
THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



a newsletter for Iowa's Democratic Left

June 2026

Day of reckoning

In November, Iowa voters will decide if they want to enshrine in the state constitution limitations on raising income taxes.

The constitutional amendment would require a two-thirds majority of both chambers of the legislature to pass any income tax increases. Interestingly, the legislation would not require a similar super-majority to reduce income taxes.

This is a high hurdle to jump in the event that the state needs to increase revenue. A simple majority should be adequate to pass an income tax increase. A two-thirds majority requirement would allow a minority of legislators to control the tax policy of the state, instead of the majority of legislators.

We have been dealing with two years of billion-dollar budget deficits. The state is using one-time money in the taxpayer relief fund to make up the difference. It is precarious to use the reserve funds for on-going expenses. At the current rate, the taxpayer relief fund will soon run short of funds, perhaps within a couple of

years. That time will be a day of reckoning – cutting budgets, laying off people, cutting programs and services, or raising revenue.

This constitutional amendment would effectively tie the hands of future legislatures in how they are going to handle the state's finances when the revenues are not meeting the expenses, when

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the reserve funds are drained, and when the public expects the services that they are getting, wanting, or needing from state government to be met and cannot be paid for with existing revenues.

With respect to raising revenues, the choices are limited—income tax, sales tax, fees for services. Income tax may be the best choice since it can target those who are most able to pay with a

graduated income tax or with a surcharge. Sales tax is under pressure every year from entities who want to be exempted from collection of the tax. Further, sales tax is regressive in that it has a greater adverse impact on lower income families and working families.

When voters read and think about this proposed constitutional amendment, they should also see bright flashing red lights that say stop, beware, tread carefully. And they should vote no at the polls in November.

This constitutional amendment is not needed. It does not move our state forward. It does not fix things that are broken. But it could significantly break things should Iowa face a shortfall in revenue and no way to fund services Iowans expect and need. Now it is up to the voters to decide in November.

—Pam Mackey Taylor is the lobbyist and Director of the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club.

The crux of a new politics

When Governor Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 75 into law on April 11, 2025, the legislative fight gave way to an organized implementation that changed the politics of affected counties. The law requires Johnson, Story, and Black Hawk counties—those with public universities—to shift from at-large to district-based elections for county supervisors, with changes taking effect during the 2026 election cycle. The change is getting real.

Iowa City attorney Jim Larew filed a lawsuit to request a temporary injunction to stop the law. When a district court judge denied the request, the counties got to work implementing the changes as best they could. I live in Johnson County, and some things stand out:

None of the counties refused to implement the law.

The increase in Johnson County candidate filings is noteworthy. With so many candidates, there is a sense county politics will change dramatically under the district system. That is the hope of candidates like Republican Phil Hemingway, running for county supervisor in his sixth campaign, this time in District 2. According to the May 7

Solon Economist:

Hemingway referred to SF 75 as an opportunity for small towns, like Solon, to not feel overshadowed by Iowa City's political composition. Rural residents, who are smaller in number, feel diluted by surrounding

urban interests. Solon, he said, has a very different political alignment than Iowa City.

I don't think Hemingway (or the *Solon Economist*) did the election math. In District 2, where Solon lies, there is a mix of regions: rural, small city, a substantial number of Iowa City proper precincts. There is also the large Newport precinct that behaves like an Iowa City precinct. This doesn't fit the talking point Republicans who favored Senate File 75 assert—better representation for small cities and rural residents. Based on where Democratic votes are

There is a sense county politics will change dramatically under the district system.

located, the Iowa City precincts in District 2, along with Newport, have enough to determine the general election outcome despite Republican leaning precincts like Lone Tree, Solon, and Big Grove. Regardless of the winner of the three-way District 2 Democratic primary, Hemingway should plan to lose again.

District 2 is the crux of a new politics. The Republican meme about rural voters electing one of their own gives way to the reality that candidates will have to build credibility across an electorate that includes incompatible priorities. The new politics is about building coalitions.

