

# Latest in Trump's America: Wages & Justice

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News

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*Every other Thursday, Equal Voice News tracks the latest from the Trump administration, whether its policies are creating poverty or prosperity, and how families and grassroots organizations are working on those issues around the country. Here's our latest:*

## Fighting in D.C., Progress in California for a Cleaner Environment

*Environmental policy [remains divisive](#) in the nation's capital, but local governments and grassroots advocates in California are making progress with new environmental policies and protections.*

*The Golden State took a step toward a fairer and cleaner transportation system for San Diego families, one that includes protecting "public health and the environment from toxic air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions," when Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 805, according to the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), which does work in the region and elevated residents' concerns on this issue.*

*"Simply put, this bill is a major milestone in our mission to bring transportation justice to all people in San Diego," EHC Transportation Justice Policy Advocate Ana Reynoso said in a statement.*

*"It's a milestone on the path toward an equitable region, and we intend to see the implementation of this bill through every step."*

*Hours north, the Los Angeles Planning Department demanded cleaner oil drilling at a South Los Angeles site, calling for the use of electric rigs, noise and vibration monitors and a soundproof enclosure, according to the Redeemer Community Partnership.*

*In recent years, residents – especially working families – in South LA have called for greater protection from oil drilling in their neighborhoods.*

*SCOPE, a grassroots organization whose members do community organizing work in South LA, has been fighting for cleaner neighborhoods, especially on this oil drilling issue, [as Erick Huerta writes](#).*

*SCOPE and other family-led organizations say it's crucial to protect all neighborhoods, especially ones with families of color and higher poverty rates.*

*What is behind these community efforts and progress on the environment? Part of the answer may be in a new report from Scientific American, "[People in Poor Neighborhoods Breathe More Hazardous Particles](#)."*

*In case you missed it, families and grassroots advocates in Tennessee are working long and hard to protect their waterways from runoff associated with coal mining, according to [this special report from Equal Voice News](#).*



## More Progress on Criminal Justice

Staying in California, policymakers continue to reform the state's criminal justice system. In one of the latest steps, Gov. Brown signed *The Rise Act*, which will limit the practice of tacking on an extra three years to a felony drug conviction when an individual has a prior drug conviction.

"California has once again demonstrated its leadership on enacting smart and safe criminal justice policies," Emily Harris, state field director at the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, said in a statement.

That's not the only way California is changing its justice system. Check out [this list of changes](#) the governor and state Legislature agreed on this year.

And for a national look at grassroots and local efforts to reform the criminal justice system, led by people directly affected by it, make sure to read, "[Bet on Cities and States to Lead Criminal Justice Reform.](#)"

## Corporate Leaders: Protect Rights of LGBT Workers on the Job

Starbucks, Google and other corporate heavyweights asked the U.S. Supreme Court to consider a case that could ensure LGBT workers are protected against discrimination because of sexual orientation, *The Hill* reports.

But, U.S. Attorney General "[Jeff Sessions Just Reversed A Policy That Protects Transgender Workers From Discrimination.](#)"

These battles are far from over and people directly affected by these policies are continuing to raise their voices. Stay tuned.

## A Deal, and Safety, for DREAMers Becomes Tougher

Only a few weeks ago, a deal to protect DREAMers, immigrants brought to the U.S. as children without documentation by their parents, appeared to be emerging. Now, the path to that deal is a lot more precarious, "[Trump's Immigration Demands Threaten DACA Deal](#)," *The Associated Press* reports via *The New York Times*.

That means DREAMers remain in limbo, only one sign of a rapidly changing debate raging over federal immigration policies. Fresh developments include:

- "[ICE director plans more neighborhood arrests after California's 'sanctuary state' bill.](#)" (*The Sacramento Bee*.)
- "[DHS explores ways to transform immigration system without Congress.](#)" (*CNN*)
- "[Trump plans massive increase in federal immigration jails.](#)" (*USA Today*)

DREAMers are continuing [to speak in public about their contributions](#) to their communities and the U.S. economy. Community organizations, including [Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles](#) and [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#) – are offering assistance.

## Walmart Doesn't Follow Target on Wages

It looks like Walmart isn't following [Target's move to raise its wages](#), the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal* says in "[Wal-Mart doesn't match Target move to raise minimum wage.](#)"

Last year, Walmart reported that it was going to [raise the hourly pay of its employees](#).

## What We Want to Read

As we support a deeper, clearer and authentic view of poverty in America, here a few things to check out:

The Atlantic explores [“The Barriers Stopping Poor People From Moving to Better Jobs: Highly educated people still relocate for work, but exorbitant housing costs in the best-paying cities make it difficult for anyone else to do so.”](#)

Splinter weighs in with [“How the U.S. Government Locked Black Americans Out of Attaining the American Dream .”](#) Plus, it’s a Q&A with the author of a new book, [“The Color of Money: Black Banks and the Racial Wealth Gap.”](#)

Hurricanes devastated parts of Texas and Florida, and now are making the lives of some of the region’s most vulnerable families even tougher.

- [“Florida’s Migrant Farm Workers Struggle After Hurricane Damaged Homes, Crops .”](#)
- [“Post-hurricane rebuilding will be done by undocumented workers – and they need protection.”](#)

Finally, [this first-person essay](#) in Splinter, by a teenage journalist working with the [ACLU of Texas](#) and who reported from along the U.S.-Mexico border, reminds us – in a good way – that confronting topics that might appear to be challenging is very well possible.

(Sources: [Jobs With Justice](#) digest, [Associated Press](#), news outlets, [The Skimm](#), and, of course, our neighbors. [Paul Nyhan](#) is the senior writer for [Marguerite Casey Foundation](#)’s [Equal Voice News](#))

[AB 805](#), [ACLU of Texas](#), [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#) , [criminal justice reform](#), [DACA](#), [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), [discrimination](#), [dreamers](#), [economic security](#), [Ella Baker Center for Human Rights](#), [Environment](#), [Environmental Health Coalition](#), [Google](#), [Gov. Jerry Brown](#), [Immigration](#), [LGBT](#), [LGBTQ](#), [living wage](#), [Los Angeles](#) , [Minimum wage](#), [oil drilling South LA](#), [Redeemer Community Partnership](#), [Rise Act](#), [San Diego](#), [SCOPE](#), [sexual orientation](#), [Starbucks](#), [Target](#), [Walmart](#)