

IF YOU WORK
FOR PEACE



STOP PAYING
FOR WAR.

More than a paycheck

NEWS FROM THE WAR TAX RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

June/July 2011

Tax the Rich and Corporations—but Not for War! Reports from Tax Day 2011

Tax day was rather lively this year, with new groups out calling for the rich and corporations to pay their fair share of taxes. War tax resisters and anti-war activists added their message to “bring the war dollars home” and cut the military budget, with many taking direct action by refusing to pay for war. Activists in Milwaukee were invited to meet with their Senator’s office after their tax day action. Many groups held tax redirection ceremonies, and once again thousands of dollars were given to all kinds of groups that care for people, social needs, and the environment. We’ll include more on redirection in the next issue, and you can see more photos and videos at nwtccc.org; click on the link for tax day reports.

MILWAUKEE, WI

In Milwaukee a handful of us protested outside the federal courthouse that houses the office of our new Tea Party senator, Ron Johnson. Afterward, Lincoln Rice, Michael Komba, Rachel Stoll, Don Timmerman, and Roberta Thurston did a sit-in at Senator Ron Johnson’s office and were arrested and escorted out of the building by Homeland Security.

The following day, we were contacted by the Senator’s state director, Tony Blando, and met with him a couple days later at the same office we had been removed from. He stated that the Senator feels that cuts to federal spending should definitely include military spending, and he was receptive to our suggestions for cuts in notorious government programs (e.g., School of the

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On a sunny Tax Day, Hanna Offutt and Sandi Mann staffed the penny poll at the post office in Eugene, Oregon. Sponsoring groups Taxes for Peace Not War! and the Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network held a rally, and several nonprofit groups, including Planned Parenthood, sent representatives to accept tax redirected money and promote their groups. Labor singer Mark Ross sang, there was an effective pitch for labor, followed by an open mike to an attentive if modest audience. At least four TV, radio stations, and newspapers covered the event. *Photo by Peg Morton.*



Citizens for Peace in Space in Colorado Springs stand at the post office with the American Friends Service Committee banner illustrating discretionary spending. For a video of their tax day action click on the tax day link at nwtccc.org. *Photo by Donna Johnson.*



More than a paycheck

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NWTRCC sees poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, economic exploitation, environmental destruction and militarization of law enforcement as integrally linked with the militarism which we abhor. Through the redirection of our tax dollars, NWTRCC members contribute directly to the struggle for peace and justice for all.

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Tough Questions

At each NWTRCC gathering (*see page 6*) we have a session for current war tax resisters/refusers and try to provide helpful answers or ideas to questions from individuals in the group. Some situations are just plain tough. When a person has assets like bank accounts, or a salaried job that they don't want to quit, it is very difficult to prevent collection if the IRS computers have put that information together with a tax debt and social security number. On the other hand, many have had experience with active responses to the levies, telling stories about going to the bank when notice of an account levy arrives and having very worthwhile conversations about refusal to pay for war with bank employees. This doesn't stop the IRS from taking the money, but it can give a sense of empowerment in the midst of an apparent defeat. Others had ideas for salary levies, including raising the pre-tax benefits available from your employer to lower the amount of the salary garnishment. Consider the opportunity for letters to the editor or other public announcements (blogs?) about being forced to pay for war by IRS collections.

Other questions came up about trusts, which usually require an experienced lawyer to help set up because there are many technical variations. The individual needs to be clear about their goals in establishing a trust. Some wondered if there is a relationship between IRS activity and the amount owed, but in the group we found no certain answer

except that it seemed to depend to some extent on how easy it is for the IRS to collect; a bank account or salary levy can be done by computer and requires little human labor. The larger tax debts—some thousands of dollars—where the person has fewer obvious assets may require an agent on the case, which can make it more difficult for the IRS to pursue. See the next entry...

Underfunded, Overworked

Among the compromises in the recent federal budget negotiation was one that not only cut out the Obama administration's requested big boost to the IRS budget but actually lowers its current (2011) budget slightly below 2010 levels. Congress has been saddling the IRS with more responsibilities without giving it more personnel or funding, and the agency is showing the strain of having to do more with less. Obama requested another boost for the 2012 budget, which begins October 1, 2011; that budget is still being negotiated.