Rural voters may feel frustrated if they expected Senate File 75 to create distinctly rural districts and instead find themselves still electorally tied to Iowa City voters. The biggest question is whether the district system diluted or preserved Iowa City's influence. This stands out in District 2.

It seems obvious, but voters inside a district won't vote as a monolith. The coalition a successful supervisor candidate will have to build includes university-affiliated progressives, older liberal homeowners, renters focused on affordability, labor-oriented Democrats, environmental activists, senior citizens, farmers, rural residents, families with school aged children, and more. My point is any candidate who treats "Iowa City" or "rural residents" or "small city folk" as a monolith has signed his candidacy's death warrant. A successful candidate has to connect rural land use, watershed protection, food systems, road funding, housing growth, affordable housing, and taxes with the same needle and thread.

The better question for candidates is how do they build a coalition that actually decides turnout? The answer is far more nuanced than the original legislative debate over Senate File 75 suggested. Things are getting real.

—Paul Deaton is the Senior Solon Correspondent for The Prairie Progressive.

When's the last time you renewed your subscription to *The Prairie Progressive*, now in its 40th year of grassroots print journalism?

Farmers have little say

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) noted in May of 2024, “Giant corporations, along with the industry associations that represent and align with them, dominate the US food and agriculture system. Together, they have hijacked federal farm policy for their profit. Analysis by the UCS shows that between 2019 and 2023, giant agribusiness companies and industry associations spent well over half a billion dollars lobbying Congress to influence legislation that includes the next food and farm bill.” In other words, farmers have little say.

Greenfield is the county seat of Adair County, the sixth most rural county in Iowa. The unique Lancaster Square in Greenfield was flourishing with retail business in 1975. There were ten attorneys, with plenty of business for all. Today, just three lawyers are practicing, one of whom lives in Des Moines.

In 1975, there were 834 students enrolled in the K-12 Greenfield Community School District. Today, after merging with two other districts (Bridgewater-Fontanelle and Orient), the local school is now Nodaway Valley CSD and serves 654 students within the formerly three-district territory.

In 1970, 57.2% of Iowans lived in urban areas and 42.8% in rural areas, a difference of roughly 412,000 people. Today, the state has 63-64% living in urban areas and 36-37% in rural areas, expanding the population gap to over 800,000. In Adair County in 1969, according to USDA, there were 1,335 farms, and in 2022, there were 748.

Henry A. Wallace, the founder of Pioneer Seed Corn, was born in Adair County. He was FDR’s Secretary of Agriculture and eventually his VP.

Under Henry A’s leadership, America adopted a crop management program called farm parity. It led farmers to use significant conservation practices, and the government allowed only a measured amount of grain on the market, ensuring reasonable prices and more conservation. During that period, farmers’ income came from the market. Farmers received half of every food dollar for the crops they sold, which today has declined to fifteen cents on the dollar.

Government-managed markets resulted in more money for farmers, conservation practices were the norm, and rural areas thrived with the ripple effect.

Ronald Reagan became President in 1981, committed to a free market. Due to a Soviet grain embargo, high land prices, and increasing interest rates, a farm crisis devastated rural America in the early 1980s. The all-time high prime lending rate was 21.5%. Generally, farmers take out operating loans in the spring to buy inputs and pay them off after the harvest. However, with interest rates at 20% or more, many farmers defaulted on those loans and went out of business.

The State Historical Society and Iowa State provide these statistics:

- Iowa lost nearly 25,000 farm operations between 1978 and the early 1990s
- 36 Iowa banks shuttered between 1982 and 1988
- Rural communities saw a permanent decline in population, resulting in the loss of schools, businesses, and farmers.

In 1996, with Bill Clinton as President, the Farm Bill was referred to as “Freedom to Farm.” Crops were

planted fence row to fence row. The more farmers planted, the more they had to sell, but that meant lower prices. By 1998, prices had dropped by an average of twenty percent, leading to the worst financial crisis for farmers in over a decade.

