



# THE Unheard HERALD

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## Strategic Vision for a Viable American Future

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### Open letter with a moral story of truth for our time

**Dear Mr President:**

*"In this letter I will share my thoughts about helping you become a successful and respected president on behalf of the American people by doing what is truly right."* It's now a year after I wrote that first sentence and your prospects for accomplishing that are dim. Many of your supporters are still hopeful you will come through for them; but much of the population is in the mode of resistance to your presidency because they don't like what you stand for or what you are saying and doing. Although it's tempting to simply join in and fight with the resistance crowd, given your performance thus far; that is not what this letter is about.

But before I get to that, I want to be clear whose interests I am representing; because it is these people whom you've promised to serve. And, your success or failure will be established on how well you serve their needs, along with millions of other Americans, many of whom voted for someone else or didn't even vote in the 2016 election. We're talking about ordinary American families, which is most of the population.

### Hardworking American Families

I write this open letter to you, Mr President, on behalf of the interests expressed by the tens of millions of people who put you in office by voting for you. I do not buy into the notion that these are mostly deplorable xenophobic racists, misogynists, and bigots. But your tepid non-specific responses to violence and tragedy perpetrated by these small but violent far-right racist hate groups, Mr President, gives them the tacit appearance of credence they certainly don't deserve, while degrading the support of good hardworking and caring people who aren't racists, but supported you regardless. In fact, although some of these extremist behave in deplorable ways, I see most of

your supporters simply as good people who, like me, are angry and have had their fill of empty promises from establishment politicians—the "old guard" and more recently, childish politicians who are intent on doing whatever it takes to get their own way in order to sustain and serve a bro-



Image 1. Families are struggling with stress and hardship trying to make ends meet. They face the pressure of unaffordable health-care and unaffordable healthcare insurance costs, with inadequate wages.

ken and rigged system so they can stay in power.

The people I'm referring to are the hard-working American families, so many of whom are struggling, who are sick and tired of

establishment political elites lying to them and picking them clean with policies that hurt ordinary American people, while giving away ever more breaks and benefits to the richest of the rich — the Wall Street corporate billionaire class. What motivated them to vote for you, Mr President, besides their passionate dislike of the Democratic candidate or simply a protest vote against the system, was their belief and trust in your expressed concern for their wellbeing and the seemingly sincere promises you made to them. You told everyone: “The system is a broken disaster; and only I can fix it.” And they believed you;

## THE Unheard HERALD

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*Herald* (n): A messenger that conveys news, proclaims, announces or warns; one that supports or advocates, esp. for notable events or major change, often presaging what is to come. (Webster)

“We have it in our power to begin the world over again...”

“It is error only, and not truth, that shrinks from inquiry... The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason... Reason obeys itself; and ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it.” —

Thomas Paine

### On Content and Length of this “Letter-Essay”

Mr President, this is not a short “presidential briefing”; it is an open sharing of my thoughts with you as a 71-year old patriotic American citizen—thoughts that I’m convinced would help save your presidency by helping all Americans. So without apology, as I begin to write this I don’t know at the outset how long this letter-essay will be. It’s been written that you don’t like to read long detailed documents or books, so all I can promise is that I will endeavor to keep it an interesting book, but thorough; and that it will be worthwhile for you to seriously consider. Yet, I certainly hold no illusion that it will even reach your busy desk, let alone that you will have the interest or care to find the time to read it.

Nonetheless, I will entertain the fantasy that I am actually communicating with you personally in a conversational, even colloquial manner at times with “street language” phrases to make clear a point; but with respect for the office of the presidency and without any intention to personally insult your dignity or intellect. So let’s call this a “non-fiction fantasy novel”—a *real* story. And further, that you will care enough to listen, reflect and contemplate the status of your presidency and your potential for long-term success—which will be determined, not by fickle temporary popularity “approval” polls, and certainly not by what you boast about; but by the impact of your legacy on America’s future.

I’ll try to bring it to your attention somehow; but I don’t do Twitface, Snapface, Tumbleface, Instaface, Yourface, Redface or Shitface, and I only started using Faceplant last year; so, I hope some little birdie helps get it to you. (:o) ... And if it reaches you only as some filtered “bullet point summary” from you staff, don’t waste your time with that, as you will entirely miss the essence of what this book is about. I’ve already made the bullet summary of my strategic vision, which you can get from my associated poster at the link ([www.TheUnheardHerald.com](http://www.TheUnheardHerald.com)), so there’s no suspense there. Simply have one of your staff make a two-sided copy of this eNewspaper edition, put a nice presidential plastic cover on it, and take it home to read by yourself on your own time. Thank you, Mr President.

they believed what you said to them, that even though you are personally very rich, you are the one who represented their interests.

## Our Future

The future for all these people, their children and grandchildren, is the future I care about; because it is the same future that impacts all Americans—the full range, from middle and upper-middle class professionals and small business owners to skilled and unskilled labor workers, union or

not, urban jobs or rural agriculture. It includes the working poor struggling with less than a livable wage; and the unemployed who are trying, but either can’t find work and want to, or cannot work for whatever reasons. And it includes the truly poor and destitute just trying to keep themselves and their families warm and dry and fed. Although they differ in their lot-in-life, they all want to be healthy and have healthy families, and to have a viable future for their children. And as patriotic Americans, they want to have their country’s democracy work



Image 2. Family farms are crucial to our food, our culture, our communities and America. They are under threat of climate change in terms of excessive heat, drought, low water tables and the risk of flooding; as well as “Big Ag” corporate takeovers. Farm labor is a make-or-break issue for farm owners.

for them; starting with having their voting rights respected and having their votes count. They care about the social and economic health of their country, as well; and of course, their safety and our country’s national defense.

These are the people you claimed as “your people”, Mr



Image 3. Nothing can defeat the power of hard work, and that is something Latinos have embodied for generations. A nation is built on the backs of hardworking people. America’s future is built on the working class and most Latinos are working class. Latinos are willing to do the jobs most Americans will not do. And family values are highly regarded by Latinos. “Why Latinos are the Best Expats in America”, Xpat-Nation.com, 8-6-2015

President, and they are the people I care about as well; even though you and I might seem to be on the opposite sides of a wide political divide. But that might actually end up being something amenable to transformation *if* we both care about the wellbeing of our country and its people, now and on out into the future—and

out of respect for the office of the presidency, cynicism and actual behavior thus far aside, I will take you for your word and address your performance against that throughout this letter-essay—as long as you end up doing what’s truly right for us all.

Sadly, however, that has not happened thus far and the moves you are making seem only to exacerbate the problems we face, as well as the performance of your administration. Unless you are able and willing to seriously engage in a new strategic direction, your administration will go down in deep hypocritical destruction and failure—the greatest failure in modern times, perhaps in our history. You will not be remembered as a friend of the working class.

This letter to you, Mr President, is about how to turn that around.