Backtrack

The Obama administration's health care overhaul had a provision that would have required businesses, charities, and state and local governments to file a 1099 form with the IRS for vendors from which they had purchases of more than \$600 during the course of the year. This was to have started in 2012. The provision was attacked as burdensome and was

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Many Thanks



Network Updates

NWTRCC sends out 2-3 fund appeals a year, and the May appeal has just been posted. We thank all of you who have given recently, and hope that others will be able to donate at this time. We do not close down during the summer months, but it is always a tight time for nonprofits. Your contributions now will help us get through the summer and prepare for the busier fall and winter seasons.

Thanks to the affiliate groups below for recent grants and dues payments:

CMTC Escrow Account (St. Louis)

Northern California People's Life Fund (Berkeley)

Southern California War Tax Alternative Fund
(Los Angeles)

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation
(Seattle)

Western North Carolina War Tax Resisters (Asheville)

NWTRCC's updated list of war tax resistance Counselors, Area Contacts, Affiliates, and Alternative Funds is on the "Contacts and Counselors" page at nwtrcc.org. Print versions of the Network List, which are slightly more extensive, can be requested from the NWTRCC office.

Please let the office know if you are interested in being a contact on our network list: nwtrcc@nwtrcc.org or 1-800-269-7464.

Advertising rates for this newsletter can be found at nwtrcc.org/ads.php or contact the editor at 1-800-269-7464.

Tax Day 2011

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Maybe this small action was effective in its own way! The event was sponsored by WAND, Community Alliance of Lane County, and Taxes for Peace Not War!

— Peg Morton, *Taxes for Peace Not War!*

NORWICH AND NEW LONDON, CT

On Sunday, April 17, the New London Clergy Association organized their second annual community walk with the theme “Taking Peace to the Streets” with funds raised for a local youth center’s workshops on nonviolence to address violence in the community. War Resisters League/New England organized local tax resisters to donate resisted taxes. Five resisters participated in the walk and donated \$570 for “Not wars in the world, but peace in the streets.”

— Joanne Sheehan, *WRL New England*

SEATTLE, WA

On a cool, sunny day at Seattle’s Midtown Post Office, Pio DeCano and Michelle Kinnucan helped raise public awareness about the militarization of the U.S. federal budget and about nonviolent alternatives to passively paying for wars and weapons we don’t want. Three hundred copies of the WRL pie chart and a couple dozen copies of the Veterans for Peace “How is the War Economy Working for You?” national

campaign leaflet, localized for Washington state, were distributed.

— Michelle Kinnucan

Leafleters organized by the Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation handed out hundreds of WRL pie chart flyers and an AFSC leaflet at the Columbia City and Greenwood post offices and also at demonstrations at Bank of America sponsored by Uncut. One leafleter said: “I had around 20 people refuse [flyers], one a very angry woman who thinks we need to kill a lot of Afghans and Iraqis because they are violent toward women (go figure). I also had many people thank me, and at least a dozen warmly, with comments about how terrible our budget is.”

Find out more about their “Bring Our Billion\$ Home” campaign at wwfor.org.

— Ellen Finkelstein, *WWFOR*



Members of Pax Christi, War Resisters League, and the American Friends Service Committee teamed up to hand out hundreds of leaflets at the main post office in New Orleans. They squeezed this successful outreach into their busy schedules amidst continuing activism about the ongoing aftermath of both the Gulf oil spill and Hurricane Katrina. Report from Ben Gordon and photo by Malcolm Suber.

Counseling Notes

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overturned by a provision in a new bill passed by Congress in April.

Backup Withholding

A question about “Backup withholding” came up at the recent gathering, but it is a type of withholding that is only used in certain circumstances and is usually triggered by a social security number on a 1099 or other form not matching IRS records or underreported interest or dividends. The IRS may place backup withholding at a flat rate of 28% on interest, dividends, rents, royalties, commissions, and fees paid to independent contractors. The IRS will notify you if you are under backup withholding and will notify any payers if your name and

social security do not match the IRS records. This is not a type of withholding that is commonly applied to war tax resisters.

