

# An Invigorated Housing Movement: Illegal foreclosures, evictions spark anger and energy

By Robbie Clark

The Occupy protests that began last fall inspired a new politically active generation. Long time organizers and activists have been invigorated and together these groups have joined together around fights for housing and economic justice. This surge of political activism could not have come at a more crucial time for the housing movement in this country. Now more than ever, it is critical that the basic human right to be housed is affirmed.

At this current moment, every type of housing in this nation is under attack. Big landlords, big banks, the state and federal government are all working on behalf of the 1% and Blacks, Latinos and women are their main targets.

Currently more than 15% of people throughout the nation are living below the poverty line, with Black and Latino communities and families headed by single women, all exceeding the national average.

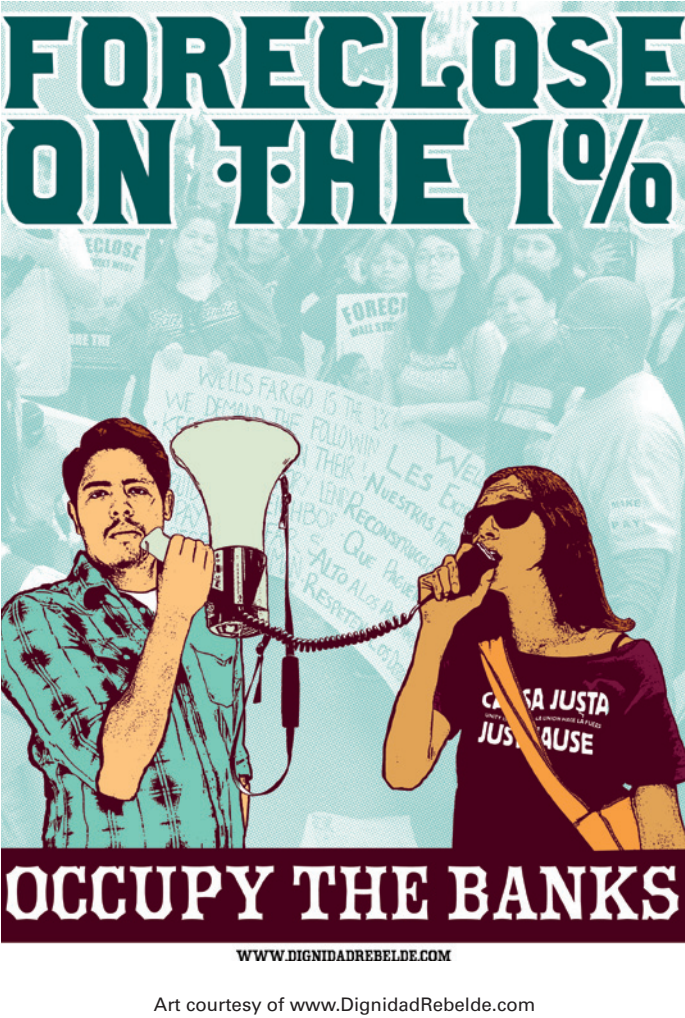
Black and Latino poverty rates are almost three times higher than for whites and overall these figures are the highest the poverty rate has been since the early nineties. Despite this fact, the Obama administration’s 2013 budget proposes almost \$920 million dollars in cuts to public housing including project-based voucher programs (Section 8) and community development block grants.

The federal level attack doesn’t stop there. New legislation called the Affordable Housing and Self Sufficiency Improvement Act (AHSSIA), is being proposed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This law will raise the minimum rent in federally subsidized housing during one of the worst housing crisis the country has ever seen. An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities states that more than three

fourths of the people potentially negatively impacted by this legislation will be people of color.

**FANNIE MAE AND FREDDIE MAC**  
The federal government controls almost two thirds of the residential properties that have been foreclosed on this year, through Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Together these two institutions own approximately 70% of all mortgages nationally that are in some stage of the foreclosure process. As a result of the foreclosure crisis, numerous Black and Latino families have lost the only asset they had – their

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# African Americans and Latinos Unite to Repeal Alabama’s Anti-Immigrant Law

By Ingrid Chapman, Organizer, Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice and Alia Trindle, Catalyst Project



Children in Alabama protest HB56.  
Photo: Ingrid Chapman, Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice

Throughout Alabama, people are coming together - across differences in race, nationality, immigration status, gender, and political party affiliation — to fight for the repeal of Alabama’s new law HB56, the most extreme anti-immigrant law in the country, a law that treats immigrants worse than animals and gives carte blanche to anyone with a bone to pick.

Crucial to the success of the movement to repeal HB56 has been the inspiring outpouring of support and solidarity from African American communities, and the unity that’s being actively built between Latino immigrants and African Americans on the statewide level. With memories of the civil rights struggle still very present, many veterans of the civil rights

**HB56 Erodes Civil and Human Rights**

Containing a host of 30 discriminatory provisions, this new Jim Crow law makes Alabama unlivable for undocumented immigrants. Because the law is so extensive and extreme, Alabama citizens haven taken on the role of immigration enforcers, interpreting the law as they see fit, and checking immigration status at every intersection of peoples’ lives: public schools, children’s sports teams, electricity and water companies, hospitals, pharmacies, super stores like Walmart, trailer parks, apartment buildings, and by police at every traffic stop, who are required to check the immigration status of people they stop and reasonably suspect to be in the country unlawfully.

This has had the predictable affect of widespread racial profiling of anyone who is brown and/or has an accent. People are afraid to leave their homes, afraid to drive to work, to school, to the grocery store. Further, the law stipulates that all new contracts between an undocumented immigrant and another person are unenforceable in state court. Consequently, in several counties the public utility companies have announced that they will not provide water, gas, or sewage service to people who can not prove their status.\*

Trailer park managers are asking residents to prove their status and then evicting everyone, claiming their leases are now null and void.

Under HB56, K-12 school officials are required to question students about their immigration status and that of their parents — who are now afraid to send their kids to school. At least 2500 children have been taken out of school by their parents. Thousands of other students were absent in the first few weeks after the law passed. Schools lost millions of dollars in federal funding, and thus lost jobs, due to the un-enrollment of thousands. Racism and bullying have increased in schools. This part of the law was temporally enjoined two weeks after it went into effect. However much damage was done.

Other provisions of the law have been temporarily blocked by the courts. These include provisions that prohibit residents from transporting or harboring undocumented immigrants; make it a traffic violation for motorists who stop in the roadway to hire a day laborer; prohibit universities from enrolling certain immigrants – including asylees, refugees or those granted temporary protected status; make it a misdemeanor for failing to complete or carry an alien

registration card; prohibit employers from taking state tax deductions for wages paid to undocumented workers; and allow employers to be sued for discrimination by people with U.S. citizen or legal immigration status when they are fired or not hired by an employer with undocumented employees

Thousands and thousands of people have left the state. Thousands of others living in fear and only leave their homes for work, school and the absolute necessities. At the same time thousands of others are stepping up, organizing, fighting back and building an incredible cross-cultural, multiracial movement in Alabama.

Alabama has taken an economic hit since the law was put in place, with a loss of skilled workers, business closures, loss of jobs and state tax revenues. Farmers, whose tomatoes rotted in the field because all their workers fled the state, have confronted the Governor with buckets asking if he would help pick the crops. A recent survey showed that the majority of Alabamians are now against the law.

\*Stories from the ACIJ hotline

—Ingrid Chapman, Alia Trindle ■





**WE ARE CAUSA JUSTA :: JUST CAUSE**

Causa Justa :: Just Cause is a multi-racial, grassroots organization building community leadership to achieve justice for working class San Francisco and Oakland residents. In 2010, CJJC emerged from the strategic collaboration of two powerful organizations: St. Peter’s Housing Committee and Just Cause Oakland. These two organizations represent more than 30 years of combined experience working toward housing and racial justice for African-Americans and Latinos. With offices in San Francisco’s Mission neighborhood, and East and West Oakland, we are a force for justice and unity among Black and Latino communities.

Our work includes protecting tenant’s rights and housing security through our tenant’s rights clinics; helping low income homeowners fight foreclosure and keep their homes; engaging community members in voter education and mobilization to affect ballot initiatives that impact their lives; as well as supporting community members to advocate for policy changes through grassroots campaigns. CJJC strives to lift up the leadership and voices of community residents to build power and make change for our neighborhoods and cities.

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Oakland, CA 94608

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510-763-5877

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2301 Mission Street  
Suite 201  
San Francisco, CA 94110

San Francisco Telephone:  
(415) 487-9203

Check out the Causa Justa :: Just Cause website or join the email list for regular updates at - [www.cjjc.org](http://www.cjjc.org) You can also email us at: [info@cjjc.org](mailto:info@cjjc.org)

 Follow us on Twitter at [causajusta1](https://twitter.com/causajusta1)

 'Like' us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/causajusta](https://www.facebook.com/causajusta)

## JUST CAUSES THE NEWSPAPER

“Just Causes” is the community newspaper of Causa Justa :: Just Cause. We have been printing two issues per year since 2007 covering stories and events relevant to our members and community supporters. We would like to hear your thoughts and opinions about the paper. If you are interested in seeing something covered, submitting content for the paper, purchasing an ad, giving us feedback or anything else, contact us at the information below.

The views represented in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the advertisers.

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# TAKE BACK OUR RIGHT TO HOUSING

## 10 YEARS OF EVICTION PROTECTION IN OAKLAND

By Robbie Clark

It has been 10 years since the Just Cause Eviction ordinance, Measure EE, was passed in Oakland. Did you know that since then, there hasn’t been any legislation to protect tenants’ rights passed in the City of Oakland.

Measure EE was approved by Oakland voters in 2002 to protect tenants from being evicted without cause. It applies to buildings built up to 1980.

When it was approved, tons of people were flooding into the Bay Area for jobs with big internet companies during a time period that came to be known as the “dot com boom.”

The dot com boom in tandem with the zenith of real estate pricing in the Bay Area from the mid-late 1990s created lucrative opportunities for landlords. With housing costs so high, landlords were eager to raise rents on long-time tenants, especially in the flatlands of East and West Oakland. Renters in Oakland were being priced out, forced to move outside of Oakland when landlords evicted them, which is why activists, organizations and tenants across the City united in the fight to pass Measure EE.

