

PPAS Voice

Celebrating diversity, promoting unity

Help is on The Way

By: Tanya Jaffe

Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company, and the biotechnical company Moderna in recent weeks said their vaccines have been found to be more than 90% effective in late-stage trials. Here is some important information about each vaccine, and when they will be available.

Pfizer said 43,538 people participated in its trials, with 38,955 people getting a second dose three weeks after their first. The company reported 164 confirmed coronavirus cases. Pfizer worked with its German partner, BioNTech, to create its vaccine. On Nov. 9, Pfizer said its vaccine was 95% effective.

A week later, Moderna said its vaccine was more than 95% effective. There were 30,000 participants, and 25,654 received a second vaccination, which would be taken four weeks after



the first. A quarter of participants in Moderna's trial were over the age of 65, 42% were at high risk for Covid-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus. Moderna had participants from many states, but an overwhelming number came from Texas, a state with more

than one million cases.

Pfizer and BioNTech's vaccine has to be stored at minus-70 degrees Celsius (minus-94 degrees Fahrenheit). They have created packaging that would contain dry ice to keep the vaccine cool. A vial can be kept for just six hours before it must be discard-

ed. Moderna's vaccine is to be stored at minus-4 degrees Fahrenheit, making it more accessible than Pfizer's. Furthermore, Moderna's vaccine can be stored in a regular refrigerator for up to a month.

The Food and Drug Administration have now authorized both vaccines, which are being administered around the country, the Washington Post reports. The government hopes 20 million people can be vaccinated by year's end. Its long-term goal is to vaccinate enough people to reach herd immunity.

There have been no serious side effects from these vaccines, only mild ones such as fatigue, chills, fever and muscle aches. Even when people start to get vaccinated, it is still important to wear masks and practice social distancing.

Change Comes When We Demand Change

By: Dannilynn King

We all waited very anxiously for the election results. When they finally came out it was like a sigh of relief. Some of us took to the streets to express our overwhelming joy, some of us posted on social media, some of us cried tears of joy. Regardless of what you did to



express your happiness, I can truly say that we all now have hope for the future, not only for us, but also for the ones to come after us, and

even for the ones that came before us.

I am so excited to hopefully see change in our country. To be honest we already

have by electing the first woman to be our Vice President—not only is she a woman, but she's also the first woman and person of

color to be a Vice President.

We're already moving in the right direction but we have to keep pushing in that direction and never look back. Remain hopeful. This is what we wanted. Now that we have it, we must use it to the best of our ability. Don't forget why we wanted to see change.

Just because the election is over doesn't mean we're done fighting, it means we're going to see change as long as we keep demanding it.

Defeating DeVos is a Win for Education

By: Ellis Rubin

When Joe Biden, garnering over seven million more votes than his opponent, defeated Donald Trump, the country signaled its dissatisfaction not only with the president, but his entire administration filled with former corporate lobbyists. None of these lobbyists-turned-cabinet members had more of an impact on students than Department of Education secretary Betsy DeVos.

The Senate confirmed DeVos, the former Michigan Republican Party chair who founded a charter school advocacy organization, by the slimmest margin in which Vice President Mike Pence had to break a tie. The highlight - or rather, lowlight - of her confirmation hearing? Arguing guns belonged in schools because of possible grizzly bear attacks.

Just as that comment undermined DeVos's credibility, her leadership has undermined American education. She's illegally rejected and prolonged student loan forgiveness requests, bluntly refused to recognize DOE employees' collective bargaining rights, and unabashedly reshaped school

sexual assault policy to protect offenders and disavow victims from reporting. She performed these misdeeds

against the harrowing backdrop of her constant, unsolicited offers to cut funding from her department, including from the Special Olympics. As Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) pointed out, "The three education budgets from this administration have proposed the largest cuts to education funding in four decades. That's since the department was created in 1979."

