

ROSENBERG FOUNDATION

# Justice in California

To mark the Rosenberg Foundation's 75th anniversary, leading social justice advocates and thinkers look to the future.

*The Remaking of California*

Manuel Pastor

*Immigrant Rights: Bucking the National Trend*

Mina Titi Liu & Thomas A. Saenz

*Smart About Safety*

Benjamin Todd Jealous & Lateefah Simon

*Sowing Change in the San Joaquin Valley*

Hugo Morales

*Securing Justice for Farm Workers*

Dolores Huerta

*An Economy that Works for All of Us*

Madeline Janis

*Building a Real Progressive Movement for Change*

Eva Paterson

*Bridging Racial and Ethnic Divides*

Maria Echaveste

*One, Larger Vision for Justice*

Kate Kendell & Stewart Kwoh

## Editors' Note

■ When we tell the story of the Rosenberg Foundation's creation, we often note that its founder, Max Rosenberg, left his wealth to the foundation because he had no heirs. Clearly, that is not true. All of us who are dedicated to building a fair and equitable society are his heirs—just as we are the heirs of Cesar Chavez, Ella Baker, and Fred Korematsu; of Harvey Milk, Thurgood Marshall, and Luke Cole. We are their heirs, and we are the beneficiaries of a great inheritance of passion. It is an inheritance we must steward, grow, and pass on stronger than we received it.

This is the inheritance of passion that drives the leading advocates and thinkers who have lent their voices to *Justice In California*, a publication marking the Foundation's 75th anniversary. The leaders who are featured here are just a few of the remarkable and visionary individuals throughout our state and country who have committed their lives to social and economic equity. These are leaders who, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt.”

We hope that this publication can help to inform our public conversation on how best to realize our common dreams for justice and equality in California. Tom Saenz and Mina Titi Liu outline how California can pioneer new ways to secure full civic and economic integration for immigrants. Lateefah Simon and Ben Jealous highlight the urgent need to reform the state and country's broken prison system, which is rife with racial disparity and is collapsing under its own weight. Dolores Huerta and Hugo Morales discuss the path to justice and opportunity for farm workers and other marginalized communities in rural California. Madeline Janis makes the case for building an economy that works for all of us.

It is clear that much remains to be done, and success on these critical issues will demand that we turn the talk about intersection among multiple interests into new ways of working together, that we move beyond a diverse set of progressive causes to build a cohesive progressive movement.

As Manuel Pastor writes in the introduction to this publication, the communities we represent comprise a very solid majority of the state—communities of color, LGBT, low-income families, labor, and progressives. What is not yet clear is whether we will mobilize collectively and sufficiently to move a proactive and systematic progressive policy agenda. So, we asked Eva Paterson, Maria Echaveste, Stewart Kwoh and Kate Kendell to share with us strategies for moving beyond our respective issue silos and constituencies to build the coalitions that will help us achieve our common agenda.

Real progress is within our reach if we commit to working together for equality and justice. The pieces in this publication offer real hope that in five years, when we celebrate Rosenberg's 80th anniversary, we will have been able to claim victory on some of the critical social and economic justice issues that confront us in the Golden State. At Rosenberg Foundation, we are resolved to back the dynamic leaders and coalitions across California fighting for justice, so that, in five years we will have achieved all this:

- The DREAM Act will no longer be a dream.
- No child will be working in California's fields.
- While our state constructs economic superhighways to quality job opportunities, we will have built commuter lanes for families who have been chronically marginalized.
- A second chance will mean just that, a fresh start for people coming out of prison.
- Our state will no longer be home to the world's largest women's prison.
- And we will have changed the odds for children exposed to violence.

We have no doubt that, by working together as one community, we can begin to build a current in California that will be felt across the country. In the words of Cesar Chavez, “We have seen the future, and the future is ours.” ■

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Robert E. Friedman & Lewis H. Butler

## Reflections on the Past 75 Years

Can we learn anything about the future of justice in California and the role of the Foundation in that quest by looking at the past?

■ In this publication devoted to the future of justice in California and the role of the Rosenberg Foundation in that quest, we have been asked to reflect on the past 75 years, which raises the question: Can you learn anything about the future by looking at the past?

The two of us, together, have served for more than 34 years on the Rosenberg Foundation's Board of Directors—too long, no doubt, but less than half the Foundation's history. Nevertheless, we will pretend to have the understanding and breadth to encompass the continuing legacy of this

remarkable Foundation.

Despite (and perhaps because of) the “broad charitable purposes and wide latitude” Max Rosenberg gave to the Foundation he endowed and that bears his name, the same values and many of the same issues that characterized the grantmaking of this Foundation during its 75 year history likely will extend forward: as articulated in the first 10-year report of the Foundation, “an early interest in agricultural areas of the state, the character and diversity of the population of California, [and] the impact of national events within the state.”

Indeed, looking back at the full span of seven and a half decades, the Foundation has shown an enduring focus on the protection and opportunities of California's children, immigrants, disadvantaged and marginalized communities, and our underdeveloped agricultural areas, notably the Central and San Joaquin Valleys. This focus, the essays in this volume suggest, likely will continue in the decades ahead.

Other themes of our history probably will extend into the future as well. We almost certainly will continue to focus on California, not just because it is our home, but because, as historian Chuck Wallenberg noted, “California is like the rest of the United States, only more so.” We are broadly aware that California is among the first majority mi-



nority states, and that if we can make California work for all people, it may serve well not only for us, but as a national and international model.

Deep in the Foundation's ethos is the belief in the dignity and promise of all people in all their diversity, and the conviction that we will all do better if everyone has full protections and the full, unhindered opportunity to contribute. Indeed, the Foundation continues to bring together the tremendous diversity of California's people, not only in our work, but also on our Board and through our partnerships and convenings, believing that the business community can understand, embrace, and benefit from social and economic justice, that police and correctional officers are as much a part of the solution to our criminal justice system as are the African American men who are so disproportionately imprisoned there and denied effective reentry to the economy after serving their time. Throughout our history, we have supported economic justice along with social justice, understanding that to thrive, people must not only gain the unfettered exercise of their rights but must also have equal access to economic opportunity.

If an institution like the Rosenberg Foundation remains vital over the course of decades and even centuries, it must be because of the caliber of its staff, the diversity of its Board, and, above all, the quality of its grantee partners. Rosenberg, the first staffed foundation west of the Mississippi, has been distinguished and shaped by five remarkable leaders—Leslie Ganyard (who had to explain to potential grantees what a foundation grant was), Ruth Chance (who graduated first in her class at Boalt, but whom no law firm in San Francisco would hire because she was a woman), Kirke Wilson (who brought his passion for farm worker justice from organizing in the fields

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of the Central Valley), Ben Jealous (who brought his experience fighting for criminal justice and civil rights to Rosenberg before going to lead a rebirth of the NAACP), and Tim Silard (who brings his leadership in civil rights and social justice). It is distinguished as well by its diverse Board of Directors, which combines and bridges activists and pillars of the business establishment as it always has. Ruth Chance was always clear that a foundation is only as good as its grantees; indeed, the Rosenberg Foundation is distinguished by the quality, diversity, and dedication of its grantee partners, and their willingness to work across racial, ethnic, political, social, and economic lines to create a new future for all Californians.

As the Foundation remains committed to core values and callings, so it likely will continue to evolve. Even as we continue to work to open doors to historically marginalized communities, we recognize other marginalized groups—in more recent years, the LGBT community and also California's prison population, which is comprised so disproportionately of people of color and the poor—as the proper focus of our attention. Our willingness to exploit the freedoms of grantmaking will continue to demand thoughtful innovation and openness to changing

conditions and opportunities.

But if change is constant, the aims of the Foundation, as articulated a quarter of a century ago on the occasion of the Foundation's 50th anniversary, ring as true now as then:

*“Despite vast differences and obstacles, we can create a working society together. We can have both unity and diversity, both excellence and opportunity. The American experiment is not over; it is just beginning. And, finally, this democracy is more than just a catfight among competing groups; it is an ideal nurtured by unselfish people. For its part, the Rosenberg Foundation will go on supporting those unselfish people.”*

As much as we are characterized by optimism and commitment, one of the inescapable lessons of our 75-year history is that, despite huge and significant victories, we have not yet achieved our hopes for a state where everyone has a real chance to grow and contribute—nor is it likely we will achieve our dreams in the next 75 years. Yet, we will continue to do all that we can, along with our allies, to create a California like the America Langston Hughes envisioned, “that never was yet still must be.” ■

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*Robert E. Friedman is a member of the Rosenberg Foundation's Board of Directors. Lewis H. Butler is one of the Foundation's alumni trustees.*

# The Remaking of California

A look at the deeper transitions - from demographic to economic - shaping the future of the Golden State.

