



Third Quarter 2017

Bringing Work to Life

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Welcome

Welcome to our latest quarterly issue of Bringing Work to Life.

Our four books explore bringing work to life for those close to us, for ourselves, for our organizations, and for our communities:

How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path: Embracing Economic Disruption, (Praeger, 2014), describes why, when, and how to create an inspiring and practical nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path from more than one source of income:

<http://www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?isbn=9781440831584>

Business Behaving Well: Social Responsibility, from Learning to Doing, (Potomac Books, Inc., 2013), provides a rationale and roadmap for organizations to incorporate socially responsible practices, building on principles of social justice:

<http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/product/Business-Behaving-Well,676586.aspx>

Building Workforce Strength: Creating Value through Workforce and Career Development (Praeger, 2010), describes the application of workforce and career development principles and practices to strengthen organizations:

<http://www.abc-clio.com/ABC-CLIOCorporate/product.aspx?pc=C3236C>

Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization (Praeger, 2003), describes leadership approaches to integrate individual needs with organizational needs for the benefit of both:

<http://www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?isbn=9781567204360>

This newsletter contains two articles: *Beginnings*, and *Workforce and Community Trends*.

Beginnings



Ron Elsdon, Ph.D., is founder of *Elsdon Organizational Renewal*, which focuses on supporting organizations enhance effectiveness through revitalized workforce relationships and leadership practices. Prior to establishing his practice, Ron held senior leadership positions at diverse organizations. Ron is also co-founder of New Beginnings Career and College Guidance, which provides caring and personalized support to individuals in career guidance and coaching.

Ron is author of *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path: Embracing Economic Disruption*, which describes why, when and how to create an inspiring and practical nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path from more than one source of income; editor of *Business Behaving Well: Social Responsibility, from Learning to Doing*, which provides a rationale and roadmap for organizations

There was a time when joining a large organization meant a honeymoon period, followed by the organization working on you for the next 40 years so you would fit the corporate mold. There was one beginning and one ending. Today our work world is different with many beginnings and many endings, which may include short term projects, longer term contract engagements, and various employment relationships. Our work lives become a series of beginnings. What does it take to navigate such waters? Let me offer some suggestions:

- **Be clear about personal purpose and stay true to personal values.** As quoted in *Affiliation in the Workplace*, Janice Brewi and Anne Brennan describe our search for purpose, “the spirit within us, found in the core of our own Selves ... slowly and painfully weaves its way through anxiety, confusion, tension and conflict to hear the rhythm of our own personal tune made up of choices and values that are truly our own. This becomes our great contribution to the world.” This speaks to aligning who we are with what we do. Finding that sweet spot at the intersection of our passions/interests, skills, and external needs. It means understanding our values and how they are expressed in our work. For example, with inclusion as a core value, it could mean joining or creating organizations that embrace differences. With ethical practice as a core value, it could mean delivering counseling services only to organizations that honor maintaining client confidentiality.
- **Embrace both planning and serendipity.** “Awaken the music sleeping on the strings,” these words from the Roman poet Horace, quoted in *Affiliation in the Workplace*, capture the essence of expressing who we are. It is important to embrace both the composition we create for our work lives and serendipitous events. For example, this may mean completing educational programs, such as a degree or a certification, while also being open to new opportunities that may unexpectedly surface from colleagues in those programs. This is one way of creating the fertile soil that supports our development and growth. It is one way of building valued portable knowledge and skills that may include diagnostic, practical, analytical, strategic, and interpersonal skills.
- **Expect unexpected supporters and barriers, and nurture relationships.** There will be many who are supportive along the way and some who erect barriers. Thank those who are supportive and forgive those who aren’t. Relationships are the lifeblood of an enterprise if it is part of a nontraditional, entrepreneurial career path, and important for success in a traditional, large organizational setting. It has been a pleasure for me recalling kindnesses from many people in the acknowledgements section of books I have written or edited. Those kindnesses were instrumental in each of my beginnings and inspired me to give back to others on their journeys.
- **Do good.** *Business Behaving Well* outlines why it is important to recognize that business is in service to our society, not the other way round; to recognize that social responsibility is central to the purpose of business; and to recognize that our economic system is sustainable only when it creates better lives for all of us. From the 1930s with President Roosevelt’s administration, through the 1970s, we established a legacy of broad-based prosperity for future generations from which many of us benefitted. How different this has looked since the 1980s. The earlier foundation is being

to incorporate socially responsible practices, building on real-world examples from contributing authors, and principles of social justice; editor of *Building Workforce Strength: Creating Value through Workforce and Career Development*, a book that describes the application of workforce and career development principles and practices to strengthen organizations; and author of *Affiliation in the Workplace: Value Creation in the New Organization*, a book describing leadership approaches to integrate the needs of the individual with the needs of the organization for the benefit of both. Ron holds a Ph.D. from Cambridge University in chemical engineering, an M.A. from John F. Kennedy University in career development and a first class honors degree from Leeds University in chemical engineering. With his co-author he was awarded the Walker Prize by the Human Resource Planning Society for the paper that best advances state-of-the-art thinking or practices in human resources.

