behind and is barely managing-worrying she could lose her home. PPUF is assisting her.

We know that it's not enough to alleviate suffering – we must work as hard as we can to eliminate. That's why we raise our voices about rules and policies that put barriers in the way of people who are in desperate need. Georgia works in coalition with 122 organizations who try to make sure families are not penalized for being poor. Thanks to the coalition's efforts (Lift the Cap) the state will now provide more support for poor families.



Next page...

In past months, many of us have cried our eyes out over the cruelty shown on our southern border. People fleeing chaos and violence in their countries walk hundreds of miles to the US only to be met by a different form of chaos. Please read Vicky's immigration update.

Oh did I mention climate change? Homeless people are already being impacted by the extremes in weather. Unsheltered homeless people whose health is already compromised are dealing with colder temps and hotter daytime temperatures. Let's hope the powers that be world wide get going on serious measures to help the planet soon!

In the meantime, do what you can. And please if you can, please consider a donation to PPUF-maybe as a birthday gift for a friend or family member. Anything you send will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for listening.

In Struggle and Hope, Georgia, Margaret, and Fran

What PPUF Does...

Provides Food to 100 + people, many elderly or disabled

Provides Food Assistance to school children over weekends, holidays & school vacations

Advocates on issues affecting families with children, homeless people

Keeps track of policies that make life harder for poor people

When possible: Provides Assistance with utility bills, back rent, storage

Educates people about the breadth and depth of poverty

Educates the general public about Kip Tiernan's life to provide inspiration to current & future generations

Let Them Eat Bureaucrats

Georgia Mattison 1984

Rude Arrogance

Bureaucratic blindness

Skillful manipulation

of human needs

Where did you learn that
that was routine

Where did you learn not
to understand

The needs of people
the hope
the vulnerability

Maybe only to then steal
away our survival
Until we rise up like a dragon
that has nothing to eat but you

A Thank You to John Rodley who has been helping PPUF with techy stuff for over 30 years!
And thank you to Stephanie Mondonca whom we met a few month ago and who is helping PPUF smooth out website glitches, updates and layouts!

Immigration Update II

ACTION FOR IMMIGRANTS

Vicky Steinitz

The situation of our undocumented immigrant neighbors remains dire. In the face of relentless demonizing, cruel family separation policies, and massive detentions and deportations, we cannot ignore what is happening. I urge you to join the struggle to support the immigrant residents of Massachusetts.

Legislation Introduced in the 2019-2020 Session -- Despite the failures of the Massachusetts legislature, efforts to pass immigrant rights legislation continue. Indeed, a record number of bills have been introduced this year. They include:

The Safe Communities Act which limits state and local participation in federal immigration matters with the aim of restoring community confidence in the police. It mandates basic due process rights and seeks to ensure that police resources are used to fight crime, not separate families.

The Work and Family Mobility Act which makes standard driver's licenses available to all qualified state residents, regardless of immigration status. It aims to ensure that all drivers are trained, licensed and insured, and removes unlicensed driving as a key entry point to the deportation pipeline.

The Higher Education Equity Act which makes it possible for all state residents who graduate from Massachusetts high schools to have access to in-state tuition and state financial aid, regardless of immigration status.



These bills, introduced in a number of previous sessions, are priorities of immigrant rights groups. Even before they have been debated, Governor Baker has made preemptive threats to veto them. Call and tell him his grandstanding is cruel and unacceptable (617-725-4005)

Other important pieces of legislation include acts: to ensure that Mass Health covers all children regardless of their immigration status; to prevent wage theft to which immigrants are particularly vulnerable; and, to update the U-visa process for immigrant victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking, and other violent crimes. We must fight for these bills too, each of which would improve the life situations of immigrant families. For more information, see <http://miracoalition.org/images/Documents/MIRA-Legislative-Agenda-2019-2020.pdf>

Legal Defense, Bail Bond Funds, and Immigrant Justice Accompaniment

What can we, as individuals, do to assist undocumented immigrants who have been caught up in the detention/deportation net? Currently, only 37% of all immigrants and 14% of detained immigrants go to court with a lawyer. Those with legal representation have a five times higher chance of achieving a favorable outcome. Two major efforts to provide legal services are described below. The United Legal Fund for Immigrants -- Administered by the Cambridge Community Foundation, the fund now serves immigrants who live and work in Cambridge and Somerville. It supports young adults previously protected by DACA who are now at risk of deportation, provides family legal services to Temporary Protected Status workers, and gives priority to cases involving asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors/juveniles, and other highly vulnerable persons including victims of trafficking, sexual, and/or domestic violence. In its first six months the Fund distributed \$255,000 to four local agencies providing legal defense services to immigrants. To contribute to the fund, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/united-legal-defense-fund>

Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network -- More than 1,000 people are held each year in South Bay Detention Center—Boston's immigration prison.