Now, let’s fast forward to 2012. Currently, about a quarter of Oakland’s residential housing stock is not covered by Measure EE! We want to change that. Ten years is too long, it time to expand tenant protection in the town and we want you to join our fight.

Contact Oakland Housing Organizer, Princess Beverly Williams at [Beverly@cjjc.org](mailto:Beverly@cjjc.org) or at (510)763-5877 x312 ■



Carlos Parkins and Annie Mora stand up for housing rights at rally in Oakland. Photo: CJJC archives

## H IS FOR HOUSING, NOT HARASSMENT: SAN FRANCISCO TENANTS NEED PROTECTIONS

By Maria Zamundio

While tenants in San Francisco have protection against unjust or unlawful eviction, there is currently nothing to protect these same tenants from being harassed by property owners, managers, master-tenants, bank representatives, or real estate agents. Situations where tenants are being harassed do not only create unsafe conditions for families, but are very uncomfortable and can result in tenants leaving their homes, thus causing displacement.

In Causa Justa :: Just Cause’s tenant clinic we see different examples of this type of harassment.

They include everything from landlords who blast their music at all hours, landlords who illegally move tenants out of their homes, throw out or destroy tenant belongings, and menace them, and real estate agents who harass tenants by calling them multiple times a day and at all hours.

Even tenants who have lived for long periods in their units and have relatively cheap rent, can become so distressed by the harassment that they feel like they have to leave. When this happens they leave their affordable home and familiar neighborhood and face many challenges in finding alternative housing they can afford. This type of housing injustice happens in part because of a weakness in the way that the San Francisco Rent Ordinance is being enforced. The ordinance clearly states that tenants cannot be harassed, however the enforcing mechanisms for this particular protection has been weakened by landlord/property owner lobbying efforts in San Francisco.

In 2008 when Proposition M passed, the new legislation stated that in the event a landlord tried to coerce a tenant into leaving and/or intimidated, harassed, or threatened him or her, that tenant could ask for a rent reduction from the San Francisco Rent Board.

In 2011 however, the Small Property Owners of San Francisco Institute, the San Francisco Apartment Association and other groups that represent the interest of landlord and property owners in San Francisco sued the city of San Francisco in court and were able to overturn this voter-approved proposition. The legal decision from that case (Larson vs. CCSF) significantly weakened the protection that Proposition M created leading to the situation we see today.

Harassing a tenant to the point where they leave has become one of the most effective and economical ways for landlords to evict tenants in San Francisco.

We believe that this has to stop immediately and plan on attacking this issue from several angles. First, we want to educate policy makers like the Board of Supervisors so that they understand why the weakening of a voter-approved measure cannot be allowed. We plan on asking them to take action to pass laws that will close loopholes in Prop M. Secondly, we are in talks with the Sheriff to convince him to stop evicting tenants until more is done to ensure that landlords are not using that department to enforce their illegal and harassing actions. Evictions do not serve and protect our community.

This will be a big fight because the landlords are wealthy and have a great deal of political power and influence. Despite the challenges this is not a fight we can ignore. We all have the right to housing in which we feel safe and comfortable and we cannot allow the one more tenant to be pushed out of their home. ■

## TENANT STANDS UP TO LANDLORD’S HARASSMENT AND WINS

By Patricia Zamora

Robert Frison first signed up to be a member of Causa Justa :: Just Cause after coming to the Oakland tenant rights clinic for help with his housing problem in late 2010. He had been experiencing harassment issues from the managers in his building operated by Lake Park Apartments. The managers left harassing notes on his car and front door, entered his apartment illegally, sent illegal rent increase notices, used their family member to intimidate Frison, pit his neighbors against him, returned his mail and packages, and even started a physical altercation with him.

Frison, who has been living in his rent-controlled apartment since 1997, said he believes that these tactics were being used against him as a means to push him out of his home of almost 15 years so that management could raise the rent of his apartment when new tenants moved in.

Frison was not prepared to allow this harassment push him out and he decided to fight back. He started by coming to Causa Justa :: Just Cause and learning about his rights. He wrote letters to the landlord demanding the harassment stop. He got other CJJC members to support him in passing our fliers in his neighborhood to let his neighbors know what he was going through. He shared the different ways in which his building managers were mistreating him and got the support of his neighbors.

### This is not a victory just for me but for all tenants. Everyone needs to know that we do have rights and we need to stand up for them. I promise that if you stand up for yourself, that CJJC and I will support you,”

— Robert Frison

Things got worse before they got better. Because of Frison’s strong will and effective organizing, one of his manager’s Bill Alvarez, actually tried to sue him in small claims court for harassing him and demanded \$7,500 in damages from Frison! With preparation and truth on

his side, Frison convinced the judge to dismiss Alvarez’s far-fetched claims outright. Since this finding in court the situation has improved significantly and Frison is enjoying more peace in his housing situation.

“This is not a victory just for me but for all tenants. Everyone needs to know that we do have rights and we need to stand up for them. I promise that if you stand up for yourself, that CJJC and I will support you,” said Frison.

Harassment cases can be very stressful and difficult but they can be won. Unfortunately, Frison’s case is not unique as many Oakland residents deal with similar conditions on a daily basis. If you or someone you know is dealing with a tenant issue join Causa Justa :: Just Cause today. Get support, give support and fight back. You are not alone. ■



# Help Me Keep My Home of 40 Years

February 21<sup>st</sup> 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great regret and a burdened heart that I write this letter asking for your support to keep my home. I am Mrs. Annie B. Attaway, and I have lived at 2657 67<sup>th</sup> Ave in Oakland for the last 40 years. On January 25, 2012, my home was purchased for \$121,000 by Robert Kramer of LM Fund LP, from Bank of America who was servicing the loan on behalf of Fannie Mae.

My once exuberant and joyous demeanor has turned to nervousness, agitation, and fear. I have begun to have anxiety attacks and fainting spells. The stress of having my home threatened is indescribable.

Ironically my home was paid in full. In 2008 when Countrywide contacted me by phone about a refinance I accepted the loan because I needed to make some repairs on the house. When I agreed to the loan they did not explain to me that they were going to falsify my income so that I could qualify. Nor did anyone say that in 4-5 years my loan payments would increase so much that I would be forced out of my home. It didn't take long before I fell behind in the payments.

My nephew, Wayne Rowland, stepped in to help me in 2009. He agreed to be an advocate on my behalf so that Bank of America could stop calling and harassing me. It was he who discovered that I had been victimized by predatory lending practices.

Wayne prepared and submitted a loan modification application in the hope that I could get a new, more affordable loan. I have requested a loan modifications six times. Each time the Bank has either made me an offer that was less my current monthly mortgage but still way higher than my income or turned me down, claiming that they didn't receive all of the paperwork. Wayne also wrote letters, talked to the Bank of America CEO and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors requesting that they cancel the sale on my house.

Ironically my home was paid in full. In 2008 when Countrywide contacted me by phone about a refinance I accepted the loan because I needed to make some repairs on the house. When I agreed to the loan they did not explain to me that they were going to falsify my income so that I could qualify.

In Waynes' letters addressed to Bank representatives he addresses the fraud I have suffered. Bank of America representatives claim that they received a signed 1003 application form which disclosed my employment and income information from my tax advisor Mr. Nicolas Munoz from Professional Tax Services. On this form the Bank claims that I was a "party planner" and owner of a business called "Puttin' On the Ritz", all of which is patently false. The fact is that I have never given anyone permission to use my signature and I know now that I was a victim of predatory lending.

Although Wayne provided the Bank with information and proof to back up my story, Bank of America never sent anyone to further investigate the situation or even contacted him back regarding my case.

My beloved granddaughter, Aqueila, has also been a great support. She has twice organized auction actions to try and prevent the sale of our home, titled "Actions on Behalf of the Attaways". She is still working hard with Causa Justa: Just Cause to help us keep our home.

However Bank of America and Fannie Mae have shown no regard for our situation, and are still fraudulently trying to take our home.

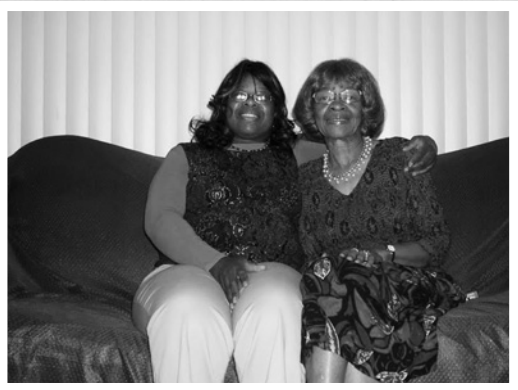
Sadly on Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> 2012, despite all of our efforts to stop the sale, an investor purchased the property. Since this happened the agents of LM Fund LP have put notices on my door and put a lot of pressure on me to vacate my home.

I AM HEARTBROKEN BUT NOT DEFEATED. I am joining hundreds of thousands of people like me who are saying "no one leaves" and I am reaching out for support to help keep my home.

Please contact Aqueila by calling Nell from Causa Just :: Just Cause, at (510) 763-5877 extension 401, if you want to assist with our effort.

Thank you very much for your time.