Today in Iowa, we have dirty water and rising cancer rates. The Iowa Environmental Council notes that “the primary cause of nitrate contamination today in Iowa’s water is consistently linked to high nitrate levels, due to intensive farming practices—specifically the corn and soybean rotation and livestock manure—which are incentivized by federal agricultural policies.”

In the 2026 Iowa legislative session, Iowa lawmakers passed a water quality package, committing \$319 million over the next twelve years, all focused on cleaning the water at water treatment centers. This crisis of water and cancer will not be solved without addressing farming practices that protect all Iowans, including farmers, who also do not want to drink dirty water or get cancer. Iowa and the federal farm bill must incentivize farmers with funding and laws to plant bumper strips along waterways and cover crops in their fields, at the very least.

If we can afford at least \$325 million annually for school vouchers, the very least we can do is match that for clean water and cancer prevention. Also, keep your eyes on the federal farm bill. Let your legislators know that conservation practices are critical to America’s health.

—Susie Olesen is a retired educator who has lived in Greenfield since 1975.

Unpredictable as hell

We are weathering the height of a mighty strange political primary season here in Iowa. Democrats have a more-than-viable candidate for governor in Rob Sand. They also have two more-than-viable candidates for the US Senate in Zach Wahls and Josh Turek.

In addition, if you live in Johnson County, you are for the first time being subjected at the county level to district-based voting for Supervisor. Instead of casting five county-wide votes per citizen the last election was, in practical terms, nullified by a bunch of Stalinists in the majority in Des Moines. Three counties—three counties out of Iowa’s 99—were mandated to carve themselves into districts for County Supervisor races. Those races were decreed to be held this year regardless of any previous legitimate length of term remaining. The seismic shakeup couldn’t have happened at a more delicate time. Johnson County is having difficult discussions about major issues—incarceration, public safety, the imperative to preserve history, and how best to be supportive of our immigrant community, to name a few. All five of the voices we elected and certified and swore in to serve were badly needed to carry these conversations to conclusion and move us forward. Now, all five are at-risk to some degree.

The purpose of this addled state intervention was allegedly to broaden representation on the Board in Johnson County, giving more of a voice to rural residents here. That is nutty, because now we have five people who only have to care about their own damn district. And no district is truly “rural.” There’s a tiny shot one area may allow for a nominal increase in rural voices being heard, but that’s only true if you believe rural voices were not being heard

before. They were. We had five people who each cared a great deal about the character of the county and the lives and struggles of all its residents. If some felt that was not the case, perhaps our five board officials should have made it more plain. But the dismantling of a strong county-wide electoral process for such a critical level of government was immensely misguided. And that’s what happens when the itchy trigger-finger of fascism grabs hold of local electoral levers and pulls. People get hurt.

Now as to that US Senate race. Democrats are hemorrhaging from self-inflicted wounds here. I lay no direct blame, but I’ll say broadly—this Senate race should not have been interfered with by the national organization and Sen. Chuck Schumer. The landscape is too volatile. Any hint of DC’s big political insiders coming in to try to put their thumb on the scale runs a high risk of costing the Democrat candidate votes in November. I suspect it will also have unforeseeable effects in the June 2 primary results. It was a massive miscalculation to step in.

People are not loving on America’s two major parties right now. Lifelong Democrats and Republicans are fed up. Rob Sand will become our next governor because of this inability of established parties to relate to their voters locally across communities. They’ve spurned people for ideology, and it’s worn thin.

Sand’s a Democrat, but he’s not hugging the overall party hierarchy close by any means. And that’s why he’s surging in this race. Josh Turek is being positively swaddled by the Democratic machine, and Zach Wahls is emerging stronger on the ground precisely because that is distasteful to

many Iowans who might otherwise have considered Turek. Again—no blame here, and no predictions. Just an observation. There is enormous trouble in our politics with parties being unable to read the room outside the beltway.