■ Analysts of California politics often operate in sound bites: Who's the next governor? What's the next proposition? Where's the next spending cut? Unfortunately, the insistence on the short-term theatrics of campaigns and budget battles—important as they may be—can sometimes obscure the deeper transitions shaping the prospects for our state. If we are to enter the future with any measure of grace—or justice—we'll have to look not just forward but outward to the long-term horizon.

## *Changing Demography and the "Generation Gap"*

Foremost amongst these coming transitions is one of demography. The Census Bureau predicts that the U.S. will become "majority minority"—that is, a nation with no racial/ethnic majority group—some time between 2042 and 2050. California crossed that threshold a year before the millennium; in fact, the demographic change we witnessed between 1980 and 2000 is roughly what the U.S. is projected to experience between 2000 and 2050.

California naturally will continue to stay ahead of that curve, and will, in fact, be a majority Latino state by 2035. With the state "browning" rapidly, the popular image is that the main driver is immigration. But this would be using yesterday's population dynamics to guess at tomorrow's demography. While the share of immigrants did rise dramatically in California in the past three decades—and now over half of the state's children have at least one immigrant parent—the percentage of

those foreign-born is actually on the decline. Rising instead is what Dowell Myers of USC calls a "home-grown majority"—young people born in California and committed to staying in the state.

The youth comprising this emerging majority are often distinctly different than their elders. Roughly two-thirds of the population above the age of 65—an age group with a very high propensity to vote—is White. The share falls to 50 percent as we look at those between the ages of 40 and 64, a cohort in their years of peak income and hence more likely to carry, or resist carrying, the tax burden of the state. Yet, the group whose future they are deciding to support or not—those under the age of 18—are 70 percent kids of color.

This is California's "generation gap"—and it is one that *Sacramento Bee* columnist Peter Schrag argues is an undercurrent in the state's resistance to fiscal reform, particularly reform of Proposition 13 and its protection of long-time homeowners. That this generation gap makes a difference is evidenced by a study a colleague and I did for the Public Policy Institute of California: those states with the greatest demographic divergence between the young and the old also have the lowest per capita state capital outlays—that is, investments in the future.

## *The State of Inequality*

Another deep transition we face involves the California economy. On one hand, the current economic recession can blind us to some long-term strengths: a younger la-

bor force, creative and progressive entrepreneurs, and a strong university system that can incubate new ideas and talent. Californians are also blessed with a firm commitment to protecting the planet, something that can drive innovation to a more sustainable green economy.

On the other hand, we also are confronting an economy marked by sharp inequalities. Once considered a beacon of opportunity, attracting migrants from other states and the world, California is now the sixth most unequal state in the country in terms of the ratio of incomes of the top fifth of families to the bottom fifth of families. Considering the ratio of the top to the middle, we are the third most unequal. The state we most closely resemble in terms of both our income inequality and changes over time is Mississippi, hardly a comparison to which most Californians aspire.

While part of this inequality reflects the fact that the benefits of economic growth have largely been captured by the richest one percent of the state, California is also experiencing a striking degree of wage polarization by skill that affects those in the less lofty reaches of income distribution. The premium for education has risen: more than ever before, more education means higher wages, especially as job growth continues to be polarized in very high- and very low-wage sectors. Adding to the mix is a continuing decline in union membership; one of the "bright spots" for the labor movement has been consistently high public sector unionization, but this simply pits state workers against the state's taxpayers, making public sector unions seem like a special interest.

There is also a worrisome stratification by race: Black and Latino family income is noticeably lower than that of Asians and Whites. Educational

levels are stratified as well, and if one projects out the skill demands of new employment against that trend, the recipe for a continuing division by race and class is set. Meanwhile, the foreclosure crisis has hit Black and Latino homeowners—or now, former homeowners—the hardest, partly because they were last to buy in the run-up to the bubble bursting, leading to a destruction of wealth that rivals the effects of a natural disaster.

While these challenges can seem overwhelming, this disaster isn't natural, and our fate is in our hands. What we need urgently is a new vision, new leadership, and a new civic—and civil—dialogue about our future.

#### *A Common Vision for California*

A new and healthier California would be one in which older, White Californians invest in the education of younger Asians and Latinos. It is one in which African Americans are advocating for immigrant integration—and in which immigrants and their allies commit to creating pathways out of poverty for African Americans. It is one in which businesses work together with community advocates to build a stronger pipeline for workforce development. It is one in which there's a common vision for one California.

Getting there will require that we reach across the racial, class, and generational divides that are splitting apart the state and keeping us from communicating with each other. In order to change our situation and redefine our trajectory, we must change both the public discourse and how we have that discourse.

We see this principle already at work in the ongoing mobilization quietly reshaping the state. Social movements—for immigrant rights, for improved working conditions, for environmental justice, for reform of the criminal justice system, and for the right of everyone to marry and serve their country as they see

fit—are offering positive change to California. Typically, these movements are associated with dramatic protests and marches—and those activities are certainly part of their work. Still, the majority of social movement work is basically patient

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and often unrecognized one-on-one organizing, done face-to-face, race-to-race, and place-to-place.

These ongoing conversations are important because they allow us to work together to make the difficult choices that moving forward requires—and we are facing some difficult choices. Shaping up our economy requires a mix of at least three things:

- setting some minimum standards for the labor market (i.e., mandating living wages and worker protection);
- creating a path for upward mobility (i.e., providing education and training for tomorrow's workforce); and

- defining a strategy for sustainable economic growth (i.e., encouraging investment with streamlined public policy).

Activists have excelled with the first, and business has focused on the last, while both need to think and talk more about mobility, especially about how to actually fund the education system the state so desperately needs.

Aligning our efforts to foster economic growth with the fight to achieve social equity is critical. Recent research on income gains in America's metropolitan regions—including a study from the Federal Reserve—has shown that when inequality and racial segregation remain, entire regional economies suffer.

Inequality also has played a role in our national crisis. The current Great Recession was driven in part by a situation in which the wealthy were so flooded with liquidity that they speculated on Wall Street, while working people were so stressed by stagnant income that they borrowed just to stay afloat. When this rising inequality was churned through a deregulated system, replete with derivatives and subprime mortgages, the results were predictable—but they were not inevitable.

With the old system broken, we have the opportunity and responsibility to build anew. Fundamental to the future will be not just new policies, but also social movements and the alliances and mutual understanding they can and must build.

This special publication of the Rosenberg Foundation optimistically projects that justice will be a firm part of California's future. To turn that optimism into reality, we will need to realize that “justice” requires “just us”: We are the ones who will help the social movements celebrated here remake the state and our future.

We are the ones who must work together to refashion California's story. ■

# Immigrant Rights: Bucking the National Trend

A little more than 16 years ago, California was a poster child for anti-immigrant sentiment. Now, the state is well-positioned to lead the nation on immigrant rights and integration.

■ In an era of term limits and rapid turnarounds in electoral fortune, 16 years may seem like an eternity in politics. In reality, it is less than a generation. A little more than 16 years ago, California claimed the dubious mantle of leadership in anti-immigrant public policy by enacting Proposition 187. In November 1994, the initiative, misleadingly named “Save our State,” received 58 percent of the statewide vote, and Governor Pete Wilson rode his staunch support of the proposal to a previously unlikely reelection.

In short, in 1994, California was where Arizona is today.

In the ensuing years, however, that dark moment in California history would change the course of California politics for the better. In November 2011, in significant part as a result of the fallout from Proposition 187, the state bucked the national trend, rejecting a conservative movement injected with a large dose of anti-immigrant hostility in favor of candidates with more progressive views on immigrant integration. Meg Whitman’s failed effort to win the office of Governor also signals that Wilson’s backing remains a significant liability for any candidate seeking support among California’s rapidly growing cadre of pro-immigrant Latino and Asian American voters.

Perhaps we could have foretold this course of events based on the racially divided vote on Proposition 187. Exit polls showed that the majority of African American and Asian American

voters, and a staggering three quarters of Latino voters, opposed the initiative. As immigrants reacted to Proposition 187 in the 16 years that followed by naturalizing, registering, and voting in record numbers—against Wilson’s political party, which they viewed as responsible for the initiative—California shifted from a toss-up state to the solidly Democratic enclave that it is today.

In fact, now California has the chance to become a national leader in immigrant integration.

