

#1377 Building a Solidarity Economy for a More Resilient Future

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast in which we shall learn about some ideas for rebuilding our economy and our society in a way that will help everyone recover from the pandemic and make us more ready for the next emergency we face. Clips today are from the Ezra Klein Show, Pitchfork Economics, the Majority Report, Deconstructed, Democracy Now and the Takeaway.

What it would take to end child poverty in America - The Ezra Klein Show - Air Date 8-20-20

EZRA KLEIN - HOST, THE EZRA KLEIN SHOW: [00:00:25] One of the things that I think coronavirus has done, although I'm not sure it's always stated this way, is give a lot of people with more wealth and resources an idea of what it is like to be a working parent without wealth and resources, what it's like to try to juggle not having childcare for your kids but having a job, not having a reliable way to make sure those two things are separated, not have reliable care cause you can't always get it, and not be able to lean on family who maybe you already had.

And I wonder if there's not some kind of solidarity that could come out of this because I think a lot of people are seeing that when you don't have the ability to make sure your children are cared for, your ability to work, your ability to move ahead at work, your ability to be productive, all those things that we end up patting ourselves on the back for doing is what we, you know, if we're lucky enough to be moving up in the economy, that really depends on childcare. And the fact that so many people do not have the capacity to rely on that, that's happened to almost everybody during the pandemic. But it often strikes me that what's happening to so many during the pandemic is simply what normal life is like for a lot of people outside the pandemic.

REP. BARBARA LEE: [00:01:31] Unfortunately, this pandemic has become in many respects, like you summarized it, an equalizer. And, I think coming out of this, I think there'll be a greater sensitivity to what low-income families have to deal with each and every day. And I think that this gives us an opportunity to form broader political coalitions, talk about suburban White housewives or suburban White mothers or single moms who haven't had to deal with this because they've had access to opportunity and good paying jobs. Well, now, you know, we need to work with them to make sure they understand this is how it is for us all of the time. And I think that sensitivity is there, but also added to that though, so many kids who are not in school for the right reasons don't have access to broadband and a lot of people who had jobs, if they did not lose their jobs, they've got access to broadband and can telecommute. And so a lot of people are beginning to see the disparities in tech as it relates to access to technology with low-income children, because there is no way if you don't have access to broadband that you can do online classes. And there's no way if you don't have access to broadband that you can keep a job that requires this.

And so, yeah, I think it gives us, unfortunately, it's taken so much death and pain to help people understand the condition of others, and I think it does present an opportunity to build a stronger coalition around eliminating childhood poverty.

EZRA KLEIN - HOST, THE EZRA KLEIN SHOW: [00:03:09] And this should be a reminder in a way that investing in kids is also investing in adults that taking care of children is also taking care of adults. I think that's a part of this conversation that often gets lost.

REP. BARBARA LEE: [00:03:21] Sure. Because you invest in kids, you're, you're helping parents make sure that they're able to go to work without a lot of worry. They're able to come home, and their children have been in school and they've learned something and they, yes, will need help with their homework, but it won't be as difficult because they've had a good day at school. And you don't have to worry about your child being safe. You don't have the, again, going back to gun violence, making sure the guns are taken off the streets, you don't have to worry about kids being shot at school if we had better gun control laws. And so, yeah, taking care of children relieves a lot of the stress and strain on parents. Again, referring to my personal experience, it was difficult as could be trying to figure out how I could study, go to classes; I was on work study, active as a community worker with the Black Panther party, and take care of my children, and all of that going on at one time. And had I had money, I could have had more childcare where it would've relieved me from some of the pressure. But we made do. And they're phenomenal young men. But so many, especially so many single moms, don't have that network and that support system in place to be able to juggle. And it, it creates more stress and more trauma, really, for the family.

Care work is more valuable than ever (with Kate Bahn)

- Pitchfork Economics with Nick Hanauer - Air Date

10-11-20

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:04:45] So Jessyn, we continue to learn, from Kate Bahn, that it is a thorny and expensive problem. But as I reflect on it, I think the best research shows that there are at least three drivers of the cost of childcare. Of course, the first cost is people because childcare is not really a scalable business in the sense that you can't make it more efficient, like a technology company necessarily. And the truth is that we want to pay those folks more money, not less. So that's going to account for a lot of the cost. The second cost is real estate, particularly in cities where real estate is very, very expensive. That drives cost a lot too. And finally, there's some really interesting problems and opportunities around regulation, aren't there?

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:05:41] Yeah, that's right. that tension between wanting to have high quality-

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:05:45] Yes.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:05:45] And a high standard for what we expect in our childcare facilities, but at the same time, not making them so onerous that you simply can't open a facility in a center city, say, because of the open space requirements or outdoor requirements.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:05:59] Correct.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:06:00] So, there's that managing that tension as well.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:06:03] Right. And, Jessyn, you mentioned that one of the things which is in our state, there's an open space requirement for childcare centers, which basically means they need an outdoor play area. Which in turn means that all of the space in the giant, fancy building where we have our offices is excluded from being possibly childcare space, which is nuts.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:06:28] Right. Right. But it really lays bare just what a massively... just that it is an expensive proposition. There's no way of getting around that.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:06:38] Yeah.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:06:38] Because A, we want to pay people well who would provide this work and B, we want to make sure that kids are really well taken care of, and we need to really vastly expand our notion of what our societal responsibility is towards this.

This is something that we need to be investing in collectively and in our exploration, our own internal exploration, I think one of the things that really struck us is that there's this arbitrary, age cutoff that we come to where we need to start public investments and it's age five. And that is this weird historical artifact that's not really based on science. We know that infants are our earliest learners. Kids and infants start learning right away. And so it is strange that so much of our public investment is withheld until kids are five.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:07:28] Yeah.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:07:28] When they've already had a lot of exposure to learning environments, both good and bad.

And so we really need to change our ideas around when and to what extent we're investing in publicly funded childcare. And the good news is Kate talked a lot about that. There's some great policy proposals, Vice President Biden issued one. Patty Murray has the Childcare is Essential Act. There's a growing interest and focus on this. And we need to really get in front of it, given the crisis that families are facing in this pandemic and what's going to be happening afterwards too.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:08:01] Yeah. And I think that there are a couple of policy principles that seem really important and robust to me.

The first is that, if we're going to tax folks for childcare, it should be the businesses that rely on the workers that have the children, right? Like it's this ridiculous thing of free riding, where expect your workers to come to work on time and to be productive. And you expect them to have children so that there will be people that buy your products. But nobody has accounted for the fact that somebody has to take care of the kids when the parents are at work. And I think a small payroll tax or a small business and operations tax would go a long ways nationally to closing the gap.

The second is the real estate problem, which I think is a super big contributor to cost and availability. And, if it was me, I would require all commercial landlords to put aside either some money or some space for childcare.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:09:06] You could even take it a step further and say that childcare facilities are essential public facilities, right, the way we do with transportation facilities or water infrastructure.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:09:16] Or schools.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:09:16] And just say, we are... or schools. Right. When we're building and planning communities, we are going to deliberately plan and fund, through private or public mechanisms, ample facilities for childcare. And that, again, you don't get at the people issue and how we're paying and compensating people.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:09:34] Yeah.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:09:34] You need to do that piece too, but just looking at it as an infrastructure issue, I think is solving part of the problem.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:09:41] Right.

