

Occupy is Occupying



photo: October2011.org

by Margaret Flowers and Kevin Zeese



Though only a few months old, the Occupy Movement has changed the public debate. Republicans are being told by their pollster, Frank Luntz, that they have to change their vocabulary because of the Occupy Movement — no more talk of bonuses, capitalism or tax cuts for the rich. And, President Obama is trying to reframe his stance, as he did in his State of the Union speech highlighting the unfairness in the economy.

But neither party is actually changing their actions. They are trying, through rhetoric based on marketing research, to appear as though they empathize with the American people, that they hear us and understand. The Democrats through their supporters SEIU and MoveOn, even went as far as creating their own five day “occupation” on the National Mall. But, President Obama still surrounds himself with Wall Street advisers and is taking record amounts in Wall Street donations. The Republicans still block taxes on the wealthy, jobs programs and sensible economic policy.

The parties need to know — the occupiers will not be fooled. The American people are smarter than the economic and political elites realize. We are onto their “funnel wealth to the top” game and know that it will not trickle down. In fact, we don't want a trickle. It is time to end policies for the 1% and put in place policies for the 99%.

On our website, October2011.org, we identify 15 areas of crisis such as housing, jobs, education, health care, the environment, and the economy. For each of these crises, there are solutions based on evidence. Some of these solutions even have support by super-majorities of Americans. Not only are these solutions not being heard in Congress, but Congress is actually going in the opposite direction on them; expanding our military instead of reducing it, cutting our social insurances, not investing in green energy, and not getting money out of politics.



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At Occupy Washington, DC on Freedom Plaza we held our own Occupied Super Committee hearing. We thought of it as a truly liberated deficit hearing in which we were able to bring in experts and hear evidence-based solutions that are not “on the table” in Congress. In fact, it is Congress that is “occupied” by corporate interests, which limit what can be discussed.

From our deficit hearing, we produced the “99%'s Deficit Proposal.” The United States has enough wealth to meet our human needs. We demonstrated that by taxing the wealthy and ending corporate welfare, we can raise in two years what the super committee sought to raise in 10 years, and also create a massive jobs program, make mortgages reflect the real value of homes, erase student loan debt, protect retirement security and improve and expand