THE NEXT SYSTEM

A call for national discussion and debate
IT’S TIME TO FACE THE DEPTH OF THE SYSTEMIC CRISIS WE CONFRONT

THENEXTSYSTEM.ORG
The following statement was developed with input from a small group of initial signatories whose names are included in the statement. They have been joined by many more—activists, policymakers, practitioners, business people, and scholars from across disciplines—in spelling out the systemic nature of the current crisis we face as a society and the urgent need to think in terms of systemic solutions.

It's time for everyone who cares about our troubled country to face the depth of the systemic crisis we now confront as a nation. We must step back from the daily fray and ask: How do we actually get on a path to the kind of society—and world—we'd like now and for future generations? We must begin a real conversation—locally, nationally, and at all levels in between—on how to respond to the profound challenge of our time in history.
“If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending,” Lincoln said, “we could better judge what to do.” Today’s answer to Lincoln’s charge is grim. If one looks at “where we are” among advanced democracies across more than a score of key indicators of national well-being—including relative poverty, inequality, education, social mobility, health, environment, militarization, democracy, and more—we find ourselves exactly where we don’t want to be: at or near the bottom.

The challenging realities of growing inequality, political stalemate, and climate disruption prompt an important insight. When big problems emerge across the entire spectrum of national life, it cannot be due to small reasons. When the old ways no longer produce the outcomes we are looking for, something deeper is occurring. We have fundamental problems because of fundamental flaws in our economic and political system. The crisis now unfolding in so many ways across our country amounts to a systemic crisis.
Today’s political economic system is not programmed to secure the wellbeing of people, place and planet. Instead, its priorities are corporate profits, the growth of GDP, and the projection of national power. If we are to address the manifold challenges we face in a serious way, we need to think through and then build a new political economy that takes us beyond the current system that is failing all around us. However difficult the task, however long it may take, systemic problems require systemic solutions.

The social pain arising from the economic crisis, the steady unfolding of the climate calamity, and many other deeply troubling developments have made it possible to pose the question of large-scale system change in a serious fashion in the United States. Yet, despite this new space for a debate about fundamental change, challenges to the system have until recently been constrained by a continuing lack of imagination concerning social, economic and political alternatives. It is said that the existing system is the only possibility, one we must accept and work with—that, as Margaret Thatcher famously insisted, “There is no alternative.” But she had it wrong.
The good news is that the inability of traditional politics and policies to address fundamental challenges has fueled an extraordinary amount of experimentation in communities across the United States—and around the world. It has also generated an increasing number of sophisticated and thoughtful proposals for transformative change. Together these developments suggest that it is possible to build a new and better America beyond the failed systems of the past and present.

Indeed, new terms have begun to gain currency among diverse social movements and activist communities—an indication that the domination of traditional thinking has already started to weaken. Thus we encounter the sharing economy, the caring economy, the solidarity economy, the restorative economy, the regenerative economy, the sustaining economy, the resilient economy, and, of course, the new economy. There is talk of the need for a great transition. Several of these approaches already have significant networks and thoughtful research efforts underway. New thinking by creative scholars and members of the labor movement and community-oriented advocates is also contributing to the ferment.
It is time for Americans to think boldly about what is required to deal with the systemic difficulties facing the United States. It is time to explore genuine alternatives and new models—“the next system.” It is time to debate what it will take to move our country to a very different place, one where outcomes that are truly sustainable, equitable, and democratic are commonplace.

*Those of us signing this statement are committed to working towards these ends.*
John Cavanagh
Director
Institute for Policy Studies

Marta Ceroni
Executive Director
Donella Meadows Institute

Karen Chapple
Professor, City and Regional Planning
Interim Director, Institute of
Urban and Regional Development
Faculty Director, Center for
Community Innovation
Co-Chair, Master of City Planning
Program
University of California, Berkeley

Theresa Chelikowsky
Executive Director
Florida Alliance of Community
Development Corporations, Inc.