Mrs Annie B. Attaway



Grandmother Annie B Attaway next to her daughter Carmelita Thurman. Photo: Courtesy Attaway family

# Housing Rights & Resources

## OAKLAND

Causa Justa: Just Cause  
West Oakland  
3268 San Pablo Ave (@ 35th St.)  
(510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

East Oakland  
9124 International Blvd (@ 92nd Avenue)  
(510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

Oakland Residential Rent Arbitration Board  
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza  
(510) 238-3721

Rene C. Davidson Courthouse  
1225 Fallon St.  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 891-6003

Superior Court of Alameda County Self-Help Center  
(510) 891-6003

Legal Advice Line  
(510) 250-5270

Centro Legal de la Raza  
(www.centrolegal.org)  
(510) 437-1554

ECHO  
(www.echofairhousing.org)  
landowner/tenant counseling & mediation  
(510) 494-0496

Center for Independent Living  
(www.cilberkeley.org)  
(510) 763-9999

Dept Fair Employment and Housing  
(www.dfeh.ca.gov)  
(800) 884-1684

Tenants Together  
Foreclosure Hotline  
(888) 495-8020

## OAKLAND CODES & COMPLIANCE

Housing Inspectors  
(510) 238-3381

Oakland Fire Prevention Bureau  
(510) 238-4049

Alameda County Sheriff's Dept  
(510) 272-6910

Sheriff's Eviction Line  
(510) 272-6890

County Assessor's Office  
(to find out who owns a property)  
(510) 272-3782

Alameda County Vector Control  
(rodents & pests)  
(510) 567-6800

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program  
(510) 567-8263

PG&E Foreclosure Hotline  
(800) 850-9587

## RENT & DEPOSIT ASSISTANCE

For Rent Assistance Call 2-1-1

Catholic Charities at  
(510) 768-3100

## HOUSING ADVOCATES

East Bay Community Law Center  
(www.ebclc.org)  
(510) 548-4040

Eviction Defense Center  
(for help with unlawful detainers/summons, evictions)  
(510) 452-4541

Bay Area Legal Aid  
(www.baylegal.org)  
(510) 663-4744

## SAN FRANCISCO

Causa Justa :: Just Cause  
2301 Mission St., Suite 201  
(415) 487-9203  
Spanish-speaking counselors.

SF Rent Board  
25 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 252-4602  
Implementation and Reinforcement of the SF Rent Ordinance

Eviction Defense Collaborative  
995 Market Street, Suite 1200  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 947-0797  
Help with Unlawful Detainers and other eviction lawsuits

RADCO (a program of EDC)  
995 Market Street, Suite 1200  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 947-0867 ext. 4  
Rental Assistance for families and single adults

Catholic Charities  
180 Howard St., #100  
(415) 972-1301  
Rental Assistance for single adults

Community Boards  
3130 24th Street  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 920-3820  
Issues between tenants or neighbors

San Francisco Housing Authority  
440 Turk Street  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 554-1200  
Public Housing and Section 8

Human Rights Commission  
25 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 252-2500  
Discrimination & Harassment cases

## OCCUPY THE NEIGHBORHOOD: HOW COUNTIES CAN USE LAND BANKS AND EMINENT DOMAIN

By Ellen Brown, Truthout | News Analysis

An electronic database called MERS (Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems) has created defects in the chain of title to over half the homes in America. Counties have been cheated out of millions of dollars in recording fees, and their title records are in hopeless disarray. Meanwhile, foreclosed and abandoned homes are blighting neighborhoods. Straightening out the records and restoring the homes to occupancy is clearly in the public interest,

and the burden is on local government to do it. But how?

The legal tide is turning against MERS and the banks, giving rise to some interesting possibilities for relief at the county level. Local governments have the power of eminent domain: they can seize real or personal property if (a) they can show that doing so is in the public interest, and (b) the owner is compensated at fair market value.

The public interest part is easy to show. In a 20-page booklet titled "Revitalizing Foreclosed Properties with Land Banks," the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) observes:

*The volume of foreclosures has become a significant problem, not only to local economies, but also to the aesthetics of neighborhoods and property values therein. At the same time, middle- to low-income*



Photo: CJC Archives

*families continue to be priced out of the housing market while suitable housing units remain vacant.*

The booklet goes on to describe an alternative being pursued by some communities:

*To ameliorate the negative effects of foreclosures, some communities are creating public entities - known as land banks - to return these properties to productive reuse*

*while simultaneously addressing the need for affordable housing.*

To read the full article check out – "Occupy the Neighborhood: How Counties Can Use Land Banks and Eminent Domain" by Ellen Brown at Truthout | News Analysis, Saturday 14 January 2012. Here's the link: <http://www.truth-out.org/occupy-neighborhood/1326472096> ■

## GET INVOLVED!

## JOIN OUR STRUGGLE FOR HOUSING AND IMMIGRANT JUSTICE! Become a CJC Volunteer

With just a few hours a week or month, you can help us wage effective campaigns and build a movement. Volunteer opportunities include: administrative support, campaign research, mailings, outreach in the neighborhoods, media tracking, grassroots fundraising, Spanish translation and interpretation (native Spanish speakers especially welcomed), childcare, event planning, giving rides, helping with our tenant rights and foreclosure prevention clinics and much, much more. We offer a dynamic orientation, ongoing support and training and even political development opportunities like study groups, for our volunteers. Come join the team! Contact Molly at (510) 763-5877 ext 302 or email [molly@cjc.org](mailto:molly@cjc.org)



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE 99 PERCENT

# Mass Sit-In Set for April 24

Wells Fargo is scheduled to hold its annual shareholder meeting on Tuesday April 24th but we have decided to make that difficult for them.

Community organizations, unions, groups from Occupy San Francisco and Occupy Oakland, and everyday community members who are fed up with Wells Fargo, will hold a protest on April 24th and hundreds of people are expected to sit in, refusing to let the meeting happen.

This year things are shaping up to look different. Protest organizers will shut down down the meeting and hold their own meeting outside. Instead of a shareholders’ meeting, there will be a stakeholders’ meeting. All those who are being impacted by Wells Fargo’s practices will be invited to attend, to speak out and to propose resolutions for the future of Wells Fargo.

The Occupy movement has helped to highlight the inequalities in society, and inspired thousands of people to action.

While different from the Civil Rights movement, one similarity the current wave of activism has to its predecessor, is that it has moved people to step up their commitment to change and to put their bodies on the line.

The mass sit-in at Wells Fargo will be a chance for everyone who is inspired by this new movement to get involved.

For more information: Robbie Clark: [robbie@cjjc.org](mailto:robbie@cjjc.org), 510 763 5877 x 404 ■

Wells Fargo’s foreclosures have kicked thousands from their homes. The bank invests in private prisons and detention centers to support its profits. And after it amasses profits from these corrupt practices, Wells finds every way it can to avoid paying taxes so that it can pay its executives and shareholders top dollar.

The annual shareholder meeting is a pep rally for the 1% who own stock in Wells Fargo, to show off the profits being made and to elect the next Board of Directors for the institution.

# OCCUPY & THE 99 PERCENT

By Alma Blackwell interviewed by Adam Gold



November 2, 2011 General Strike in Oakland. Photo: R.M. Arrieta

Over the past six months, a new wave of activism has washed across the United States and the world, mobilizing thousands of people to camp out in city squares, protest financial institutions and disrupt meetings and conferences of the rich and powerful. The Occupy movement, as it is called, started with the Occupation of Zucotti Park in New York City and expanded to hundreds of cities in just weeks. Occupy claims to be lifting up the 99% of people who have suffered at the hands of the 1% - the richest one percent of people in the world.

Now, as the movement prepares to launch huge actions in May of this year, we are reflecting on how much this movement has affected and inspired people in the neighborhoods, everyday workers, poor folks and people of color. Is this a movement with the potential to move the millions of people in this country who need systemic change? In this interview, CJJC staff member Adam Gold talks with Alma Blackwell, a leader at CJJC, who has been a part of Occupy Oakland and San Francisco actions and who has been contributing to our local housing campaign work in Oakland for the past three years.

**HOW DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT AND WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSIONS?**  
I first heard about the Occupy Movement here at CJJC. I know

that the movement began with Occupy Wall Street in New York and that it was mobilizing people who were fighting back against the system. It began to spread to other cities and then the movement was here in the Bay Area, first San Francisco then Oakland.

My first impressions were how amazingly the masses of people were coming together in the U.S. (and around the world) to fight against the injustices that have been plaguing our communities for so long. Also, that this is a people’s movement: working class people, people of color, poor people, oppressed people.

**WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY SAY ABOUT OCCUPY?**  
Folks are feeling motivated and inspired by this movement. It’s vibrant, energetic, and creative. This movement could be bigger than the Civil Rights Movement. It’s creating solidarity among grassroots organizations who are already doing amazing work in our community. We’re in an economic crisis, people are losing their jobs, their homes, vital services are being cut, services that benefit people of color in low-income communities. People should have a right to protest without having to worry about police brutality. We should continue to target the banks and hold them accountable for the foreclosure crisis and make the big corporations pay their fare share of taxes. We are the 99%.

**DOES THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT REALLY REPRESENT THE 99%? HOW COULD IT DO BETTER?**

We have seen representation of the 99% at the General Strike, Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011 in Oakland. Approximately 50,000 people participated, from all walks of life. I felt proud to be a part of the history-making event. We saw students, teachers, parents, educators, health care workers, union workers, working class people, people of color, members of clergy, organizers for racial, social, political, and economic justice. So yes, I believe the Occupy movement does really represent the 99%. I do believe that as the year progresses the movement will get better. There should be a more strategic analysis of what we want to accomplish and direct action plans that do not involve destroying and defacing

properties. I think there should be more occupation of properties, especially bank-owned properties.

**WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR THE MOVEMENT OF THE 99%? WHAT DO YOU THINK WE CAN ALL ACCOMPLISH TOGETHER THIS YEAR?**

I want to see the movement continue to grow stronger. This movement has created a united front for the masses of people who are and have been fighting against the evils of capitalism. We should continue to mobilize and protest against the banks and the big corporations who are profiting on the backs of the people. We know that the wealth of this country is in the hands of the 1% and this movement of the 99% is a potential to create the change this system needs. ■



Alma Blackwell at Oakland General Strike. Photo: Josh Warren-White

## GET INVOLVED!

# TENANT RIGHTS CLINIC IN SAN FRANCISCO & OAKLAND

Causa Justa :: Just Cause (CJJC) provides free tenant counseling and case management for low-income residents of San Francisco and Oakland through our Tenants’ Rights Clinic. We do not have attorneys on staff, but we can give you advice regarding your general rights as a tenant in San Francisco or Oakland. If you are having problems with repairs, rent increases, evictions, harassment or other problems with your landlord/property manager please call us to make an appointment.

**SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE**  
2301 Mission St, Suite 201, Tel: (415) 487-9203  
CJJC’s San Francisco clinic is the only tenant rights organization in San Francisco that has all Spanish-speaking counselors.

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday & Wednesday: 1 pm - 5:30 pm  
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9 am – 12 pm & 1-5:30 pm  
We are closed for lunch everyday from 12 – 1pm

**OAKLAND OFFICES**  
**WEST OAKLAND:**  
3268 San Pablo Ave (@ 33rd St.) Tel: (510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday & Wednesday: 1 pm – 5 pm  
Tuesday: 9 am – 12 pm & 1 pm – 5 pm  
We are closed for lunch everyday from 12 – 1pm

**EAST OAKLAND:**  
9124 International Blvd (@ 92nd Avenue)  
Tel: (510) TENANTS or (510) 836-2687

**OFFICE HOURS :**  
Thursday & Friday: 9 am – 12 pm & 1 pm – 5 pm  
We are closed for lunch everyday from 12-1pm

Services are available in both English and Spanish. We encourage people to call for an appointment so that you can avoid long waits and having to return for multiple visits.

## GET INVOLVED!

# BECOME A MEMBER OF CJJC!

Do you live in San Francisco or Oakland and want healthier and stronger neighborhoods?  
Do you believe that the only way we can get justice is if we come together and fight for it?  
Do you believe housing is a human right and that no one is “illegal”?

If you answered yes to any of the above, then it’s time to become a member of Causa Justa :: Just Cause!

To join, fill out a membership form at any CJJC office or on-line at [www.cjjc.org](http://www.cjjc.org), or call our offices to have one mailed to you. To contact us in San Francisco call (415) 487-9203, for our Oakland office call (510) 763-5877 or email us at [info@cjjc.org](mailto:info@cjjc.org)

Follow us on Twitter at [causajusta1](https://twitter.com/causajusta1) 'Like' us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/causajusta](https://www.facebook.com/causajusta)



# Immigrant Workers March For Dignity And Justice

By R.M. Arrieta



Former Pacific Steel workers at their March For Dignity in Berkeley. Photo: Brooke Anderson

More than 200 workers fired after an I-9 audit at Pacific Steel Casting plant in Berkeley, marched Feb. 20, to protest the “silent raids” they say are devastating to their families and livelihood. Organized by the Committee of Fired Workers From Pacific Steel Casting, their statement read: “We will march with our heads held high, undocumented and unashamed.”

In a federal workplace audit, the government checks the validity of Social Security numbers and demands the firing of any worker who is undocumented and cannot provide a valid number. Tens of thousands of audits, done through no-match letters, I-9 audits and the “E-Verify” program, have led to massive firings across the nation.

Many of the Pacific Steel workers had been at the company for years. Adrian Lopez worked at the plant for 7 years. The father of five said that he’s been working “here and there. It’s hard. We are accustomed to a work routine and then it’s snatched away. It’s sad ... we were working not

**“They talk about undocumented workers taking jobs but I’d like to know what would happen if for one day, all the undocumented laborers would stop working.”**

— Former Pacific Steel worker

robbing.” He added that they worked “hard and long.... between 8 to 12 hours a day. We were pushed.”

As each worker was fired they received payouts for whatever vacation they had accrued and two weeks pay. Even so, for Lopez, it was humiliating. He said that he along with several other workers were officially laid-off on a Tuesday, but had to come back for their final pay on Thursday. The company didn’t have the money ready for them on their last day. “The company sent us away and without even a ‘thank you,’” there was nothing.” After years of benefitting for a lower paid workforce Pacific Steel submitted to an I-9 audit. Tens of thousands of these audits have been conducted throughout the country.

For another former worker at Pacific Steel, the audit complicated his potential kidney transplant. Jesús Navarro had a matching donor and private insurance, which would pay for the procedure. He waited for years and had finally reached the top of the transplant list. As doctors and administrators at UC San Francisco Medical Center consulted him they learned of his immigration status and refused to do the surgery because there was no guarantee the drugs and after-treatment would be paid for. The after-care drug costs to prevent organ rejection are \$20,000 a year.

The kidney would be transplanted from his wife who is a match. Although Navarro now pays for the private insurance he once had through his job, the option

lasts only 18 months. Because of his release from his job of 14 years, he could end up on the state’s Medi-Cal program, which won’t pay for transplants for undocumented patients.

A story about his dilemma appeared in several news outlets and a several petitions went out by the Alameda County United in Defense of Immigrant Rights, (ACUDIR) and the Pacific Steel Worker Committee, and Change.org. More than 140,000 signatures were collected protesting Navarro’s treatment by UCSF. Not surprisingly, administrators retracted their decision and agreed to give Navarro his transplant. A joint statement went out issued by UCSF and Navarro basically saying it was all “just a misunderstanding.”

For Navarro, the I-9 audit and his job loss unraveled his life and could have even led to his death. Fortunately, for Navarro, he is going to get treatment he needs due to the overwhelming support that has poured in for him. However, as of this printing, he is still waiting. ■

# Are Unionized Shops Targets of Silent Raids?

**“...without the full picture and supporting documentation, it would seem... employers who are bearing the brunt of these audits are [those] ... involved in collective bargaining agreements with labor unions. That is bad for business, workers and the American people.”**

— Conchita Lozano-Batista, attorney, Weinberg, Roger and Rosenfeld

Meanwhile Jesús Navarro’s former co-workers maintain their fight. Since the start of the “silent raid” policy put in place by the Obama administration in 2009, ICE has reportedly carried out over 3,000 workplace raids, compared to about 500 in 2008. Civil rights activists note that companies employing unionized workers are most affected.

In September An I-9 Audit Freedom of Information Act filed by a law firm Weinberg, Roger & Rosenfeld in response to announcements by ICE last February and June to audit 2,000 employers. The request was on behalf of two local unions and one international union including the one that represents workers at Pacific Steel: the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International Union Local 164 B; along with the ACLU-Northern California and the Service Employees International Union United Service Workers West, and the SF Bay Guardian newspaper

The request stated in part: “... it appears that many of the targets of these workplace enforcement investigations by DHS are not the unscrupulous or bad apple employers. To the contrary, worksites that have been targeted include employers that are trying to do the right thing such as abiding by industry standards and complying with state and federal employment laws. In many cases, targeted employers have been parties to existing collective bargaining agreements with labor unions

where workers are paid a living wage and have further protected workplace rights. These audits have a detrimental impact to local businesses, the economy, and workers in the U.S.”

ACLU attorney Julia Harumi Mass said in a statement, “The public has a right to know about these ‘silent raids’ on American workplaces. Is the federal government trying to detect bad actors who hire undocumented workers to avoid labor law obligations, or are there other triggers that explain why several unionized workplaces have been audited recently?”

Conchita Lozano-Batista, an attorney with Weinberg, Roger and Rosenfeld stated “From janitorial firms, to Pacific Steel, to Chipotle, there is a lot that we just don’t know about federal immigration audits in the workplace.” She added: “...without the full picture and supporting documentation, it would seem that the employers who are bearing the brunt of these audits are employers who are involved in collective bargaining agreements with labor unions. That is bad for business, workers and the American people.”

Says Pacheco, “We are marching today for our dignity. For the hurt and sadness and the consequences of this audit. We are here to stop the injustice of this law. They talk about undocumented workers taking jobs but I’d like to know what would happen if for one day, all the undocumented laborers would stop working.” ■

UNITE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

**With memories of the civil rights struggle still very present, many veterans of the civil rights movement are stepping up in the struggle against HB56.**

have dialogued with young immigrant rights activists fighting for the DREAM Act. The Black Alliance for Just Immigration has held immigration workshops in Black communities throughout Alabama. Across the state, civil rights leaders are reaching out to newly organized immigrant communities, sharing a wealth

of wisdom and lessons from the Black freedom struggle. In turn, Latino immigrant communities have turned out for the Martin Luther King Day Parade, and are making plans to march in the annual Bridge-Crossing Jubilee March, a celebration and commemoration of the right to vote and the historic March from Selma to Montgomery that took place in 1965.

Alabamians are getting organized and forming new organizations with coordinating support provided by the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ACIJ).

ACIJ organizers have held hundreds of Know-Your-Rights trainings across the state to spread awareness about the

law, and help immigrant communities defend themselves. The trainings are also used to identify emerging leaders in the community. Simultaneously, Immigration 101 workshops are being held in ally communities, educating folks not directly affected by the law, on the myths and facts around immigration, and building support for a repeal. Many of these workshops have taken place in churches across the state —hundreds of faith leaders are speaking out.

It is becoming more clear that HB56 is driven by racism and scape-goating, and that these driving forces are false solutions to our economic problems. Rather than fixing the economy, HB56 is devastating the lives

of thousands, and hurting all Alabamians morally, spiritually and economically.

This law is the most aggressive and extensive statewide anti-immigrant bill in the country. The potential and impact of both our victories and losses in Alabama will be far reaching. Organizing resources in Alabama are very minimal and national solidarity and outcry against this law are imperative.

Will Alabama set the new standard for the level of racism, abuse and dehumanization that is acceptable and the new normal? Or will this be a moment the tide really turns and laws like this become politically impossible? ■

 **GET INVOLVED!**

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!**

Join CJJC for “Coffee with a Cause/Café Con Causa,” our monthly membership meeting every second Wednesday of the month. We provide information and trainings on different housing and immigrant justice issues going in Oakland and San Francisco. We hold morning and evening sessions in the San Francisco office and evening sessions in the Oakland office:

**DAY:** second Wednesday of each month

**TIME:** 10am-12pm (San Francisco) and 5:30-7:30pm (San Francisco & Oakland)

**LOCATIONS:**  
West Oakland Office: 3268 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, California 94608  
San Francisco Office: 2301 Mission Street, Suite 201, San Francisco, California 94110



# TAKE BACK OUR LOCAL & STATE BUDGETS

## GOVERNOR BROWN SLASHES AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDS

By Gloria Bruce, Deputy Director, East Bay Housing Organizations

With the dissolution of redevelopment on February 1, we have lost the largest state source for affordable housing. Unless we can be particularly creative in identifying new funding sources and changing political will, this decision may well result in displacement, instability, and even homelessness for thousands of Californians.