dismantled, threatening the economic and social fabric of our society. During the past recession, our economy almost collapsed in part because of rising inequality and a move to take from the many, including future generations, to benefit a few wealthy individuals. Unfortunately, we now have an administration that will make this worse. Particularly in these challenging times, our personal path needs to include social responsibility as a central component. This may include volunteering, it will include honoring business practices that support those around us. For example, this has meant supporting employment continuity for team members to move from my organization into customer organizations as projects shifted from contract delivery to in-house delivery.

- **Persevere, welcoming change and transition.** As observed in *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path*, in entrepreneurial endeavors, while projects sometimes materialize quickly and the path from initial proposal to implementation is measured in days or weeks, those projects with broad ramifications and significant scope can take much longer to materialize. During that time there may be periods of quiet and other periods of active discussion. There may also be a time of heightened activity when rapid response is critical to meet a timing deadline that surfaces. Holding fast through this process, staying tenacious, is essential. Rarely will a customer's time frame follow a predictable path, patience and perseverance are needed to stay the course. A benefit of extended project preparation time is the opportunity this affords for strengthening and further building relationships. It also provides time to refine and develop a project approach, and to gain support from others. In a conventional, large organization, guiding organizational change based on flexibility and openness is frequently necessary to anticipate and respond to an ever-changing external world. Guiding change and transition requires sensitivity and skill as described in *Building Workforce Strength*.
- **Enjoy the journey.** There is only one!

These suggestions support a series of beginnings in our work lives that unfold from daily small decisions shaping the form of our path, and less frequent major decisions shaping its course. Through many such beginnings, we honor the idea expressed in Rumi's wise words, "Let the beauty we love be what we do."

Parts of this article are extracted from, or based on concepts from: *How to Build a Nontraditional Career Path* (Praeger, 2014), *Business Behaving Well* (Potomac Books, Inc., 2013), *Building Workforce Strength* (Praeger, 2010), and *Affiliation in the Workplace* (Praeger, 2003).

Workforce and Community Trends

The unemployment rate continues a long term decline, supported by employment additions, as shown in the following figure, though, disturbingly, employment additions on average over the past three months have slowed:

Chart 1. Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, May 2015 – May 2017

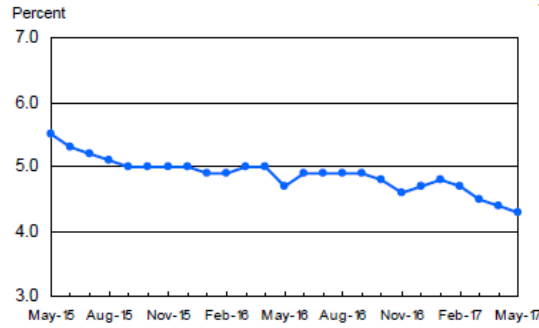
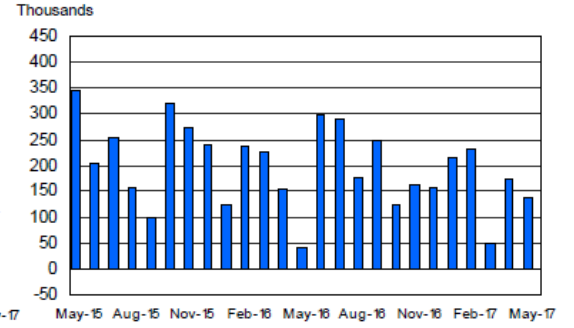


Chart 2. Nonfarm payroll employment over-the-month change, seasonally adjusted, May 2015 – May 2017



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release, The Employment Situation - May 2017, June 2, 2017.