Wahls was discarded early on by insiders because they bought into the unelectability of “Johnson County liberals.” What they failed to see is that Iowans, disappointed in what their gods of ideology have delivered, are looking for humans now – not machine politicians. Johnson County is home to lots of fine human beings. They are solid, friendly folks of great capacity and intelligence who are ready to provide the governance our faltering state needs.

It was a mistake to anoint a primary candidate simply because of where he resides in the state. Turek supporters are right to say there is much at stake and we must have our best candidate for November. They may also be endangering our chances by believing tired old stereotypes as they decide who that might be.

Iowa generally, and Johnson County in particular, is ready to be unpredictable as hell in the voting booth. All Democratic campaigns should remain keenly alert to this inter-party voter volatility and position candidates to be receptive and enthused if it rolls their way. That’s the only way to get a November win.

—*Kim Painter is the Johnson County Recorder.*

Love of the revenue

Values, beliefs, and experiences shape our approach to life. For example, when an email arrived offering me 2 free tickets to a Minnesota Twins home game last April, I grabbed the opportunity. Raising three children alone made me a bargain-hunting, coupon-clipping fanatic. Family members with financial means were genuinely confused by my meal planning around sales helps. My spouse shared the same challenging money management experience. So, we both appreciated the chance to head north to Target Field in Minneapolis on Easter morning, envisioning catching a foul ball as it popped out to our seats in left field.

The free tickets being offered by the Twins organization was a strategy to win back fans after a disastrous 2025 season. The Pohlads family wanted to sell the Twins, but with roughly \$500 million in debt, no one was biting to buy the team. The family decided to have a fire sale at the 2025 July trade deadline. They traded away around 25% of the 40-man roster, including key veterans carrying high salaries and pretty much desecrating the once admired bullpen. Fans were livid. The Pohlads decided not to sell the team but instead sold 20% of the franchise to three minority partnership groups. But the damage to the fan base during this process was devastating, hence the free tickets approach. But were the people who turned their back on the Twins truly fans?

My father was a lifelong fan of both the Twins and the Minnesota Vikings. A yellowed Homer Hanky from the 1987 playoff race was amongst his prized possessions. He always carried a positive attitude, cheering when they won and stating, “we’ll get ‘em

next time,” when they lost. My love of the game is for players that keep fighting to the end, never giving up, no matter how bleak the outcome may seem. That’s what fans do, they stick with their teams through both winning and losing seasons.

My 8-month-old grandson is now potentially the fourth-generation fan, sporting an extensive Twins’ and Vikings’ wardrobe. We are watching baseball games together and he grins from ear-to-ear when he hears the team’s fight song. But recently I realized that the values for Major

The focus of the future will be betting on the numbers produced by favorite professionals.

League Baseball (MLB) and the National Football League (NFL) are morphing into something unhealthy and potentially dangerous.

After my free game, I was asked to fill out a survey about the experience: Was I aware of the food value section? Did I purchase a jersey or visit the stadium fan shop? Did I purchase any food? How was my overall experience? My response was we had a wonderful time. We didn’t buy any food. The two bottles of water we bought were over \$12, since there was no visible drinking fountain. The only down-side was drunken fans, who got louder and more obnoxious as the game progressed and their alcohol consumption increased. A few days later, the Twins promoted how fans can now enjoy \$2 beers from the time the gates open, until the game begins.

Binge drinking doesn’t fit into my idea of a great time at the ballpark. Staying home and watching games from the comfort of my living room was much more appealing. I do understand the marketing plan. People who drink excessively are more likely to buy food, more drinks, and to purchase merchandise from the shop. If you plaster them with enough alcohol, they won’t even remember what they bought.

The NFL is actively promoting gambling as a means to attract a new “fan” base. The pregame show on Fox used to end with the panel picking which team would win. Now they pick odds for specific players and statistics. DraftKings and FanDuel actively advertise. Fantasy leagues are a billion-dollar business that continues to grow. Streaming services are showing interest as viewership is up due to gambling increases. Love of the revenue has replaced love for the game.