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## Preliminaries: Who and What

For you, Mr President, and anyone else reading this including my progressive friends and colleagues, I want to be clear that, although I intend to keep this positive, this letter does not convey some sort of “fawning” or “obsequious” attempt to curry your favor, interest or assent to these ideas by appealing to your ego or needs for flattery and self-aggrandizement. That is not what you will find from me; what you will get is my honest and candid analysis and comments.

The success I’m talking about is that which concerns the wellbeing of America, my country, and all its people. I will introduce myself below; but please understand from the start that I am a pragmatic realist and what I share here is focused on *real* needs and *real* solutions that are grounded in *reality*; solutions that are implementable in a practical policy sense; that serve not only the American people but your personal and political interests along with them; and are not based on false narratives attempting to pull the wool over people’s eyes. Woe to those politicians, Democrat or Republican,

who betray the American people yet again. We're talking about basic good management, Mr President; which the Republican Party continually demonstrates it's so inept at.

Many of your followers claim to



Image 4. Assembly line worker in automobile factory. We are losing heavy manufacturing jobs. Our policies need to be designed to keep these jobs home—not to increase corporate profits by sending them overseas in a global capitalist race to the bottom.

like you because, they think, “He tells it like it is”; which they interpret as “frank honesty”. Actually, Mr President, having observed you and your statements and actions for many months, I find that you tell it like you *want* it to be, or what you want others to *think* it is. You often seem to be disengaged from reality. You will find that I actually “tell it like it is—for *real*.” And I hope you will be convinced, after contemplating what I present, that is what is in your own interest. If we want to be successful, we're not playing some cynical game about how to buffalo the American people by *making up* some reality, simply because it might be entertaining. That won't hold for the long flight.

You are the president and, of course, it is within your power to

do whatever you decide you want to do, owning the consequences of your own decisions. However, I would think it is within your personal and political interest to succeed on behalf of the near-term and long-term needs of the American people; and

so the thoughts I offer you should not be considered as yet some other set of half-baked “proposals” for you to accept or reject or modify at will to your personal liking; or that follow some preconceived notion of “ideologically conservative” solutions, what-

ever those might be.

This is how Republicans typically operate. Whatever the problem, usually never really well defined or understood, they try to preemptively hammer an ideological stake through it; and then bullshit the American people with the goal of their ideological beliefs succeeding, not America or its people succeeding—in fact, time and time again, the people usually get screwed by Republican “solutions”, while simultane-

ously being personally chastised for their own “lack of success... if they'd just not be so lazy and work harder”. This is simply repugnant ideological myth and dogma that I categorically reject.

I'm presenting here what is minimally required to address core systemic failures in an integrated comprehensive way in order for the American people to hold out reasonable hope for an eventually functioning system that creates the conditions for the likelihood of them succeeding, with a viable future for themselves, their children and the very posterity of their descendants. This is an integrated systems perspective for success; not a piecemeal hodgepodge of partial efforts that on their own have a high probability of failing to address the realities of the ailments we face. It certainly doesn't cover “everything”; but



Image 5. More women are becoming entrepreneurs in manufacturing, like Becky who owns and runs her own welding shop serving the aerospace industry. It is small-scale community-based owner-run businesses that create the most jobs in America—not large corporations with distant owners ever focused on reducing labor costs by moving jobs overseas.

it is a solid platform from which people down the road will have the structure and tools they need to address seemingly intractable

problems. Let us not slam the door to America's future. This is all very feasible—if you inspire your followers to be the backbone of congress, pressing them to support this program on behalf of and for the people.

If you're still with me, Mr President, let me set the table for this discussion.

## Setting the Table — Agree or not, let me be clear about where I'm coming from

### Hopping over a few hurdles

Mr President, although I could take this letter in any of a number of directions since we are faced with such a multitude of problems and issues, I do not intend it to be a "wash list" of complaints covering everything that besets us; nor by omission, do I intend any implication about the importance or not of this or that issue. For example, as important as they are, I will say little if anything directly about immigration, education, race, gender, the media, war, foreign policy or national security, among many other things. Everyone has their pet issues and I'm sure there would be critiques about what I didn't address, but should have, regardless. That is not what this letter is about. What I'm suggesting below cuts across many issues; focusing on a few strategic success issues and reasonable, rational and moral solutions that are easily imple-

mentable and will be of immense benefit to the American people.

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### This letter is about the core essential elements of a strategic success vision regarding "gateway" issues...

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Further Mr President, although personally I find much of your rhetoric and behavior repugnant; and I disagree with much if not most of what you say and do; that is also not what this letter is about. With respect, it is actually about *helping you succeed* in the only way that the American people can participate in your success—by focusing on what is required to heal our systemic ailments and ensure we are properly equipped to deal with the ominously uncertain challenges of our future. If you think you can just take some of the ideas, say something about them yourself, and thus co-opt this effort, you are sorely mistaken—you lack the essential ingredients: "integrity" and "credibility". More about strategic strengths and weaknesses below.

This letter is about the core essential elements of a strategic success vision regarding "gateway" issues that will ensure the people and generations who follow us will have the best chance of addressing systemic problems and sustaining some semblance of wellbeing as time moves on. It's not intended to cover everything; but if the only things accomplished are these core gateway elements, that would constitute a tremendously successful presidency, regardless of who that president was.

## Fits and Starts

Thus far your presidency has had unhelpful, even clumsy, fits and starts where you have found yourself off balance with your approval polls sinking. Although some Americans, especially institutions like the mainstream media, respond fawningly to a military strike as if it's the essence of "being presidential"; those presumptuous and immature accolades are momentary and quickly fade on the long path toward peace and security. Irrespective of specific tactical efficacy, you cannot "bomb" your way into a successful administration, regardless of how big and impressive the bombs are. And, although you've signed many "presidential orders" to demonstrate your effort to meet various campaign promises; these are not only not strategic, they often become merely a political display of patronizing mean-spirited policies that don't really address the big problems. Before your window of opportunity closes, Mr President, you need some *real* strategic successes—strategic not in the sense of "my party won another victory, isn't that the greatest thing ever?"; but strategic in the long run for the American people.

Many of the things you are dealing with currently will come and go; and your success on those many fronts will be determined by how you work these things out in the public arena. Those demands on you do not go away. Apparently, you have "strategic" advisors on your staff that you "trust"; but given how things have been manifesting for you,



Image 6. Heavy equipment manufacturing jobs, like machine shops, are disappearing. Journeyman skills, like that of this machinist, are being replaced by automation or overseas labor. Automation technology is a reality that needs to be addressed comprehensively and its impacts on labor compassionately.

much of what they are encouraging you to do seems tactical at best, even pulling your presidency down amidst chaos, confusion, distrust, hypocrisy and fear. This includes the current gaggle of ideological numskulls that make up the Republican congress; and I know you know that, Mr President, whether or not you can say it publicly.

### Going directly to the people

Let's be perfectly clear. You will need to go directly to the people who voted for you, Mr President, and have *them* press congress on doing the right thing for America. I know you love doing that; so do it! But first you have to know what those right things are; and thus far you've demonstrated that neither you nor the Republican Party have a clue about what's needed for a viable American future.