Noam Chomsky
Institute Professor, Professor of
Linguistics Emeritus
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Leslie Christian
Investment Advisor
Leslie E Christian LLC

Tiy Chung
Researcher
SCORAI

Christina A. Clamp
Professor, School of Arts and
Sciences
Director, Ph.D. Program, Com-
munity Economic Development
Director, Center for
Co-operatives & CED
Southern New Hampshire
University

Mary M. Cleveland
Adjunct Professor of
Environmental Economics
School of International and
Public Affairs
Columbia University

Jaimie Cloud
President
Cloud Institute for Sustainability
Education

David Cobb
National Spokesperson
Move to Amend

Larry Cohen
President
Communications Workers of
America

Maurie Cohen
Associate Professor and
Director, Program in Science,
Technology & Society
New Jersey Institute of
Technology

Jonathan Cohn
Managing Editor
Great Transition Initiative
Tellus Institute

Peter Colavito
Director, Government Relations
Service Employees International
Union

Romand Coles
Frances B. McAllister Endowed Chair
Director, Program for
Community, Culture and
Environment
Northern Arizona University

Chuck Collins
Senior Scholar
Institute for Policy Studies
Co-Founder
Wealth for the Common Good

Melvyn Colón
Executive Director
Southside Institutions
Neighborhood Alliance

Ken Conca
Professor, School of
International Service
American University

Representative John
James Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress (D)
Thirteenth District, Michigan

Christine G. Cordero
Program Director
Center for Story-Based Strategy

Teresa Córdova
Director, Great Cities Institute
University of Illinois at Chicago

Jose Corona
Chief Executive Officer
Inner City Advisors (ICA)
Dave Gardner
Filmmaker, Growthbusters
Leo Gerard
International President
United Steelworkers
Todd Gitlin
Professor of Journalism and
Sociology Chair, PhD Program in
Communications
Columbia University
Danny Glover
Actor, Social Activist
Tim Glynn-Burke
Associate Director of
Democratic Governance and
Student Programs, Ash Center
for Democratic Governance and
Innovation
Harvard University
George Goehl
Executive Director
National People’s Action
Alexis Goldstein
Writer, Activist
Communications Director
The Other 98%
Eban Goodstein
Director, MBA in Sustainability
Director, Center for
Environmental Policy
Bard College
Neva Goodwin
Co-Director, Global Development
and Environment Institute
Tufts University
Linda Gordon
University Professor of the
Humanities
Florence Kelley Professor of
History
New York University
Greg Grandin
Professor of History
New York University
Alisa Gravitz
President
Green America
William Greider
National Affairs Correspondent
The Nation
John A. Grim
Senior Lecturer and Senior
Research Scholar
Yale School of Forestry and
Environmental Studies
Christopher Gunn
Professor of Economics Emeritus
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Sarita Gupta
Executive Director
Jobs With Justice
Robin Hahnel
Professor Emeritus
American University
Visiting Professor
Portland State University
Gwendolyn Hallsmith
Executive Director
Public Banking Institute
Founder, Global Community
Initiatives and Vermonsters for a
New Economy
Ian F. Haney-López
John H. Boalt Professor of Law
University of California, Berkeley
Hildegarde Hannum
Board of Directors
Schumacher Center for a New
Economics
Rev. Fletcher Harper
Executive Director
GreenFaith
Keith Harrington
Co-Founder
International Student Initiative
for Pluralist Economics
Lisa Hasegawa
Executive Director
National Coalition for Asian
Pacific American Community
Development
Paul Hawken
Author
Founder, Project Drawdown
Randy Hayes
Executive Director
Foundation Earth
Richard Heinberg
Senior Fellow-in-Residence
Post Carbon Institute
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seymour Hersh</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita Axelroth Hodges</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Penn Program for Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School of Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Hollender</td>
<td>Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Sustain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-Founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Seventh Generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Hoover</td>
<td>Interim Executive Director, US Federation of Worker Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Founding Director, Democracy at Work Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise A. Howells</td>
<td>Professor of Law, UDC David A. Clarke, School of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Hudson</td>
<td>International Executive Vice President, Service Employees, International Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Humphreys</td>
<td>President and Senior Fellow, Croatian Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah Hunt-Hendrix</td>
<td>Co-Founder, Solidaire, Board Member, New Economy Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan T. Isham, Jr.</td>
<td>Director, Center for Social Entrepreneurship, Professor of Economics, Middlebury College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Iuviene</td>
<td>Program Director, Just Urban Economies, MIT Community Innovators Lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janine Jackson</td>
<td>Program Director, Fairness &amp; Accuracy in Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushil Jacob</td>
<td>Director, Green-Collar Communities Clinic (GC3), East Bay Community Law Center, Berkeley Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Jacobs</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Labor, Business and Society, Graves School of Business and Management, Morgan State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saru Jayaraman</td>
<td>Co-Founder and Co-Director, Restaurant Opportunities, Centers United Director, Food Labor Research Center, University of California, Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Jencks</td>
<td>Malcolm Wiener Professor of Social Policy, Harvard University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Kawano</td>
<td>Coordinator, U.S. Solidarity Economy Network, Staff Economist, Center for Popular Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne R. Kapuscinski</td>
<td>Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor of Sustainability Science, Dartmouth College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Kassan</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer, Cutting Edge Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John B. Kassel</td>
<td>President, Conservation Law Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Kēhaulani Kauanui</td>
<td>Associate Professor of American Studies and Anthropology, Wesleyan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina A. Jennings</td>
<td>Executive Director, Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role and Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Kazin</td>
<td>Professor of History, Georgetown University, Co-Editor, Dissent Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esteban Kelly</td>
<td>Staff Leadership Team, New Economy Coalition, Board Member, National Cooperative Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marjorie Kelly</td>
<td>Senior Fellow, The Democracy Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Ketelsen</td>
<td>Coordinator, Central Massachusetts Move to Amend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamus Khan</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Sociology, Columbia University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Korten</td>
<td>Founder and President, Living Economies Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fran Korten</td>
<td>Executive Director and Publisher, YES! Magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolas Kosoy</td>
<td>Assistant Professor, School of Environment and Department of Natural Resource Sciences, McGill University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Kovalik</td>
<td>Adjunct Professor, International Human Rights, University of Pittsburgh School of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Kunkel</td>
<td>Author, Utopia or Bust: A Guide to the Present Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Kuznick</td>
<td>Professor of History, Director, Nuclear Studies Institute, American University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alnoor Ladha</td>
<td>Executive Director, The Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erik Lampmann</td>
<td>Researcher, Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Langlois</td>
<td>Co-Founder, Richmond Progressive Alliance, Richmond, California Planning Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Leonard</td>
<td>Author, The Story of Stuff, Executive Director, Greenpeace USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Michael Lerner</td>
<td>Editor, Tikkun Magazine, Chair, Network of Spiritual Progressives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Levere</td>
<td>President, Corporation for Enterprise Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arina Levinson</td>
<td>Associate Professor of Law, University of Louisville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Levinson</td>
<td>Chief Economist, Service Employees International Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Lichterman</td>
<td>Senior Research Analyst, Western States Legal Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Lingane</td>
<td>Co-Founder, Project Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penn Loh</td>
<td>Lecturer and Director of Community Practice, Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Long</td>
<td>Executive Director, Business Alliance for Local Living Economies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Lovato</td>
<td>Writer, Visiting Scholar, Center for Latino Policy Research, University of California, Berkeley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas E. Lovejoy</td>
<td>University Professor of Environmental Science and Policy, George Mason University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
L. Hunter Lovins
President
Natural Capitalism Solutions

Stephanie Luce
Professor of Labor Studies
Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education
CUNY School of Professional Studies

Paul Lussier
Author, Playwright, Executive President
Me2U Media
Lecturer
Yale College

Christopher Mackin
Founder and President
Ownership Associates, Inc.

Jerry Mander
Founder and Distinguished Fellow
International Forum on Globalization

Gabriel Mandujano
Founder
Wash Cycle Laundry Inc.

Jane Mansbridge
Adams Professor of Political Leadership and Democratic Values
Harvard University

Ben Manske
President
Liberty Tree Foundation for the Democratic Revolution

Peter Marcuse
Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning
Columbia University

Abby Martin
Founder
MediaRoots.org

Rania Masri
Associate Director
Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship
American University in Beirut

Bob Massie
Minister, Activist, Non-Profit Executive

Julie Matthaei
Professor of Economics
Wellesley College
Board Member
U.S. Solidarity Economy Network
Co-Coordinator, Boston Area Solidarity Economy Network
Cornerstone Cohousing

Dick Mazess
Emeritus Professor of Medical Physics
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Robert W. McChesney
Gutgsell Endowed Professor of Communication
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Heather McCulloch
Manager, Tax Policy Project
Asset Funders Network

Heather McGhee
President
Demos

Bill McKibben
Co-Founder and Senior Advisor
350.org

Gayle McLaughlin
Councilmember and Two-term Mayor
City of Richmond, California

Repa Mekha
President and CEO
Nexus Community Partners

Pam McMichael
Executive Director
Highlander Research and Education Center

Zia Mian
Program on Science and Global Security
Princeton University

Lawrence Mishel
President
Economic Policy Institute

Stacy Mitchell
Director
Community-Scaled Economy Initiative
Co-Director
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Anuradha Mittal  
Executive Director  
The Oakland Institute

Marissa Mommaerts  
Communications Manager  
Transition US

Yolanda T. Moses  
Professor of Anthropology  
University of California Riverside

Jamal Mubdi-Bey  
Director, Office of Community Outreach  
Sojourner-Douglass College

James Mumm  
Staff Director  
National People’s Action

Caryn McAteigne Musil  
Senior Scholar and Director of Civic Learning and Democracy Initiatives  
Office of the President  
Association of American Colleges and Universities

Ralph Nader  
Consumer Advocate, Author, Former Presidential Candidate

Bruce Nelson  
Emeritus Professor of History  
Dartmouth College

Jessica Gordon Nembhard  
Professor of Community Justice and Social Economic Development Director, McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, Department of Africana Studies  
City University of New York

Thomas Newmark  
Co-Founder and Chair  
The Carbon Underground

Helena Norberg-Hodge  
Director  
Local Futures / International Society for Ecology and Culture  
Author  
Ancient Futures  
Producer  
The Economics of Happiness

Richard B. Norgaard  
Professor Emeritus of Energy and Resources  
University of California, Berkeley

Bertell Ollman  
Professor of Politics  
New York University

David W. Orr  
Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics  
Oberlin College

Noel Ortega  
New Economy Working Group Coordinator  
Institute for Policy Studies

Richard L. Ottinger  
Dean Emeritus  
 Pace Law School

Thomas Palley  
Senior Economic Policy Adviser  
AFL-CIO Research Associate  
Economic Policy Institute

Christian Parenti  
Faculty, Global Liberal Studies  
New York University

Manuel Pastor  
Professor of Sociology and American Studies and Ethnicity Director, Program for Environmental and Regional Equity  
University of Southern California

Raj Patel  
Research Professor  
Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs  
University of Texas, Austin

Carole Pateman  
Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Political Science  
UCLA

Michael Alden Peck  
Co-Founder  
1worker1vote.org

David Pellow  
Don A. Martindale Professor of Sociology  
University of Minnesota

Antonio Pérez  
Secretary-Executive Director  
Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Francisco Perez
Activist
Carlos Pérez de Alejo
Co-Director
Cooperation Texas
Tova Perlmutter
Principal
Engine of Progress
Sarah M. Pike
Director of Partnerships
Common Enterprise
Development Corporation
Frances Fox Piven
Distinguished Professor of
Political Science
The Graduate Center
City University of New York
Brenda Platt
Co-Director
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Rachel Plattus
Director of Youth and Student
Organizing
New Economy Coalition
Alicia Plerhoples
Associate Professor of Law
Director, Social Enterprise and
Nonprofit Law Clinic
Georgetown University Law
Center
john a. powell
Director, Haas Institute for a Fair
and Inclusive Society
Professor
University of California, Berkeley
Joni Praded
Senior Editor
Chelsea Green Publishing
Vijay Prashad
George and Martha Kellner
Chair in South Asian History
Professor of International
Studies
Trinity College
Will Raap
Founder and Chairman
Gardener’s Supply
Co-Chair
New Economy Coalition
Carolyn Raffensperger
Executive Director
Science and Environmental
Health Network
M.V. Ramana
Program on Science and Global
Security, Princeton University
Kelly Ramirez
Chief Executive Officer
Social Enterprise Greenhouse
Marcus Raskin
Co-Founder and Distinguished
Fellow
Institute for Policy Studies
Paul Raskin
Founding President
Tellus Institute
Dave Reed
Organizer
Fund for Democratic Communities
Robert B. Reich
Chancellor’s Professor of Public
Policy
University of California, Berkeley
Lauren Ressler
Director of Campus Organizing
Responsible Endowments
Coalition
Anne Reynolds
Executive Director
University of Wisconsin Center
for Cooperatives
Burton Richter
Nobel Laureate (Physics 1976)
Professor Emeritus
Stanford University
Corey Robin
Professor of Political Science
Brooklyn College and the CUNY
Graduate Center
Doria Robinson
Youth and Student Network
Organizer
New Economy Coalition
Belinda Rodriguez
Youth and Student Network
Organizer
New Economy Coalition
Saket Soni
Executive Director
National Guestworker Alliance
New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice

Kaitlin Sopoci-Belknap
National Director
Move to Amend

Jill Stein
Physician
2012 Green Party Presidential Nominee

Steven Stoll
Associate Professor of History
Fordham University

Oliver Stone
Academy Award-winning Filmmaker

Sarah Stranahan
Strategic Development Director
Free Speech For People

Lee Stuart
Executive Director
CHUM

Cathy Swain
President and CEO
The Hub of Human Innovation

David Swanson
Director
World Beyond War
Campaign Coordinator
RootsAction.org

Aaron Tanaka
Director
Center for Economic Democracy
Startup Manager
Boston Impact Initiative

Linwood Tauheed
Associate Professor of Economics
University of Missouri, Kansas City

Astra Taylor
Filmmaker
Author
The People’s Platform: Taking Back Power and Culture in the Digital Age

J. Phillip Thompson
Professor of Urban Planning and Politics
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Marnie Thompson
Co-Managing Director
Fund for Democratic Communities

John Tirman
Executive Director
Center for International Studies
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Gerald Torres
Jane M.G. Foster Professor
Cornell University Law School

Rodolfo D. Torres
Professor of Urban Planning, Chicano Studies, Political Science, Culture and Theory
University of California, Irvine

Mary Evelyn Tucker
Co-Director
Forum on Religion and Ecology
Yale University

Joe Uehlein
President
Labor Network for Sustainability

Alayne Unterberger
Founder
Florida Institute for Community Studies

Kabzuag Vaj
Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director
Freedom Inc.

Juanita Valdez-Cox
Executive Director
La Union del Pueblo Entero

Sarah van Gelder
Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief
YES! Magazine

Carlos L. Velasco
Founder
Velasco Consulting LLC
Director
Fuerza Local Arizona

Peter A. Victor
Professor of Environmental Studies
York University

Stewart Wallis
Executive Director
New Economics Foundation (London)
The Next System Project is an ambitious multi-year initiative aimed at helping Americans think boldly about what is required to deal with the systemic challenges the United States faces now and in coming decades. Responding to real hunger for a new way forward, and building on practical experience with new economic institutions and approaches being developed in communities across the country and around the world, we will use the best research, understanding and strategic thinking to refine and publicize comprehensive alternative political-economic models capable of delivering superior social, economic, and ecological outcomes and put the central idea of system change, and that there can be a “next system,” on the map. For more information, see http://thenextsystem.org or write to nextsystem@democracycollaborative.org
It is possible to build a new and better America beyond the failed systems of the past and present.