The job openings rate has been in the same range over the past two years, as shown in the next figure:

Chart 1. Job openings rate, seasonally adjusted, April 2014 - April 2017

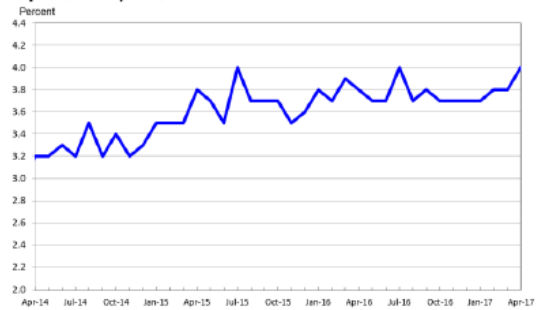
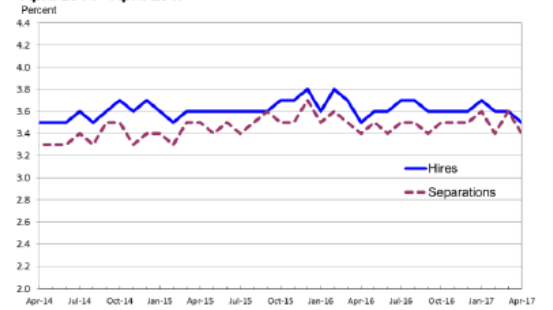


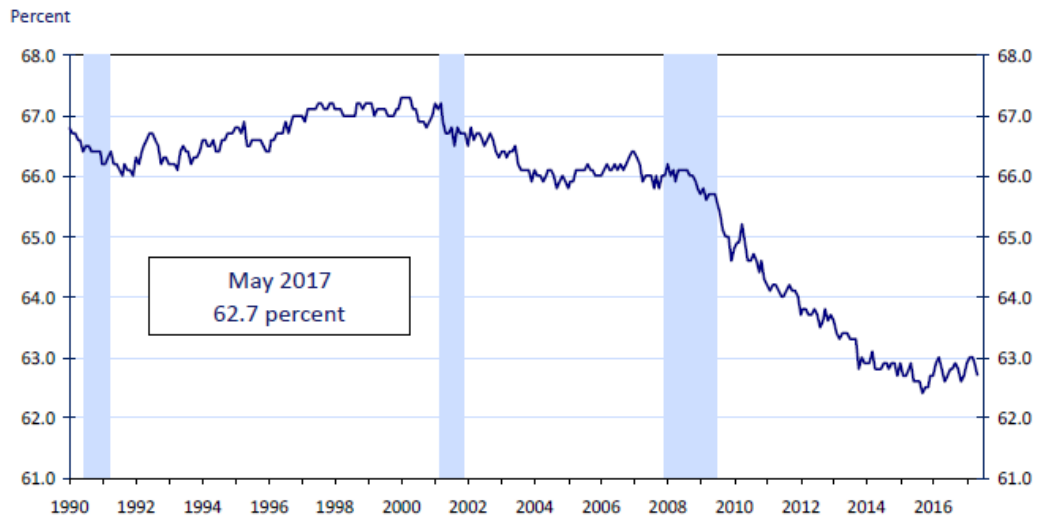
Chart 2. Hires and total separations rates, seasonally adjusted, April 2014 - April 2017



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, News Release, Job Openings and Labor Turnover - April 2017, June 6, 2017.

The labor force participation rate has plateaued, as shown in the next figure:

Chart 2. Civilian labor force participation rate
Seasonally adjusted, 1990–2017



Note: Shaded areas represent recessions as determined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Data online at <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNS11300000>.

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Source: Charting the labor market: Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), June 2, 2017.

And, though improving, long term unemployment remains a challenge, as shown in the next figure:

Chart 12. Long-term unemployed as a percent of total unemployed

Seasonally adjusted, 1990–2017

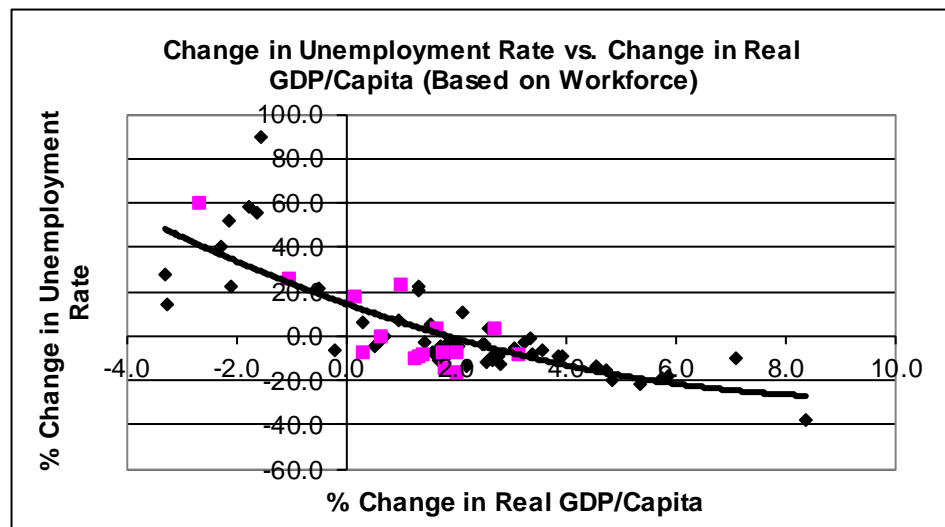


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Source: Charting the labor market: Data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), June 2, 2017.

The relationship between changing unemployment rate and changes in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which we first observed in *Affiliation in the Workplace* for the period from 1947 to 2000 in the United States, has continued to hold. The following figure shows that more recent 2001 to 2016 data (the square, purple data points using real GDP expressed in 2009 dollars) follow the same trend as the original 1947 to 2000 data (the diamond, black data points with the associated trend line, also using real GDP expressed in 2009 dollars).

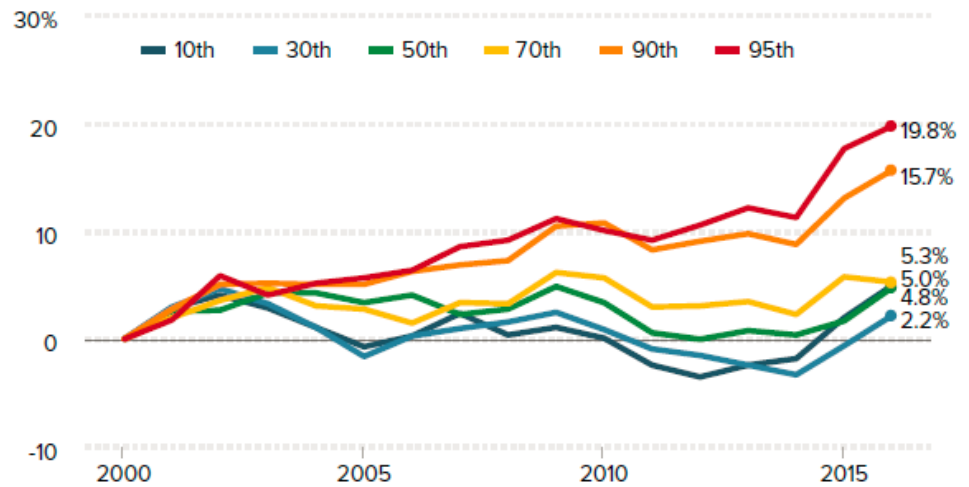


Only the highest earners, those in the 90th percentile and above, have seen

significant wage growth since 2000, as shown in the next figure:

High-wage earners have continued to pull away from everyone else in the 2000s

Cumulative percent change in real hourly wages, by wage percentile, 2000–2016



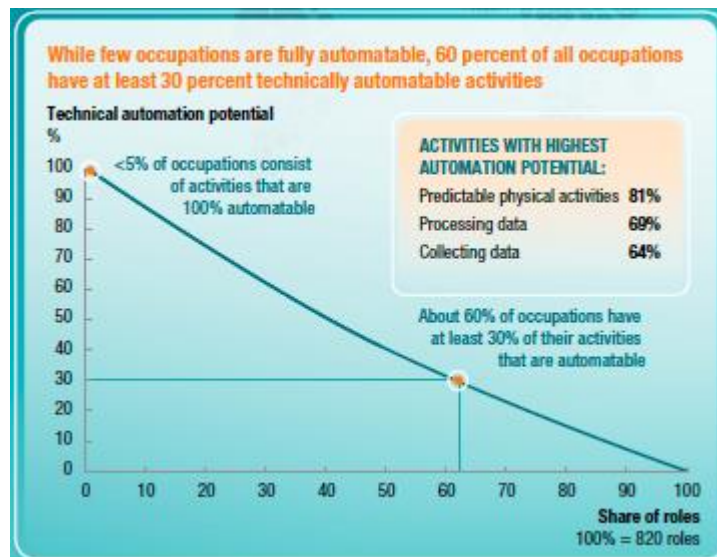
Note: Sample based on all workers age 18–64. The xth-percentile wage is the wage at which x% of wage earners earn less and (100 - x)% earn more.

Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata

Economic Policy Institute

Source: Elise Gould, Economic Policy Institute, The State of American Wages 2016, March 9, 2017.

With wages likely to face future pressure due to increasing automation, as shown in the next figure:



Source: James Manyika, Michael Chui, Mehdi Miremadi, Jacques Bughin, Katy George, Paul Willmott, Martin Dewhurst, McKinsey Global Institute, A Future that Works: Automation, Employment, and Productivity, January, 2017.

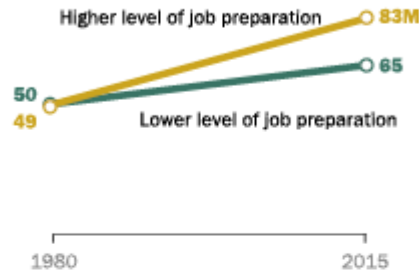
An offsetting trend is continued movement to jobs requiring more preparation, and

recognition of the importance of on-going training, as shown in the next figure:

How economic change is reshaping the workplace

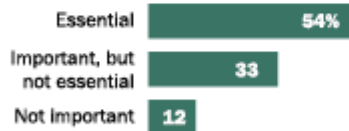
Employment is rising faster in occupations requiring more preparation ...

Number employed, in millions



... and most workers see continuous training as essential or important to career success

% saying training/skills development throughout their work life will be ...



Note: Employment data (top panel) are based on civilians ages 16 and older who are currently employed. *Job preparation* is a combination of education, experience and training. Survey findings (lower panel) are based on adults (ages 18+) who are in the labor force.

Source: Employment data are based on a Pew Research Center analysis of O*NET and monthly Current Population Survey data (IPUMS). Opinion data are from a survey of U.S. adults conducted May 25-June 29, 2016.

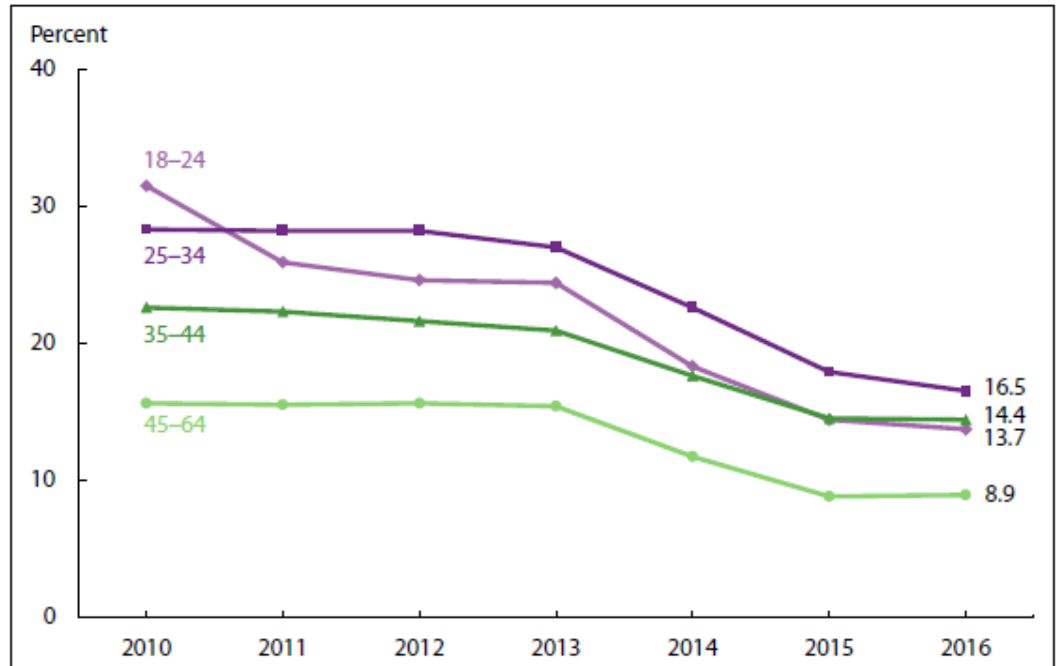
The State of American Jobs

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Source: Pew Research Center, The State of American Jobs, October, 2016.