JESSYN FARRELL: [00:09:41] So, I really like that.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:09:43] Yep. We need to find a way to get our childcare system through this crisis, but then we need to put some real energy into re-imagining it. And I guess for me, the punchline is: of course we can afford to do it. Of course, we can have a decent childcare system in this country. We're just going to have to rearrange the way in which we value things in a more reasonable way.

The Tragic Cost of American Child Poverty w: Jeff Madrick - The Majority Report w: Sam Seder - Air Date 10-7-20

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:10:05] Your plan, it's very straight forward. And, we should also say in this era of COVID, there is data coming out of COVID, the first CARES Act that went out, that in many respects, gives you all the evidence you need, that your prescription is the right one. Talk about this.

JEFF MADRICK: [00:10:25] Well, my prescription comes from a couple of places, in my head and heart. Forgive me. One is we can't keep treating poor people like poor parents, like they can't take care of their kids. If the big reason we don't want to give cash is that we think they're going to waste the money on themselves. The evidence is that they don't. It's not only evidence in the US. Almost all rich democracies give a cash allowance of some kind of rather. Canada, in my think tank, which is supported by Bernard L Schwartz, we presented the Canadian proposal, and talked about how much it would help America. We adopted the Canadian cash proposal.

So my attitude was, my attitude is simple. Kids need, poor kids need a lot of things, but mostly they need money. And this is not just wishful thinking. One of the things discovered by academics over the last 20 years is the value of money itself. They're in constant -- I talk about this, I think I have a chapter in the book that talks about how money matters. That one colorful example is an Indian tribe that developed a very successful casino and they gave \$5,000 to each family that had a child. The evidence...

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:11:50] This is a Duke study from a Cherokee tribe in North Carolina. Is that right?

JEFF MADRICK: [00:11:54] Exactly. And they discovered their educational attainment increased, the crime rate decreased, that is compared to their peers in similar tribes and in similar economic circumstances.

But that was just one example of how cash can matter. So my view is, let's give them cash; three or \$4,000 per child a year, may be \$5,000. Some nations go higher than that. And let the parents figure out how to use that cash best: buying them a warm coat, having electricity in the winter time, buying them books, computers possibly, at least an internet service, and let's treat parents in a respectful way. And I think they'll act in a respectful way if we do that.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:12:46] Well, we know from the COVID payments that were sent out at the beginning of, the crisis back when there was at least some attempt to provide relief for Americans, we know that the cash payments ended up reducing the poverty rate. I mean, it, it sounds quite obvious but all the data was there. And the other thing is we also know ideologically, we keep hearing that you want to localize, you want to give school boards the right to expend their own cash. Well this is that principle, but on a very meaningful level, and that is: trust parents of children to figure it out. Of course, on the margins of every single endeavor that humans undertake, I think there's people who don't do the right thing or they waste it or whatever it is, but the bulk is important.

Now what you're proposing is also universal, right? I mean, so...

JEFF MADRICK: [00:13:34] Universal and taxable so that if you make higher incomes, it'll be taxed. The universality is a little bit like Social Security is universal. You want to have everybody, you want to have broad public support for this kind of thing. But let me also say that giving them cash, you've raised a good point, Sam. Giving them cash got poverty down, but now we know getting poverty down gives these kids a chance in school to get good jobs, to be healthy, to be emotionally stable, on and on and not to have brain damage.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:14:07] Let me just lastly, just add this thing about the universality. People are always talking about means testing, whatnot. We have a way of means testing that is very efficient. This also applies to Social Security for that matter, which is you give everyone a universal amount and you claw it back on the back end with taxes, because we already have an apparatus to determine taxes. We already have a tax rate. We don't need to create another bureaucracy to see, and to force people to jump through hoops, to get it in the first place. We could just do it on the back end through taxes. That's the most efficient way. And it also retained support for this program. So people aren't thinking that other people are getting benefits that they're not getting.

JEFF MADRICK: [00:14:48] Of course I'd love to raise the progressive tax rate as well.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: [00:14:52] You and I both. We can do that as well. After we do the heavy lifting of getting those payments out.

How Democrats Risk Repeating the Mistakes of the Financial Crisis in the Era of Covid-19 - Deconstructed with Mehdi Hasan - Air Date 9-17-20

NAUSICAA RENNER - PRODUCER, DECONSTRUCTED: [00:14:58] Well, what you wrote in your piece is that the signal is that the Biden administration will be taking its clues from 2008 and reacting in a similar way.

JAMES GLABRAITH: [00:15:09] That's fair enough; that seems to be the case, that what one sees is the dominant tendency. They believe that what they did in 2008, 2009, and 2010 worked; that they can pull the economy out through a short-term program of stimulus and then shift to retrenchment of one kind or another in the following years. And I think it's fair to say that that is a projection of a situation that was very different then from what we have now. It doesn't have the complication of the public health issue. And it did have a certain degree of uncertainty, but the uncertainty over what was going to happen next was resolved in a fairly short period of time. And that's not necessarily going to be the case now.

NAUSICAA RENNER - PRODUCER, DECONSTRUCTED: [00:15:55] And so tell us what's different about how the Obama administration reacted to 2008 and why just extending unemployment benefits, giving money to small businesses, the Federal Reserve pouring money into the economy. Why won't that work in the long term?

JAMES GLABRAITH: [00:16:13] Well, I think there are two or three basic problems here — Let's call it three basic problems that, are, really signatures of the situation.

The first is that the major industries in which the United States is competitive, which depend upon world markets, are seeing their markets basically dry up. And that's true if you think about aerospace, the civilian aircraft industry — a major industry, major employer — it depends upon world demand for aircraft.

And since nobody's flying, there is no demand for new aircraft. One can go down the list; the oil industry, you may not like it, but it fueled the recovery in the last 12 years, and it now operates in the United States, in a situation where the price that they get is half the cost of extraction. It's not going to go on like that indefinitely.

So all these elements that make up the advanced sectors of the economy are in limbo at the moment. And there's nothing much you can do just by pouring money into the firms. You can keep the firms alive, but you can't make their markets function; you can't make it profitable for them to produce what they're accustomed to producing.

So that whole sector needs to be reorganized and mobilized to do things that we actually need doing, like dealing with climate change, for example, or reconstructing our living environments so that we can handle the public health emergencies that obviously, hit us now, and may well hit us again in the future. Those kinds of things require reorganization and mobilization of the most advanced sectors.

That's not where most of the jobs are. Most of the jobs are in services. The problem in services, small and medium businesses, is that if I'm in a service sector and you're in the service sector. Your job depends upon my willingness to buy the service you're providing. And your job depends upon my having an income and therefore me having a job. The service sector, of course, is in this enormous retrenchment. So one has to think about how to restructure that sector so that at least a significant part of it can keep going.

And the third thing is that yes, all these incomes have become, the economists call this contingent — they've all become uncertain, and people are anxious over whether they have incomes. And their incomes, in many cases, are being cut off: The unemployment insurance that they got in April and ran out in June and July.

But their debts are not contingent, their debts continue to pile up. So the rent bill is still there, the mortgage bill is still there, the utility bill is still there. And all of these things can put them under enormous pressure and end up putting them out of a house, a place to live, as soon as the moratorium on foreclosures and evictions is lifted.