President-elect Biden's appointee will transform the DOE. His leading contenders, Lily Eskelsen Garcia and Randi Weingarten, are former teachers and union presidents who, unlike DeVos, have



Miguel Cardona, Biden's Pick for Education Secretary

extensive experience with the public education system. They understand how systematic problems cause public school deficiencies. The contrast could

not be starker between their work to save teachers and children from falling through the cracks and DeVos' drive to make those cracks wider.

DeVos has proudly touted her negligence, even saying in an interview, "I have not - I have not - I have not intentionally visited schools that are underperforming." On the first day, DeVos' Biden-appointed replacement can do the most good by simply not doing a lot of what DeVos does. However, some of DeVos' rule changes, like those regarding sexual assault, will take much more time to change.

Biden's team knows that undoing DeVos' damage doesn't go far enough and have championed various ambitious policy proposals to fix the problems that preceded her. These remedies include universal pre-K, doubling the number of health professionals in schools, and tripling funding for Title I. The last represents the largest federal aid program for public schools, encompassing a high percentage of students from low-income families.

A best-case Democratic Senate would be split 50-50 among the parties, with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris breaking ties; such an outcome relies on unlikely upsets in both of Georgia's senatorial run-offs. Even in such a scenario, the Biden administration could face challenges furthering its most progressive education initiatives given some Democrats' fiscal conservatism. But progress is inevitable as DeVos' exit will remove an education predator far more dangerous than grizzly bears.

Photography: Fall

By: Sophia Villa



The Return of Democracy

By: Gregory Papadopoulos



With the conclusion of the Trump Era upon us, Americans are more than ready for a change in administration. Four years ago, Trump's malignancy engulfed our country and the rest of the world and little did we know of his habitual criminal exploits and lies. Many across the political spectrum were pushed left while others consumed Trump's conservatism and moved even more right. His failure to control Covid-19 was a final showcase of his incompetence. Personally, that incompetence was clear from the get-go, however, for many it was a final kick over to the blue ticket.

Joe Biden is a familiar face in Washington and knows his way around the political landscape. His campaign was also

uplifted by the "Vote Blue No Matter Who" slogan and for voters across the country, he was the clear preference as opposed to the current POTUS. However, we mustn't forget how Biden's actions on foreign policy throughout his career in the Senate and as the Vice President under the Obama administration were not just questionable, but also

clearly unprogressive. The administration launched military raids and bombed seven countries across the Middle East (Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan, and Libya), killing thousands of innocent civilians. Additionally, in 2002, Biden voted in favor of authorizing military forces in Iraq.

Since then, Biden has taken

responsibility for his "bad judgement" concerning the Iraq War. My hopes are that Americans will not take Biden's win as a chance to sit back and relax but instead will continue fighting for social justice.

For many, Biden was not a first or even second choice, but when compared to Trump, he was the necessary choice concerning national security...and also our own sanity. It is unfortunate that Bernie Sanders, a day and night comparison to Biden, was not able to make it farther in this election but life goes on. America has a long way to go and electing a democratic president is just the beginning. Keep demanding the fundamental changes that we need to get our country back on track.

NASA News!

By: Maria Palagian

Imagine you just closed your computer from a long day of school, and you lay on your bed looking out your window, only to see the full moon. With everything so overwhelming on Earth, sometimes it would be easier to dream about being in a virus free galaxy. No online school, no more staying home, and no more google classroom notifications. Some news that we have plans for somewhere other than planet Earth, is NASA's program Artemis, which is trying to land the first woman and next man on the moon by 2024! They are working to launch Artemis I in 2021. Six days ago NASA finally told us which Astronauts are going to be eligible for early moon admissions! Two of these awesome Astronauts are Joseph Acaba and Christina Hammock Koch. Acaba has spent 306 days in space and performed three spacewalks, meanwhile Koch has spent 328 days in space and did six spacewalks! Experience is obvi-



ously vital when people are involved in events that we aren't super familiar with. **Over the summer**, I'm sure movie marathons were pretty popular, so for all of the Star Wars fans, NASA made a cool discovery in August! They found an active 'Star Wars' galaxy deep in space! It resembles a TIE fighter from the Star Wars movies! It's 500 million light years away in a constellation called Casseopia. Astronauts thought it was just faint

gamma rays in the beginning, but they made the right call taking a closer look!