In some ways, Proposition 187 was more severe than Arizona’s Senate Bill 1070, whose passage in 2010 has significantly emboldened today’s anti-immigrant forces, as evidenced by the stunning recent attempts to wipe out the long-standing American Citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment. Proposition 187 followed the enactment of a number of restrictive immigration-related bills by the California Legislature—including the requirement that drivers prove status before receiving a license—and the serious consideration of an even greater number of such proposals. The initiative itself began as the most extreme of a number of potential measures circulated to qualify for the ballot.

Were Proposition 187 not permanently enjoined in almost its entirety by federal courts, the initiative would have required every Californian to prove status before accessing public health care, social services, K–12 education, and higher educa-

tion. Public servants in these areas, as well as law enforcement officers, would have been required to report suspected undocumented immigrants to state and federal authorities, and to send those suspected notices to legalize or leave the state. The initiative’s endemic violations of privacy and invitations to discriminate contributed to the rejection of the proposal by minority voters.

Yet, Proposition 187’s assault on constitutional values catalyzed a dramatic political shift in California, which, in 2011, has resulted in a state government that is different from any other state government nationwide. While no political shift is permanent, and there still is much to do to ensure that California enacts and follows progressive policies, the significance of the shift in California between 1994 and 2011 on immigration is undeniable. At a time when the likelihood of national immigration reform has dimmed, we can find hope in the fact that California can lead the way on this issue.

Despite local and isolated attempts to replicate Arizona, our state seems to recognize the community disruption and economic havoc that mass removals of undocumented immigrants would wreak. With the prominence of California students among those who recently led the national movement for the federal DREAM Act and with the importance of agriculture to the state’s economy, California also readily perceives the need for progressive reform of our federal immigration laws.

California can lead by translating these views into concrete state public policy that demonstrates an interest and investment in the civic and economic integration of immigrants. That begins with taking steps to pre-



vent local jurisdictions from seeking to enact laws going beyond federal law in restricting housing, speech, employment, or schooling on the basis of immigration status. Such laws have almost uniformly been challenged and struck down where they have been enacted, and California cannot afford to spend precious resources defending such unconstitutional measures.

California also can work with the federal government and enact protections to guard against the worst excesses of the Secure Communities program and other efforts by the Obama administration to increase federal enforcement. Too often, these programs do not target or apprehend serious criminals, but rather sweep in peaceful victims of racial profiling or other faulty police practices. The state has a strong interest in not contributing to such unconstitutional activity.

In addition, California can take steps to better involve immigrants in our communities. For example, currently, non-citizen parents cannot vote in school board elections, despite the fact that immigrant students comprise a significant portion of the state's student population. California can pioneer new efforts to address this mismatch. The state could implement significant and well-monitored pilots in multiple districts under which non-citizen parents could have an appointed representative on the school board, akin to the student representatives present on many boards. Another idea might be to create a shared governance structure, much like what is used in the federal Head Start program, in which differences on significant matters between the board and a parents' council are resolved through a mediation process.

Another key element of immigrant integration is language access. In 1973, California's state legislature passed the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act to ensure that Californians



with limited English skills are able to access critical government services. Unfortunately, a report issued by the California State Auditor in November 2010 concluded that, decades later, many agencies either do not know of their responsibilities or do not fully meet the legal requirements to aid the limited-English-speaking residents they serve. The failure to address language barriers can endanger the health and safety of all Californians, cut immigrants off from the opportunity to receive vital government services, and prevent them from fully engaging with local and state government. Ensuring accountability by state and local agencies to Dymally-Alatorre must be a priority of the state's leadership.

While the state's continuing revenue and budget problems may preclude significant investment in such important integration measures as English language and civics classes for immigrants, California could incorporate other approaches to promoting knowledge. For example, the state might consider a policy of encouraging employer provision of such classes as an element of settlement in any state-pursued enforcement of employment law against employers with significant numbers of non-English-speaking workers.

*In the 16 short years since Proposition 187 was passed, California not only has managed to turn away from the ugly anti-immigrant sentiment that gave rise to the destructive measure, but also now is poised to become a national leader on immigrant integration.*

This is just a small sample of the wide-ranging and progressive policies California can incubate and pioneer to integrate immigrants. In the 16 short years since Proposition 187, California not only has managed to turn away from the ugly anti-immigrant sentiment that gave rise to the destructive measure, but also now is poised to become a national leader on immigrant integration. California's immigrant communities have already demonstrated how critically embedded they are into the very fiber and makeup of our state. By advocating for public policies that reflect and facilitate this undeniable fact, imagine what we can do in the next 16 years. ■

**Welcome to California.  
Since 1988, state spending on  
prisons has risen 20 times faster  
than on higher education.**



**Let's build a better America together. [NAACP.org/smartandsafe](http://NAACP.org/smartandsafe)**

Source: The National Association of State Budget Officers, State Expenditure Reports, 1988 and 2008, with fiscal information adjusted for inflation (at 1.82, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics).



**NAACP**

**Benjamin Todd Jealous & Lateefah Simon**

*Image courtesy of NAACP*

## Smart About Safety

**Building an effective and equitable criminal justice system is an urgent civil rights issue, and the only way we can create safe and healthy communities.**

■ Reforming the nation's criminal justice system is one of the most urgent civil rights issues of our time. One shocking fact illustrates why: More African American men are entangled in the criminal justice system today than were enslaved in 1850.

How did we get here? The rise in America's penchant for punishment can be traced as far back as the 1964 presidential campaigns of Barry Goldwater and George Wallace, who each made law and order a defining plank of his platform. President Richard Nixon continued the trend, framing Democrats as "soft on crime" and pushing for tough law enforcement policies in opposition to President Lyndon Johnson's credo of tackling crime through a "war

on poverty." "Doubling the conviction rate in this country would do more to cure crime in America than quadrupling the funds for [Hubert] Humphrey's war on poverty," Nixon told voters.

Since then, Republicans have pushed—and Democrats have embraced—a so-called "tough on crime" approach to keeping us safe, one that emphasizes harsh measures after crimes have already occurred, and that disproportionately punishes poor and minority communities rather than addressing the root causes of crime and preventing it in the first place.

As a result, our wrong-headed approach to justice and safety is breaking the bank of pretty much every

state and breaking the spirit of communities across the country. Today, the U.S. accounts for five percent of the world's population but has 25 percent of the world's prisoners. We imprison almost one million more people than China, at a cost to taxpayers of \$68 billion in 2010.

Turning locally, California's prison population grew 500 percent from 1982 to 2000, and the state now attempts to manage nearly 170,000 people in prisons designed to hold 83,000. In the last 20 years, the cost of operating California's corrections system skyrocketed from \$2.3 billion in 1992–1993 to a projected \$9.3 billion budget in the 2011–2012 fiscal year, with an additional \$4 billion budgeted for prison infrastructure expenses. Ten percent of the state's general fund revenue now goes to the prison system.

Nowhere is the impact felt more deeply than in African American communities, where America's epidemic of mass incarceration seemingly has removed entire generations of Af-

rican American men from their communities. Today, 500,000 Black fathers are currently incarcerated in America's prisons, and one out of every six African American men has spent time in prison. African American girls and young women have become the fastest growing population of incarcerated young people in the country. More than two million African Americans are currently either in prison, in jail, on probation, or on parole.

Our criminal justice system today undoubtedly functions much like a racial caste system, as Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, so aptly points out. Being labeled a felon effectively strips away crucial rights from an individual, locking him or her into second-class status indefinitely, unable to vote, secure a good job, or find safe and affordable housing. The current system provides for little or no reintegration; it functions as a revolving door, where those who've served time in jail or prison all too often quickly find themselves back in, unable to overcome the many obstacles they face when attempting to reenter their communities.

It is time to recognize that our scorched-earth approach to public safety has sent us down the wrong path. We need to be smart about our policies and resources while keeping our communities safe. Here are three steps we recommend to ensure that public safety is a true civil and human right for all of us:

#### *Build Broad-Based Coalitions*

It is no longer enough for criminal justice reform to be an issue of concern only to criminal justice reformists. We need to bring to the table advocates for civil rights, education

equality, women's rights and families. We also need to work together with people we've traditionally considered to be unlikely allies in this fight, such as law enforcement and business. More and more, leaders in law enforcement are calling for new ways to keep our communities safe, and California's new Attorney General Kamala Harris is among those leading the charge. We also need more grantmakers to recognize the connection between criminal justice and other social problems they are aiming to alleviate, and invest resources for maximum impact.