So one has to think about how to deal with that. And that's a major reset, because there's no reason why people who were put out of work by a public health emergency should be put out of their homes, because they couldn't maintain incomes while their debts continued to pile up. That's a fundamental injustice. As that problem develops — for the moment it is held in abeyance -- it's going to have to be dealt with because should meet an enormous amount of popular resistance to force those kinds of contracts to be fully enforced.

And that means working it out, because you have a whole lot of mom and pop landlords who own a few units, and their incomes depend upon being able to get the rental payments that they have. So one has to work out a general resetting of the situation that can hold people more or less harmless in their situations.

Simply pumping money into the economy can hold things up for a period of time, but it's not going to produce the recovery, in my view.

NAUSICAA RENNER - PRODUCER, DECONSTRUCTED: [00:19:46] So the recommendations that you make sound a lot like the New Deal to me. I mean, a jobs guarantee —

JAMES GLABRAITH: [00:19:53] [Laughs.] They do to me, too!

NAUSICAA RENNER - PRODUCER, DECONSTRUCTED: [00:19:56] So just to go over them, I mean, you have the jobs guarantee, you have rebuilding domestic manufacturing, basically inventing a new economy, to deal with climate change and putting people to work there. Do you think that we're prepared to make such a large shift in the economy?

JAMES GLABRAITH: [00:20:16] Well, I think the American people are prepared to do it. Sure. I think they're anxious for the kind of leadership that would give them the opportunity to show what they can do. And that was true in 1933, as well; people were ready for the leadership when Roosevelt provided it.

Could you get it done in the present political environment? Well, you know, that depends upon what the people decide to do in November, and whether the elected leadership gets the message. And that's obviously going to be, under any circumstances, a pretty tough road to hoe. But the New Deal is the right example. The New Deal showed that it is possible to

reconstruct the economy. And it wasn't that Roosevelt simply revived the preexisting economy of the 1920s or the early 1930s. No, set out to change fundamentally, the nature of American agriculture, to provide economic development through the American South, and electricity — it had never been there before. And to rebuild the entire what we now call infrastructure of the country, the roads, the bridges, the airfields, the schools, the courthouses, university buildings -- it's all over the country, the legacy of the New Deal. And this was imagined at the time. And that strikes me as fundamentally the mindset we need to have in dealing with the aftermath of this, because we're not going to get back. Whatever one thinks about the economy that existed, and that developed over the last 40 years and it took a mature form in the last dozen years; we're not going to get it back. It's not coming back in that form.

We're going to have to find new things for millions of people who've been working in offices who will find themselves no longer needed; millions of people who have been working in services that are not going to be revived very quickly, to do.

And, there are lots of things to do. There's never a shortage work to be done, but we have to organize people to be able to do it and bring to bear the talents of the advanced sectors and their capacity and get them off of doing things which people are not going to be needing, not going to be demanding, and into doing things that are actually [what] the future generations are going to say yes, that was a good idea.

Check Your Blindspot 10-27-20

ANNOUNCER: [00:22:21] It's time, once again, to play America's favorite political game show.

Check Your Blindspot!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:22:37] That's right, it's *Check Your Blind Spot* powered by Ground News. The first ever news comparison platform that provides readers with objective data about the underlying political biases in all published news stories. The Ground News app features the Blind Spot, which highlights news stories that just aren't being covered by one end of the political spectrum or the other. So I use the Blind Spot to quiz contestants on theirs. With us today is our, well, previously reigning champion, looking to redeem herself, Amanda from Boston. Welcome back to the show.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:23:11] Thank you.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:23:12] And now I'm going to tell you about news stories and you're going to tell me which side of the political spectrum is blind to them. Are you ready?

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:23:20] I'm ready.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:23:21] And we're going to skip right past all the Hunter Biden stories and take it as granted that the right is having a field day in the left is either ignoring or debunking. All right, let's dive in and get ready for round one.

In whose political blind spot is this story? Biden says America is an "idea" that was, "never lived up to". A little bit more on that during an interview on Brené Brown's podcast, talking about the legacy of slavery and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Biden said, "America was an idea, an idea. We hold these truths to be self-evident. We never lived up to it, but we never walked away from it before. And I just think we have to be more honest, let our kids know, as we raise them, what actually did happen. Acknowledge our mistakes so we don't repeat them."

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:24:13] Hmm. Well, I'm going to go ahead and say it's in the right's blind spot.

(Buzzer Sounds)

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:24:19] Boo!

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:24:25] Boo.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:24:28] I'm sorry to say, no, it is not in the right's blind spot because once again, of course this is reasonable, but it goes strongly against what the right believes. And so of course the right is responding by clarifying that actually no, America is fantastic, everything about it is great, and it has in fact lived up to its ideals.

The best articles on the right about this are just the listicles of tweets, where people rain down hatred on Joe Biden for suggesting that America is less than perfect.

Right.

Although one of them said something really insightful when they said, "no, we have lived up to our ideals." And I thought, I wonder if that's true. Because we've all said things that we don't really believe, that doesn't mean that what we said is part of our ideals. So maybe we really have lived up to our ideals.

(Stunned murmuring)

Anyway, let's get ready for round two.

In whose political blind spot is this story? They cannot find the parents of 545 children separated on the border between the U.S. and Mexico.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:25:45] Well, I know this is in the right's blind spot because this is all I've been reading about this week.

ANNOUNCER: [00:25:49] Correct. (Polite applause)

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:25:55] Such a mediocre excitement.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:25:59] The right is covering this a little bit, they're just completely swamped by the coverage on the left. And the best coverage on the right, best is in quotes, it's from the Blaze, where they just repeat uncritically, the Department of Homeland Security's response, which is that, in fact, this narrative has been dispelled and the simple fact is this, after contact has been made with the parents to reunite them with their children, many parents have refused.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:26:32] Come on!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:26:33] The idea being that America is so great and the parents have been deported that they're like, no, no, no, we don't want our children back, keep them. But of course this goes against maybe that has happened in some cases, but not these cases.

Right, and

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:26:48] not for 500 plus children.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:26:50] Not the 545 cases where the lawyers are saying we can not find the parents.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:26:57] Right, we're trying to reunite these families.

Gross.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:27:00] And now, for round three.

In whose political blind spot is this story? Biden town hall questioners included former Obama speech writer and wife of Pennsylvania Democrat.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:27:17] This is obviously in the left's blind spot because the right is losing their minds. Everything is rigged!

(Ding Ding Ding) Yay!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:27:26] Of course, of course. And just for clarification on the story the Hill, classified as being in the center, says they went and tried to get comments from ABC, and ABC said that Stephanopoulos disclosed the mix of voters at the top of the program saying to Biden, about the audience, "they're a group of, some are voting for you, some have said they're voting for President Trump, some are still undecided, and we're going to try to take questions from as many as we can tonight." And then when Osborne, the person who was an Obama speech writer, like not for Obama but within the White House more broadly, when he was questioned, he was shown as, his occupation was 'communications.' There was no indication that he was former administration speech writer though, he was introduced as a Philadelphia Democrat.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:28:20] Yeah, I mean, okay. Yeah, that's not cool. I if it was on the other side and they had Trump administration, people just titled, as, you know, 'Virginia Republican' asking questions, yeah, I'd be upset about that.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:28:35] That's fair. They were also going crazy about a wife of a person who previously ran for Congress as a Democrat as if that was also out of bounds.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:28:47] Hmm.