Other Taxes

A note came from a reader asking for a list of excise taxes that contribute to the general fund, and thus to military spending. The telephone federal excise tax is the most familiar to readers, although since July 31, 2006, it applies to local service only. The tax can still be resisted, of course. See hanguponwar.org for more information.

Other common federal excise taxes are the “sin” taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and gambling. Lack of participation is one obvious means of resistance, although homebrewing or “rolling your own” are alternatives. If you are considering an ocean cruise, you

LEXINGTON, KY

I handed out pie chart flyers from 5-8 pm at the main post office. It was easy to stand on the side of the driveway with flyers in my hand and whenever it caught someone’s eye, I asked, “do you care where your tax dollars go?” Perhaps one in twenty said “no” or rolled up their window, but most reached out to take one and easily over half seemed happy/excited and thankful to get it. In a few cases, people drove back around (after seeing what it was) to thank me again.

I had met with Kentucky’s Senator Rand Paul earlier that day to discuss with him statements he has made about reducing the military budget. I have been speaking with groups around the state constantly and distributing the pie chart as part of a discussion that ends with letter writing asking members of Congress to cosponsor the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill (HR 1191).

— Steve Olshewsky

are subject to a federal excise tax. Excess contributions to IRAs or taking a distribution before age 59½ can incur excise tax penalties (check your retirement fund rules). There are excise taxes on gasoline, other fuels, and air travel; some cover trust funds such as the Highway Trust Fund, but are collected by the IRS and passed through the general fund. Surpluses in trust funds may be invested in government securities.

The “other taxes” project is one that is underway, and we expect to have more on our website and in print in the coming months. The laws on many of the federal excise taxes change, expire, shift in and out of trust funds, and can be hard to keep up with. If you are interested in this research and its implications for resistance, please be in touch with the NWTRCC office. ▼

WTR Ideas and Actions

Tax Day 2011

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Americas and nuclear weapons) as well as military aid to countries that violate human rights (i.e., Israel and Colombia). We are awaiting further response from his office.

If the Senator's office stays true to their word regarding the need to slash military funding, perhaps the Tea Party representatives can embarrass the Democrats into making drastic cuts in military spending. Time will tell.

—Lincoln Rice

ATHENS, OH

Athens People for Peace and Justice made a 50-foot banner representing the discretionary budget as put out by AFSC and held it in front of the courthouse on tax day. We collected signatures on a petition calling for cutting the military budget and funding other programs. Coverage from local media was very good, with video on the evening news and newspaper coverage. We are doing a longer term "Bring Our War Dollars Home" project with a YouTube video of our banner in front of social service agencies in the area and doing a food drive to illustrate the amount of food that is equal to the \$549 taxpayers in Athens pay for the current wars in one hour.

—Rod Nippert



"A group of us got up early to greet a typical rainy day in Portland—and the morning commuters. We were on two bridges with our Burma Shave style signs and got lots of positive feedback from drivers and bikers alike." Photo and quote from Kima Garrison, Oregon Community of War Tax Resisters.

PORTLAND, OR

Besides holding signs on the bridges at rush hour, a redirection program, "Moving our Money from War Towards Peace," was held on April 15 and co-sponsored by First Unitarian Church's Economic Justice Action Group and Real Wealth Portland, the Oregon Community of War Tax Resisters, and Portland WRL. The program included food from Food Not Bombs and a great display of some of Mike Hastie's photos from Vietnam and more recent peace/antiwar events. Mike also told some stories from his Vietnam experiences, which need to be told and remembered, especially for the younger generations. John Greushow gave a talk on the counter-recruitment activities of Portland WRL.

War tax resisters gave grants of \$1,000 each to VOZ (a day-labor employment, empowerment, and education center) and to Veteran's Bridge Fund (a church-sponsored fund that provides funds for emergency needs, like phone, heat, rent, transportation, etc. for veterans and their families), and \$525 to In Other Words, an independent feminist resource center that has actively supported us for over a year now. We gave whatever donations came in at the door to Food Not Bombs.