Often missed in the debate about redevelopment was the state law requirement for agencies to commit at least 20% of their funding to creating and preserving affordable housing, and that 15% of all housing in a redevelopment area had to be affordable to people of low and moderate incomes.

In recent years, the redevelopment agencies in Oakland and

San Francisco were known for prioritizing lower-income housing in redevelopment areas, using the financing as a flexible tool in an era of diminishing public resources. By diverting \$1 billion annually from affordable housing funding generated by Redevelopment to other budget “core services”, Governor Brown is actually decimating funding for one of the most essential functions of government – ensuring that people have homes.

While the long-term effects of redevelopment’s demise are unclear, we will prioritize policy and advocacy in 2012 to pursue local and state funding for affordable housing, ensure that affordability and equity are part of regional planning processes, and to win community benefits in local cities and counties.

Just last week, our partners introduced the California HoMes Act which if passed, will fund development, acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable homes for Californians on fixed incomes and modest budgets, including

emergency shelters, transitional and permanent rental housing, foreclosure mitigation, and homeownership opportunities.

Funded through a \$75 document recording fee on real estate transactions, the bill would generate an average of \$700 million per year for housing affordable to hardworking families, put construction workers back on the job, and boost California’s economy by creating millions of dollars in new economic activity.

In short, this would be California’s first “permanent” source of affordable housing funding, setting up a trust fund similar to those in other states.

EBHO, CJJC and our partners will be tracking this bill and other on-the-ground efforts to ensure that we find ways to build and preserve housing for those who need it most. Creating affordable housing and stabilizing families is still, we believe, the best way to spur the neighborhood revitalization that was the original goal of redevelopment. ■

## IS THERE A FUTURE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By Raven Willoughby

Over the last 50 years, redevelopment agencies (RDA) in the state of California have worked diligently on promoting economic and community development in areas once deemed “undesirable.” About 400 RDAs across the state have provided funding for many different projects including affordable housing, improving city infrastructure and landscape, and providing job opportunities.

## There is widespread concern that Governor Brown’s decision to eliminate the RDAs was a shortsighted action that will seriously hurt our state and her residents in the long run.

In 1945, the legislature gave cities the ability to create RDAs that would identify “blight” or property areas in need of revitalization. The RDAs would provide the initial funding for projects in these neighborhoods that create the momentum for

further development. The revitalization leads to increases in property values; and, the increased property taxes that get collected creates the revenue that are used to fund more projects.

In light of the current state level budget crisis, Governor Brown proposed legislation to dissolve redevelopment agencies in order to decrease the budget deficit. On December 29, 2011, the California Supreme Court ruled in favor of the governor, and the dissolution of all redevelopment agencies went into effect February 1, 2012.

**SUCCESSOR AGENCIES**  
With the elimination of the RDAs, local city governments are now fully responsible for setting up “successor” agencies that will complete outstanding projects and assume outstanding debts. These successor agencies will create an oversight board, which will have appointees from several local agencies i.e. school board, park districts, etc.

These boards will be responsible for making the decisions about the specifics of the transition process and all their meetings and discussions will be held open to the public. While the path forward is clear for projects that were initiated under the old system, what is really unclear is how future projects that are needed in our neighborhoods will happen. And this is a serious problem.

Redevelopment agencies have invested heavily in areas that do

not traditionally attract private developers. Numerous neighborhoods in San Francisco and Oakland rely on redevelopment funds as the main funding source for creating the infrastructure that our communities need. In Oakland alone, the elimination of the RDA will create a gap of about \$28 million in this type of critical project development.

**IMPACT ON WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOODS**  
What is the future for community development in working class neighborhoods like the Mission, Excelsior, West and East Oakland? How will development in the communities that most need it continue to move forward without RDAs? Where will new funding sources come from and how will residents be able to participate and lead in the decisions about how their neighborhoods develop and thrive?

Right now there are many more questions than there are answers. There is also widespread concern that Governor Brown’s decision to eliminate the RDAs was a shortsighted action that will seriously hurt our state and her residents in the long run. What does seem clear is that the voices and opinions of those most impacted by these decisions have to be at the forefront of figuring out the way forward. More than ever working class people have to be actively engaged around issues of community and neighborhood development.

Our neighborhoods, our cities, our decision! ■

Often missed in the debate about redevelopment was the state law requirement for agencies to commit at least 20% of their funding to creating and preserving affordable housing,



Darrius Lightfoot CJJC intern from the School of Unity and Liberation at a budget protest. Photo: CJJC Archives

## TAX MEASURE COMPROMISE A VICTORY FOR PROGRESSIVES: WHAT IT MEANS

By Paul Hogarth

After spending months attacking and belittling the Millionaire’s Tax (which polls showed had far greater support than his own Tax Measure), Governor Jerry Brown struck a compromise March 14 with its backers – allowing a “hybrid” tax measure for the November ballot.

While less progressive than the Millionaire’s Tax, it is a vast improvement over what the Governor had proposed – and will raise more revenue for the state. Without significant infrastructure to wage a statewide campaign, progressives had the weaker hand in negotiation.

The fact progressives had to stand up to a Democratic Governor before cutting a deal demonstrates the sheer arrogance of the Sacramento Establishment – who think they can co-opt a few big unions and ram their flawed proposals down our throats, like they’ve done before.

Grass-roots activists never have a seat at the table, which makes this compromise so historic.

The Governor’s initial proposal – which had the backing of the Democratic leadership in Sacramento, along with SEIU, the California Teachers’ Association & AFSCME, and major corporate funding – would have raised the sales tax by a half-percent, and raised income taxes for those making over \$250,000 by 2% for only five years.

The compromise crafted with some supporters of the Millionaire’s Tax would cut the sales tax increase in half, and raise the income tax increases to 3% and extend it to seven years. While not as clear cut as the Millionaire’s Tax, the compromise measure is far less regressive and far more equitable.

Given how popular the Millionaire’s Tax was polling – and given the broad coalition supporting it from the Courage Campaign, the California Federation of Teachers, the California Nurses Association and ACCE – it is incredible that Democratic leaders, rather than get behind and support the measure, spent months urging their progressive base to drop it.

Given that the Millionaire’s Tax was so much more popular than

Jerry Brown’s measure, why didn’t progressives hold firm and insist the Governor withdraw his proposition – or at least craft a compromise that was more progressive than the one we got? Simple. Progressives lack the infrastructure to wage a winning, statewide ballot campaign.

At the end of the day, the compromise was something progressive backers of the Millionaire’s Tax can be proud of. Jerry Brown’s initial measure would have put 40% of the tax burden on a sales tax increase. This new compromise puts 85% of the new tax burden on incomes making over \$250,000 and \$500,000.

Because the compromise is a new tax measure, there won’t be very much time to gather signatures to put it on the November ballot – which will require serious resources to make it happen.

Now that the Democratic Establishment has learned they can no longer ignore or belittle progressive activists on this issue, it’s time we work together to get this compromise on the ballot – and fight to win voter passage in November, as a crucial first step for California.

Reprinted courtesy of BeyondChron / <http://www.beyondchron.org/news/>. ■



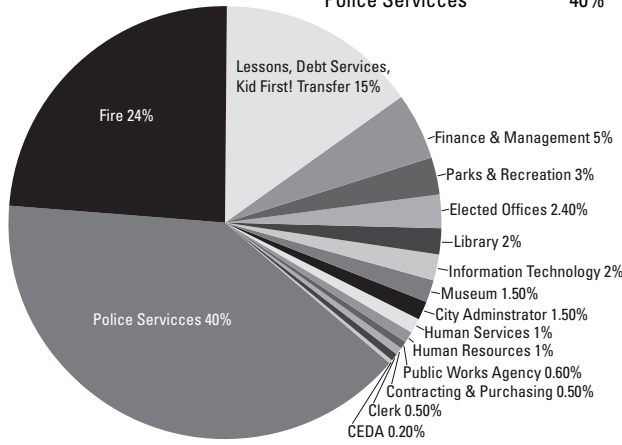
# The Facts About The Oakland Budget

- Projected Deficit for 2011-2013 is \$58 million
- Annual Budget for FY 2011-12 is just under \$1 Billion
- 58% of the budget are restricted funds
  - Streets, housing development, sewer maintenance, Measure DD improvements on Lake Merritt
  - These funds are collected from certain sources which has restricted spending: grants, fees, bonds, revenues
- 42% of the budget is the General Fund
  - The \$58 million budget deficit is in the General Fund
  - Police and Fire, libraries, senior centers and recreation programs, elected offices
  - These funds are collected primarily from property taxes
- less than 1% of the 9.75% sales tax goes back to the city
- about 26 cents of every dollar of property tax goes to the city

Source: City of Oakland Website

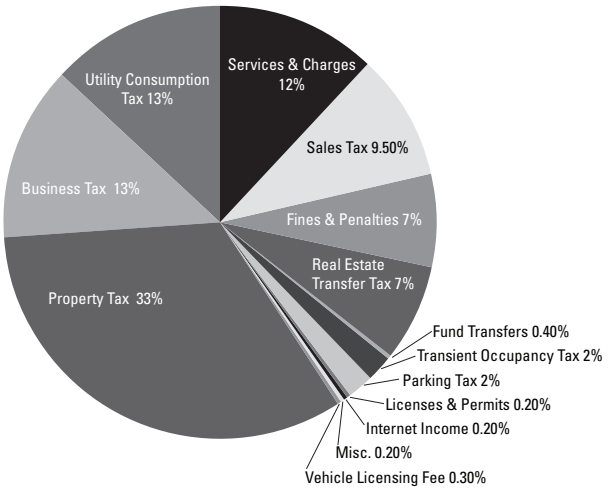
## Oakland General Purpose Fund Budget By Department

Fire	24%	Museum	1.50%
Lessons, Debt Services, Kid First! Transfer	15%	City Administrator	1.50%
Finance & Management	5%	Human Services	1%
Parks & Recreation	3%	Human Resources	1%
Elected Offices	2.40%	Public Works Agency	0.60%
Library	2%	Clerk	0.50%
Information Technology	2%	Contracting & Purchasing	0.50%
		CEDA	0.20%
		Police Services	40%