If you step forward on these strategic elements as I outline them,

I'm sure you will gain massive support from the people, such that you never even thought was possible. It's literally not up to you convincing entrenched Republican ideologues in congress; it's up to you to convince the people to support your program and have *them* convince congress. You might even

find a large amount of support from the other side of the aisle as well, if you take seriously what I'm offering. We're all in this together, Mr President, and we need to approach it that way. You clobbered the Republican establishment thinking in the primaries and on through the election; so there is no need to consider yourself anchored to their failing ideological follies. You can step out on behalf of *all* of the American people instead with a program designed to succeed for our future.

### By way of introduction

#### I'm a 71-yr old politically engaged military veteran

This letter is not a publicity ploy, Mr President; I'm very much for real, with my personal and professional reputation on the line, and you can check me out politi-

cally and professionally. Even the FBI might have some information about me as I've been a publicly visible and politically engaged activist for many years; I don't know, you'd have to ask them, but they always seem to be keeping track of political dissidents like me.

### 1960s to Bernie Sanders

You and I are of the same era, close to the same age, as I turned 71 years old this November and you in June, both of us born at the head of the boomer cohort in 1946; so let us share that as a common basis.

Regarding the Vietnam War, you and I were both in college from 1964-68 with student deferments. However, you had some nice breaks with your high school military academy and waivers lat-



Image 7. Vietnam Veteran, Captain Root Routledge, Navigator, C-141 military airlift and EC-47 tactical military intelligence, United States Air Force, 1968-72.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

er on; whereas I had to deal with the war head-on upon graduating. In 1968, when we both graduated, people our age were either going to voluntarily join the military or be drafted; I chose to join the Air Force and fly, but I respect all those who had to serve as “drafted grunts” doing the most difficult and dangerous tasks.

My name is Root Routledge



Image 8. Root was elected a Colorado Democratic National Delegate, Congressional District 3, for Bernie Sanders; here in Philly.

and most recently I was elected a Colorado National Delegate for Bernie Sanders to the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia last summer. Like Bernie, I’ve been a lifetime political independent, and the only thing



Image 9. Senator Bernie Sanders

that got me to join the Democratic Party last year was so I could support Bernie who was running as a Democrat; about whom you’ve actually said some nice things and not much, if anything, negative.

Both Bernie and you, Mr President, have made it very clear that the system is broken, corrupt and rigged; and let’s admit it, Bernie and all the millions of people who

supported him in the primaries got screwed by the DNC and other establishment Democrats allowing for the lesser candidate to run against you... and lose. As you well know, Bernie has also been focused on the needs of hard working American families and no one

in Congress has higher integrity than Bernie. That’s why Bernie has become the most popular politician in the country; even though the Democratic stalwarts still keep trying to undercut him. These establishment Democrats seem to have a hard time learning from their mistakes and losses; and, unless they wake up pretty quickly, they’ll just take the party down with them time after time. It is helpful that Bernie maintains his political independence and his popularity and influence is only growing.

## Vietnam Veteran

I’m a Vietnam Veteran, having served combat duty in the United States Air Force as a navigator in the Military Airlift Command on C-141 aircraft (strategic and combat airlift) out of McChord AFB in Washington state; and highly classified intelligence missions on EC-47 aircraft in the 360th Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron, 460th Tac Recon Wing, out of Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Saigon, for which I held a Top Secret security clearance with the highest SI requirement.

In four years, from 1968-72, out of a total of 2360 hours, I flew 170 combat missions with 630 combat flight hours, earning the DFC, Air Medals and Service Medals; and the rank of Captain. I’m very

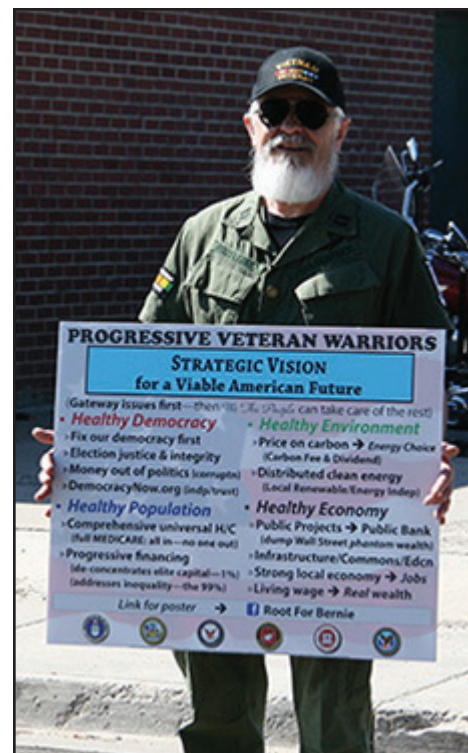


Image 10. Captain Root in Vietnam combat fatigues, holding “Strategic Vision” poster, for July 4th, 2017 parades, in Bayfield and Durango, Colorado.

proud of my service; and I'm very proud to be a patriotic immigrant and naturalized U.S. citizen who



Image 11. Root Routledge, Facebook photo

moved here with my parents from Canada when I was 7 years old.

You can check out my personal and military background here ([www.facebook.com/RootRoutledge](http://www.facebook.com/RootRoutledge)); and some of my political comments throughout last year's campaign for Bernie at my political page [www.facebook.com/RootForBernie](http://www.facebook.com/RootForBernie).

## Profession

Professionally, I'm a business consultant and small business man with an industrial consulting firm I founded over 25 years ago, called *Alpine Analytics*<sup>TM</sup>, specializing in data analytics. I describe myself as a scientifically educated systems engineer; I effort to understand the decision world as a complex of dynamically interacting systems. My clients have been mostly technical people from large corporations and agencies: engineers, scientists, regulators,

quality assurance professionals and process managers, and middle managers from various functional areas.

With a PhD in Industrial Engineering, an MBA and an MS in Statistics, my expertise is system decision making and data analytics. My business *Alpine Analytics* is focused by my logo statement, which characterizes what I help my clients accomplish: "*Sound ethical decisions based on data!*" You can find more about my business on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/AlpineAnalytics](http://www.facebook.com/AlpineAnalytics)) or my "billboard" website: <http://AlpineAnalytics.com>, where a pdf of my [1-page bio](#) can also be found.

## Public Assistance Under Hard Times

All that given, for full disclosure Mr President, like you I've taken some bruises and lumps. I've had failed marriages (three), have been through a bankruptcy, and my business was hit very hard by the 2007/2008 crash, from which it never really came back with a dependable living. Consequently, for the past several years since age 63 and with multiple medical issues requiring surgeries, I've needed to rely on public assistance benefits, including Social Security, Medicare, Food Stamps (SNAP benefits), and the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) just to survive. I can testify



Image 12. Alpine Analytics™ business logo, with trademark logo statement: "Sound ethical decisions based on data!™"

it's not enough; my Social Security benefit, for example, would be equivalent to working full time all year for \$6.68 per hour; that's not even minimum wage, let alone something livable.