#### *Eliminate Barriers To Employment*

There is perhaps no more effective tool for successful reentry into society than employment. Formerly incarcerated people who are able to secure employment are one-third less likely than their counterparts to end up back in prison or jail. That is why both the NAACP and the Lawyers' Committee have launched new initiatives to meet this challenge. In California, the NAACP worked to secure an administrative order from the governor's office that removes questions about criminal history from employment applications for most state jobs. The Lawyers' Committee has launched a new clinic to connect formerly incarcerated individuals with *pro bono* attorneys from top law firms to address legal barriers to reentry and employment. We all win when we ensure that those who have paid their debt to society can have the tools they need to turn their lives around.

#### *Reallocate Resources*

In 2010, the NAACP commissioned new rolling advertisements

in various California cities to draw attention to a disturbing trend. Since 1988, state spending on prison has risen 25 times faster than on higher education. Former Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger acknowledged this when he aptly noted: "Spending 45 percent more on prisons than on universities is no way to proceed into the future...What does it say about any state that [it] focuses more on prison uniforms than on caps and gowns?" As states across the country continue to struggle with budget crises, we need to collectively call for shifting our funding priorities from incarceration toward programs and initiatives that will revitalize our communities.

It is our belief that criminal justice reform is one of the leading issues in the fight to ensure equal opportunity for communities in need. We cannot afford to wait another generation to turn around decades of failed policies that have resulted in our nation hemorrhaging money and human potential. The exigency for policies that are smart on crime—not just "tough on crime"—is now. It is the only way we can achieve something we all want—safe and healthy communities. ■



*It is time to recognize that our scorched-earth approach to public safety has sent us down the wrong path. We need to be smart about our policies and resources while keeping our communities safe.*





Hugo Morales

## Sowing Change in the San Joaquin Valley

On a recent funders' tour of the San Joaquin Valley, a region of California that faces daunting challenges, the author finds ample cause for hope.

■ Recently, I participated in “Sowing Change,” a three-day tour for grantmakers organized by the Women’s Foundation of California. During the tour, I saw first hand some of the daunting challenges the San Joaquin Valley faces in the continuing fight for social justice and equality.

It has some of the highest concentrations of poverty in the country, and its air is among the most polluted in the country—it is sometimes known as Appalachia West. And, although educational achievement is critical for a healthy California, in this region, most Latino youths don’t graduate from high school.

Traveling through the countryside during this tour, however, I also witnessed a phenomenon that gave me hope for the future of the San Joaquin Valley: Each stop of the funders’ tour revealed a Latino/a community

leader, usually younger than 35, working to build a better San Joaquin Valley and a better California.

In Delano, California—home of the United Farm Workers’ Forty Acres and center of the Chavista movement for social justice for farm workers—20 Mexican-American children and teenagers were performing traditional Mexican mariachi music. Their instructor, Juan Morales (no relation to me), travels some 30 miles from Porterville to teach these children how to celebrate their culture through music.

Lamont, California, home of the labor camp made famous by *The Grapes of Wrath*, now houses a model modern labor camp administered by the State of California. The same region also has several de facto labor camps that more closely resemble the original Depression-era ones. Populated

by immigrants from my native Mixteca in southern Mexico, this community of our country’s poorest engages their own local leadership to hold an annual Guelaguetza celebration, honoring traditional Mixteco language, music, dance, and food. The culturally driven organizers that make this possible are the new face of the farm worker workforce, numbering some 300,000 strong in the San Joaquin Valley. Some 20 percent of this workforce is Mixteco; almost all are undocumented.

And in Kettleman City, a town of 2,000 mostly Mexican-American farm workers along a lonely stretch of Interstate 5, a new generation of local organizers raised in this community are challenging the expansion of one of the largest chemical waste dumps in the country because of the town’s high incidence of birth deformations in recent years.

We also visited Bakersfield, home of the Dolores Huerta Foundation, and Tulare, where California Rural Legal Assistance is challenging urban planning that will negatively impact the quality of drinking water in



a cluster of homes inhabited by low-income, Mexican-American families. Each stop was inspiring to me for several reasons:

- I witnessed a high degree of collaboration among nonprofits.
- The leaders are young and knowledgeable, and also excellent organizers.
- The organizers are effective despite their small operating budgets.

Seeing these new leaders in action has shown me that San Joaquin Valley is ripe in opportunity. There is opportunity to address access to preschool through higher education, to support local citizens who are demanding local government institutions be responsive to their community needs, and to stand behind young leaders of color who are already doing the work.

There is the opportunity afforded to us by the dramatic shift in population growth from the coastal region to the San Joaquin Valley. According to 2009 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2000 to 2009 San Francisco's population grew by five percent and Alameda County by three percent. In contrast, the San Joaquin Valley grew by 21 percent.

There is also an opportunity to organize the region's largest ethnic group, Latinos, who are the new majority. It is a young population, mostly under the age of 23. More people listen to Latino public radio in Spanish or bilingual programming than the English-only NPR radio programming.

From philanthropy, to nonprofits, to the public and private sectors, we all have a role to play in ensuring that the seeds of change can grow and flourish in San Joaquin Valley. We must not forget the interconnection between this region and the rest of the state, from air quality to the water that empties into the San Francisco Bay to the food produced in the valley

that ends up in restaurants and on plates throughout California. We must support the efforts of these young leaders working to bring about change in our communities. We must invest in our youth by resourcing educational opportunities for all the children in the San Joaquin Valley. We must foster democracy by ensuring that we have well-educated, informed voters.

This is the new California. The opportunity is there. It is up to us to take advantage of it. ■

*From philanthropy, to nonprofits, to the public and private sectors, we all have a role to play in ensuring that the seeds of change can grow and flourish in San Joaquin Valley.*



Images courtesy of the Women's Foundation of California

## Securing Justice for Farm Workers

The famed labor activist chronicles the historical struggles—as well as the significant present-day challenges—in the fight to secure justice for California’s most marginalized workers.

■ The San Joaquin Valley is the breadbasket of the United States and the world. A prosperous area, the wealthy agriculture industry that calls this area home is important to California’s economy and provides the food that nourishes so much of the country. Yet, the farm workers who labor to create this wealth and abundance have long lived in abject poverty.

John Steinbeck chronicled the immigrant story of California and our government’s mass recruitment of immigrants needed to develop the land. Immigrants were continuously recruited from Mexico, Japan, China, and the Philippines. And, although the immigrant population was and remains critical to agriculture, agribusiness continues to fight the unionization of farm workers.

In the past, many of California’s policies discriminated against farm workers. The Oriental Exclusion Act deprived Asians from owning land and made it illegal to marry Whites. Large numbers of Filipinos were unable to afford the long voyage to the Philippines to secure wives. The legal immigration quota was one woman to 50 Filipino men, leaving most men without families. The Chinese drained many of the islands around Stockton, California, yet that same Act prevented them from owning the land they made usable. The Japanese lost their agricultural land during World War II, when they were placed into internment camps. 1941 saw the start of the infamous Brace-

ro program, which brought millions of Mexican nationals north to work in the fields in the U.S.—initially as a way to solve labor shortages during World War II, and subsequently as a cheap labor supply.

Brutal opposition from the industry stamped out all attempts of these immigrant workers to unionize. In order to improve conditions for farm workers and their families, Cesar Chavez and I founded the National Farm Workers Association, later the United Farm Workers Union, in 1962. The organization would become the first successful union to win collective bargaining agreements for farm workers. In my early lobbying days, the grower representatives would say before legislative committees, “We do the public a service by employing these winos and degenerates that nobody else will hire.” We do not hear those references any more, at least not in California.

Over time, United Farm Workers was able to help win many legislative victories. The Bracero program ended in 1964. The Agricultural Labor Relations Act allowing farm workers to unionize and have protections from unfair labor practices passed in 1975. The Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Protection Act passed in 1983. The Immigration Reform Act of 1986 legalized 1.4 million farm workers.

By organizing farm workers, we were able to bring a measure of social and economic justice to them. Many of these victories won were basic human and labor rights—clean toilets,

potable drinking water, rest periods, safety protections, pesticide regulations, contracts, and credit unions. We passed legislation to remove citizenship requirements for public assistance, such as aid to the disabled and to needy children, and old age assistance. In 1975, after UFW secured unemployment insurance for farm workers, families were able to settle in communities, keep their children in school, and vote.

Many other support systems for farm workers were established with foundation and government funding: training programs for farm workers to upgrade their skills for better farm jobs, farm worker clinics, bilingual education programs, targeted programs for farm worker women, housing, child care programs, and more. The UFW movement influenced the organizing strategies of other labor unions and gave birth to the Chicano movement, leaving an indelible mark on this country’s social justice and labor movements.

In February of this year, the office of the United Farm Workers in Delano, California, was declared a national landmark. This is the site where Cesar Chavez fasted for 25 days in 1968 for nonviolence, and for 36 days in 1988 to bring attention to the dangers of pesticides to farm workers and consumers. In 1970, after a five-year strike and an international grape boycott supported by millions of consumers, the grape industry came to the bargaining table and signed the historic grape contracts with the UFW at the Delano headquarters.

