



March 26th, 2019

For Immediate Release

Contact: Debbie Notkin, T: (510) 418-0627 E: kith@spicejar.org

Contact: JP Massar, T: (510) 883-0580 E: massar@alum.mit.edu

Strike Debt Bay Area: strike-debt-bay-area.tumblr.com

Strike Debt Bay Area on Track to Eliminate Millions in Medical Debt for East Bay Residents.

Oakland: Strike Debt Bay Area (SDBA), an organization devoted to working against unjust debt, in conjunction with national non-profit RIP Medical Debt (ripmedicaldebt.org), has begun its campaign to lift millions of dollars of medical debt from the backs of East Bay residents.

By buying up medical debt at pennies on the dollar, SDBA and RIP are in the process of turning millions of dollars of impossibly burdensome East Bay medical debt into... nothing. TV host John Oliver explained how this works on *Last Week Tonight* in 2017 (tinyurl.com/yy833k95). Debbie Notkin, one of SDBA's organizers, said:

"We're buying it, and then we're going to rip it up. The only losers will be the bottom-feeding debt collectors who would otherwise be paid to harass poor people. Donors have already made it possible to eliminate some \$300,000 in debt; our immediate goal is to reach \$1,500,000."

Debtors will get a letter informing them that their obligation to pay has been terminated; they will no longer be receiving nasty letters and harassing phone calls from debt collectors; and they can concentrate on getting, or staying, healthy without the stress of unpayable debt.

Kate Harrison, City of Berkeley Councilmember (for identification purposes only), an advocate for universal health care, commented:

"Companies are raising insulin prices to the point where people are selling off their possessions, going into massive debt... or dying for lack of funds. This campaign is an excellent way to call attention to the absurdity of our medical services payment system, while helping out those seriously in need. Just a \$10 donation will unburden someone - who has to choose between paying medical debts and paying for life's necessities - of \$1000 of debt."

In similar campaigns, Michigan nurses erased \$1 million in medical debt locally (www.ripmedicaldebt.org/michigan-nurses/), and high school students in Pensacola, Florida eradicated some \$2.5 million (www.ripmedicaldebt.org/pensacola-debt-sharks-whale/).

Donations can be made at the campaign [website](#) and a [FAQ](#) – with more information on the history of these campaigns and how this is all possible – is also available there: bit.ly/2GVctgT