Even with Medicare and worse for others without it, there is a huge wall between the people and their healthcare — one has to come up with more money than they have to overcome "deductibles and copays" before one gets access to healthcare. I'm telling you from directly living it, Mr President, this is an unconscionable system that is not serving the needs of the people very well.

But I can speak from experience about the significant and crucial help these programs are supposed to and do provide, to a certain extent, based on circumstances and need regardless of education or whatever work one might have had when times were better. The problems are systemic; the people they impact are very real.

## Heartlessness

It is unconscionable for heartless mean-spirited Republicans



Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

to continually chastise and attack people who need and depend on public assistance; while they undermine the very programs people need to survive. It's disgusting and appalling how they look down on people from their high perch of power, ironically while getting all their benefits from the public trough.

The denigration Republicans typically pour over the dignity of people who find themselves in this situation is morally repugnant; and I'm as sick of it as I'm sure so many of your supporters are. They operate from a morally vacuous worldview about human nature pushing a narrative

that presumes these folks are inherently lazy and don't want to work, with their plight being their own fault. All they need, according to this view, is a "kick in the ass" from some form of supposedly "compassionate conservatism" of more discipline, punishment, blame and shame, dished out by harmful

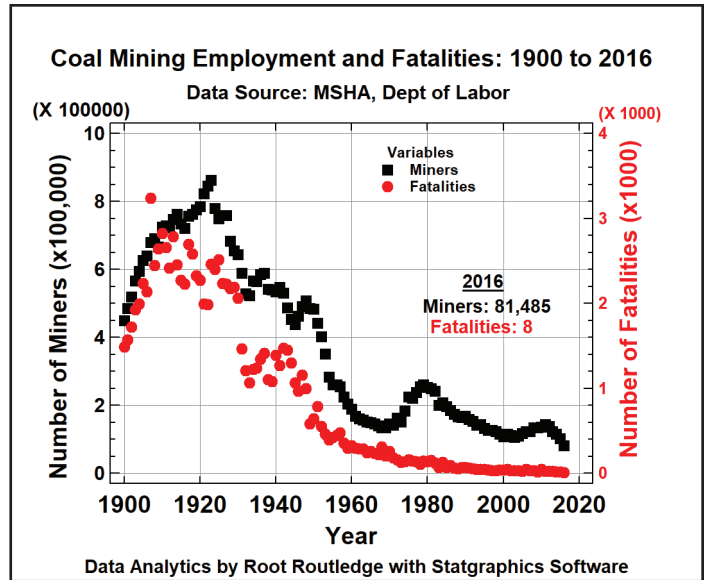


Image 14. Market forces have driven down demand for coal over the years, resulting in permanent loss of coal mining jobs. Note that coal mining has always been an extremely dangerous occupation, as indicated by the annual number of fatalities, and even though the annual rate has been dropping we still find ourselves horrified by mining accidents due to management neglect. At this point, concerns about climate impact are putting further downward market pressure on coal mining jobs.

The entire situation needs to be approached with compassionate policies that help these workers and their families through these economic impacts, including preserving their health and retirement benefits as their jobs disappear. That is a righteous and moral role for our government to play. You might claim to "love the coal workers", Mr President, while promising to bring back their jobs; but you have no control over these market forces. And you must understand that helping coal company CEOs with financial breaks is not the same as helping coal miners, in fact it can hurt them.



Image 13. As coal production wanes and coal mining becomes more and more automated, many patriotic coal miners who voted for you, because you promised to bring back coal jobs Mr President, find their means of livelihood vanishing. Many *must* depend on public assistance while they retool for new career skills in an uncertain job market, often with lower pay and no prospects for jobs where they and their families have lived for generations.

Coal is not a growth industry, Mr President; we need to think about their situation in a different and compassionate way and not denigrate them for needing help and public assistance because of their plight, which is beyond their control. While capitalist owners get "depletion allowance" subsidies, we need to be thinking in terms of transitional "depletion support" for these extractive job-holders, as well as a "technology tax" when new technology, for which all returns go to capital asset owners, eliminates jobs.

Republican policies functioning as some sort of surrogate authoritarian "father figure".

The arrogant hypocrisy of Republican congress members seems to know no bounds in class warfare. They blame peo-

ple in need for "getting something they didn't earn" if they have to rely on public assistance; and that any help they get just creates a "dependency culture" and all it takes is an authoritarian "father figure" to kick them out on their own in order to "teach" them the lesson of "self-reliance". This is not compassionate; nor is it economically effective policy.

These ultimate hypocrites do this as their support goes to those people with the most money and least need, who get the most

breaks and benefits from the government—because the billionaire oligarchs and corporate lobbyists always get to write the legislation for their own benefit! The few get almost everything and the many get almost nothing; and then they have the audacity to portray themselves as the “makers” and “job creators” while they sneer at all the rest as mere “takers”.

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**The few get almost everything and the many get almost nothing...**

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Part of this strategic vision I’m presenting, Mr President, is to get money out of politics for this very reason, in order to help manifest the outcome of a *healthy democra-*



Image 15. “The Rise of the Working Poor and the Non-Working Rich. Many believe that poor people deserve to be poor because they’re lazy. In reality, a large and growing share of the nation’s poor work full time — sometimes sixty or more hours a week – yet still don’t earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of poverty. It’s also commonly believed, especially among Republicans, that the rich deserve their wealth because they work harder than others. In reality, a large and growing portion of the super-rich have never broken a sweat. Their wealth has been handed to them.”

cy for the American people. We know very well that oligarchs and

authoritarian regimes despise democracy, which is why they work to ever undermine any significant direct influence by the people.

## The Moral Path

What kind of society are we? And what does it mean to be a country that does not do enough to take care of its own people?

It never ceases to amaze me that most of those in congress also consider themselves to be “Christians”, if not dedicated followers of Jesus. In fact, while endeavoring to claim the moral high ground for themselves and impose their fundamentalist interpretation of religious scripture, rules and beliefs on others, including control of women’s bodies (sounds akin

to Sharia Islam, doesn’t it?), they even show contempt for much of the good that Jesus lived and preached: humility, generosity, respect, justice, empathy, love, kindness, forgiveness, grace, peace and the spirit of resistance.

Like those of earlier times, Jesus would call these rightwing “so-called Christian congress members” the ultimate hypocrites and tell everyone, “By their fruits you will recognize them.” Republican Congressmen seem



Image 16. Man with son waits for his turn at mobile food pantry. Dozens of people stand outside in the dark, in front of tables covered with pounds of carrots, apples, bread and cereal. Senior citizens and parents with their young children move down the line, thanking the volunteers who help them put food in their bags.

to worship some mythical “market force” and the “commodification of life” over real help for real people. Anchored to ideological falsehoods, they vehemently resist employing the resources and power of our government to actually help our people in need. This is not the winning ideology of the 21st Century; it is antiquated delusion that will only exacerbate our demise through its cruelty.