—Pam Allee and Kima Garrison

ASHEVILLE, NC

Members of the Western North Carolina War Tax Resisters, WRL Asheville, and the New South Network of War Resisters banneted at the Asheville post office. We distributed copies of the *War Crimes Times* with the Veterans for Peace question: "How is the War Economy Working for You?" The paper's centerfold featured the WRL's pie chart. Then we marched to a local park to join the MoveOn.org gathering calling on corporations, particularly Bank of America, to pay their fair share. We added our voice to the gathering, with the message that true patriots must also question where their tax dollars go and take personal responsibility to withdraw their support of war crimes. The gathering drew about 100 people, and we distributed all our remaining copies of the *War Crimes Times*.

—Clare Hanrahan



On tax day, Steve Magin (left) of Madison county in Western North Carolina, made his annual trek into Asheville to the IRS office, checkbook in hand, to attempt to pay his fair share of federal taxes. When he did not receive official assurance that his tax monies would not be used to support militarism and war he left the office without submitting his check. For more than a decade Steve has made this pilgrimage of conscience, and every year he redirects his resisted war taxes to support work promoting peace and social justice.

Photo by Clare Hanrahan.

NEW YORK, NY

The annual march from the Manhattan IRS office to the General Post Office, through the ever-crowded Times Square, was lively once again, involving activists and war tax resisters from the War Resisters League, NYC People's Life Fund, plus Raging Grannies, Veterans for Peace, and Brooklyn for Peace members. We leafleted and vigiled in front of the IRS, followed by the half hour march with the Rude Mechanical Orchestra. At the post office we met up with two other groups — US Uncut and Right To The City (RTTC). Uncut members were dressed as Bank of America executives, thanking taxpayers for their support, and handing out suckers. RTTC broadcast their message with the “Tax the Rich Shuffle.”

EUGENE, OR

On a very soggy Saturday, April 16, a number of us gathered at Free Speech Plaza for our “I'd Rather Pay for Peace than War” and “Fashion Resistance to Militarism” event. We pitched canopies, set up our casket replete with names of corporations that profit from

arms production, and, undeterred by the pouring rain, bravely paraded through the Saturday markets. We were led by mourners for the wars and war expenses that continue, followed by some in Fashion Resistance to Militarism costumes, signs and flags. We chanted, “We'd rather pay for schools!” “We'd rather pay for farmers!” and were cheered by bystanders.

The short rally featured a cogent talk by Jim Schmidt of Veterans for Peace, and another by two children who spoke powerfully about the effect of global warming and invited all to join the Mother's Day “I Matter!” March. It all ended with a delightful fashion show that featured two children, one a large yellow banana, the other giant teeth and a sign, “We'd Rather Pay for Organic Food than War.” Other fashions included a “Carbon Footprint,” with trails of trash attached, and “Hanford Clean-Up,” covered by a large white baggy suit and a gas mask for protection.

We all returned home, soaked to the bone but with our spirits buoyed. Who knows?—

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War tax resisters, Raging Grannies, and members of the Rude Mechanical Orchestra join Right to the City for their “Tax the Rich Shuffle” in front of the main post office in New York City. See the videos from around the country at righttothecity.org. Photo by Ed Hedemann.

Penny Polling

Groups around the country held Penny Polls, an outreach tool where passers by put pennies (or beans) in jars marked for parts of the federal budget. WTR activists at Friends House in Santa Rosa, California, set up a table with a poll in a communal area of their residence. The Norwich, Connecticut, Free Academy YouthPeace Club had a table at a fundraising concert, which included a Penny Poll. Maine activists tried to coordinate polls in cities around the state and collect the results. Eugene, Oregon, folks set up the poll in front of their post office. These efforts provide good interactions with all kinds of people.

At the NWTRCC gathering (*page 6*) a proposal to coordinate nationwide polls sparked ideas that connected to a talk on today's outreach techniques. Speaker Kwan Booth posed the question, “where do young people spend a lot of time,” with the answer being online using their cell phones. Could we create an online penny poll tool that could be used in high schools, colleges, churches, etc., where the results from the community could be collected and announced to the community at large? How about setting up a “penny” poll on Survey Monkey? Someone said, “We need a penny poll APP!” (Another small group wondered about a “Thoreau APP.”)

Do you have the technical skills to help us develop an online penny poll? If so, be in touch with the NWTRCC office.

NWTRCC has a page on our website about how to set up a physical penny poll: nwtccc.org/penny_polls.php.

Send your ideas and photos, and we'll add to that page.