The UFW union contracts provide a health plan, pension plan, grievance and arbitration procedure, and seniority. These union contracts were won with great sacrifices. Many farm workers were beaten, hundreds jailed, and four farm workers—Rufino Contreras, Nagi Daifallah, Juan



De La Cruz, and Rene Lopez—and one supporter, 18-year-old Nan Friedman, were killed. It was, and still is, an uphill battle.

While the conditions for farm workers in California have improved since then, the harsh reality remains that farm workers who do not have union protections are still among the poorest workers in the country, and working conditions remain extremely hazardous. A recent study the Dolores Huerta Foundation did with California State University, Bakersfield, indicated that the average wage of farm workers was \$15,000 a year in Southern Kern County.

This rampant poverty is exacerbated by the fact that undocumented farm workers are denied any unemployment insurance and public assistance. Many farm workers work at “piece” rates that have stagnated, leaving workers dependent on the minimum wage for protection. At the same time, the laws that cover immigrants and undocumented workers, such as federal minimum wage, health, and safety laws, are not enforced. Employers prefer hiring undocumented workers over residents or citizens, using labor contractors to avoid paying unemployment insurance and social security, thereby avoiding the laws that can benefit farm workers. Meanwhile, the campaign against the undocumented has resulted in working people ending up in jails for immigration violations. Hard-working farm workers have been deported in anti-immigrant crackdowns, dividing families and resulting in children being separated from their families and deprived of their rights as U.S. citizens.

Amidst these setbacks, there are rays of hope, such as the recent appointment of Hilda Solis as U.S. Secretary of Labor and the election of Governor Jerry Brown in California. Support for this region and its farm workers has increased, and many nonprofit organizations and



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fundraisers are focusing on rural areas of California to create healthy communities where farm workers live. Religious organizations are supportive of farm workers, and many give direct services. My own organization, the Dolores Huerta Foundation, is doing grass roots organizing and leadership development so farm workers can have representation in their communities and learn how to solve the issues through direct non-violent action. Growers in California no longer denigrate their workers. Many have Farm Worker Day celebrations, and raise scholarships for the children of their workers. Some agricultural employers, such as Swanson Berry Farms, are supporting the unionization of their

workers. Others, such as Paramount farms, are helping their workers improve their communities.

However, we must not forget that having their own democratic organization—a union—is still the best way that farm workers can have a voice in the workplace, allowing them to negotiate their wages and working conditions and to develop relationships with their employers. Only when farm workers are working under union contracts can health, safety, and labor laws be enforced by union stewards at the work site. With public support, farm workers can continue to organize, learn advocacy, and, eventually, secure full justice and equality for themselves, their families, and their communities. ■

# An Economy that Works for All of Us

## How can we build a state in which economic injustice and poverty are replaced by shared prosperity?

■ In March 2011, right before the state's Republican party rammed through a law intended to break the backs of labor unions, I spent 24 hours in Madison, Wisconsin. I went with a contingent of 160 leaders from Los Angeles—nurses, teachers, janitors, and hotel workers, people from every walk of life—and we came to Madison to connect with regular, everyday people who were in the middle of an epic fight for economic equality.

All around Madison, we saw clear signs of the progressive fervor that has swept through this town to reach the entire country. Almost every business—restaurants, dry cleaners—carried similar messages: “I’m pro-union,” “I support teachers,” “I believe in public sector workers.” We visited the pizza place where hundreds of thousands of dollars had poured in from around the world to help feed the protestors. During the day, we marched across the city and into the capitol building, where a thousand people were rallying inside the rotunda, singing and chanting. They had been doing this for days.

In Madison, it was clear that people felt like they had been pushed over the edge by the reality of economic inequality—pushed into being strong, brave and forceful enough to occupy the statehouse. Visiting Madison was a powerful lesson in the kind of energy that California and this country desperately needs to embody if we are ever to realize our vision of a healthy economy—one that works for all of us. Good jobs, thriving communities, and a healthy environment can all be achieved in this country if we raise our hands

and assert that we are ready.

There is no doubt that, today, our economy is not working for many of us. It certainly is not working for Los Angeles County’s 3.7 million low-income taxpayers and residents. In South L.A. and East L.A., unemployment rates are above 30 percent. A third of the people who work in L.A. don’t earn enough to meet their families’ basic needs. L.A. County is emblematic of a statewide and national problem. Today, in addition to a severe budget crisis, California faces an extreme human crisis marked by high unemployment, an epidemic of foreclosures, and some of the highest rates of poverty in decades. Census data released in 2010 show that families in America are facing the highest rates of economic hardship in a generation.

There are many factors that got us into this crisis, but one clear stand-out is reckless Wall Street schemes impacting a middle class already being tightly squeezed by 30 years of failed right-wing economic policy. Since the 1980s, the dominant economic policy has been a combination of tax cuts aimed at the rich and deregulation designed to maximize profits for the top one percent. Coupled with an any-job-is-good-enough approach to employment and a labor policy that has stripped away the foundation supporting middle class jobs, the result is an explosion of the working poor. As a result, the poverty rate for working age people between 18 and 64 rose to 12.9 percent last year, its highest in more than four decades.

Despite these grim obstacles, I know

that we have the power and enthusiasm necessary to dig ourselves out and move into a brighter future. We must harness that energy and combine it with practical, proven strategies if we are to achieve our vision. Even in this economy, it is possible to implement real and practical solutions that can benefit all of us.

One of the most powerful ways we can do that is by insisting on creating and sustaining good jobs, jobs that pay enough to meet families’ real needs and lift them out of poverty. Without a focus on job quality, we can look forward to annual increases in poverty well into the future. In Los Angeles, for example, we pushed for a living wage policy that covers hotels near the Los Angeles International Airport. The ordinance has improved pay in existing jobs and helped more than 5,000 workers and family members earn their way out of poverty. Studies have put the net benefit to the community from increased wages and spending at more than \$23 million in the first four years. This “trickle up” approach is in direct contrast to the right wing’s narrow focus on profit at the top, which continues to concentrate wealth and take us in the wrong direction.

We also must enact policies that require businesses who seek government funds and permit approvals to balance private profit and public good. The two principles are not incompatible, as we’ve demonstrated many times in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Too often, public officials subsidize developments with no real benefits to local communities. In fact, with billions of dollars in federal stimulus money being distributed through local and state governments, there is increasing pressure on local officials—elected and appointed—to move quickly to approve job-creating projects without any clear stan-



*Visiting Madison was a powerful lesson in the kind of energy that California and this country desperately need to embody if we are ever to realize our vision of a healthy economy—one that works for all of us.*

dards, such as decent pay.

Instead of rushing to rubber-stamp these projects, local public officials, community, union, immigrant, and environmental leaders must insist that businesses receiving taxpayer money create good jobs, affordable housing, and a healthy environment. And we must do so while withstanding any criticism that holding businesses accountable in this way is “killing jobs” or hurting the local business climate.

Critics of such policies sometimes say that these community-benefit standards are nothing more than thinly veiled attempts to strengthen local unions. The answer is, so what? We can ensure good jobs by rallying behind and supporting unions, which is crucial at a time when others are increasingly agitating to weaken them. It is no coincidence that the U.S. enjoyed its greatest level of economic equality during the 1950s, when union membership was at its highest, and that the sharp decline in union membership over the past several decades has coincided

with a dramatic rise in inequality.

Union jobs almost always offer better pay, better benefits, and better conditions than non-union jobs, and unions are good for the overall economy. For example, a recent study by the Los Angeles Economic Roundtable found that union workers in L.A. County earn 27 percent more than non-union workers in the same jobs. The increased wages for the approximately 800,000 union workers adds \$7.2 billion a year in pay. These workers spend their wages on food, clothing, child care, car and home repairs, and other items. As a result, their buying power created 307,200 jobs—64,800 more jobs than would have been created if these workers did not earn union wages.

So if we really believe in economic opportunity, creating more union jobs is a no-brainer. I’m not alone in this belief. There is a growing federation of groups in 18 cities around the country—the Partnership for Working Families—that works closely with public officials in major metropolitan regions to advocate both for



Images courtesy of LAANE

impoverished communities, and for the general public.

Of course, these strategies are only possible if our elected officials are behind them. From local officials to state legislators, congressmen, and the President of the United States, it is time for public officials around the country to stand up for the rest of us. Instead of just giving tax breaks and subsidies to big business, deregulating industry, lifting “barriers” or “strings,” or advocating for tax cuts for the “haves,” we need our leaders to generate and implement strategic ideas that can help the middle class and the “have-nots.”