The spiritual path is not about “beliefs” and the pseudo-authority of “imposition” (as opposed to *enlightenment*) by quoting “chapter and verse”, Mr President (I’d probably get that stuff wrong too; did Paul really write two letters to the Corinthians? :o). Rather than grasping at religious beliefs and rules, and the pseudo-righteousness of trying to be the best at “book quoting”; take your spiritual signals from the prophet Jesus himself, Mr President—what he stood for and taught, and the ways he showed us to be when coming across others, strangers

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*



Image 17. Working for justice for the marginalized, the “working poor” (a category which should not even exist in our land of plenty), like this immigrant worker and immigrant communities, includes not only low wages, but on top of that the insult of having your meager wages stolen—wage theft—by corrupt managers and business owners. Mr President, this is what it’s like to struggle.

or not, who may be worse off. Did Jesus not teach us the godly way of treating others? Was not his prophetic focus on those who suffer or have less; while unloading his prophetic fire on the sycophantic hypocrites of the powerful who control and rig the system for their own selfish benefit? Did he not say anything about greed and wealth?



Image 18. Poor people are often the most generous.

## Compassion and Empathy for Human Suffering

Over the years I’ve gotten to know many of these people who are struggling at the bottom, many of them homeless people; and I make an effort to eat at our local Manna Soup Kitchen once or twice a month to keep in touch

with people I’ve gotten to know and keep up with how they’re doing. Sometimes just simple brotherhood goes a long way in showing people that someone cares. Mr President, I can tell you that, even though most of them might not have the education to articulate their own plight like I can, or may be recovering from scrapes with the law they might have had; they are good decent people just trying to keep their lives going while searching for a new start.

There are lots of veterans from various wars, even a Navy Seal Iraq/ Afghanistan vet, and one 94-year old WW II Marine vet, who walked with a cane and a limp because he took two bullets while landing at the Battle of Tenaru

against the Japanese in the Guadalcanal Island Campaign of the Pacific; he died recently. There are other Vietnam vets who eat at the Manna; one of them was disabled by an accident on the deck of an aircraft carrier. And, there are families with children who would not be eating if it weren’t for public services they depend on.

The Manna has wonderful caring staff and volunteers; it is often elementary school kids who serve out the food. No one in our town of Durango has to go hungry. Have you ever had a chance to connect with any of these people struggling at the bottom, Mr President? It might really open your heart to their situation.

## Community Policing and the Poor – Engaging Properly with Citizens

Even the Durango Police Department has a community connection program where police often come by for a friendly visit and take turns helping in the serving line of the Manna Kitchen. And our La Plata County Sheriff or his deputies come by and sit down with the people eating at the soup kitchen. They actually



Image 19. Coffee with a Cop program; building connection and trust. Columbia Heights Police Department, Minneapolis.



Image 20. Mistreatment of protesters. “Failure of Authority In America” by John Whye. “It’s like the national leaders don’t lead but instead set horrible examples that are so transparently self-serving, why would anybody respect them anyway?”

get to know people by name and with a smile.

With such negative events we continually witness in the news of outrageously unaccountable police repression and brutality, and police murdering unarmed citizens, mostly Black and Latino in big cities, but certainly others including whites, it is a beacon of light to actually witness community policing working as it should.

In fact, as part of our police com-



Image 21. NYPD policewoman on the street with residents cooling confrontations. “On the local level a police response that is more often repressive than helpful is often the most disheartening because these are the people that the average citizen is most likely to come into contact with if there is any trouble.” J. Whye



Image 22. “The Simple Strategies That Could Fundamentally Change How Communities View Their Police”, HuffPo

munity-engagement policy, local Durango law enforcement has been actively working with our homeless and near-by neighborhood residents in a constructive way to lower fears and balance needs of the neighborhood community with those of people in need; while working with the homeless to help them lead their own efforts to keep their camps clean and safe. It doesn’t make problems go away completely; but it mitigates them in a civil way that doesn’t criminalize people’s status in life.

## Life on the Edge of the Republican Swamp

One’s lot-in-life can certainly be affected by the start one gets in life. Whereas one could easily and appropriately describe you as being

born “financially gifted”, Mr President; with a bit of wry humor and a smile, one could argue that Root was born “financially challenged”. Money was not what motivated me; it was doing good things for people and the environment, while connecting

with spirit and hoping to make enough money as I went. My only car is over 20 years old, and if something costly breaks I’d be in a pickle trying to figure out how to get it fixed so I could still get around. Didn’t end up financially well-off enough to tuck retirement savings away; so it’s very difficult sewing the month-to-month ends together.

What does that mean to these morally challenged Republicans, who forever blame the individual for their own demise so they don’t have to confront the growing reality of systemic failure due to a structurally flawed system design based on a failed ideological belief system and false dogma about the very nature of being human? Where they get this from I don’t know; but for rightwing Christians, some of it certainly finds its roots in the flawed thinking of the interloper Paul, who ignored the teachings of Jesus, couldn’t even take responsibility for his own natural bodily feelings, and who chastised his cult of believers, especially the women and slaves, for not falling in line obediently



Image 23. Policeman with kids in city park. “Let’s give the police a chance to once more ‘Serve and Protect’ as they swore an oath to do as idealistic rookies. Failure to do so will inevitably lead to chaos and disaster.” J. Whye

behind established authorities.

Should I and others be chastised, punished and cut-off from assistance to “teach me a lesson for being too lazy”? Should I be punished with having my little 1940 one-bedroom 650 sq ft home repossessed and left to survive under a bridge somewhere? “That’ll teach him to ‘get off his duff’ and get a job;” as the cruel presumptions of heartless Republican policy go.

No wonder ordinary people are enraged about these entrenched establishment hypocrites, who take all they can from the public trough for themselves and their moneyed friends. No wonder they have risen up in electoral fury against this corrupt system that is not serving them; only the richest of the rich. We need a more compassionate moral vision than your

party is capable of providing, Mr President; which is why your supporters saw you as an altruistic “White Knight” who promised to “drain the swamp” of these scoundrels and focus on the plight of ordinary people who are all just trying to make it under the conditions of an increasingly harsh and challenging system.

But with this vision of strategic success for the American people

that I’m presenting with this letter, you could personally provide and concretely demonstrate that sense of care and compassion; and be loved for it, Mr President.

Big rallies where you brag about how much you’ve done and rant about how poorly you are treated by others, including the press, just come across as a dual exercise in self-aggrandizement and self-pity. In the end, it’s the policies you support that will make or break it for your supporters, the public at large, and you.

You have a lovely family, Mr President. I personally, like most ordinary people, would have a hard time imagining what your worldview is like from the lofty heights of so much family wealth. You’d all have the best of everything, I imagine, and would want

for nothing. You’d have great influence on others of high wealth and power status, wouldn’t you?

By the same token, I’m sure you have no idea what the worldview is like from my station in life, like that of so many other Americans. But give it a try, regardless; because setting cynicism aside, as hard as that is to do, people are counting on the fact that you actually do care about them and their plight.

Nonetheless, I am quite knowledgeable about these crucial elements of a strategic program for a successful future. We need to think strategically and systematically; and if you’ll pick up on a more comprehensive notion of “success” that I will lay out, Mr President, I believe it is possible for you to see that it happens.