(Stunned murmuring)

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:28:48] Plants! Rigged!

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:28:52] Right. They're not, they're not plants, but it's like, there's a kernel of justification and they're upset.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:29:02] The best lead sentence from the right on the story was this: "Chick-fil-A is delicious, Jesus is Lord, the sky is blue, water is wet, and town hall questioners are covert liberal activists."

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:29:18] They're so over the top. Just tone it down, people would take you seriously.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:29:24] Yeah. Chick-fil-A is just fine.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:29:30] No, it's evil.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:29:33] So having come back with hard-fought redemption once again, winner and again, champion Amanda from Boston. Thanks for playing.

AMANDA - CONTESTANT: [00:29:40] Thank you.

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:29:44] Yay!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST: [00:29:44] That wraps it up for today. It's important to mention that all of today's commentary and analysis is hours alone and definitely not that of the staunchly unopinionated Ground News. If you'd like to try their service, get a discount on their premium features, and let them know we sent you, go to ground.news/best. As always, whether for traffic safety or media literacy, never forget to...

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:30:08] Check Your Blindspot!

Voting Is Not Enough - FINAL PUSH! GOTV & DONATE STRATEGICALLY - Best of the Left

AMANDA HOFFMAN - ACTIVISM, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:30:37] You've reached the activism portion of today's show. Now that you're informed and angry, here's what you can do about it. Today's activism: Voting Is Not Enough: GET OUT THE VOTE & DONATE STRATEGICALLY FOR THE FINAL PUSH!

Next week, exactly seven days from now, America will watch the election results roll in. And chances are it will take days, possibly weeks, maybe even months until we know who won.

Your actions this week can build the giant turnout we desperately need to overwhelm gerrymandering, make up for voter suppression and deliver a decisive victory for Biden. Maybe that doesn't sound exciting to some of you - and I get that - but this is what it will take to have a chance at protecting peoples' rights and fighting for progressive ideas.

Last time, we highlighted the get out the vote campaigns Swing Left, Field Team 6 and Vote Save America. This week we'll add Indivisible to that list at 2020.indivisible.org. Handwringing doesn't help, but talking to likely voters might actually make you feel better. For our full list of volunteering opportunities, voting resources, and much more, visit our Voting Is Not Enough 2020 Election Action Guide at BestoftheLeft.com/2020action.

Today, we're going to focus on how you can strategically and effectively donate in this final, critical week before the election. We know these are hard times for many people, so if you can give - please, please do.

SwingLeft isn't just getting out the vote. They're also making it easy to donate strategically. The Swing Left Immediate Impact Fund sends 100% of your donation to the candidates in the closest races among the 12 super states - that's the most important states to help flip the White House, the Senate and state houses key to rolling back Republican gerrymandering. Or, you can donate to one of the super states, and 100% of your donation will support close races up and down the ballot just in that state. Go to SwingLeft.org/funds to donate.

If you want to help the Democrats keep control of the House, the DCCC has established what they're calling a Frontline Member donation fund. These are House members who won tight House races and flipped districts in the 2018 midterms and are vulnerable in 2020. Go to DCCC.org/frontline to see the list of candidates and scroll all the way down to click to donate. It's worth noting that this list includes: Sharice Davids from Kansas - one of the first two Native American women elected to Congress, as well as the first openly gay person elected to Congress from Kansas; Lauren Underwood from Illinois - the youngest and first Black woman to win in her district; Abby Finkenauer - the first woman elected to Congress from the state of Iowa and nearly tied with AOC for youngest member of the House; and Jahana Hayes - the first Black woman to represent Connecticut in Congress. We don't want to lose these 2018 gains in diversity and political outsiders.

If you want to help flip more House seats, donate to the DCCC's Red to Blue program at redtoblue.dccc.org. That list includes Kara Eastman in Nebraska's 2nd district, who was endorsed by AOC's Courage to Change PAC and Justice Democrats in the primaries. She was within 2 points of winning in 2018. This could be her year.

And don't forget about governorships, which will be critical to protecting civil rights laws and implementing public health measures to fight against COVID-19. Right now, Utah and Montana have an open seat for Governor, while Missouri's Republican incumbent is in a close race. Indiana, North Dakota, New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia all have Republican governors up for re-election. Head to DemocraticGovernors.org to donate.

As we get closer to election day, remember that if you or someone you know encounters a problem when trying to vote, call Election Protection at 866-OUR-VOTE or visit 866OurVote.org.

So, don't get complacent. Trump could still win this thing. Republicans could still hold on to the Senate or erode the gains in the House. No one wants to wake up on November 4th wishing they had done more, so take action now. Voting is not enough, folks....it's just not.

The segment notes include all the links to this information as well as additional resources, and, once again, this segment is available on the "Voting is Not Enough" page at BestoftheLeft.com/2020action.

So, if giving left-leaning candidates the resources they need to WIN this thing is important to you, be sure to tell everyone you know about Voting Is Not Enough: GET OUT THE VOTE, and donate strategically for the final push so that others in your network can spread the word, too.

It's time to stop relying on crisis legislation (with Lindsay Owens) - Pitchfork Economics with Nick Hanauer - Air Date 8-4-20

LINDSAY OWENS: [00:34:40] Recessions have different triggers, but most of the consequences can be fully anticipated. Job loss is going to happen in recessions. There are going to be income disruptions for families, and there are going to be liquidity constraints and credit crunches. And so each of those consequences can be solved or addressed or alleviated with a suite of policies. Instead of Congress rushing to put together ad hoc processes for bailouts every time there's a recession, we can have a sort of "break glass in case of emergencies" standing set of policies in place that Congress could just turn on to address these sort of known features of recession.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:35:26] Yeah. It's of course an incredibly obvious and a good idea, which is, I suppose why we haven't done it before. But tell us what the elements of that plan would entail.

LINDSAY OWENS: [00:35:36] We have a proposal that we call the Standing Emergency Economic Resilience and Stabilization Program. And it's really a four part plan. One piece of the plan is around job loss. As you know, and as many of your listeners know, unemployment right now is incredibly high, but it didn't have to be that way. Other countries, particularly in Europe, who also experienced high rates of COVID-19, have much lower job loss than we do on the order of four to 5%, whereas we're approaching that 15% mark. Job loss is obviously terrible for individuals, but it's also just really costly as a society. Rehiring is costly. Training is costly, extinguishing productive matches between employers and workers is unnecessary and costly, workers get rusty when they're not working. They lose certification. And of course, in the US, because jobs are attached to health insurance, many people lose their health insurance too, which has been really devastating for folks in the middle of a global pandemic.

One piece of our emergency package is a paycheck guarantee legislation for small businesses. This is similar to what many other countries are offering and it's been proposed in both the House and the Senate, but it would allow the government basically to step in and take over the payrolls of small businesses.

A second piece of our proposal is around financial systems infrastructure. Obviously one thing that we do every time there's a recession and we're responding is we get money out the door. Both so that folks can cover their expenses but also for fiscal stimulus. We have a proposal for what we call an emergency payments form that basically just allows businesses and individuals to have accounts and payments addresses, so that we don't have these long delays getting money out the door. I know many of your listeners probably got the \$1,200 checks from the CARES Act that was passed in March and they may not have gotten those until May or June. Those types of delays are really unnecessary and they're also really bad for the economy. Getting money out the door quickly is really important.