A healthy economy is possible if we raise our voices and fight for the working poor, the unemployed, and the middle class, if we are willing to make the hard choices to hold businesses and our leaders accountable. It will take our collective energy, passion, and wholehearted commitment, but we can achieve our vision of building a great state and country in which economic injustice and poverty are replaced by shared prosperity. ■

## Building a Real Progressive Movement for Change

A how-to guide to developing the coalitions that are essential in the fight for justice in California.

■ A progressive movement in California and across this country is more aspiration than reality when its members work towards many of the same goals, but apart from one another. If we are not arm-in-arm while marching towards our dreams, we may be moving, but we are not a movement. We all suffer when we turn our backs and say, “that’s not my issue.”

Today, too many progressive groups still remain disconnected from one another. We need more LGBT organizations to support equal opportunity for people of color. More groups working with people of color need to realize that net neutrality—the movement asserting that all internet traffic must be treated equally—is a civil rights issue, granting equal opportunity to all of our voices, and allowing communities of color to enjoy the equal representation they lack in other media platforms. Support from proponents of campaign finance reform can help achieve marriage equality through the ballot and in the courts.

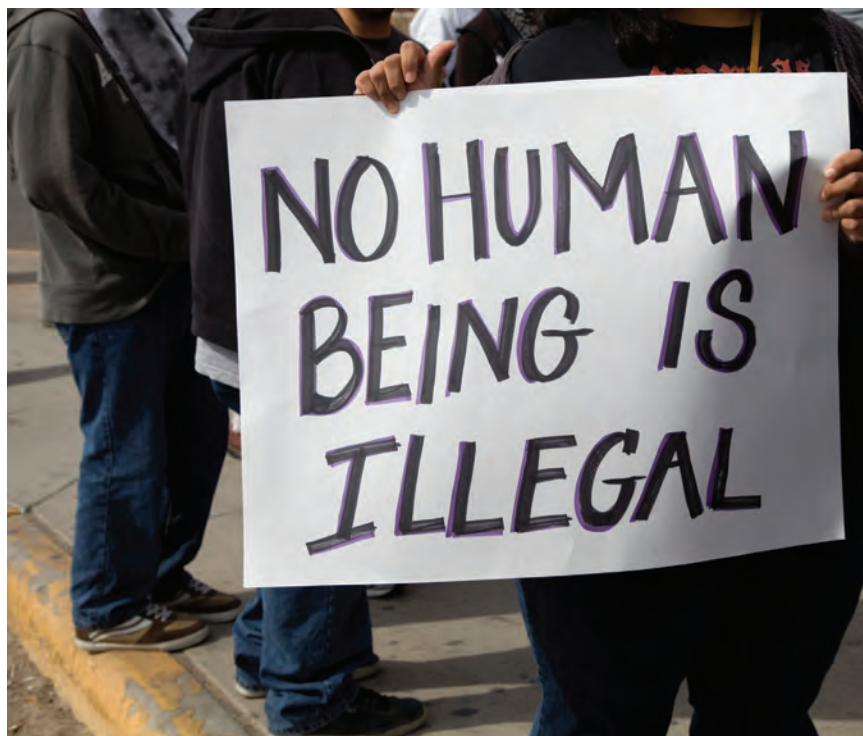
In my view, coalitions are not optional—they are essential. Despite the gains in California and across the country for the communities and families we represent, we still have a lot of work left to do. People of color still are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system and on death row. Many victims of discrimination and injustice still cannot find redress in our courts. As I write this, some misguided legislators are waging a war to roll back the

birthright citizenship clause of the 14th Amendment, and are conducting shameful hearings intended to demonize American Muslims under the guise of homeland security.

We have the numbers, capacity, and passion throughout the state to build the coalitions that will sustain us as we continue the fight for justice in California for the next 25 years. Yet, without joining hands with each other, we cannot achieve ambitious goals such as reclaiming the full protections of the 14th Amendment against institutional discrimination. We cannot ensure that there will be more Black males in colleges than in prisons. We can-

not give our LGBT brothers and sisters the same rights and freedoms to marry afforded to the rest of us. We cannot secure full civic and economic integration for immigrants.

At Equal Justice Society, the practice of coalition building was embedded into our organizational DNA from day one, and remains one of our core principles. We learned this crucial lesson from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who, through the urgings of his aide, Bayard Rustin, sought to create the “Grand Coalition,” an alliance of groups and individuals who hungered for justice and equality. This meant bringing together women, people of color, union members, peace activists, and environmentalists—all those who saw the possibility of a better world with equal opportunity for all people. Here are five important lessons we have learned in our efforts to develop coalitions:



### *Find Intersections and Common Goals in Seemingly Disparate Issues*

When Proposition 8 in California threatened to erode the rights of the LGBT community, many of us recognized that we could not allow others to pigeonhole Proposition 8 as a “gay” issue. By rolling back the fundamental rights of one group, Proposition 8 cast a threat that loomed over the civil rights of all Californians. Cross-coalition opposition to Proposition 8 took the form of public appearances with LGBT community leaders, media interviews, forums and outreach to communities of color—all of which contributed to illuminating the racial diversity of the LGBT movement and showing the impact of the proposition outside of the LGBT community. Immigration reform, marriage equality, and the advancement of equal opportunity may appear to many as issues that have minimal overlap. In reality, success in each of these areas advances fairness, access, and equality for all of us.

### *Learn and Embrace the Cultures and Terminologies of Your Allies*

When we find ourselves at a table with diverse groups, it is important to understand and embrace the cultures and languages of our allies. It demonstrates respect for others and their ideas, and contributes to our collective solidarity. In terms of language, one of the toughest battles today is over the widespread use of the term “illegal immigrant,” made popular by conservatives in an attempt to dehumanize undocumented immigrants. Despite the fact that a person cannot be “illegal,” the term has been widely adopted in news coverage by the mainstream media and in the lexicon of our courts. By continuing to protest the incorrect use of “illegal” to describe immigrants,

we not only embrace the values of our immigrants’ rights allies, we also push back on the efforts of those who seek to use language to frame values in a degrading manner.

### *Set Aside Differences in Strategy to Achieve Common Goals*

In 2003, California’s Proposition 54 threatened to amend the state Constitution in a manner that would have prohibited state and local governments from using race, ethnicity, color, or national origin to classify students, contractors, or employees in public education, contracting, or employment practices. A statewide coalition organized to defeat the measure. Pollsters advised us that success would require employing messages that focused on Proposition 54’s negative impact on health care, rather than framing it as an assault against people of color. While voters of color immediately understood the negative impact Proposition 54 would have on efforts to remedy racial discrimination, polling indicated that White voters were by and large not moved by an appeal to racial justice. Although we initially pushed back against the race-neutral focus, the coalition ultimately accepted the polling data and its health-oriented approach. The tactic proved successful. Proposition 54 ultimately was defeated. If we, as racial justice advocates, had not agreed to rely on research-driven messaging, Proposition 54 might have passed.

### *Practice “Physical Solidarity”*

In the 1940s, Bayard Rustin traveled to California to help protect the property of Japanese Americans who were interned in concentration camps. At that time, the U.S. had forced Japanese American citizens to leave their property unattended or under the watch of others. In a time

when Japanese Americans “looked like the enemy” and could count on few supporters, Rustin came to their aid—setting a powerful example for us to follow, especially in today’s increasingly virtual world. Today, it is easier for us to avoid physically showing up. We sign online petitions, have Twitter protests and email our elected officials—all of which are helpful strategies. We must not forget, however, that we can best forge our alliances by being there for others in person—by practicing “physical solidarity.” In victory and in the toughest of times, we should be there when our allies call for our presence.

### *Do Unto Others*

Our last suggestion is the simplest in concept and, yet, often the most difficult to practice: “Play nice.” The stakes are so high and the pressure so fierce on many of our issues that the worst of our natures can get the best of us. We become bitter at an ally over a tactical disagreement; we keep our objections to ourselves and seethe; we cry foul when we think another organization is stepping on our institutional toes. At the end of the day, movement building is all about personal connections. We must learn to be generous, give credit to others even when it doesn’t benefit our own organization, and find ways to have open discussions about differences and grievances.

Coalition-building is more art than science. It requires flexibility, patience, and perseverance. This way of doing business won’t come easily. It will require some or more of us taking a step back so that others may step forward. It will also require a collective commitment to staying in the fight over the long haul. Yet, we cannot afford to be poor students at it. Our communities are counting on us. ■





Maria Echaveste

## Bridging Racial and Ethnic Divides

Building coalitions across racial and ethnic dividing lines will help us create the American community in the 21st Century.