## Strategic Success — Weaknesses, Strengths and Advantages

### Weaknesses

Mr President, you bring your expertise from the business world to the job of presidency and are attempting to solve public issues by applying the skills and tactics you’ve learned from the private sector. However, as your political life has unfolded you have exposed one or more major strategic weakness, which must be addressed in order for any of this to work.

This is undoubtedly difficult for

you to hear, since no one likes to be pressed on their faults or weaknesses; but it is crucial for you to raise your awareness if you expect to obtain any sort of strategic success.

### Weakness: Truth

We can't have democracy without truth, Mr President; democracy depends on the free and accurate flow of information. In so many ways your rhetoric, decisions and actions clearly expose the fact that you are more the enemy of truth than its purveyor. You and your surrogates can rant-and-rave all you want about how everyone else, including the media, is lying and only you are right. People who support you might buy that for a while, because they want to still believe in you; they truly want you to succeed on their behalf by doing the right thing, not continually playing childish "I'm right and they're

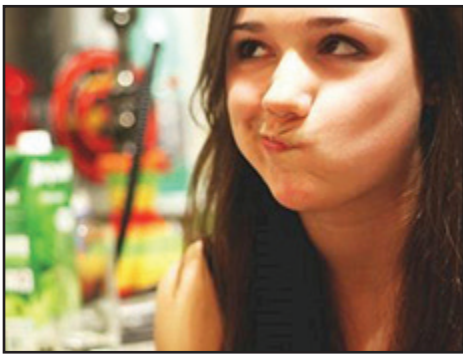


Image 24. People become skeptical about everything when they learn what they were told as the "truth" is really just pure bullshit.

wrong" games. They might enjoy the spectacle for a while and even rally to defend you; but there is a bottom line as people become more and more skeptical. What

they really want is for the promised goods to manifest. So, that support is ephemeral, even fickle, and does not address this serious strategic flaw that undermines anything strategic you want to accomplish.

It is apparent to everyone paying attention that you don't like the truth, or indeed even an informed public; and you have depended on lies and distractions and falsehoods to steer your agenda, with its inherent anti-democratic features. This is merely following the long-run, yet crumbling, Republican strategy of "sustainable ignorance" for legislators and their "base"; which continues to be a profound insult to everyone involved, and people are finally waking up to it! Republicans traffic in ignorance. People are getting very tired of the bullshit, Mr President. They're not dummies and want to be properly and accurately informed.

### Republicans traffic in ignorance

Tactics that attempt to divert attention from, or reframe, crucial issues and problems so they seem something other than they really are may allow you to buffalo "the gullible others" and muddle through for a while. But in the end these tactics will become exposed and collapse because they are not undergirded with any solid basis in reality. Just because you say something, doesn't make it true, even if you're president. You can't blow off reality with statements like, "You have your beliefs; I have mine" — *especially* as president.

### Knowledge is all about *justified* true belief...

You have a responsibility to all of us to *justify* your beliefs. This is not about a "religion" based simply on faith founded in pure beliefs, even though you and your Republican Party seem to treat most of it that way. That is offensively insulting to the intelligence of the American people. Do you really want to treat the American people like gullible suckers; or with the dignity and respect they deserve?

Further, your tactical propensity to attack, mock, belittle, humiliate and discredit the messenger with hurtful personal criticism may have served you well in your previous business world; but it will not bring you strategic success in the public arena. You can bluster and present extreme "trial balloons" as a negotiating tactic



Image 25. "Where's the beef, Mr President?" (Wendy's cultural classic commercial used as political parody in elections.)

in order to test your opponent's and public reaction, then back off to something less; but this will not bring you long-term strategic suc-

cess if it's not grounded in reality. People can wake up.

And that is a strategic weakness if you expect anyone to believe you or to get anything of significance done. Evidently, you have people advising you that "facts are mere 'White-noise' to be ignored"; and tell you it is only through flooding the public discourse with propagandized alternative lies that you can confuse the world enough to get your way. This is the strategy of a small-thinking mega-loser, Mr President and it certainly won't cut it for the long haul; the chickens are coming home to roost and you have to shift gears soon. In fact, your biggest personal strategic success challenge to make it work into the future, may be whether or not you are able to pivot away from personal skirmishes and ideological rightwing party trivia, and transition into a mature *wisdom mode*.

It's not how smart one thinks they are—I'm pretty smart and you claim you are too. That would mean we are bright and knowledgeable enough to have the ability to pick things up quickly and understand them; not that we know everything better than others.

Wisdom, on the other hand, is about holding sufficient knowledge and rationality for deep understanding of phenomena, people and situations; and having a capacity for keen discernment, reasoning and sound good-sense judgment, while retaining an awareness and acceptance about things we know we don't know, thus knowing when to seek proper advice from competent exper-

tise. Knowledge is all about *justified* true belief, which comes about by seeking and understanding unbiased data and facts that characterize the reality of the decision environment we are operating in, including its context and interrelationships.

The respect afforded to wisdom is earned, Mr President. And it comes about from a place of humility; not self-serving arrogance and hubris, which are attributes of the unwise. In fact, humility itself can subtly connote a certain amount of contemplative wisdom; whereas, thoughtlessly 'flying off the handle' in angry response to a perceived insult does not. You've put out such a huge set of claims and promises, Mr President, I can imagine how stressful it must be to figure out how to achieve it all, as promised; and why you may find yourself mired in the pursuit of trivial skirmishes, trying to sustain your own image of "can do it, all powerful" by coming up with little things here and there in order to claim some progress, if not accomplishment. Letting go is hard and one's ego resists it, for sure.

But that's okay and it can be accomplished in a face-saving way; it's not too late to do that. It's okay for *anyone*, especially the president of the United States, to "awaken" from confusion and admit they've shifted their beliefs and focus because they've become "aware" of things they never really knew or understood before; which is what I'm wanting to help you with. In fact, such an awakening actually demonstrates the ability of honest self-reflection, which you need to

show is becoming part of who you are. Doing that engenders respect and demonstrates strength—not weakness—especially as president.

### **Weakness: Integrity, Credibility and Trust**

Mr President, you are trying to "win" battles by redefining what "truth" is. But a continual stream of "alternative lies", circular bullshit, false narratives, betrayals, and bait-and-switch tactics exposes this weakness and continually undermines your own personal integrity and credibility. This is serious! Eventually, the "faith" and "belief" people may have held in you based on a presumption of trust begins to crumble, because you cannot keep a lid of lies on the truth and expect it to hold. From a basis of pure emotion, your followers may simply reject facts, rationality and logic... for a while, because you tell them to. But people do wake up when the "goods" don't show up; and once they feel betrayed yet again by falsehoods, they become bitterly disappointed, even feeling humiliated and suckered, and it is then very difficult to win them back.

Mr President let me emphasize this again: these are the tactics of a weak loser; not a strategically strong winner. It is the character of the person that bestows credibility. Somehow, integrity and credibility need to be integrated into strategic success solutions, not cynically forced upon them like a façade of ornamental appendages; but, so that they are manifestly genuine and inherent-

ly exhibit wisdom and compassion, which I will ferret out more thoroughly below.

