

## Toxins in Your Kitchen:

Bisphenol A, better known as BPA, is linked to a host of health concerns, such as altered brain and nervous system development, changes in the reproductive system, and reduced sperm count in men. Its toxicity may be most concentrated in fetuses and small children.



Did you know that BPA-based epoxy is found in the lining of canned goods. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) reports that many food companies have not removed BPA from the epoxy that lines aluminum cans, despite widespread knowledge of its potential health impacts. According to EWG's analysis of 252 canned food brands, the organization found that 78 brands are still packing their food into cans containing BPA-based epoxy, and just 31 brands are using BPA-free cans for all their products.

Of course, cooking with fresh ingredients will reduce your ingestion of BPA.

For a list of brands that have BPA-free linings, go to:

<http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/06/03/BPA-canned-food-report?cmpid=tpdaily-eml-2015-06-03>

(Information gleaned from TAKE PART website)

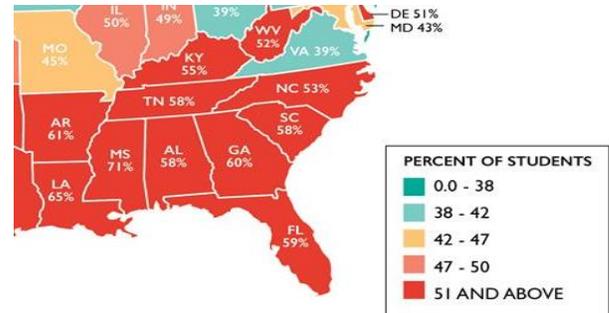
## Poverty and American Children:

A sobering report released in January from the Southern Education Foundation revealed that for the first time in 50 years, a majority of students enrolled in America's public schools are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2013 a full 21 percent of school-age kids in the United States were living below the poverty line of \$23,550 for a family of four. That's a 6 percent increase since 2000.

The federal school lunch program subsidizes reduced-price meals for families living at 185 percent of the federal poverty line, and free lunches for those at 130 percent of the federal poverty line. But if a family makes just a few

dollars more than the official cutoff, the family doesn't qualify for the assistance.

This map shows the percent of low income students in public schools in the southern United States. Florida has 59% !



(Information gleaned from SOUTHERN EDUCATION FOUNDATION website)

## Torture:

National Religious Campaign Against Torture announces the release of a new NRCAT film, *Breaking Down the Box*, a 40-minute documentary for communities of faith, to expose the torture of solitary confinement in the context of mass incarceration in the United States.

Produced by filmmaker Matthew Gossage, the film examines the mental health, racial justice and human rights



A documentary exposing the torture of solitary confinement and calling the faith community to action.

implications of the systemic use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons. It is a call to action for communities of faith to engage in the growing nationwide movement for restorative alternatives to isolated confinement that prioritize rehabilitation, therapeutic interventions, and recovery.

You can watch the film online at <http://www.nrcat.org/torture-in-us-prisons/breaking-down-the-box>.

(Information gleaned from NRCAT website)

## Fracking:

Also called "hydraulic fracturing," fracking is a destructive process that corporations like Halliburton, BP and ExxonMobil use to extract natural gas and oil from rock that lies deep underground. They drill a deep well and inject millions of gallons of toxic fracking fluid – a mix of water, sand and harsh chemicals – at a high enough pressure to fracture the rock and release the oil or gas.

Fracking is exempt from major environmental laws, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, and spills and accidents are far too common.

### What's Wrong With Fracking?

The entire process of fracking — from drilling a well to transporting waste — endangers our water and the health of our communities. There is clear evidence of the growing damage caused by fracking:

- Some people who live near fracking sites have become seriously ill from drinking contaminated water. Others can light their tap on fire due to the amount of methane in their water.
- The oil and gas industry isn't required to disclose the chemicals they use in the fracking process, but many are known endocrine disruptors and carcinogens.
- Communities with fracking have seen declines in property values, increases in crime, and losses in local tourism and agriculture.
- Methane, a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change, leaks from fracking industry sites.

### What You Can Do: Take Action to Ban Fracking

We can – and must – put a stop to fracking. You can help: Sign the petition to ban fracking now by going to:

<https://secure3.convio.net/fww/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=241>

(Information gleaned from FOOD & WATER WATCH website)

This spring the Social Justice Committee signed a letter to Gov. Scott urging him to ban fracking in Florida.

## TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership):

The TPP is a massive, controversial "free trade" agreement currently being pushed by big corporations and negotiated behind closed doors by officials from the United States and 11 other countries – Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam.



The TPP would expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) "trade" pact model that has spurred massive U.S.

trade deficits and job loss, downward pressure on wages, unprecedented levels of inequality and new floods of agricultural imports. The TPP not only replicates, but expands NAFTA's special protections for firms that offshore U.S. jobs. And U.S. TPP negotiators literally used the 2011 Korea FTA – under which exports have fallen and trade deficits have surged – as the template for the TPP.

This secretive deal could:

- offshore American jobs and increase income inequality, jack up the cost of medicines
- empower corporations to attack our environmental and health safeguards
- roll back Wall Street reforms
- expose the U.S. to unsafe food and products
- elevate individual foreign firms to equal status with sovereign nations

Although it is called a "free trade" agreement, the TPP is not mainly about trade. Of TPP's 29 draft chapters, only five deal with traditional trade issues. One chapter would provide incentives to offshore jobs to low-wage countries. Many would impose limits on government policies that we rely on in our daily lives for safe food, a clean environment, and more. Our domestic federal, state and local policies would be required to comply with TPP rules.

(Information gleaned from PUBLIC CITIZEN website)