As performers, some days we are very sore after dance practice or doing physical activity. I'm sure those days we wish we didn't have to feel any weight on our muscles. Zero gravity is obviously very challenging to deal with when you are used to feeling all of your weight on a daily basis. Astronauts have to train tirelessly before they spend countless

days in space. They have to be mentally and physically prepared! They even have to learn how to sleep on a spaceship properly! They sleep in sleeping bags in small compartments. In these compartments, they must strap themselves down loosely so they don't float everywhere. It can be hard to sleep in space because there is no real up or down.

It's essential to keep their hygiene up to par too, so instead of taking showers, they use liquid soap and water with shampoo they can't rinse. These are kept in pouches and so is their food! They eat freeze dried space food. It doesn't sound very appetizing, but the astronauts actually have a variety of food to choose from! I'm glad I got to grab your attention to what's going on in our galaxy, but now we have to go back to planet Earth, your bed. You're still staring at the moon, but you have a greater appreciation for what's not going on right in front of you.

Blue Whirlpool

By: John Powers

Don't be fooled by the raging celebration of resistance liberals in America's streets. This election was not a blue wave. Hopes of an earth-shattering blue wave came crashing down as soon as President Trump won Florida. Surprisingly, though, over 60% of Florida voters passed a \$15-dollar minimum wage. On the same night, an exit poll conducted by Fox News showed that 72% of Americans favored a "government run health care plan". Clearly, then, the centrist policy direction of the Democratic party is somewhat not in line with what Americans want. Why is this? Because the Democratic party is bought out by corrupt special interests and donors. Yes, Biden won. However, this does not mean that the centrist strategy is iron clad. In fact, many centrist house members lost their seats. In response, Blue Dog Democrats, who are extremely moderate, had much to say. Abigail Spanberger (VA-07), a Blue Dog who won her race

by a measly 1.82%, advocated against policies like defunding our police and using the term "socialism."

While in some swing districts this strategy is vital, it must always be accompanied by a strong economic and anti-establishment message with bold leadership. Look no further than Max Rose, a congressman who represents New York's 11th congressional district.

Flipping the reddest district in New York City in 2018, Rose rejected federal

lobbyist money and ran on an anti-establishment platform. Sadly, as congressman, he joined the corporate blue dog caucus, spent time trashing progressives, and virtue-



Blue Dog Democrats



Nicole Malliotakis

signaled by marching with Black Lives Matter protesters instead of fighting against the establishment. It is clear why he recently conceded to Mallicotakis after losing by a full 6.2%.

The centrist strategy did not work for the senate either. Even if Democrats pull off two wins in Georgia, Blue Dog senators, Krysten Sinema and Joe Manchin, could

easily join the Republicans on many votes. One solution to this conundrum Joe Biden and others

offer is bipartisanship, which is feasible. After all, Democrats and Republicans worked together to vote for the appalling Iraq war and to pass the disastrous North

American Free Trade Agreement. What's more, if we cannot count on Democrats to enact bold economic legislation, America could look like democratically controlled Virginia, which passed the "Virginia Values Act," an important LGBTQ nondiscrimination law modeled on the "Equality Act." While this was a huge step forward for Virginia, and the south as a whole, Virginia remains the absolute worst state for workers' rights and the Democrats have done nothing about it.

It's a bleak future if Democrats continue to favor social issues to hide their neoliberal agenda, instead of treating both social issues and economic issues with equal importance. So, what should we take away? Fundamentally, we have to decide if we want a blue wave or a blue whirlpool. If we want the blue wave, we must unite against the corporate elite and establishment as Americans because being less bold and more moderate like Max Rose doesn't win elections.

Call for Contributors

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