

# CAPITOL HILL CITIZEN

“Democracy  
dies in  
broad daylight”

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## Bill Gates at the Helm

# Big Tech campaign to fast track nuclear energy

Democratic Senators Booker  
and Whitehouse take the lead

By Peter Castagno

In September 2014, a Google engineer hosted a private meeting at the company's Mountain View headquarters. The guests included a nuclear energy investor and staff from the influential think tank Third Way. By the end of the meeting, the small group agreed to “fund a bit of work in DC” to influence policy in favor of nuclear energy.

That meeting set in motion a decade-long campaign that would transform Democratic politics on nuclear energy — and leave the regulatory framework governing atomic safety vulnerable to the most aggressive deregulatory assault in its history. The Trump administration leveraged the bipartisan legislative architecture that Democrats helped build to gut the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Ross Koningstein — Google's former director emeritus of nuclear energy R&D — hosted the Mountain View gathering. As he explained in a 2024 article, the tech giant quietly supported Third Way, the Clean Air Task Force, ClearPath and other advocacy groups for over a decade, helping lawmakers craft pro-nuclear legislation. Third Way and its partners have since taken credit for “creating an entirely new policy discussion around advanced nuclear energy,” helping draft overhauls to nuclear policy, and working “behind the scenes” to shift Democrats' nuclear views.

In the early years of this effort, public support for nuclear energy was at a low point. In 2016, Gallup found a majority of Americans opposed nuclear energy for the first time since it began surveying the issue in

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## No to war. No to nuclear weapons. No to nuclear power

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was started more than 100 years ago to protest World War I. Today, it is a forceful voice against war, nuclear weapons and nuclear power. In this issue, we rip the cover off of the nuclear industry's multi-million dollar public relations and lobbying campaign. And we interview Linda Pentz Gunter about her new book — *No to Nuclear*

(Photo: WILPF)

# Corporate crime wave slaps Congress in the face

By Russell Mokhiber

Arguably the largest unaddressed social problem facing Congress is the massive crime wave sweeping over America.

We are talking intentional infliction of death and disease on millions of Americans. We

are talking about highway robbery. We are talking about corporate executives getting away with murder — case in point, 347 dead in two Boeing airplane crashes. (Criminal resolution watered down from guilty plea, to deferred prosecution agreement, to non prosecution agreement to — hey, Boeing, never mind your criminal record, here

are some more billions in government contracts.)

If both parties weren't controlled by the corporate crime lobby, then we would see a Congress hauling the criminal executives to Capitol Hill for comprehensive hearings, demanding increased police and prosecution budgets (Fund the

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## Lame Excuses

# From Impeachment to Genocide, to Iran war powers, Democrats fail to act

By Linda Pentz Gunter

“Total cowardice,” muttered a friend recently after spending a day on Capitol Hill visiting various predominantly Democratic Congressional offices.

She was lamenting what so many of us experience during visits to the Hill, where we are routinely met with a whole litany of largely lame excuses made by Democratic offices as to why

they can't do anything. This even includes refusing to support legislation brought by members of their own party.

The disconnect between many Democratic members of Congress and their constituents — never mind the mood in the country in general — is matched only by the disarray within their own ranks.

The low point of this was on full display when Representative Jared Golden, a Maine

Democrat, was the only member of his party to vote on April 15 — tax day — against the House War Powers Resolution (H.Con. Res.40), which would have limited President Trump's ability to continue waging war with Iran. The vote failed to pass by one vote. His.

Code Pink founder Medea Benjamin decided to visit Golden's office after the vote to find out what prompted such a fatal defection — the vote was 214-

213. In an off-camera response she recorded and later posted while speaking with one of Golden's staffers, she was met with possibly the most preposterously absurd justification yet.

“His biggest thing right now is that if we abruptly cut off this war, then that could leave this region really destabilized,” the staffer told Benjamin. “He thinks abruptly ending this could be a really big problem

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