A third component of our legislation is around using automatic stabilizers, which is a sort of a wonky technical term that really just means social policies that are tied to conditions in the economy. When the economy is contracting, the social programs would expand. And when

the economy is expanding, the social programs would contract. And all sorts of programs can be offered through those stabilizers: cash assistance, money for state and localities, unemployment insurance, expanded benefits and housing assistance, which we talk a lot about and I think people don't always think about in the automatic stabilizer context.

And then the final piece of the proposal is an off the shelf bankruptcy restructuring process for large firms. And that is really designed to prevent the kind of no-strings-attached bailouts and corporate slush funds that we've seen in this recession. And frankly, for a second time, because we also saw it during the great recession.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:38:59] Well, let's start with the last one. I think one of the reasons that I like this idea so much is that people can both do and justify terrible and egregious things during an emergency. Particularly if no one has thought it through carefully and structured an approach to the particular problem that you're addressing. And both this time and in 2007/8, we, in many cases effectively shoveled money into the pockets of rich people, rather than doing things that really helped secure the economy for most people and, panic sort of obscures all of that. And I just think it's, just really super unnecessary. And that there's so many simple ways to approach this, that your report details, that would be cheaper and more efficient and more effective. And I think most important to me, wouldn't erode the public's confidence in the government. Which is what's going on now.

DAVID GOLDSTEIN: [00:40:03] And at the center of that, I think you would agree, Nick, is this idea that instead of just shoveling big piles of money towards these large corporations and banks, we actually get an equity stake in exchange.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:40:16] Right. What would the mechanism in your program be?

LINDSAY OWENS: [00:40:19] You're making two really important points. The first point is a political one and I do want to touch on that because, while the policy pieces of this paper are really important and we think some of them are quite innovative, some of them, as you say are very obvious. The real innovation may be the potential to change the political dynamics. And you're absolutely right; in the fog of an economic crisis when Americans are really suffering, small businesses on Main Street are shuttering. There's a lot of energy and need for Congress to move money out the door, to help alleviate that suffering on Main Street and for American families.

However, because there is so much political pressure, and so many constituencies wanting that, it creates this sort of must-pass bill. We have to get this aid out the door. And when you have a must-pass piece of legislation, it is a bonanza for lobbyists and special interests.

And we absolutely see all sorts of policy writers for really idiosyncratic things. I read yesterday as they're negotiating this unemployment cliff, some Republicans have proposed removing the deductions that were passed during the tax cuts and jobs act on deducting expensive meals. They're trying to get an increased deduction for sort of three martini lunches.

And obviously, because so many members of Congress will want to vote to extend the unemployment insurance, somebody downtown on K Street sees an opening for that

proposal. And even the most kind of steadfast corporate governance advocates, your Senator Elizabeth Warrens, your representatives Katie Porter and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who really oppose those kinds of special interest handouts, are in a little bit of a bind because also want to move the unemployment insurance. And so that dynamic is really poisonous and I agree it really undermines public confidence. And I think with a standing program, that's sort of where the rules are written in advance and they're laid out and there's a little transparency around them. I'm not saying that you avoid that dynamic, but I do think that dynamic becomes much more pointed and clear and easier to propose because you're having to add it on top of what we've already agreed upon.

DAVID GOLDSTEIN: [00:42:54] For this part, for the automatic stabilizers, do you really require an on-off switch? Or could you just leave it on all the time so that there is no opportunity for this sort of log rolling in activating the program?

LINDSAY OWENS: [00:43:11] Oh, that's such a good point. That's a great question. You're exactly right. Once you pass legislation, tying these programs to automatic stabilizers, you're exactly right. You would not need to turn them on and off again during a recession. And I do think it's important to point out that there are programs in the safety net that already function as defacto automatic stabilizers because they're on the mandatory spending side. Which means that if you qualify for the program, you get the program, and during an economic downturn, more people qualify for programs like nutritional assistance and unemployment insurance. The kind of stabilizer conversation right now around unemployment insurance is about actually increasing the minimum benefits.

But you're exactly right. Stabilizers would actually... they're a great policy tool. It sounds really wonky, but the political argument for them is pretty powerful because they really raise the floor for negotiations. Can you imagine if we weren't having to have this unemployment insurance debate and instead of dealing with unemployment and the CARES Act, and then now again in right before August recess, Congress had spent a whole summer working on the infrastructure for a vaccine? You're really clearing the decks in a way and allowing people to focus on the triggers of a recession or the sort of proximate crisis at hand.

DAVID GOLDSTEIN: [00:44:40] You could have written in at some point, every time there's a one million increase in weekly jobless claims, a \$600 bonus payment kicks in and that could've passed because nobody would've thought it ever would have happened.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:44:55] I just really think that some version of this is so important, and by the way, could be such an opportunity for the country because you really are making lemonade out of lemons in some of these circumstances, if you do it correctly, because in the circumstance where you're taking preferred basically equity and preferred shares in these companies in exchange for bailing them out, to the extent that you could make the public benefit from that. Well, then you have come out in the longterm ahead. And I just feel really strongly that for instance, if you basically required companies to give the federal government preferred shares, you could distribute them in the social security accounts of all Americans, everybody gets a share and when you retire, you get to sell those shares.

DAVID GOLDSTEIN: [00:45:49] Imagine if these bailouts, every time there was a corporate bailout, the American people got bailed out simultaneously. They became shareholders. The political support there would be for that. Everybody wins.

NICK HANAUER - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:46:02] Everybody wins even in a difficult circumstance.

Rev. William Barber Millions Are Struggling. So Why Do the Debates Ignore Poverty? - Democracy Now! - Air Date 10-8-20

REV. WILLIAM BARBER II: [00:46:05] We have to stop saying things were well before COVID. It's almost as though we give that away to Trump and Pence. The reality is Wall Street was well. The reality is those who got his tax cuts were well. The reality is though that, before COVID, they were trying to overturn healthcare. Before COVID, they were blocking living wages. Before COVID, we were not addressing the issue of poor and low-wealth people. And we have to find a way to say that.

I wish the moderators would just talk about that and open it up, Amy, because 64 million poor and low-wealth people were eligible to vote in the last election. That's nearly one-third of the electorate. Thirty-four million did not vote. And a study that we just recently did called power unleashed — “Unleashing the Power of Poor and Low-Wealth Voters,” said that the number one reason that poor and low-wealth people did not vote — this actually was a tri-reason: They never hear their names called, their issues, the lack of transportation and they can't get off the job and voter suppression. But that's the very group that in 15 states if just 1 to 20% of them vote — Michigan, 1%; North Carolina, 19%; Florida, 7% — could fundamentally shift the electorate. And they deserve to no longer be marginalized but to be heard and to be talked about in these debates.

NERMEEN SHAIKH: [00:47:31] Reverend Barber, I'd like to ask you about one aspect of what this widespread poverty before the pandemic and after the pandemic has induced, namely food insecurity. According to the Census Bureau and the Department of Agriculture, the level of hunger in US households has tripled, since 2019, and the proportion of American children who sometimes don't have enough to eat is now as much as 14 times higher than last year. So, could you talk about that particular issue and your assessment of the Biden-Harris plan? their anti-poverty proposal?