## Oakland Sources of General Purpose Fund Revenue

Services & Charges	12%	Licenses & Permits	0.20%
Sales Tax	9.50%	Internet Income	0.20%
Fines & Penalties	7%	Misc.	0.20%
Real Estate Transfer Tax	7%	Vehicle Licensing Fee	0.30%
Fund Transfers	0.40%	Property Tax	33%
Transient Occupancy Tax	2%	Business Tax	13%
Parking Tax	2%	Utility Consumption Tax	13%



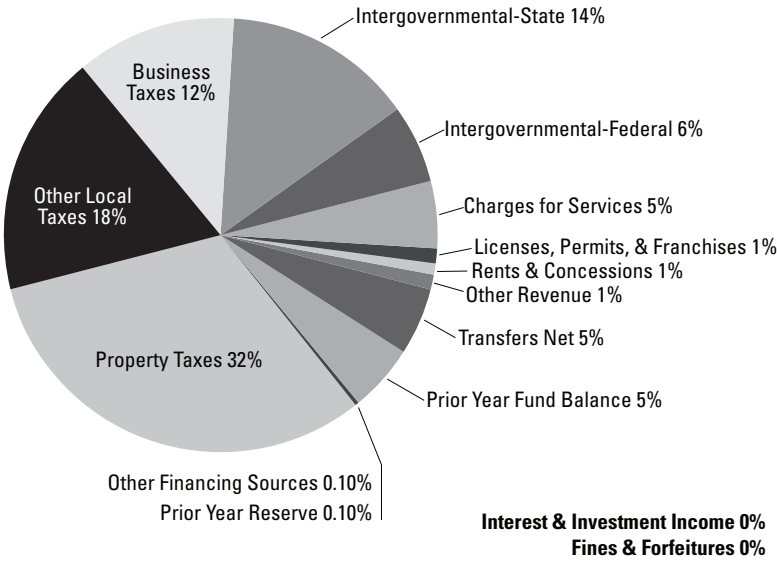
# The Facts About The San Francisco Budget

- The budget for the fiscal year 2011-12 \$6.83 billion
- Budget deficit on \$380 million from previous FY
- City Funds can be divided into 3 categories
  - Governmental Funds- this includes the General Fund for discretionary spending
  - Proprietary Funds
    - Internal service funds- expense of good or services provided by one city department to another
    - Enterprise funds- included SFO, Water department, General hospital
  - Fiduciary Funds- resources held for the benefit of parties outside the city

Source: SF Controller, SF Examiner

## SF Sources of Fund - General Fund

Other Local Taxes	18%
Business Taxes	12%
Intergovernmental-State	14%
Intergovernmental-Federal	6%
Charges for Services	5%
Licenses, Permits, & Franchises	1%
Rents & Concessions	1%
Other Revenue	1%
Interest & Investment Income	0%
Fines & Forfeitures	0%
Other Financing Sources	0.10%
Transfers Net	5%
Prior Year Fund Balance	5%
Prior Year Reserve	0.10%
Property Taxes	32%



# WEALTHY CORPORATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS: PAY YOUR FAIR SHARE!

By Vanessa Moses

Each year, the state of California and local municipalities play the budget game – trying to work out how to fund services and pay growing debts with shrinking revenue.

Those of us who have been watching and experiencing the impact of continuing cuts to vital services see a different pattern – a crisis in revenue generation that dates back over three decades. In 1978 California passed the misleading and profoundly impactful Proposition 13, which put into place loopholes for giant corporate property owners and a law that requires a two-thirds supermajority vote to increase taxes. Prop 13 simultaneously made it easier for big corporations to get out of paying their fair share of taxes and made

it much harder for our state representatives to raise revenues through tax increases. Prop 13 has seriously hurt generations of California residents.

This year things got even worse as cities across the state faced the additional burden of loosing funding from the closure of all state Redevelopment agencies. Historically the Redevelopment Agency’s responsibilities includes mitigating community blight, attracting new businesses to economically depressed areas and building affordable housing.

This will not be a cut that our cities easily recover from.

There is a battle of ideas happening here. On one side are the people who say that government should not be involved in providing services and trying to meet the need of residents. They argue that the role and function of government should be reduced and by that extension, funding for government programs should shrink. We disagree. We say that the our state and local governments have a responsibility to make sure that

## OPINION PIECE

### MY OPINION: THE STATE OF THE CITY? MIGHT BE ON THE RISE... By Esperanza Tervalon- Daumont, Executive Director, Oakland Rising

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2012 Mayor Jean Quan, gave her first State of the City speech entitled “Oakland is on the Rise” to an audience of Oakland’s community, labor, business, athletic, musical and grassroots leaders. As one of Oakland’s native daughters, the mother of a young son and the Executive Director of Oakland Rising, I listened to the State of the City pensively.

I was listening for a plan that would align with Oakland Rising’s [Vision and Issues Platform](#) by setting administrative priorities that move Oaklanders from the unemployment line to good paying jobs, from burying young people killed by gun violence to helping them rise through leadership development programs, and most importantly how the next city budget would reflect a commitment to funding programs and services that support quality of life services.

I wanted to feel inspired and confident in the Mayor’s ability to lead the city with the articulated progressive values and strategies that so many Oaklanders elected her to bring to the Mayor’s office.

I have to admit, I was moved from pensive to pleasantly surprised by her State of The City speech. While the Mayor began by noting that under her leadership our city brought 5,000 new jobs in Oakland’s high-tech, restaurant, retail and construction industries, and a 2% decrease in Oakland’s unemployment rate, what really grabbed my attention was her always-impressive technical knowledge of policy.

In classic style, Mayor Quan unveiled, detailed and expanded upon her [100 Block plan](#) through which the City focuses the efforts of law enforcement, violence prevention services, job training, employment opportunities and street outreach workers to the 100 blocks in East and West Oakland where 90% of shootings and homicides are taking place.

Leading with a more holistic approach to public safety than we’ve seen from [previous Administrations](#), the Mayor’s 100 Block plan is a step in the

right direction. Drawing upon best practices around the country like the Harlem Kids Zone and Chicago Ceasefire, the 100 Block Plan aims to implement cohesive solutions to systemic problems. It lifts up the common sense thinking that Oaklanders know to be true: simply increasing the police presence doesn’t work to stop violence and crime.

For years Oakland politicians have used fear tactics against Oaklanders to prioritize increasing police officers on the streets in order to support their heavy-handed strategy to addressing violence and crime in the flatlands of East and West Oakland. But the reality is that police-centered tactics haven’t worked to curb long-term violence or crime. In fact, in 2011 when police staffing was at a three-year low, violent crimes in Oakland were down according to [statistics](#) from the City of Oakland’s website.

While police are part of the equation to creating safer communities, we will simply never police our way out of poverty, hunger or joblessness. The Mayor’s 100 block plan articulates clear ways that City government can partner with communities to create a safer, healthier and more thriving Oakland.

As a native Oaklander, the 100 Block Plan sparks some hope in me that the Mayor is bringing a progressive eye and more holistic approach to our city. But the question remains, how will the City budget reflect a commitment to these principles and programs?

Currently, Police and Fire [costs make up 63%](#) of the City’s general fund. For years, Oakland’s tax dollars have overwhelmingly gone to support a narrow-minded, outdated and ineffective law-and-order approach to public safety. If the Mayor’s plan and approach in Oakland’s most vulnerable 100 Blocks is going to succeed, revising the budget to fund critical services and reduce our investment in a police heavy strategy is the next logical step.

The budgeting process is the place where our espoused progressive values hit the proverbial pavement, and Oakland Rising’s Budget workgroup will continue to champion calls to City Council to reevaluate how Oakland is aligning policies with its budgeting priorities.

The Mayor repeated a single phrase through the evening: “Oakland is on the Rise”. If our City Budget reflects the funding needed to move this promising public safety plan, I think she just may be right. ■

critical services like education and health care are fairly and equally available to everyone who needs it. Therefore instead of shrinking resources, we need to find ways to raise revenues and make sure that we can meet the huge need that exists in our communities.

Without the wealthy corporations and individuals of California paying their fair

share, we will see more of the same: overcrowded schools with more teacher layoffs and no books for students, crumbling roads and highways, closing libraries and senior centers, and shrinking health care access for those that need it most.

This cannot continue. We have to do something different if we are going to rebuild our neighborhoods and cities. ■



# Californians Benefiting From Federal Health Care Law

By Richard Figueroa, Director, Health & Human Services, The California Endowment

Thanks to the great work of many community organizations around the state, Californians are beginning to understand that staying healthy is not only a matter of routine visits to the doctor's office, but is affected by the places we live and by our access to preventive health care services.

In fact, there are approximately 7 million Californians who have no health coverage, the vast majority of which are persons of color and lower-income families. That is nearly one in every five residents of the state, and according to health care experts it means those individuals are less likely to live long, healthy lives.

The federal health care law, also known as the Affordable Care Act, passed almost two years ago, is working to ensure that Americans have access to quality, affordable health care. While the new populations eligible for subsidized health insurance can't enroll until later next year, there are a number of benefits available now that are helping California families find health coverage.

For example, the White House recently reported on the story of Augustina Rodrigues, a retired senior on a fixed income living in Winchester, Calif., who received a \$250 check because of the Affordable Care Act that helped defray her prescription drug expenses.

In another example, the federal government has provided California a \$10 billion "bridge to reform" fund to help the state prepare for and implement the new federal rules to take effect in 2014. That means expanded health coverage, today, for lower-income uninsured residents.

The "bridge" funding allows counties to expand eligibility in county-based programs and offer comprehensive benefits to some lower-income adults currently ineligible for Medi-Cal coverage. The state Department of Health Care Services estimates that as many as 500,000 adults ages 19-64 are eligible through this expanded coverage.

In addition to federal, state and county-level programs, community-based health organizations are actively working to enroll individuals who may not be aware that they are already eligible for existing low-cost or no-cost coverage like Medi-Cal or Healthy Families.