The dream of my grandson growing up to love baseball and football is fading. By the time he is old enough to show commitment to a particular team, fan loyalty may vanish, being replaced by following the statistics of a certain player. The focus of the future will be betting on the numbers produced by favorite professionals; the opportunity for drunks to yell profanities from the stands; and the greed of franchise owners seeking not to improve the game for compensation, but for the hope that inebriated bettors will spend excessively to fatten their already bloated coffers.

—Stephanie Fawkes-Lee is the Sports and Finance Bureau chief for *The Prairie Progressive*.

Wahls for Senate

Iowa Democrats are ready to win again. I'm running for the United States Senate because I believe we can, if we have the courage to fight for it, and I would be honored to have your support.

For more than a decade, we've watched the same movie.

Washington Democrats pick a candidate. They run the same campaign. They lose. The consultants get paid, the autopsy gets written, and the next campaign we do it all over again. Meanwhile rural hospitals close their doors. Family farms go under. Medicaid gets cut. Grocery bills climb. We drink water that we know isn't safe. And every two years, a new round of Iowans wonder why the party that says it's on their side never seems to actually win the fight.

There's a reason this keeps happening. Too many Democrats in Washington don't fight. They fold. They fold to Trump. They fold to the corporate donors who fund both parties. They fold to the consultant class that tells them to soften every edge until there's nothing left for a working Iowan to grab onto. And then they wonder why Iowans stopped showing up to vote for Democrats.

I'm in this race because I believe a Democratic Party that fights for what it believes in is one that can win in Iowa again, but only if we're willing to try something new.

That's the choice in this primary. My opponent is Chuck Schumer's pick. A dark money Super PAC has spent more than \$8 million in outside money trying to buy his nomination. That's the Schumer playbook. Iowans have seen it

before, and it loses every time. I'm not running to be the next Democrat who follows orders from Washington. I'm running to take on the corrupt establishment in both parties and fight for Iowans.

Here's what fighting looks like.

It looks like a senator who stands up to Donald Trump every single day. Too many Democrats in Washington are letting Trump destroy our democracy, staying quiet while he defies the courts, punishes his enemies, and shreds the Constitution. I won't. I'll fight him with the urgency this moment demands.

It looks like breaking up the corporate monopolies strangling rural Iowa. Four companies control 85 percent of the meat market. Four companies control roughly three-quarters of the grain trade. Iowa passed the first antitrust law in American history in 1888 because Iowa farmers were getting squeezed by railroad barons and grain monopolies. We need to do it again by breaking up Bayer-Monsanto, JBS, Tyson, and Smithfield, restore the Packers and Stockyards Act, and stop foreign corporations from buying up American farmland.

It looks like a real future for rural Iowa. A Family Farm Authority to keep Iowa farmland in Iowa hands and open a real path for the next generation. Mandatory Country-of-Origin Labeling on meat. Investment in small and mid-sized livestock processing so a cattle producer in Audubon doesn't have to truck animals 300 miles to a corporate slaughterhouse. Reining in the pharmacy benefit managers that have closed more than 200 Iowa

pharmacies since 2014. Clean water that doesn't give our communities cancer.

And it looks like asking the billionaires to pay their share. I support Bernie Sanders' wealth tax. A five percent tax on the wealth of billionaires would raise enough money to fund the things Iowans actually need: affordable childcare for young families, quality health care that doesn't bankrupt you when you get sick, food assistance for the one in eight Iowa kids who don't know where their next meal is coming from. Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk can afford it. Working Iowans cannot afford to keep waiting.

This is the vision: a Democratic Party that names the corporations rigging the game, names the billionaires hoarding the wealth, names the politicians taking their money, and then goes to Washington and actually does something about it. Not a quieter Republican. Not a Schumer-approved placeholder. A Democrat who fights.

I'm a sixth-generation Iowan. Chloe and I are raising our son Elijah here because we believe we can still turn things around in this state. I'm running for the Senate because I want Elijah's Iowa to be even better than the one I grew up in — stronger, healthier, more prosperous, more free.