Letters Wanted!

Carlos Steward, editor of NWTRCC's *Death and Taxes*, is about 10 months into his 2-year prison sentence on tax charges.

Please continue to write him:

Carl W. Steward, 09105-088
FPC Montgomery
Montgomery, AL 36112



Erica Weiland gratefully accepts a grant for NWTRCC from the People's Life Fund.



Kwan Booth and Mira Luna speak on new outreach techniques and building a new economy at the gathering Friday night.

Walking and Talking Resistance

By Erica Weiland

NWTRCC's semiannual conference and meeting took place in Berkeley and Oakland, California, on May 6-8. On Friday evening, about 30-35 people gathered at Berkeley Friends Church for registration, a delicious dinner, introductions, and a panel discussion. Susan Quinlan led us in an introduction exercise that was initially daunting, but turned into a silly and fun activity of nicknames and gestures that helped everyone remember names for the rest of the weekend.

David Gross introduced the evening's speakers, Kwan Booth, Senior Community Manager at Oakland Local, a news website, and Mira Luna, an activist in sustainability and local currencies and the founder of Bay Area Community Exchange.

Kwan Booth described how many young people today use cell phones more than computers to access the internet. He gave examples of media and activist campaigns organized partially or primarily via Twitter, text message, and Facebook.

Mira Luna spoke about the power of local economies that generate most of the food and other items they need, and how this leads to more equal and sustainable economies. She also talked about local currencies and systems of exchange, including the Timebank that she helped found.

"Currency" comes in the form of hours, and everyone's work is equal. If a hairdresser spends an hour cutting and styling hair, she can exchange that for an hour of yard work from someone else, for example. You can see more notes about this panel online at nwtrcc.org/economics-outreach-panel.php.

We met on Saturday at Lake Merritt United Methodist Church near downtown Oakland. To start people shared their favorite war tax resistance (WTR) activism moments from the past year. Responses included participating in vigils and protests, running penny polls at events and in churches, leafleting, and working with high school students. The morning ended with the first round of workshops, in which people could choose from discussions on simple living, confrontational WTR, and outreach strategies.

"Walk & Talk" workshops were held over an extended lunch, designed to get us out walking around Lake Merritt. We split into groups of two or three to discuss two questions: what are the social networks that sustain you in your activism, and what kind of support do you need to stay active? We noted our responses on a short worksheet, and the results were plugged into Wordle.com, which creates a word picture that highlights the words mentioned most frequently.

Sessions for new and current war tax resisters were followed by workshops on homebrewing beer to avoid federal excise tax (with brewing instructions!); taking our Thoreau educational packet into the classroom; resisting Selective Service; and the New Priorities Project's campaign to bring attention to military spending.

In the evening, Northern California People's Life Fund held their annual granting ceremony in conjunction with a special program for the conference. The keynote speaker was criminal defense attorney and war tax resister J. Tony Serra, who gave a spirited talk about his experiences in the legal system, which also included stints in prison. We heard a few songs from the talented local Bay Area musician Francisco Herrera both before and after Tony Serra's speech. Interspersed were presentations of redirected tax dollars from the People's Life Fund. Each of the following groups received awards of resisted tax dollars in the amount of \$1,000 or \$1,500: Bay Area Women's Project, BAY-Peace, Break the Silence Mural Project, California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Civilian Soldier Alliance, Hand in Hand, PUEBLO, 9 to 5, and NWTRCC.

The Sunday morning business meeting was held at Berkeley Cohousing, where some

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Francisco Herrera.



Ruth Hyde Paine of Santa Rosa makes a point during a conference session while David Gross (left) and Jason Rawn listen.



Thanks to our weekend organizers from Northern CA War Tax Resistance and Sonoma County Taxes for Peace, (l to r), David Gross, Susan Quinlan, Alice Green, Larry Harper, Eszter Freeman, and Jay Sordean (and Jon Marley, not in photo).



Kim Garrison gets into the spirit of things.

of us also stayed for the weekend. We pulled off the meeting in 2.5 hours(!). Our two major decisions were to form a Rapid Outreach Working Group to share information about war tax resistance with emerging movements and groups who may be interested in the information, and to pursue

membership in Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI).

The meeting evaluation was very positive. We are all very grateful for the organizing efforts of Northern California War Tax Resistance and Sonoma County Taxes for Peace in hosting our May 2011 conference. ▼

Erica Weiland lives in Seattle and just finished a term on NWTRCC's Administrative Committee. She's on NWTRCC's Fundraising Committee and the new Rapid Outreach Working Group. To volunteer for the Working Group contact David Gross, dave@eorbit.net.

Conference photos by Ed Hedemann.

Profile

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human family and a healthier environment.

But somehow I feel ok inside—that at least I did not intentionally write out a check knowing that about half would be used for war and war preparation. They had to take it from me. I did not willingly give it to them to make their war and violence. (It had to

cost them a little something—all those letters and time and paperwork....)

Now I wonder about the bigger picture and my place in it. And I do wonder how I might meet my own financial needs.... I do wonder what good did it really do... I wonder if I make any difference.

And, then, an answer to my wondering came as I typed the above.... As I typed "I do

wonder what GOOD did it really do?" I had made a typo, actually first (mis)typed "I do wonder what ggod did it really do...."

So I had to stop and think, let out a little "gee," and add a little "oh!"—and then it was "good."

It seems that there was a little god in there!

Funny how sometimes we receive even as we're asking.... ▼

Out On A Limb

Dee Logan, Cleveland, OH

I've kept my wages below taxable limits so as not to be required to pay income (war) taxes. And now, due to health issues, I am not employed. However, the year my mom passed on (2002), I did receive some inheritance. Although the financial person said it was not taxable, it was—and so the InFernal Revenue S(C)ircus started writing me letters requesting payment. I wrote them letters back saying that because of my beliefs I could not give them money to make war—to kill people or prepare to kill people (my relatives all).

At some point I had a personal meeting with an IRS representative in a tall office building downtown, and she listened attentively. I later received mail from IRS, basically stating what I had said—and I was happy to see that they got it right! It was very clear what my position is, and I felt heard (more or less)—but the letter also stated that it really didn't matter to them, and so pay up.

Which, of course, I did not. Penalties and interest grew. I got a few letters. I wondered when and how they'd attempt to collect.

I now owned a home (inherited) and had/have health issues and live on a very fixed "income"—so I was concerned. (A poster I have has a quote from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: "The ultimate measure of a [man] is not where [he] stands in moments of comfort, but where [he] stands in times of challenge and controversy.") Each day, one day after the next, I wondered exactly where I was standing and how long I could stand....

I felt maybe I'd climbed very far out on a limb—and I remembered another saying about "going so far out on a limb and then—another tree grows under you"I don't know what all that might mean, about faith, about hope, about human nature, but I was holding on and trying to stand, even with shaking, quaking knees and trees and uncertainties.

Finally, the day after Inter-dependence Day 2010, I got a letter from the IRS with information indicating that they knew my bank name and that they intended to levy...so two days later I went into my bank to have a chat (witness) with the bank folks and explain

what may soon be ahead. We had a wonderful conversation! We both took our time and spoke our hearts...then I learned that the "transaction" was already underway. (I thought the IRS was supposed to notify intent BEFORE a levy... I got the mail the same day as the levy began—who knows, maybe they began it in the morning, but I received the mail notice in the afternoon...?! I felt that was curious, and unexpected although expected, you know!) It seems the notice said they were gonna levy, then I discovered that they already done did it!*

So the IRS "stole" the money from my bank account. It was nearly the exact amount of my property tax, so I still have to deal with trying to come up with the "green energy"

**Editor's note: The IRS "intent to levy" letter may come months before a bank account or salary is actually levied. Or there may never be a levy, but the IRS is supposed to send the warning letter. When the money is actually frozen in an account or a salary is garnished, the resister's notification usually does arrive after the bank or employer receives the notice.*



Dee with her vigil signs. Photo by Carlos Jones.

and, well, I can't just zip out and get some extra income like I used to before health issues sneaked up on me.

Over the years I have made efforts towards educating and implementing (passing) the Religious Freedom Peace Tax Fund Bill in Congress, but as we know, it is still an idea on paper and not yet law.

And my heart is very sad knowing where much of that money goes—and knowing that it really needs to go for the general good of our

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