One such enrollment event is scheduled to take place May 19 in Oakland, a partnership between WE Connect, the Alameda County Public Health Department, Oakland Unified School Department and Causa Justa: Just Cause along with nearly a dozen other community organizations including Lifelong Medical Services, Street Level Health Project, Oakland Community Organization, First 5 of Alameda County, Bay Area Legal Aid, Communities for a Better Environment and many more.

For weeks leading up to the event, community organizations will be conducting extensive outreach efforts to educate and when possible, enroll, eligible residents. At the event, families will not only be able to find out if they qualify for health coverage, but they will be able to take advantage of free health coverage application assistance, dental screenings, flu shots, food giveaways and many more money saving resources.

We hope to see you there! ■



The Affordable Care Act, enacted March 23, 2010, will make approximately 5 million California families eligible for low to no-cost health care assistance through county health programs, Medi-Cal and Healthy Families. Could you be one of them?

### EXCITING NEW HEALTH BENEFITS UNDER THE NEW LAW:

- **HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS:** The law makes health insurance easier to afford for most lower-income families through both Medi-Cal and private insurance.

Learn more at <http://www.healthcare.gov/index.html>

- **MORE AFFORDABLE CARE:** The law provides more money to your community health clinics and school based health centers to improve care and reduce wait times.

Learn more at <http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/2010/08/increasing-access.html>

- **FREE PREVENTIVE CARE:** The law enables patients to receive free basic preventive care such as annual check-ups, mammograms, immunizations for kids and cancer screenings. The law also provides grants to communities to provide physical education programs in schools and healthier school lunches for students.

Learn more at about free preventative check-ups here:  
<http://www.healthcare.gov/law/features/rights/preventive-care/index.html>

Learn more about community wellness programs here:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/communitytransformation/>

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Applying for and participating in certain public programs will **NOT** jeopardize your immigration status. Only programs that provide direct cash assistance might cause concern.
- Did you know approximately one million California families are currently eligible but uninsured? Families can enroll for Medi-Cal or Healthy Families on line at [www.healthapp.net](http://www.healthapp.net). Or in person in English and Spanish in the following locations:
  - o All Family Resource Centers (Call 211 to find the Center closest to you!)
  - o Most community clinics have application assistance
  - o County hospitals and clinics
  - o Your local welfare or social services office

To learn more about low cost and no cost health care and other resources, visit [weconnect.net](http://weconnect.net).



**SOMOS EL 99 %  
WE ARE THE 99 %**

**ME ECHAN LA CULPA POR LA CRISIS ECONÓMICA...  
Y LOS BANCOS DE WALL STREET ¿QUÉ?  
I'M BLAMED FOR THE ECONOMIC CRISIS...  
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WALL STREET BANKS?**

Art courtesy of [www.DignidadRebelde.com](http://www.DignidadRebelde.com)

## Community Health & Wellness Event

**Saturday, May 19, 2012**  
**10:00 am – 3:00 pm**  
**Laney College Gymnasium**  
900 Fallon St.  
Oakland, CA 94607

Close to:  
BART: Lake Merritt  
Bus Stops: Line 40, Line 801 & Line 840  
(3 block walk to/from 12th and Oak)

**¡Hablamos español!  
我們講中文**

**Take Advantage of FREE SERVICES**

- Healthy Food Giveaway (while supplies last)
- Money Saving Programs & Service
- Health Application Assistance
- Dental Screenings
- Developmental screenings for children ages 1 month – 5 ½ years old

Please bring these documents to enroll in health care services:

- Proof of Income: current pay stub, current bank statement
- Birth Certificate or Legal Resident Card
- Proof of Residency: PG&E, cable bill, telephone bill
- Proof of Identity Current driver's license or picture

## GET INVOLVED!

**Are You A Home Owner Who Is Falling Behind On Your Mortgage?**

**Do You Know Someone Who Is Facing Possible Foreclosure?**

**CALL THE OAKLAND HOMEOWNER CLINIC OF CAUSA JUSTA :: JUST CAUSE**

We provide free services and support to Oakland homeowners dealing with foreclosures. We're in a housing crisis and we must come together to fight for the right that we all have to stay in our homes. You are not alone in the fight to stay in your home, join us!

Call the Oakland Homeowner Clinic hotline at (510) 318-7391 or contact Nell at (510) 763-5877 ext 401 or email [nell@cjjc.org](mailto:nell@cjjc.org).

Follow us on Twitter at [causajusta1](https://twitter.com/causajusta1)

'Like' us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/causajusta](http://www.facebook.com/causajusta)

**For more information call Nell at 510.763.5877 ext. 401 or email: [nell@cjjc.org](mailto:nell@cjjc.org)**



# A VICTORY FOR OAKLAND: Good Jobs on the Horizon for the Army Base Project

Kate O'Hara, Revive Oakland Campaign Director, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy



Oakland residents speak out at City Council hearing. Photo: Brooke Anderson

**With our partners at Oakland Rising, we talked to 5,600 voters in East and West Oakland. We found staggering support for the Good Jobs plan.**

On February 7, the Oakland City Council unanimously approved a Good Jobs and Community Benefits plan for the massive redevelopment of the Oakland Army Base project. This was a huge step forward for the Revive Oakland! Campaign for Real Jobs and Healthy Neighborhoods – and for all of Oakland.

The City is now on record in agreement with the community's vision for an Army Base project that puts local residents to work in good-paying, family-supporting jobs. The project is

estimated to create upwards of 6,000 construction, warehouse and other long-term port jobs over the next 20 years, with ground-breaking estimated in 2013 and warehouses projected to open a few years later.

In the coming months, the city will continue negotiating towards a final deal with developer Prologis, a multi-billion dollar global corporation based in San Francisco. The commitment that has been made to the “good jobs” plan means that the city will work to ensure that the jobs created from this project

will provide employment opportunities that will really serve the community. The kind of jobs that will pay enough to allow workers to continue to afford to live in Oakland, provide for our families and build a healthy and peaceful city.

Revive Oakland, a coalition of youth, community, labor and faith organizations, representing thousands of families, will call the question on Prologis, to see if they will help to make sure this project delivers on real opportunities for Oakland.

The Army Base project is the largest development opportunity we will see in our lifetimes in Oakland. As a project that will take place on public land and using a huge amount of public resources, this is a critical opportunity for us to win jobs for our community.

The coalition utilized a multi-pronged strategy to secure this victory, including a combination of on-the-ground organizing, thoughtful policy development, endless conversations with decision makers – and turning up the heat when we needed to!

Over the last year, Revive Oakland coalition partners have been organizing community residents about this massive opportunity. With our partners at Oakland Rising, we talked to 5,600 voters in East and West Oakland. We found staggering support for the Good Jobs plan. 80% of voters surveyed support our proposal to “ban the box” on job applications, which means that those who apply for Army Base related work will not be discriminated against for their criminal records. Voters also support the right of future warehouse workers to organize for better wages and benefits free of employer harassment.

Also over the last year, we participated in a year-long consensus

process to develop the Good Jobs plan. The process, led by Councilmember Jane Brunner, brought together all community and labor stakeholders. Through a series of meetings, we developed real solutions to improving access for local residents into construction careers and connecting workers with real jobs.

Once the plan was developed, the Good Jobs plan had to be approved by the Council's Community Economic Development Committee and then by the full City Council. When the City abruptly cancelled the Committee meeting where this item was scheduled, Revive Oakland and 50 residents and workers showed up at City Hall to express to the City how badly we need these jobs. That day the City committed to hold the hearing in two weeks.

Two weeks later, we were back with more than 100 people packed into a tiny hearing room. Dozens of community members spoke eloquently and passionately about the need for good jobs. Twenty-year old Rayna Smith, a leader with Urban Peace Movement, urged the city to pass the Good Jobs plan to help curb violence in our neighborhoods. Rose Morton, an Oakland ironworker, explained how her stable, union job lifted her out of poverty and how she wants the same for others coming up today. The Committee unanimously approved the plan, forwarding it to the full City Council who did the same.

Our success clearly shows what the community, and the City expect from this project. The question now, is whether or not Prologis will agree to these terms and create a project that actually delivers on real benefits for Oakland.

Prologis, the biggest developer of warehouses on the planet, owns enough warehouses and

## GROUNDBREAKING EXPECTATIONS

**The Good Jobs plan sets expectations for this project that we've never seen before in Oakland, including:**

**Construction careers opportunities:** In addition to the City's 50% local hire goal for construction, ALL new apprentices on the project will come from Oakland and a share of the work each year will be for new apprentices. These provisions will be included in both a Community Jobs Agreement and a Project Labor Agreement, ensuring good quality, long-term construction careers for local workers.

**Long-term Jobs pathways and training:** Creation of a West Oakland Jobs Center and 50% local hire goal for long-term warehouse operations jobs, starting first with West Oakland and then other low income neighborhoods. This marks the first time Oakland has set local hire expectations for jobs beyond the construction phase.

**Good quality, family-supporting jobs:** Long-term businesses on the site would maintain peaceful labor relations with workers who chose to organize for better wages and benefits as well as not utilizing temp agencies which undercut job quality and stability.

**Opportunities for formerly incarcerated people:** A quarter of the long-term jobs and apprenticeships will be for disadvantaged workers and employers will “ban the box” removing the question on job applications about previous convictions. This would extend the City's own non-discrimination hiring policy, one of the most progressive in the nation.

**Community monitoring and enforcement:** These pieces will be developed into a community jobs agreement with ongoing stakeholder input and enforced through a community-labor-government oversight to ensure employer compliance in real-time.



Member Of Iron Workers Union testifies at hearing. Photo: Jahmese Myers

other real estate around the world to fill up almost half of San Francisco. A corporation of and for the 1%, Prologis paid their CEO's a combined \$13 million last year and has \$48 billion in assets. Based in San

Francisco, Prologis has a responsibility to share their wealth with working families in Oakland if they are going to do business in our city. Revive Oakland plans to be there every step of the way to make sure that happens. ■

## MOVEMENT: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

homes. Not only has our financial security been impacted, but homeowners in foreclosure suffer devastating physical and mental health impacts as well.