Continued on page 5...

It Was Just Too Much to Ask

Georgia Mattison

Lift the Cap wins despite a Second Veto

The 122 organizations in the Lift the Cap on Kids coalition determinedly returned this January to again go through the process of filing a bill to rescind the family cap on children born to a TAFDC (Transitional Assistance to Families with Dependent Children) household during their time on the program. Any baby conceived while the family receives TAFDC cannot receive any benefits, causing documented malnutrition for the whole family according to the Children's Health Care Watch. In newspapers around the state The Family Cap has been described as a cruel Welfare Experiment that since 1995 has increased food insecurity and caused poor health outcomes on the unfounded expectation that birth rates among TAFDC mothers would go down. The TAFDC birthrate is the same as that in the general population. As the March 7 Boston Globe editorial said, "The truly pernicious part is that the cap penalizes all siblings who need to be clothed and fed with the same size benefit."



Last July, the governor, waiting until the last minute, unexpectedly vetoed the bill with a poison pill amendment that made it impossible to override his veto in the three days left in the session.

In January, the bill again received almost unanimous votes in the House and the Senate, but the coalition became worried about another veto when they saw legislators close to the Governor try to insert the same cruel provision into the bill, a provision that would Lift the Cap on 8700 babies but deny TAFDC cash benefits to 7000 children living in households that have a parent receiving Social Security Income.

On April 8 the Governor again vetoed the bill. The 122 member coalition did not have to marshal its forces again to override a veto from a Governor who sees an extra \$100 a month as being just too much to ask. In fact, the Speaker of the House, Robert DeLeo immediately announced an Override vote for April 10. After House lead sponsor Marjorie Decker spoke eloquently about the need to take care of these babies, the House voted 155-1 to override the Governor. The President of the Senate, Karen Spilka, announced that the Senate would hold an Override vote on April 25 which it did.. The bill then became law immediately.

This is a win for the families and a great win for the Commonwealth!! Thank you to all who worked with such great passion for this victory. Kip would have been so proud!!



Advocates Who Lifted the Cap!
photos compliments of Field-First, Mass Law Reform & Greater Boston Legal Services

(Action for Immigrants...continued from page 4)

A volunteer network of faith communities, individuals and other activist groups working closely with immigrant communities and immigrant-led organizations, BIJAN provides accompaniment to these detainees. This can include support in court or at ICE check-ins, fundraising for bond or legal fees, and a variety of other legal support services. It also helps with housing, transportation, and other immediate needs of people released on bond who have no other resources in the community. In its first year, BIJAN raised over \$200,000 to bond out 50 people and help with legal fees for many others. To volunteer, sign up at www.bit.ly/joinBIJAN.

Efforts to help immigrant Massachusetts residents are growing apace but we are still far from meeting the needs of our vulnerable neighbors. This is an urgent task which calls on us all.

In Memoriam

Francis Ogilvie long time friend and PPUF supporter passed away on March 30th. He served as department head for MIT's Department of Ocean Engineering until 1994. His wife Joan was PPUF's volunteer bookkeeper until they both retired and moved west. Joan passed away in 2013. Over the years, their children Nancy, Ken and Beth have stayed in touch with PPUF. We are grateful to have known these two wonderful people. We know their legacy of kindness and service to community lives on in their children and others they touched along the way.

Women's Voting Rights Celebrates 100 years in 2020

The year 2020 will mark the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing and protecting women's constitutional right to vote.

PPUF's home for 39 years is Having A HUGE Celebration.

Old South Church is Celebrating its 350th Year!

Old South's website says, *"May 12, 1669 was the first gathering of Old South. In the 350 years since, we've taken bold stances and pursued justice and mercy. The church of Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Adams, of Phillis Wheatley and the Boston Tea Party, we continue to make history in the 21st century. And we think that deserves some celebration!"*

Kip always relished in being part of Boston's revolutionary church. A church committed to justice. Bravo! To 350 more!



And ...Senior minister at Old South recently received the Light to the City award from City Mission. Nancy received a rousing cheer from the audience as she was presented with her award. Old South is always responsive to the needs of whomever comes to the church for help. Her leadership always inspires. Congratulations, Nancy.





Poor People's United Fund
645 Boylston Street
Boston MA 02116

Visit the Kip Tiernan Memorial This Summer



Find it on Dartmouth Street between Boylston and Newbury Streets.
At the *Copley* Green Line Station.