In fact, let me state this more strongly, even if this is hard for you to hear: Mr President, you display a lack integrity domestically and internationally; and that is a strategic weakness that needs to be overcome. Trust and integrity are earned over long periods of experience with someone; once lost, they are extremely hard, if not impossible, to recover. This becomes a core central component in addressing a strategic success program; and we need to factor in a way to address it. My intent is to help you and I will show you how.

### Weakness: Expertise and Competence

Mr President, I've seen it written that you are a superb salesman who, it was stated facetiously, could probably sell sand to the Arabs and get them to finance it. While I give the deference of respect to your prowess with those skills; I believe that you are often unclear about where your expertise starts and where it begins to drop off. With bravado, you make lots of claims about the expanse of your expertise; but when the rubber hits the road, those claims are seen to fall far short of your actual connection with reality. This is not helpful, Mr President.

Surely you know, as someone who has been the top executive of, as you say, a very large and successful company, that you *need* to bring in people with the appropriate expertise to address the

issues at hand. That's just being a smart executive. It means staffing for strategic success; not for proselytizing the ideological world-views of others that supposedly fix everything; or in your case, are just tearing our public institutions apart because one or more of your "strategic advisors" is intent on sabotaging our government.

Evidently this advisor and his collaborators don't like the "state" as an institution where people can address the needs of their society; but prefers instead that all control of society be in the hands of unfettered rich capitalist oligarchs whose primary focus is on growing more money for themselves. This is what they call "freedom". He acts and talks like he's some great thinker with profound philosophical ideas about society encapsulated in fancy memes like "completely deconstructing the administrative state"; wow, doesn't that sound impressive! But in truth, he's just a windbag full of shit who wants to sabotage America — *my* country. This sort of unfettered conservative rule leads to the atrophy of democracy, while preserving conservative control. We all know you're an authoritarian, Mr President; but is it really your goal to do away with our democracy?

People didn't vote for this, Mr President. Can you imagine if it was ISIS saying they wanted to accomplish the same thing — complete destruction of our functioning government and its protective institutions we as American people have worked so hard at building over decades? What would you be saying about that, Mr

President? When you and I took an oath to protect our country and its constitution from "all enemies, foreign and domestic", what do you think that meant? That it's okay for some nut case ultra-right ideologue to take down our functioning government?

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**Treason is "the betrayal of trust; the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender holds allegiance."**

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As a veteran, I view this kind of destructive program as *treasonous* and its purveyors of *traitors* to my country who are actually trying to do harm to it. I would think ISIS is jumping for joy over your people internally sabotaging our government. *Treason* is not just "adhering to our enemies, giving aid and comfort", which the efforts of some of your staff clowns are doing; but treason by dictionary definition is in fact, "the betrayal of trust; the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender holds allegiance." Do you really think your supporters, many of whom call you "the people's president", voted for you in order to undermine our country? You know that's not true. This does not constitute a good start, Mr President; and it is counterproductive in any effort to accomplish a program of strategic success.

Your current staff is not up to the task of developing and implementing a strategic success program; they don't have the vision for it nor the management skills



to carry it out. You need to think deeply about how your administration is staffed with respect to the leadership that this strategic success program requires, about which I will share more below.

Then, once *proper* leadership is incorporated into this focused effort; you need to let these strategic success experts run with it. Because, if out of your own personal ignorance you mess with it, you will surely poison the effort and become the cause of its eventual, if not immanent, failure—which you will then own as the ultimate person responsible. On the other hand, if you engage this success strategy and delegate the leadership responsibilities *wisely*, you can be the strategic winner. We want you to help make our country successful, Mr President; not tear it apart. I wouldn't hesitate to fire these people that undermine your effort to do that. They are bad for America's future.

## Strengths and Advantages

### Strength: Your base of supporters

Perhaps your greatest strength, Mr President, is your ability to inspire your base of millions upon millions of supporters. If you employ that to promote a strategically winning program for success, you have the potential to "light a fierce roaring fire" under this "coin-operated" congress to accomplish these important goals for the people; as much as this financially captured and ideologically challenged congress is resis-

tant to that. The Republican-led Congress is lost, they're divided and floundering and cannot come up with effective solutions to problems, or even a way of governing the country. Whether they like it or not, they need your strategic success leadership. But I'm not sure you've yet got any idea about what that means.

Countries and business flourish when *people* flourish. We need to keep that focus when we speak of "success". If congress can't break loose from the tethers of billionaire oligarchs ever focused on grabbing more and more for themselves, while sticking it to the little guy leaving immense suffering for the masses, as evidenced by almost any bill they come up with; *you* will lose, Mr President—*YOU!* Because that is the antithesis of why so many millions of hardworking Americans voted for you. You need to be intently cognizant of who you actually represent: the people of America, especially those who voted for you; or the political hacks of rich special interests who have captured you once they've infiltrated your office. You need to be vigilant about what is happening to your administration if you want to be strategically successful on behalf of the American people.

### Strength: Your defiant rebel character

You've gotten to where you are by taking on and challenging the status quo of rigid party lines and ideologies—you've undercut the "deep givens" that the Republican

Party has always represented. Kudos for that, Mr President! Don't turn around now and throw your hands up to the things you've just defeated. You've tapped into the populist anger that ordinary people were expressing about our systemically failing ways of the past. At the Republican convention, with immense audacity you claimed something to the effect: "Our country's a mess; and I am *the only one* who can fix it—*the only one.*" I personally would never say something like that, because I'm a team player and have found that, in my experience in industry, success comes by leading people to come together as a team to solve problems. However I must admit, there may be some ironic truth in what you said.

## Paradoxical Machiavellian Irony

In a paradoxical bit of self-serving Machiavellian irony, at this moment in time and within our current political context, you may just be "the only one who can fix it". Of course, that would not be because you know more than everyone else or can come up with the best plans yourself; but because the confluence of political paths has placed you in a powerful enough position that, given the comprehensive vision needed for an essential strategic success program, which I lay out below, you could just pull it off.

## Defiance and Courage:

It won't be easy, because you'll have to upset a lot more apple

carts and piss off a lot of the “old guard” establishment Republicans, who may be your friends; as well as the party’s cabal of childish little ideologues who ever threaten to “wreak everything”, including our country, if they don’t get their way. Are you up for this, Mr President? Enough of congressional immaturity, already! We need adult thinking focused on the needs of ordinary American people, Mr President; that’s your role and you need to demonstrate the strength to *go beyond* the petty squabbles.

For example, forget trying to “negotiate a deal” with congress over the sack-of-shit health care and tax bills they dump on you, expecting you to just suck it up and “Sell it to the American people, like you’re told to!” Although you’ve ‘thrown your hands up in the air’ and want to give up on that in order to move onto things you have a better chance of achieving; your hands are not tied and you’re showing too much deference and acquiescence to a congress that has been failing America for a long time. We need you to stand up and be strong in the face of these perceived “defeats”.