That Iowa is still within reach, if we're willing to fight for it. I'm asking for your vote on June 2nd.

—Zach Wahls is an Iowa state senator who lives in Coralville.

Turek for Senate

On behalf of the Josh Turek campaign, I appreciate the opportunity to submit an article to *The Prairie Progressive*.

Ashley Hinson knows Iowans are tired of the Trump chaos. She knows Iowans want change. What she fears most is an Iowa opponent with hard-won, real-life experience who has the back of ordinary Iowans.

Hinson has two strong Democratic opponents, Zach Wahls and Josh Turek.

Both are thoughtful, capable, and similar on the key issues. So, which one is the best bet to defeat Hinson and the MAGA machine?

I've worked with both Wahls and Turek. I am certain Josh Turek has the best chance to win. Here's why.

From birth, Josh's life has been all about breaking barriers, exceeding expectations, and leading by example. He's got the grit and resilience Iowans value.

A two-time U.S. Paralympic gold medalist, Josh was inspired by his mentor Senator Tom Harkin. He became a fighter for health care and a state representative.

For example, in the Iowa Legislature as a member of the House Democratic minority, Josh led the successful bipartisan effort to pass Work Without Worry. This legislation allows disabled Iowans to take a promotion or pay raise without losing their health care coverage.

And just like Harkin, Josh Turek wins tough races. In his 2024 re-election victory, Josh outperformed Harris for President by 13 points. He has repeatedly faced Republican opponents and won in a challenging district. He does it by listening to and winning over conservative voters.

**Iowa's next U.S.
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States Senate.**

In contrast, Zach Wahls has never faced a Republican opponent.

In the Democratic primary for Senate, there is really only one question: Which of these two candidates is best prepared to win over Iowa independents and non-MAGA

Republicans? That's what our candidate must do to win. The stakes could not possibly be higher. Iowa's next U.S. Senator could determine Democratic control of the United States Senate.

Senator Tom Harkin knows this and his recent endorsement of Josh is a clear signal to all of us. Harkin knows what it takes to win in Iowa. He believes Turek has the skills and determination to win this race.

Ashley Hinson was chosen by the national Republican elites and the MAGA establishment to be Iowa's next U.S. Senator. They will fund a nasty, scorched earth campaign to win. Josh Turek is ready to take her on.

Here's the main reason I'm voting Josh Turek in the June 2 Democratic primary: Josh Turek is our best chance to defeat Ashley Hinson and the MAGA mania. If you are still undecided, email me at joe@joebolcom.org.

—Joe Bolcom is a former Iowa state senator who lives in Des Moines.

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice,
but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.

—Elie Wiesel (1928-2016)

Tips for losing an election in small-town Iowa

1. Listen to experts. There is nothing better than having depth and breadth of understanding of an issue that people don't like. If this knowledge helps you evolve thoughtful and nuanced policies that meet the community's needs while being realistic, you're hitting the loser's bullseye. Nuance is death!

2. Prioritize older people. They need things like sidewalks, community spaces, rides to the pharmacist, and healthy local food options. They're usually unemployed and on fixed incomes, too. The trick here is that people will say they respect their elders, but they actually resent the resources old folks require to survive and thrive, and will consistently vote against those interests. Advocating for an accessible food pantry, for example, is sure to put a target on your back when we could be meeting real community needs like a pool. Cash in on the hypocrisy! Align with those without voices and you're sure to be drowned out (get it?).

3. Be just like them. Broke? Single mom? Renter? Gold. Get started by sharing your few extra groceries with other struggling neighbors so that they're sure to trash your integrity online. Be sure to live across town from the wealthy

neighborhood where three councilors, the mayor, and the city administrator all live so it's really clear you're a person of the people. No one wants someone like themselves in charge of real decisions.

4. If you want to immediately tank your prospects, make sure that people of all ages and incomes have housing. When your slogan is "a place to put down roots" and your largest employers are education and senior services, ensure that those workers are able to live in the same community they work in. Say

People will say they respect their elders, but they actually resent the resources old folks require to survive and thrive.