REV. WILLIAM BARBER II: [00:48:16] Well, you know, when Pence talked last night, he told what my grandmother called a bold-faced lie. In the first CARES Act, 83% of the money went to corporations and banks. It did not go to the people. And when we look at COVID-19, we know that the fissures of systemic racism and systemic poverty have actually allowed this pandemic to have a greater hold on our American society. We know that when we talk about death, we have to be exact, that it's not just people are dying, poor people are dying. People who make less than \$50,000 a year are dying. People are dying who are among the poor, whether it be White, Black — disproportionately among Black and Brown and Indigenous people, and that COVID has killed more people in the U.S. than Americans were killed in battle in five of our most recent wars — Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, the War in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf War. I mean, this is what we're talking about when we're talking about this devastation that's happening among poor and low-wealth people.

And then we're talking about the residual, the other impacts. For instance, 13 million people, one study says that we did, who make under \$50,000 a year, one in five don't know where they're going to get their next food. They don't know how they're going to eat. You know, millions, upwards of 40 million people, are facing eviction.

One of the things I like about the fact of the Biden-Harris plan is that they are, number one, not talking about taking people's healthcare. The Trump-Pence plan, that's what they're saying: "Elect us. We'll take your healthcare." The Biden-Harris plan is talking about raising people's living wages to \$15 an hour. The Trump-Pence plan is talking about giving more money to the wealthy. In fact, the Trump-Pence-McConnell plan, they refuse to pass a stimulus because they want another \$200 billion in tax cuts, they want money for a fighter jet, and they want to protect corporations from liability when those corporations didn't protect their people from coronavirus.

So, what we have is two different worlds operating. Pence, with a straight face lying, basically said, "Vote for us, and we'll take your healthcare and undermine your preexisting conditions. Vote for us, and we'll block living wages. Vote for us, and we will not protect the environment. Vote for us. Vote for us, and we'll put people on the Supreme Court who will be against your healthcare, against labor rights. You know, one of the things people forget about nominee is that she voted against people getting overtime pay.

And so, we're living in two different worlds. Not only will Pence and Trump not acknowledge racism when it comes to police violence, they are not even acknowledging the disparate racism in economics and in healthcare, and so forth and so on. So, on the one hand, while Pence and — while Biden and Harris may not be every, fully where the Poor People's Campaign are, they are in the world of wanting to do more. They're in the sphere of wanting to increase. They're in the sphere of wanting to make sure that the people have what they need, as opposed to wanting to only secure the wealthy and the greedy. And it's tragic.

And to think that someone running for the vice president — you talk about disrespecting people — number one, not only to lie to them, but to be so bold that you literally look people in the eye and say, in essence, "Vote for me, and I'll take from you. Vote for me in the midst of a pandemic, and I'll take healthcare, even in the midst of all of this death. All of this death." There's something wrong with Trump and Pence, I mean, deep down in the soul, and McConnell and the Republicans who have decided hold onto these positions. It's immoral. It's constitutionally inconsistent. It's economically insane, and it is a form of necropolitics, The politics of death that is contrary to everything we say we believe in on paper, like life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Homelessness on the Rise Amid Coronavirus Pandemic - The Takeaway - Air Date 10-1-20

MATT KATZ: [00:52:17] You refer to a crisis on top of a crisis, COVID and homelessness. What types of resources have been available to the homeless during the pandemic? Have those resources just been depleted across the board?

WILL JAMES: [00:52:31] Yes, I mean, it's been interesting to watch. The coronavirus pandemic has affected the homelessness crisis in a bunch of different ways. The first,

obviously, is that it's forced millions of Americans to the brink of eviction, and we know from studies here in Washington state, that eviction is a main driver of homelessness. Back in June, I think it was estimated that a quarter-million people in Washington couldn't pay their rent, and they were only protected by a moratorium on evictions, so that's the main effect. Also, the pandemic has scrambled the way that nonprofits and local governments deal with homelessness, because early on there was this fear that the thousands of people who are homeless on the West Coast and here in Washington State would be a vector for disease and would be especially vulnerable to the pandemic.

We know that people who are homeless have higher rates of chronic disease. A lot of people who are homeless have illnesses like COPD and emphysema and cancer that would make them vulnerable to COVID-19. A lot of people who are homeless live or spend their days in these really crowded environments like shelters and day centers. One thing that happened was, number one, shelters had to spread out their populations, and that reduced the capacity of shelters. When you move beds 6 feet apart, some shelters had to cut their populations by as much as half in some cases.

Also what some governments and nonprofits did was that they started moving people from shelters into individual hotel rooms around Washington state. And that's been really interesting to watch, because there's this idea in homelessness services called "housing first," the conventional wisdom is that when you put someone in a home, their other problems might be addiction or mental illness or physical illness or disability become much easier to deal with.

And that's what anecdotally, a lot of service providers found once they moved someone from a crowded congregant shelter, into a hotel room, suddenly, they were able to in some cases go into recovery for addiction. In some cases, just manage their addiction better. In some cases just feel better. There were fewer fights, fewer conflicts between residents. People said they felt calmer staying in these hotel rooms.

Now there's a big push in Washington State to say, "Hey, maybe when this pandemic is over, maybe we don't go back to the congregant shelters. Maybe we try to keep this model going in some way, keep people in individual rooms. Whether it's buying hotels and using them permanently to house people, whether it's building some kind of dormitory-style facility in the future."

The big problem, of course, is that local governments and state governments have been gutted by the economic fallout of the pandemic. The big question is that's a really expensive proposition that they're talking about and is there going to be any capacity to do that in the future?

MATT KATZ: [00:55:44] Then you also have to convince neighbors to put up buildings, larger buildings, to house the homeless, which is obviously another issue. It gets to something that Anna mentioned earlier, she said that there were negotiations going on between the activists and the homeless in these encampments in Philadelphia and the city of Philadelphia. What are the negotiations about? Are they looking for this kind of housing that Will was referring to?

ANNA ORSO: [00:56:11] Yes, similar. I see a lot of parallels actually with what Will is talking about with regards to folks being fed up with the shelter system, and feeling like they are

healthier, a variety of ways when they have a space to themselves. The negotiations are related to that. The activists want the city to release vacant city-owned property into a land trust, that the activists would control and then be able to dole out to the most vulnerable people who are living in the encampments.

You can't starve your way out of a recession (with Kitty Richards) - Pitchfork Economics with Nick Hanauer - Air Date 8-14-20

PAUL CONSTANT - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [00:56:50] The common response that you hear when you hear that income is down is that well, in my house, we would have to cut the budget. If my wife or I were to lose work, then we would have to stop going to the movies or trim our grocery budget. But the economy doesn't work like a household budget. Can you talk about why that is? Maybe the mechanics behind why treating the economy like a household budget isn't a good idea.

KITTY RICHARDS: [00:57:14] Absolutely. There are a few reasons. One thing when we talk about the household budget, I do think that it's a great example and it's something I want to even push back against in the way that it was just framed. Absolutely, if my budget dropped, I would stop going to the movies, but the services that States and localities provide to their citizens are not movies and popcorn. Right? They are really, really important supports for people's lives, for future economic growth, and for all of the activities that workers need to engage in, in order to participate in the economy. So one piece of it is just that if you lost your job and you had a credit card available to you, you might stop going to the movies and getting popcorn, but you wouldn't stop feeding your children and you wouldn't stop paying your rent unless you really couldn't make do. And so a first piece is just really understanding how critical the services that we're talking about are to the residents of these states.