Unfortunately, the current administration continues to try and limit health care access for many people, particularly those in need. The Obama administration's Affordable Care Act succeeded in significantly improving access to healthcare insurance as shown in the next figure:

Figure 3. Percentage of adults aged 18–64 who were uninsured at the time of interview, by age group: United States, 2010–2016



NOTE: Data are based on household interviews of a sample of the civilian noninstitutionalized population.
SOURCE: NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2010–2016, Family Core component.

Source: Robin A. Cohen, Emily P. Zammitti, and Michael E. Martinez, National Center for Health Statistics, Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, 2016, 5/2017.

This, though, is only the first step along the path we need to take to a single payer system. The benefits of such an approach, used in various forms by other developed countries, are evident in the following international comparison. The United States is bottom of this group of eleven developed countries in healthcare system performance, though this is before the full benefits of the Affordable Care Act are evident.

EXHIBIT ES-1. OVERALL RANKING

	COUNTRY RANKINGS										
	AUS	CAN	FRA	GER	NETH	NZ	NOR	SWE	SWIZ	UK	US
OVERALL RANKING (2013)	4	10	9	5	5	7	7	3	2	1	11
Quality Care	2	9	8	7	5	4	11	10	3	1	5
Effective Care	4	7	9	6	5	2	11	10	8	1	3
Safe Care	3	10	2	6	7	9	11	5	4	1	7
Coordinated Care	4	8	9	10	5	2	7	11	3	1	6
Patient-Centered Care	5	8	10	7	3	6	11	9	2	1	4
Access	8	9	11	2	4	7	6	4	2	1	9
Cost-Related Problem	9	5	10	4	8	6	3	1	7	1	11
Timeliness of Care	6	11	10	4	2	7	8	9	1	3	5
Efficiency	4	10	8	9	7	3	4	2	6	1	11
Equity	5	9	7	4	8	10	6	1	2	2	11
Healthy Lives	4	8	1	7	5	9	6	2	3	10	11
Health Expenditures/Capita, 2011**	\$3,800	\$4,522	\$4,118	\$4,495	\$5,099	\$3,182	\$5,669	\$3,925	\$5,643	\$3,405	\$8,508

Notes: * Includes ties. ** Expenditures shown in \$US PPP (purchasing power parity); Australian \$ data are from 2010.

Source: Calculated by The Commonwealth Fund based on 2011 International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults; 2012 International Health Policy Survey of Primary Care Physicians; 2013 International Health Policy Survey; Commonwealth Fund National Scorecard 2011; World Health Organization; and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD Health Data, 2013 (Paris: OECD, Nov. 2013).

Source: Karen Davis, Kristof Stremikis, David Squires, and Cathy Schoen, The Commonwealth Fund, *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: How the Performance of the U.S. Health Care System, Compares Internationally*, 2014 Update, June 2014.

With a for-profit emphasis in this country we have created a case study in how not to deliver healthcare (additional information about the evolution of U.S. healthcare, and future steps we need to take is provided in a chapter by Deborah LeVeen in *Business Behaving Well*). Countless studies show how other countries have successfully deployed variants of a single payer system. The advantages of a single payer approach include improved healthcare outcomes, effectiveness of healthcare delivery, breadth of conditions covered, universal coverage, lowered costs, facilitation of entrepreneurial endeavors, and removal of the specter of personal bankruptcy due to healthcare expenses. The Affordable Care Act was a small step in the right direction, with many further steps need to single payer, which will benefit all in our community and our society. We are making major strides as single payer healthcare movements gather momentum in several states. In early June 2017, the California senate passed a bill, SB 562, advancing single payer healthcare. The forces in favor are grass roots organizations like Physicians for a National Health Program, the California Nurses Association, and many individuals concerned about the health of their communities. The forces aligned against single payer healthcare have enormous resources, insurance companies, entities like Kaiser Permanente, and business groups that see their cash flow threatened. Not surprisingly we suffer when healthcare is delivered through entities focused on preserving their status quo rather than improving our access to healthcare.

At this time we are under siege from forces unleashed and stoked by the current administration. Those forces aim to enrich those already wealthy, while threatening our healthcare, our services for those in need, our environment, marginalized groups, our economy, and international stability through reckless and abusive use of force. This is a time for courage and resistance to those forces, so we can resume

creating a compassionate and just society that benefits all.

Quotes

“The glory of God is the human person fully alive.”

Iraenaus of Lyons, Second Century CE.

“And we shall, I am confident, if we maintain the pace, in due season reap the kind of world we deserve and deserve the kind of world we will have.”

John F. Kennedy. Remarks upon receiving Annual Family of Man Award, New York, Protestant Council. New York City, November 8, 1963.