"cottages, not condos" until you're blue in the face and present illustrations of charming, modest neighborhoods that would add crucial housing diversification in a rapidly growing community. Do this a lot, in numerous ways and places, so that people really understand that you're trying to make permanent

space for people like them in the community. This way, they can spread the good word that you are rolling out a red carpet for "slum lords" and Section 8 housing to kill the town's "character" and "demographics." Yes, if you want to lose (and lose badly), provoke a NIMBY reaction so hostile that you question your life choices.

5. Spend time with them. An hour on water bills with one constituent will pay off with their insistence that you're all talk and will never change anything. Be sure to judge the science fair and pumpkin decorating contests. Reply to every inquiry and email with compassion and information so they know you are an entitled snob who's too good to be with the little people. If you're willing to be the only person on council with a public phone number, your position as an imperious, inaccessible overlord is enshrined.

6. Run against rich white guys!

Stay tuned for my next piece: how to eat crow and smile.

— *Lauren Whitehead served on the Solon City Council from 2017 to 2025.*

Justice will come when those who are not injured are just as indignant as those who are injured.

—*Thucydides (5th century B.C.)*

A way of living

A few issues back in *The Prairie Progressive*, I contributed an article on “radical tithing.” This is an update. Tithing is a concept of a conscious decision to share time, skills, and financial resources with your community. It is not a pledge of poverty. It is a pledge of assessing what you need, a bit of what you want, and providing mutual aid above that amount, without putting yourself at risk. The ability to tithe is easier for those of us with the privilege of having a retirement fund. It is a way of living versus a way of giving.

You might share your resources with organizations or with individuals. Maybe you give annually or monthly to a non-profit whose mission aligns with your values. You might help someone out with food, rent, or childcare for a few months.

I thought I was at my capacity in terms of financially contributing to my community. My financial planner has a “retirement predictive model.” Most financial planners will have access to this kind of model. You start with your current age, planned age of retirement, age at which you start taking social security and your best guess for longevity. You input things in your life such as your mortgage, car payments, college funds, vacations, remodeling plans, philanthropy/mutual aid, etc. You can change your investment “risk factor; i.e., more risk while you are working, and less risk once retired. Then you run the model, and it tells you the percentage of chance that your money will last.

We ran this model for me, and I was in a healthy place. Then we put in a whopping big number for mutual aid. We ran the model again. I was still in a healthy place. My planner looked at me with a calm, confident, firm air and said, “Karen, you have more capacity than you think.”

I got very emotional, as I have lived in poverty for much of my adult life and my tithing was mostly about time and skill sharing. Now, I have orgs to whom I currently give. I added a monthly ACLU gift, as they are taking the Trump administration to court on everything and need our regular support. *Little Village* got a monthly gift too, as local independent press is an important cornerstone of a functioning democracy.

In March, we held an in person gathering about radical tithing. You can find the video provided by local government Channel 4 on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2ORn5aHj9k>.

The point at the end of the session was about not worrying too much about the amount you choose. Just start. Pick an amount, or an amount greater than your current one. Share it. See how it feels. In six months or a year, repeat this until you are uncomfortable. If we all expand our capacity, we will fuel those issues and organizations that we value.

You have more capacity than you think.

—Karen Kubby is a business owner and former city council member in Iowa City.



June 1

Last day to vote early

June 5, 1981

1st official AIDS diagnosis

June 12, 2016

49 killed at Pulse nightclub

June 27, 1876

Emma Goldman born

July 1, 1966

Medicare began

July 14, 1921

Sacco and Vanzetti convicted

July 16

Johnson Co. Dems Legacy Club
Speaker: Mark Stringer,
Exec. Director, ACLU of Iowa
Noon, Coralville Public Library
Info: wm.gerhard@gmail.com

July 29, 1901

Socialist Party of America
was founded

This 4th of July is
yours, not mine. You
may rejoice, I must
mourn.

—Frederick Douglass, 1852

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