A recent study done by San Francisco's county assessor, Phil Ting, revealed that more than 84% of the foreclosure filings in San Francisco between 2009 and 2011 were illegal. Wells Fargo and Bank of America have been two of the major culprits. Despite this damaging discovery, these banks continue to disregard demands for them to stop pursuing foreclosures until they can guarantee that they are not taking away homes fraudulently.

California is currently ranked number 2 in the nation for

foreclosures, and all in all there will be a total of 10 million foreclosures in our state this year alone.

Illegal foreclosures are not the only crimes being committed by the big banks. They have also been illegally evicting tenants from foreclosed properties as well. Representatives of the banks often send notices demanding tenants move because the building has been foreclosed, when both Oakland and San Francisco laws clearly state that tenants in foreclosed buildings have the right to stay in their homes.

These representatives harass and threaten tenants into accepting small amounts of money to move out, when often these

“deals” do not adequately cover the expenses of finding a new home and moving costs, not to mention the stress and anxiety incurred by the families.

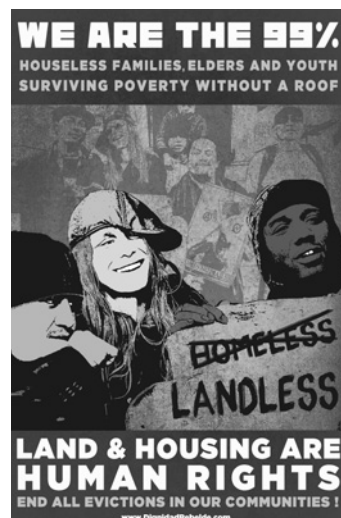
When banks foreclose on buildings with rental units they essentially become landlords and building managers. They legally assume responsibility for collecting rent and for all necessary upkeep and repairs that the buildings need. In many cases they do not keep up their end of the deal. They neglect to pay for utilities leaving tenants with no water or garbage service in some cases. They refuse to perform necessary repairs and force tenants and their children to live with broken toilets, mold, rat infestation or leaky roofs. Often problems

get so bad tenants feel forced to move by this negligence.

It is clear that the foreclosure crisis has not only hurt homeowners, but renters as well. 40% of all foreclosures in California are rental properties. With 54% of Oakland's population and almost 70% of San Francisco residents being renters, this crisis has really hit our cities hard.

**OUR HOUSING RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK, WHAT DO WE DO? STAND UP, FIGHT BACK!**

For the third year in a row Causa Justa :: Just Cause and a coalition of other community, labor, immigrant rights and other allies plan on protesting the annual shareholders meeting for Wells



Art courtesy of www.DignidadRebelde.com

Fargo, which takes place in San Francisco April 24. This action will be part of a national effort to

hold banks responsible for their part in causing the housing crisis and disrupting their business in the same way they have disrupted the lives of millions of families. Groups on the other side of the country will be closing down the Bank of America shareholders meeting in Durham, North Carolina as well.

We have stood up to the banks before but this year we need to roll harder and deeper than ever. Enough is enough. All of us who have been impacted by the housing crisis and the actions of these banks have to stand up and fight back. We are taking our fight to a new level. In the words of the old Freedom song, “we shall not be moved”! ■



# ARTS & CULTURE

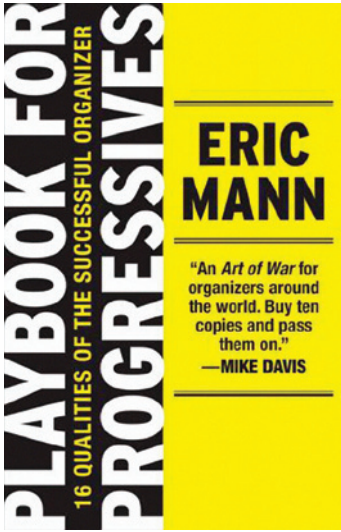
## Book Review

# Playbook for Progressives

By Jaron Brown

*Eric Mann is a veteran organizer with the Congress of Racial Equality, Students for a Democratic Society, and the United Auto Workers Union. He is presently the director of the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles and a member of its Bus Riders Union and Community Rights Campaign*

*Jaron Browne is the Communications Director at POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights) in San Francisco. Jaron is also a co-author of Towards Land, Work, and Power. Before joining POWER, he did organizing and campaign research against racism in the criminal justice system with the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. Jaron was trained as an organizer in Los Angeles at LCSC's National School for Strategic Organizing.*



Eric Mann’s new book Playbook for Progressives is one of the most anticipated publications offered to the grassroots social justice movement in years. Over 10 years ago, a group of young organizers, including myself, surreptitiously got a hold of a four-page outline from a training that Eric had given at the Labor/Community Strategy Center in Los Angeles about the job description and the essential qualities of organizer effectiveness. The rough outline spread quickly, passed around to dozens of organizers, all seeking theory that spoke to the model of Left conscious organizing in the context of the U.S. From that point forward, we began our own campaign to urge Eric to write this very book.

**“The tradition of transformative organizing always finds the paths of hope. In dark times, what do we do? We organize.”**

That one outline was so invaluable because we were always searching for theory and reflection on how to build grassroots mass organizations with Left

edge and consciousness in the context of the US. Too many of our lessons and wisdom have largely been lost with our movement elders. While new generations are often inspired by the legacies that came before us, we often can’t find the organizations to join or the mentors to pass on lessons learned. From relative obscurity, we are then forced to chart our paths to power through trial and error.

In my own experience as a young anti-racist white activist, I had many years of trial and error organizing—some really inspiring moments, and some serious crash and burn failures—before I was very fortunate to be trained at the Labor/Community Strategy Center National School for Strategic Organizing in 2001.

I spent the following nine years as a full-time organizer with POWER working to build a multi-racial, multi-lingual mass organization fighting for racial, economic, gender and environmental justice in San Francisco. For me, The Playbook for Progressives is the first book to really describe the model of organizing that I see as having the greatest potential to really transform conditions and build a movement for global justice inside the U.S.

The Playbook for Progressives is exciting, because it takes political theory that is so sharp and helpful for mass organizing in the U.S. and makes it accessible to thousands of activists and organizers.

Eric Mann is uniquely positioned to write a book on Left grassroots organizing, as he is one of the few long distance runners who has stayed directly on the frontlines building mass organizations and waging powerful campaigns in working class Black and Latino communities for over four decades.

The book is filled with concrete examples from Eric’s own

## Movie Review

# RED TAILS: Blacks & Military Service

By Laurene S. Francois



Photo: courtesy Lucasfilm/Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

They huddled together, arms in arms, and their voices reverberated like a choir, “Nothing is difficult, everything is a challenge. Through adversity, to the stars, from the last plane, to the last bullet, to the last minute, to the last man, we fight, we fight, we fight, We Fight!”

On Friday, Jan. 20, the film “Red Tails” debuted at the Grand Lake Theatre. There was a beautiful multitude of Black faces at the theatre with up to 150 people in attendance and when the lights dimmed, the crowd erupted into a joyous applause.

“Red Tails” chronicles the experiences of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first African-American fighter pilots, navigators, bombardiers, instructors, and all the personnel who kept the planes in the air for

the U.S. Army Air Corps.

The film, which cast all Black leads, depicted young men putting their lives on the line for a country that placed roadblock after roadblock in front of them. The movie aimed to inspire and educate- and it succeeded in both areas.

Watching Terrance Howard as Colonel A.J. Bullard defend and more importantly demand the right for his “boys” to have equal opportunities in the war, declaring “we will not go away” was a testament of strength and perseverance of the Black community.

The jokes intermittently dispersed throughout the movie, referenced important underlying themes of racism, bigotry and white supremacy.

Take for example the joke, “If somebody asks me something about the war,” a Black airman says, “I’m going to make something up.” The pilot was referencing the blatant discrimination that prevented their infantry from receiving missions. “Jokes” like this one reference the institutional racism facing Black service people in the military a situation that the civil rights movement helped improve but has by no means fully abolished.

Although this is not the first time the story of the Tuskegee Airmen has been told through film – the first movie depicting the Tuskegee Airmen debuted 1995 and featured Black actor Laurence Fishburne –this most recent version brought to the forefront the barriers the Black

community faces in Hollywood cinema, such as funding, allotted representation and distribution.

The story of the Tuskegee Airmen remains relevant today for communities of color, women, gender non-conforming, disabled and other historically marginalized groups. Theirs is a story of collective struggle and hope. Through taking on the racism within an institution as powerful as the military, they became part of the broader struggle to advance the rights of all oppressed people in society.

We have to remember and thank these men for their contributions to advancing the struggle for equality that many of us are still fighting today. ■

experience, as well as the lessons of his comrades and peers throughout his forty year history in the civil rights movement, labor movement and environmental justice movement in some of the most exciting and dynamic struggles of our time.

Playbook for Progressives is a call to anyone who reads it to join the movement—not as individuals, but to be part of building a larger movement that can make history. It is a call to activists to join organizations and begin organizing in the place where you are. It is a manual designed to help strengthen grassroots organizations, and a call to begin coalescing our various arenas of

work into a broad social movement for global justice.

With this book, Eric Mann reminds us why, in spite of the difficulty, organizing can be such joyful and deeply rewarding work. The book awakens the organizing spirit in all of us, leaves the martyr behind and cheers us on saying “You can do it because we need you.”

— This review is an excerpt of a longer piece that you can read by going to :<http://www.organizingupgrade.com/2011/09/playbook-for-progressives/>

*Playbook is available at Modern Times Bookstore in SF, and at*

*manyotherindependentbookstores as well as on Amazon, Powells Books, Kindle, Nook. Group rates can be worked out with Broche Fabian at Beacon Press, [bfabian@beacon.org](mailto:bfabian@beacon.org) and there are direct links at Eric’s website, [www.ericmannauthor.com](http://www.ericmannauthor.com) ■*



**Do you think your rent has increased too much?**

*Oakland Tenants: Call for an assessment!*

CENTRO LEGAL DE LA RAZA (510) 437-1554

*or*

BAY AREA LEGAL AID (510) 250-5270

**\*\*Income guidelines apply\*\***

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE