

WHAT'S THE ECONOMY FOR, ANYWAY?

A New DC Conference Tackles Globalization, Widening Wealth Inequality, and Climate Change

For Immediate Release

WHEN: October 5-7, 2007

WHERE: Washington DC Convention Center

On October 5-7, more than 90 distinguished economists, social scientists, and political activists will speak at a national conference in Washington, D.C. about the goals of the U.S. economy and how well it is meeting our quality-of-life, justice and environmental needs. Open to the public, the conference will launch a national campaign to promote public discussion not just about the health of the economy, but about its fundamental purpose and priorities.

Leading experts will include:

Jerome Ringo, President of the Apollo Alliance

Hunter Lovins, co-author of *Natural Capitalism*

Juliet Schor, Economist and author of *The Overworked American, Born to Buy*

Chuck Collins, founder, United for a Fair Economy

Miles Rapoport, director, DEMOS

Peter Barnes, co-founder of Working Assets and author of *Capitalism 3.0*

Bill McKibben, author of *Deep Economy, The End of Nature*

Riane Eisler, author of *The Real Wealth of Nations, The Chalice and the Blade*

Nancy Folbre, feminist economist, author of *The Invisible Heart*

John Stauber, author of *Trust Us, We're Experts, Weapons of Mass Deception*

Karen Kornbluh, Policy Director for Senator Obama

"We've called the conference 'What's the Economy For, Anyway'" says organizer John de Graaf, "because that's the key issue. We all have to ask deeper questions about ends to get smarter answers about means."

As they undertake this probing inquiry into the economy's basic purposes, speakers will reframe conventional economic analyses and tackle issues that will surely preoccupy economists and policymakers in the coming decades:

- What indices besides GDP can we use to measure the success of our economic policies?
- Compared to Western Europe, how well is the US economy doing in creating healthy, fair and sustainable societies?
- What are the economic costs of environmental degradation and how can they be measured?

- How can economists develop cutting-edge incentives for reducing greenhouse gases?
- What is the place of the “common wealth” (e.g. the broadband spectrum) in a free-market economy?
- What is the value of unpaid work such as parenting, and how might it be measured and included in economic policy?
- How can we get candidates in the 2008 elections to ask "What's the economy for, anyway?" before offering policy ideas?

“Recent trends like globalization, widening wealth inequality, and climate change have made it crystal clear that an economy’s success cannot be measured by traditional statistical indices like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or the Dow Jones Industrial Average” says MacArthur Prize-winning economist Nancy Folbre. “We economists have a responsibility to think more broadly about what a healthy economy might do for its participants. We need new metrics and new models.”

Traditionally a subject reserved for economists, the “What’s the Economy for, Anyway?” expands the dialogue and promises new approaches to thinking about the economy.

Opportunities for interviews and media professionals are available.

See the full schedule and register early at: www.timeday.org/economyconference

For further information and a press kit contact:

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The “What’s the Economy for, Anyway?” project is a program of the Political Economy Research Institute’s Forum on Social Wealth. Financial support comes from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The conference is part of the Washington DC “Green Festival,” an annual event sponsored by Co-Op America that hosts over 30,000 visitors.