■ Safe streets, good jobs, good schools, good health care, good homes, and a dignified retirement—whatever our background, community, or racial and ethnic origins, we all have similar aspirations for ourselves, our families, and our communities. The question is: If we all want the same things, how can it be that fewer and fewer of us can actually achieve them? Perhaps it is because we are fruitlessly trying to get there alone, instead of building community across racial and ethnic divides.

Here in California, where no racial or ethnic group is in the majority, the state has been in steady decline across all indicia of a healthy society while undergoing significant demographic change. While some extreme and conservative voices have argued that the decline is directly related to those demographic changes, I would argue that the

changes have not caused the decline. Rather, the decline reflects how hard it is for human beings of different backgrounds to see their common humanity. To quote my husband, “it is not rocket science; it is harder than rocket science.”

Looking toward the future of the movement for social and economic justice, to be successful we will need to honestly and frankly confront the issue of race, and the myriad of ways that racial and ethnic differences are used to prevent us from seeing our common goals and shared values. This is not just about opening the eyes of the European-American majority in our country. We all have to narrow the racial and ethnic divides that stand in the way of our success—but how? How can we reshape the movement from a loose and ill-defined collection of interests, which run the gamut from identity group

politics to narrow issue-focused efforts, into a cohesive, interconnected community with a shared agenda?

First, we need to acknowledge the current reality and stop clinging to the identity politics that were so necessary in the 1960s and '70s: Black power, the Chicano movement, women's movement, gay movement, et cetera. Then, these movements were a way of affirming racial, gender, ethnic, and sexual orientation differences that for so long had drawn disparaging and negative views from those in the majority. Now, too often, they serve as barriers to finding common cause on broader and intersecting agendas. The leadership of many organizations focused on social and economic justice often is from that older generation that finds comfort in strong identity politics, but the time has come to leave that comfort zone. Increasingly, the younger, under-30 generation is less caught up in the racial and ethnic categories of the past. We need to learn how to be proud of our heritage while also understanding that we are part of this



mosaic, melting pot, salad—whatever metaphor we choose to use—and that means we have a responsibility to each other regardless of our origins.

Second, we need to understand that the issue-focused politics that began to emerge in the 1980s and thereafter (right to life, guns, environment, and school prayer, among others), have become so infused with passion and emotion that they have morphed into some version of identity, too. Is it not surprising that, in the wake of the identity movements of the '60s and '70s, the environmental movement became a haven for White males who felt—rightly or wrongly—that they did not belong in other movements? The time has come for all of us to understand that, for example, Latinos need to be environmentalists, too, just as men need to be concerned about the exploitation of women, regardless of race or ethnicity. Perhaps the Tea Party movement is reflective of a search for identity among certain groups who feel threatened by the demographic change. All people want a sense of pride in who they are and what they do; the challenge lies in achieving that goal without giving in to the temptation to see ourselves as superior to others.

Third, we must ignore the urge to skip over hard conversations of racial and ethnic differences. Like personal demons that ultimately fester and cause self-destruction if not confronted, our long history of exclusion, of slavery, of discrimination, of treating those who are different as “the other” must be acknowledged and worked through. We have to understand that our capitalist and economic system has often used the differences among us to promote wealth for a few at the expense of the many. I am not advocating a different economic system; I am arguing that we have to take blinders off and recognize when and where race and ethnicity is being used to di-

vide us. In those moments, we need to pause and ask who is benefitting from the tension and fear. We have to experience that moment of revelation that all of us have a story of pain, of struggle, and that all of our stories are valid. Then, we have to go beyond being victims, to that place of action and of taking responsibility for going forward.

Finally, we need to build coalitions with goals that are both ambitious and pragmatic. The search for perfect or pure solutions has led us too often to inaction or defeat. Compromise should not be a dirty word. If we are truly inclusive and respectful of all voices, then a compromise will reflect a shared understanding of what is possible, and where the next struggle must occur. In that regard, we have to set priorities. Too often, by being about everything, the “movement” ends up accomplishing little or nothing. When we recognize our shared values, we can find the common ground that seems to have evaporated in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C. We will understand that inequality hurts us all.

Philanthropy can help by funding coalition work that honestly tries to grapple with the racial divides

in meaningful ways. For example, if a foundation wants to take on the farm bill, it should ensure that communities of color are engaged meaningfully in that strategy. Also, funders can prioritize strategy work that is both ambitious and pragmatic, paying more attention to the results we want and less on the latest theory of change.

The road forward won't be without its challenges, especially now, when one in eight people living in the U.S. was born in a different country, and many of them do not know our American history in all of its complexities and pain. Add to the mix the fact that, for too long, our textbooks ignored the contributions of so many to this history, and that even now some are trying to rewrite this history. We have to insist on educating both ourselves and our newcomers that America is an unfinished story that has not always lived up to its ideals, but is committed to that road. No matter the obstacles, building coalitions across racial and ethnic dividing lines will help us rebuild the American community for the 21st century, where we can finally find the common ground that long has eluded us. ■

*Looking toward the future of the movement for social and economic justice, to be successful, we will need to honestly and frankly confront the issue of race, and the myriad of ways that racial and ethnic differences are used to prevent us from seeing our common goals and shared values.*

## One, Larger Vision for Justice

Proposition 8 highlighted the urgent need to find common ground and build lasting alliances.

■ We live in a California that is more diverse than at any time in history. Due to California's size, history of immigration, and reputation for tolerance, innovation, and opportunity, our state is diverse by every measure.

For many of us, this diversity is precisely why we love living here, and a key reason for the dynamic nature of the social and political landscape. Yet, such richness also creates huge challenges, as various groups jockey for policy changes, legislative or political gains, and visibility or traction in the struggle for public attention. Particularly when faced with scant resources, such as in times of budget crisis, fighting to assure that one or another group's interests are protected can overshadow or diminish interest in finding common ground.

Perhaps no other recent event illustrates the danger in failing to find that common ground than the one that took place on November 4, 2008. This historic date, while ushering in the election of the nation's first African American president, also saw the narrow passage of Proposition 8, the amendment to the California constitution that eliminated the right of same-sex couples to marry.

The passage of Proposition 8 highlights the need to build a united, broad-based movement for equality. To do so, two things are required: one, the emergence of "border bridgers," leaders who can look beyond the immediate needs of their own constituents to find common ground with others; and two, the intentional investment of time and resources to educate our diverse

communities, either through highlighting parallels or showing broader impact, about how our different struggles for equality fall under one, larger vision for justice.

It can no longer be sufficient for political or thought leaders to fight only for whatever slice of the population or whatever constituencies they call their own. Rather, what California requires now is a commitment to long-term cultural change and pragmatic solutions championed by "border bridgers."

Who, exactly, are "border bridgers"? The book *Uncommon Common Ground: Race and America's Future* refers to Craig McGarvey, a former program officer at the James Irvine Foundation, who identified "border bridgers" as those who must speak to and for their constituents while earning the respect of the constituents of others. "Border bridgers are leaders who move with integrity outside their own circles, always seeking a circle that is broader. They find common ground by setting difference aside and focusing on interests that can be shared."

Long-time civil rights advocate Eva Paterson, executive director of the Equal Justice Society (EJS), exemplifies this new type of leadership. She describes her work as "silo-busting," a variation on the theme of border bridgers. Although EJS is primarily focused on racial justice and dismantling legal doctrines that perpetuate racial bias, the approach EJS takes is to find and create alliances among all sorts of groups who are marginalized under the law. It is no surprise, then,

that EJS and Eva were very visible in the effort to defeat Proposition 8. Eva and EJS understood that Proposition 8 would set a dangerous precedent by allowing a simple majority vote to strip away the fundamental rights of a protected minority.

Second, rather than simply presuming broad support for whatever cause we are championing, we must connect seemingly disparate struggles of different communities to build lasting alliances.

For example, while some progressives see marriage equality as an extension of the civil rights movement, it became clear after the passage of Proposition 8 that we cannot assume communities of color will support marriage equality simply based on civil rights solidarity. The work to bring together complex intersections, such as the intersection of LGBT justice and racial justice, is essential, and public education in communities of color is critical. Many believed that the lack of support for the defeat of Proposition 8 in African American communities reflected a failure to include communities of color in the "No on Proposition 8" campaign, especially African American gays and lesbians.

In contrast, the work conducted by Asian and Pacific Islander (API) activists to organize communities in support of LGBT rights can serve as an example. After thousands of Chinese immigrants protested gay marriage in 2004, API community activists founded API Equality-LA, a coalition to promote marriage equality in the API community. Unique to API Equality-LA's strategy was the inclusion of not just LGBT activists and leaders, but many straight allies.