But the bigger picture is that first, the federal government has a lot of ability to borrow. They don't have to charge things on high interest credit cards. They're able to borrow at very, very low interest rates and really use that borrowing to smooth out the economic ups and downs so that the economy doesn't fall into a spiral in which the pain that's being caused within families and communities ripples out into the broader economy and causes more problems. That's another piece of the puzzle. The reason that it's so important to treat government budgets differently from family budgets is that you have to look at the ways in which the impacts on individual families and individual workers ripple out from them into their communities and into the economy.

So when a public school teacher is laid off and loses her job, that impacts the children who she would have taught, the parents of those children who no longer have a safe place for their kids to go while they try to work, but it also means that it's harder for her to pay her mortgage, to pay her childcare provider, to go to the local store and get groceries for her family. That is bad for her, it's bad for her children, it's also bad for all of the people who rely on her spending in the economy to keep their families afloat. And that ripple effect is really what defines a recessionary spiral. That you can have some kind of negative shock to the system, but if you can support people and keep those core services going and make sure that people have money in their pockets to spend on the things they really need, you can stop it

from turning into a deeper recession or a depression because you can stop the cascade of lost jobs, lost income, reduced spending, more layoffs rippling through the community.

So

PAUL CONSTANT - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [01:00:33] actually increasing taxes during a recession can cause a swifter, healthy recovery, but the taxes should be on the rich. Can you talk about some of the, data that shows progressive versus regressive taxes and why we have to be careful about where we're getting our revenue from?

KITTY RICHARDS: [01:00:49] When economists talk about stimulus funding they often talk about what's called a multiplier. So this is just the idea if you spend a dollar in the economy as the government, how much additional economic activity do you create with that dollar? And you want to spend as much as you can, if you're trying to stimulate the economy on things with high multipliers and spend as little as you can on things with lower multipliers.

And what we learn from economic data is that the biggest bang for your buck is direct government purchases of services and transfers to people who are most likely to immediately go out and spend the money. And the reason is that if you give a dollar to higher income person, what they're likely to do with it is maybe engage in some additional spending, but a lot of that dollar goes directly into savings or into paying down debt, which economically is the same as savings. Right? If you're trying to get people to circulate that money in their local economies by buying goods and services, you want to give the money to people who live paycheck to paycheck or have experienced unemployment or for some other reason are more likely to go out and spend every cent of that dollar. And that means lower income people and people who have lost their jobs.

And so, just like spending, you want to spend in the highest value way, for taxing, you want to raise money in the lowest cost way. So again, you want to focus your taxes on people who have a lot of money in the bank, are really able to ride out this crisis, and are not likely to spend a lot of their additional dollars. That means the wealthy high-income folks, people who have not experienced disruptions in employment.

And, in fact, if you think about those ideas together, if you pair progressive taxes, so taxes that mostly fall on higher income folks, with spending that mostly benefits lower income folks, you're going to get a big net effect from that, even though, ideally, again, you would want to just borrow the money, but at any given level of borrowing, even if there is state and local fiscal relief, states should be trying to bolster their economies and provide help for their citizens by increasing progressive taxes and spending that money on core government services and critical supports for low income people. It will be good for the state economy.

PAUL CONSTANT - HOST, PITCHFORK ECONOMICS: [01:03:48] You want in the paper that if state and local governments follow the same sort of austerity path that they did during the smaller recession in 2008, they could possibly turn this crisis into a "long grinding depression, nationwide." I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about that worst case scenario for a minute. How long are we talking and how much worse could it get?

KITTY RICHARDS: [01:04:12] I think that you can look to the Great Recession for a guide there. Partly, there's a lot of uncertainty about what the big picture is going to look like even two weeks from now or a month from now, let alone a year from now. Now a lot of it really

depends on the response to the virus. Though, I would point out that a lot of states aren't doing what they need to be doing in order to contain the virus, which is the most important thing that they can do for their economic recovery. I mean, it could get really, really bad and it's especially going to be catastrophic if there isn't state fiscal relief from the federal government. And if the federal government doesn't step in, just generally with the kinds of income supports that states are just not able to provide. So the fact that Congress has allowed the supplemental \$600 unemployment insurance payments to lapse is already wreaking havoc in local economies, and that is only going to become worse if Congress does not renew those payments. But also, I think that state policy makers really need to grapple with the ways in which this recession is so severe, and the cuts that they're talking about are so stark in comparison to the needs because needs have actually increased because of the pandemic that they could be really hobbling their economies for years to come.

Summary

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:05:41] We've just heard clips today starting with the Ezra Klein Show discussing how the pandemic has given a wider swath of people a glimpse at what it's like to live without childcare resources. Pitchfork Economics also looked at ways to reorganize childcare. The Majority Report discussed basic income for children. Deconstructed spoke with James Galbraith about taking inspiration from the New Deal to build our new economy. We heard our latest episode of Check your Blind Spot and our activism for today. Pitchfork Economics looked at ideas to put economic emergency recovery on autopilot. So, all of that was heard by everyone, but members also heard three bonus clips, including Democracy Now speaking with Reverend William Barber about food insecurity and the sickness of the GOP looking to take away from people in a time of crisis. The Takeaway discussed homelessness amid the pandemic, and Pitchfork Economics explained once again why the government's budget is nothing like a household budget and why a time of crisis is exactly the time to spend. For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and they are part of the transcript for today's show, so you can still find them if you make the effort. If you would like to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, you can sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support or make a request for a financial hardship membership because we don't let a lack of funds be a barrier to hearing more information so every request is granted, no questions asked. And now we'll hear from you.

Be aware and prepared but not panicked - Erin from Philly

VOICEMAILER: ERIN FROM PHILLY: [01:07:22] Hi, Jay!, this is Erin from Philadelphia, whereas you may have recently only heard bad things happen. First. I want to respond to that claim by saying, okay, it's true, but only if you're Santa Claus or a player for the Dallas Cowboys. More importantly, for the purposes of this podcast, I am responding to episode 1375. As someone who is a poll worker for November 3rd needless to say, it's a little disconcerting to hear about all of these plans that are going on by various right wing armed groups to try and disrupt polling places. In fact, while the woman wasn't armed, the whole "bad things happen in Philadelphia" meme started because somebody showed up at a, not a polling site, but an election commissioner's office demanding to be allowed to observe what was going on there

when she had no credentials whatsoever and also no legal right to just sit around in a city office and watch the people do their work, which is all that was going on in that location. So like I said, obviously a little disconcerting to think about what might happen, hopefully since my precinct isn't right on the edge of the city like that office was nobody's going to bother to drive all the way in and show up to give us trouble, but we are prepared in case things get a little weird.

The thing I wanted to talk about, though, for all the listeners was to make sure that you keep the line between awared and prepared and panic—don't cross over that line. Trump is a want to be strong man and one of the most important things for a strong man, whether classically a Mussolini or a Stalin, or more recently an Orbán or a Putin, or like Trump wishes, he was, they require an air of invincibility and inevitability. And so, don't give them that. Don't concede that they are invincible or inevitable.

