Barbara Lee’s Peacebuilding Discourse as Transformative Social Justice Politics

Ellen W. Gorsevski  
*Bowling Green State University, elleng@bgsu.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/smc_pub](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/smc_pub)

Repository Citation  
Gorsevski, Ellen W., "Barbara Lee's Peacebuilding Discourse as Transformative Social Justice Politics" (2021). *School of Media and Communication Faculty Publications*. 56.  
[https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/smc_pub/56](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/smc_pub/56)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Media and Communication at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Media and Communication Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.
Abstract

This essay explores discourses of Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), appreciating her intersectional standpoint as a leader in Trumpian times, and as the lone AA woman dissenter who has long advocated peace over war in the United States” Congress in the aftermath of two politically seismic shifts: (1) September 11, 2001 and (2) the rise of right wing politics in the U.S. and internationally. As bellicose and right wing politics have expanded, Lee’s nonviolent voice has persisted, offering critiques of (1) post 9/11 and (2) Trump Administration era xenophobic rhetoric, policies, and systems. Rhetoric of White male politicians pervades discourse studies, yet comparatively little has been studied on countervailing peacebuilding discourses of U.S. Congresswomen. This study refocuses discourse scholarship on sociopolitical justice rhetoric across the activist career of Congresswoman Barbara Lee. Lee’s career-spanning politics bears study as successful peacebuilding leadership. Lee’s political discourses espousing peacebuilding exemplify contemporary women of color’s activism, which rebalances foci in discourse studies between necessary critiques of right politicians and legislation. Studying transformative politics recenters leaders of social, environmental, and economic justice who buck status quo via peacebuilding discourse (PD).

Keywords congresswoman Barbara Lee, political activism, peacebuilding discourse, Department of Peacebuilding, women of color leadership

Acknowledgements:

Great thanks in abundance go to the following:

Zhao Ding for research assistance; the office staff of, and Congresswoman Barbara Lee herself, for speaking with me; The Waterhouse Family Institute (WFI) of Villanova University for research funding support; anonymous peer reviewer at Journal of Black Studies for helpful suggestions in revisions of the manuscript; and Editor Ama Mazama and the editorial staff of the Journal of Black Studies.

Sage Open Access link

Sage Open Access link to full scholarly, anonymously (a.k.a. ‘blind’) peer reviewed article:

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0021934720964924