API Equality-LA built a strong network of community groups and individuals in support of marriage



Photo courtesy of API Equality-LA

equality in Los Angeles, using one-on-one conversations, outreach at community festivals and through ethnic media, coalition-building, and even filing an API-specific amicus brief before the state Supreme Court. API Equality-LA also successfully drew parallels between the past struggles of Asian immigrants against anti-miscegenation laws with the current movement for marriage equality. A November 2008 exit poll found that API voters in Southern California favored the defeat of Proposition 8 by 54 percent to 46 percent, a dramatic shift from the 68 percent to 32 percent split among APIs in 2000 on Proposition 22, an earlier ballot measure against gay marriage.

While the battle is not won in the API community—recent exit polls still show significant pockets of opposition to gay marriage amongst some APIs—the changes in Los Angeles’ API community inspire hope for our future. It also illustrates the type of change that is possible when we work to unite different struggles for equality un-

*Two things are required: one, the emergence of “border bridgers,” leaders who can look beyond the needs of their own constituents to find common ground with others; and two, the intentional investment of time and resources to educate our diverse communities, either through highlighting parallels or showing broader impact, about how our different struggles for equality fall under one, larger vision for justice.*

der one umbrella. The fight against Proposition 8 squarely brought into the limelight the fact that, in order to end the structural inequality that exists in California, which has those with the least fighting with each other over scraps instead of

challenging inequality itself, it will no longer be sufficient for us to conduct business as usual. We need to work together, not only to achieve victories and advances in equality, but also to prevent further attempts to diminish our freedoms. ■



# About our Contributors



■ A Senior Fellow at American Progress, [Maria Echaveste \(page 18\)](#) is also co-founder of the Nueva Vista Group, a policy and legislative strategy and advocacy group working with non-profit and corporate clients. She previously served as assistant to the president and deputy chief of staff for President Bill Clinton from May 1998 through January 2001.



■ Renowned community organizer and activist [Dolores Huerta \(page 12\)](#) is president of the Dolores Huerta Foundation and co-founder and first vice president emeritus of the United Farm Workers of America. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award from President Clinton in 1998.



■ The co-founder and executive director of LAANE, [Madeline Janis \(page 14\)](#) led the historic campaign to pass L.A.'s living wage ordinance, which has since become a national model. In 2002, Ms. Janis was appointed by the mayor as a volunteer commissioner to the Board of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency, the country's largest such agency, and then reappointed to that position in 2006.



■ [Benjamin Todd Jealous \(page 8\)](#) is the 17th president and chief executive officer of the NAACP, the youngest person to hold the position in the organization's nearly 100-year history. He also has served as president of the Rosenberg Foundation, director of the U.S. Human Rights Program at Amnesty International, and executive director of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), a federation of more than 200 Black community newspapers.



■ [Kate Kendell \(page 20\)](#) leads the National Center for Lesbian Rights, which works to change discriminatory laws and to create new laws and policies benefiting the LGBT community. Ms. Kendell received her J.D. from the University of Utah College of Law. She later became the first staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah. In 1994 she joined NCLR as legal director, and was named executive director two years later.



■ The first Asian American attorney and human rights activist to be named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow, [Stewart Kwoh \(page 20\)](#) is the president and executive director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC). He has been hailed as one of the nation's premier advocates for Asian Americans and as a bridge builder bringing people together from diverse racial backgrounds.



■ **Mina Titi Liu** (page 6) is the executive director of the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, the nation's oldest organization advocating for the civil and legal rights of Asians and Pacific Islanders. Ms. Liu has had a long career advancing social justice issues both domestically and internationally. She has served as the Law and Rights program officer for the Ford Foundation, and as a consultant to the U.S. State Department and USAID. Prior to joining the Caucus, she was the Garvey Schubert Barer Visiting Professor in Asian Law at University of Washington School of Law.



■ A Mixtec Indian from Oaxaca, in southern Mexico, **Hugo Morales** (page 10) is the executive director of Radio Bilingüe, Inc., which he helped found in 1976. In 1994, he became the first resident of the San Joaquin Valley to be a recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. He is the immediate past chair of the Rosenberg Foundation's Board of Directors.



■ **Dr. Manuel Pastor** (page 4) is professor of Geography and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. He currently directs the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity at USC and is co-director, with Dowell Myers, of USC's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. He has authored and co-authored various books, including *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America*.



■ The president of Equal Justice Society, **Eva Jefferson Paterson** (page 16) has campaigned for civil rights and racial justice for more than three decades. She served as the executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area before founding EJS. Ms. Paterson also co-founded and chaired the California Coalition for Civil Rights for 18 years.



■ **Thomas A. Saenz** (page 6) is the president and general counsel of MALDEF, where he leads the civil rights organization's five offices in pursuing litigation, policy advocacy, and community education to promote the civil rights of Latinos living in the United States. Mr. Saenz re-joined MALDEF in August 2009, after spending four years on Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's executive team as counsel to the mayor. He previously spent 12 years at MALDEF practicing civil rights law as a staff attorney, regional counsel, and vice president of litigation.



■ MacArthur Foundation Fellow **Lateefah Simon** (page 8) is part of a new wave of African American civil rights and community leaders. Currently executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area, Ms. Simon has advocated tirelessly on behalf of communities of color, youth and women since her teenage years. At age 19, she became executive director of the Center for Young Women's Development, a role she held for 11 years.

The Rosenberg Foundation is an independent grantmaking foundation committed to ensuring that every person in California has fair and equitable opportunities to participate fully in the state's economic, social, and political life. Since its founding in 1935, the Foundation has provided close to 2,800 grants totaling nearly \$80 million to regional, statewide, and national organizations advocating for social and economic justice throughout California. Some of the Foundation's key accomplishments follow:

**1948** In a grant partnership with the Columbia Foundation, established the San Francisco Foundation. The San Francisco Foundation has since become one of the nation's largest community foundations.

**1953** Launched one of the first funding programs supporting farm workers by providing a grant to the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools to research the tools needed to educate the children of farm workers.

**1964** Supplied a grant to the Migrant Ministry, which helped farm labor families form the Farm Workers Organization of Tulare County. The group became part of the National Farm Workers Association and helped organize the famous grape pickers strike.

**1965** Ruth Chance, who was then president of the Rosenberg Foundation, and several others began meeting to exchange ideas and improve cooperation among foundations, leading to the formation of the Northern California Grantmakers.

**1973** Gave a grant to establish the San Francisco Child Abuse Council, which now provides training to more than 5,000 children and 5,000 professionals each year.

**1975** Joined three other foundations in providing start-up support to Legal Services for Children, the first nonprofit law firm for youth in the country.

**1986** Assisted undocumented immigrants eligible to achieve legal status under new legislation by providing grants to community-based organizations for planning and direct assistance to immigrants as well as for training, consultation, policy monitoring, litigation, and advocacy.

**1993** Targeted the struggling child-support system in California, kicking off a nine-year, \$6 million initiative that resulted in the complete overhaul of the system.

**1995** Foundation grantee Asian Pacific American Legal Center joined the ACLU and the Asian Law Caucus in representing immigrant workers from Thailand who had been held as virtual slaves in an El Monte sweatshop, resulting in an award of more than \$4 million in damages.

**1999** Supported public interest law organizations and immigrant advocates in successfully challenging the constitutionality of California's Proposition 187, an initiative that prohibited undocumented immigrants and their children from receiving public education and other services.

**2001** Provided its first grant in support of *Wal-Mart Stores v. Dukes*, the largest civil rights class action lawsuit in U.S. history, pending before the Supreme Court. The case charges Wal-Mart with discriminating against women in promotions, pay, and job assignments.

**2003** Received the prestigious Paul Ylvisaker Award for Public Policy Engagement by the Council on Foundations for work on immigration policy and the rights of immigrants and other minorities.

**2007** Launched a multi-year, multi-million-dollar initiative to reform California's criminal justice system, making a first round of grants to facilitate successful community reentry from prison and to combat employment discrimination against formerly incarcerated people.

**2008** A coalition of San Francisco advocates secured agreement for more than \$30 million in employment, affordable housing, and other community benefits from Bayview-Hunters Point developer, Lennar, Inc.

**2010** Made an inaugural grant for "Fairness in the Fields," a new initiative by a coalition including Oxfam America that aims to establish, enforce, publicize, and monitor a comprehensive set of labor standards for farm work in the U.S.



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and the future is ours.”

– *Cesar Chavez*

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