And what I mean by that is take the stories you heard about militia members wanting to cause trouble before, during, and after election day, make plans to do something about that, to make it known that their voices aren't legitimate, whether that's some sort of street protest, whether it's rallying your neighbors, whether it ends up being some sort of a strike situation or even something as extreme as what's going on in Belarus right now, but know that we have the power still to fight back. It's when you cross that line into saying, well, it doesn't matter what I do because they're just going to steal the election. That's when you've conceded to the inevitability and the invincibility, and you don't want to get yourself or your friends in that mindset. Where there is life there is hope. And hope isn't blind optimism, it's saying, look, it ain't over till it's over. And you're going to fight all the way.

So listen to those activism segments, the more than just voting segments that Amanda has been presenting and just have a plan for before, during, and after election day yourself, because there are more of us than there are of them, and that matters as long as we show up in our numbers to make it matter.

That's my little rallying cry for today, my call to action. Thanks for everything you do, Jay!, and stay awesome.

American power - Aaron from New Zealand

VOICEDMAILER: AARON FROM NEW ZEALAND: [01:11:29] Hi from New Zealand, this is Aaron.

My late Grandmother was a member of the US Communist Party back before F.D.R. used socialism to save the USA from collapse .

Nothing you say in your podcast about the American abuse of power would have been news to her.

By the way, the US Communist Party branch was mostly made of kind, caring, educated, professional people, and after helping greatly to win the war, they got wrapped around the axel with Russian paranoia from a feckless media and political gangsters.

The hand book for US Power is certainly about the use of unprofessional incompetence. Today we even have our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, being hailed as a political super hero in the US for just doing the job of her office competently.

When Trump put his hat in the 2016 presidential ring, from here it looked like his old friends the Clinton's got him to switch to red so he could tarnish the GOP with gross incompetence... The DNC could then sweep up all the dislodged corporate money... Looks like that kinda worked except they forgot... everything Donald touches turns to shit.

All the Best.

Are there episodes explaining socialism? - Alfredo from Frankfort, KY

VOICEMAILER: ALFREDO FROM FRANKFORT, KY: [01:12:34] Thank you so much for having my call. My name is Alfredo. I'm calling all the way from Frankfurt, Kentucky. First, I want to thank you for your show. I think the format is really good and I've profited a lot from your show.

My question was brief. So, I'm becoming more and more a socialist. I'm convinced of the goodness of it and the necessity that we have of this system to come back. So many of the ills that we have here in America -- and ,by the way, I'm not born in America. I'm Panamanian, but I've been living in America for over six years. My question is simple. A lot of people, when they hear socialism, they immediately think about the worst case scenarios like Venezuela; others think of North Korea, these countries.

I wanted to know if you had a show dedicated to this type of arguments. I think that they are straw men. if you have anything substantive, something that I can give to friends and family members that immediately jump to these sort of. crazy arguments, I would appreciate it.

I think those countries are underdeveloped. I think they're very young democracies, if you will. I also don't think that it's as bad as people make it to be. And then we also have to take into consideration that they have blockades and punishments, international punishments that have crippled those nations. I'm talking about Venezuela, for example.

So, if you can go into that, provide more context, historical tidbits and whatnot, I would really appreciate it. So, thank you so much for taking my call and see you next time. Bye-bye.

Final comments on the completely separate issues of political and economic systems

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:14:02] Thanks for listening everyone. Thanks to Deon Clark and Aaron Clayton for their research work on the show. Thanks to the monosyllabic, transcriptionist trio, Ben, Dan and Ken for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together, things to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments.

And thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line or wrote their messages to be played as. Voicemails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at (202) 999-3991. Or write me a message to jay@bestivalleft.com. So just quick response to, uh, Alfredo.

I don't know that I have exactly the episode that you're requesting, but I think it's a good idea. And I may do one soon. To get you started though. I would go with episode 1243, the story, yeah. Of socialism in America that helps explain why Americans talk about socialism. The way we do then 1248 is about Venezuela and America's addiction to.

Fiddling in other people's business, 1293 is debating democratic socialism and how to get there. So that gives a different perspective on something that we could refer to as socialism and what people are more. Yeah, really clamoring for right now there's 1323 power to the people, the future of public ownership and local control.

So again, more talk positively about what we want, frankly. I think a good strategy for talking about the concept of socialism, especially when you're talking with someone who reflectively, derails the conversation. To talk about Venezuela is to talk about what you want rather than defending. No, no, no.

You're misunderstanding. And don't forget that Venezuela is under sanctions from the United States because we use our imperialist power to try to crush anyone with a system that we don't agree, like rather than get in that slog. Talk about what we do want. So again, 1323 is a good one for that. And a 1343, similarly it's titled bread and roses.

Socialism is freedom and firefighters. So again, reframing the ideas behind socialism, especially how we talk about it today and what people really want and helping people understand pretty much all the good parts of America. Stems from some form of socialism or another, but as I said, it's a good idea to talk more specifically about the propaganda aspect of it.

Not just how we talk about socialism and why, but, but really exploring back cold war propaganda. And in particular, I would love to dive deeper into this. I'll just do like a quick overview. Comment on it, which is that the economic system when talking well, when talking about socialism or capitalism, what we have done is we have fused inextricably economic systems and political systems.

So in America we believe that democracy and capitalism are fused and. One cannot exist without the other, um, most, and then they do the same for socialism and say that the economic system of socialism is fused with an authoritarian power structure, a political structure that is authoritarian. And I hate to be the bearer of.

Odd news, but that's just not the case. There's just no reason to think of those things as inextricably connected, because you can have democratic socialism, which is economic policies that could be referred to as socialist, but which are administered democratically. The political system is democratic.

The economic system is socialist or democratic socialism. You can also, obviously we've seen examples from history. You can also of course have authoritarian socialism. So it's not that that can't exist. And that it's the myth that, that ever happens. It's not, of course you can,

you can have a Chinese communist party that is authoritarian and their economic system, which is.

Communists, but that doesn't mean that those two things have to go together. They do in that case, but they don't have to. And with democracy and capitalism, you can have capitalism without democracy. And again, With a little touch of irony. China is also the example for that because they have transitioned massively from a purely communistic economic system into a largely capitalistic economic system.

But during that economic shift, There has been essentially no political shift. So if you need any proof that the economic system and the political system are not inextricably linked, China's economic shift happening at the same time as there's been and no shifting our politics and the structure of their power being administered in an authoritarian.

Top down sort of way. I mean, nothing should be clearer than that. Those things are not inextricably connected. And so anyone who tries to tell you that they are, which is basically everyone in America who has been brainwashed into thinking it, you should know. Right off the bat that they are completely wrong.

So just as China was able to transition from a communist economy to a capitalist one without changing their politics, it is equally true that we could shift away from a purely capitalist economy without shifting away from democracy, you don't then need authoritarianism to administer socialism. You just don't, which is why unsurprisingly.

They call it democratic socialism. That's not a misnomer to try to trick you or anything. That's, that's really what people want. They want vastly different economic systems, but for those systems to be controlled democratically because authoritarian political systems are terrible. So Alfredo, I hope those episodes I gave you help or at least get you on the right the path.

And maybe we'll be continuing this conversation in the coming months as always keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991. Or by emailing me to jay@bestoflyft.com. That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift membership@bestofleft.com slash support as that is absolutely how the program survives.

Of course, everyone can support the show just by telling everyone you know about it and leaving us glowing reviews on Apple podcasts and Facebook to help others find the show. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device.

You're using the lesson. So coming to you from far outside, the conventional wisdom of Washington DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the best of left podcast coming to you twice weekly. Thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from best of the left.com.