Indeed, you *have* inherited a mess perpetrated by a do-nothing congress, whose Republican leadership proudly exploits the tactics of obstructionism, inefficiency and gridlock, seeing them as GOP virtues. This is no way to run a railroad, let alone a country, Mr President. But you can’t escape it by blaming previous administrations. Entrenched ideologues in your own chosen political party are your nemesis; not the previ-

ous administration. The election is over; in your own interest, Mr President, get over that blame game because it just comes across as petty and foolish. It certainly doesn’t qualify as *strategic*.

You need a strategic success program that works and you’re going to have to stir up your massive base of supporters to focus their indignation directly at their congressional representatives and senators over their unfair, mean and shameful response (or lack of) to the needs of the American people. And *for real*, like the fury expressed at the election polls, we already see that happening at town meetings across the country. People are sick of a quagmire congress and they are anxious to help you do the right thing for them. The cynics want to see you fail; however, I think you can still be successful on behalf of the American people, *if you wake up to the strategic advantages of this comprehensive vision of success.*

### **Advantage: Ease of Implementation**

Finally, under the topic of “strengths and advantages”, let me emphasize one other point. And that is this: *ease of implementation* is an inherently advantageous attribute of each element of this integrated strategic success program. I don’t mean “easy” in a political sense, where it seems almost impossible to get anything done these days—you really are going to have to effectively deploy your army of supporters, not against other Americans (many of whom may even wish to join in

and help with this strategic success program), but against congress in order to accomplish anything.

What I mean is “easy to implement” in a management sense, for example, when necessary infrastructure, processes and procedures are already in place; or when the problem is so well defined, it becomes straight forward to address it in a comprehensive way. I also mean that the impact will be so broadly positive and effective that there is high probability that the desired outcomes will be achieved. I will show you. Ironically, you will have to overcome congressional resistance by *leading* the “people’s representatives” to do the right thing for the American people; because the Republican congress has already proven they are incapable of doing it all by themselves.

### **Can you do it?**

*It won’t be easy.* Let’s not fool ourselves. Given the behavioral and ideological shifts this will require on your part, the attachments you might have to pet beliefs you’ll have to let go of, and the feathers you’ll have to ruffle, I’m not sure you’ll even want to put in what it takes to do it. In that case, you can just ignore all of this and continue to stumble along, trying to convince everyone you’re doing what’s right, whether it’s working or not (and blaming others when it’s not working). That path doesn’t look promising in a strategic sense.

Strategic success will take your conviction, dedication and cour-

age, Mr President. I don't believe your courage has ever been tested in this way; so until you make the effort, the jury's still out on whether you have what it takes. But the potential rewards will be monumental, both for the American people and for you personally. Believe me, it will demonstrate wisdom, compassion, strength and strategic insight, if all of it is followed through. It will help steer our country in a viable direction and set the foundation for future generations to have a chance at accomplishing what they will need to, whatever they're facing at the time.

### Which parallel universe will future generations associate with your legacy?

Look at it this way, Mr President. Contrary to how much money one makes over a short period of time, the myopic single-minded focus of corporate capitalists; strategic success for American people will be defined by the legacy you bestow on future generations. We are at a crucial fork in the path to the future. Like right at this moment there are two potential future universes, one or the other of which will manifest and be effected by decisions and policies we make and implement now.

One possible universe is a nightmare scenario of continual decent into a living hell of massive struggle and suffering, with no end in sight — *ever*. That is the universe of "Business As Usual" (BAU). The other is what I'm calling the *viable* future. And that means having a reasonable chance of succeeding

in terms of our very continued existence and our capability of functioning as a sustainable living system with a society and economy that works for everyone — all in, no one excluded. That's the desired outcome and that's why this is a *strategic vision for success*.

Like it or not, believe it or not, Mr President; the reality is that we have never been at this ominous tipping-point of no return before in history, where all is close to collapsing in an unfathomable and unrepairable way, as I will show you below. A "BAU" approach will seal our fate before your administration is out. Yet, as fate would have it, your administration has come to power at this moment in history and you personally, as our leader who could do something about it, will inherit either the eternal enmity of blame and ignominy; or the accolades of strategic success, depending on the values you internalize and on what you actually do now. So, you have to ask yourself and your family — not your "political advisors", not Wall Street, and certainly not the numskull Republican ideologues in congress — what side of eternity you want your legacy to be part of?

### Will you do it?

You have very bright adult children, Mr President. Your youngest son is a smart-looking boy with a potentially bright future; and you have grandchildren too, as do I. I hope you will share this with your most respected daughter, in particular, as I'm sure as a mother she is very much attuned

to concern over what society and the world will be like for them. I doubt she is so disengaged that she thinks you'll all be just fine tucked away above water in your "golden tower", regardless of what happens to the rest of our American people. I'm sure she has more heart and compassion than that; and you yourself have either said or alluded to as much on multiple occasions, indicating how much you appreciate her insights. Share this and discuss it with her, Mr President.

Consider this metaphor, if you will. Suppose your family owned stock in something called, "A Viable Future". Would you not want your investment to flourish? Would you really "hedge" your investment, thinking you could "win" either way, by risking it all and betting on a future of collapse by selling the people short; which is the path we're on now? What would your family, your kids and grandkids and theirs generations out in time, want to point back to, decades on, that their family patriarch and former president of the United States was responsible for?

Mr President, we all "own stock" of sorts in "a viable future" for all of us; which means we need to care for and nurture that promising future in the present. We need our president to internalize that and help us all achieve it. I'm not yet joining those cynics who have given up on you, Mr President, which is why I'm even taking the time and effort to write this letter; but I certainly will quickly drop any hope I might potentially hold for your collapsing presidency, if

you don't soon wake up to what is needed for strategic success. The political winds are already shifting, and there definitely will be a major change in political fortunes come 2018, regardless; so this is the time to awaken and act appropriately *now*, before the window of opportunity closes. Time is very short.

## Success Together: Issues of Sincerity, Integrity, Cynicism and Self-Interest

### Respect for your supporters

Before presenting the meat of this strategic success program, we need to come to grips with the expression of your own lack of sincerity and integrity; because there's no sense in pretending that you mean what you say, when the skeptics and cynics have so much ammunition from your own words, actions and behavior demonstrating otherwise. We're talking here about real strategic needs and solutions — and getting that to stick for the long-run — not something that can easily be bullshitted away before people who are ignorant of these strategic issues or their implications.

Incidentally, why did you say, "I love the poorly educated..."? Was that because they're so easy to confuse and muddle due to their ignorance, yet you could still get them to believe in you with your blustery "tough-guy" talk? Or did that mean, with compas-

sion for their state of ignorance, you sincerely wish to help them understand these issues better and how to resolve them by offering to help educate them about how your policies would do what you promise? The first approach exploits their ignorance for your own selfish political gain; the second demonstrates that you actually care about them, which is the assumption I've been operating from and this program will demonstrate, if you're behind it.

### Mass Cynicism

Mr President, at this point in your new administration there is growing mass cynicism among the public regarding the perceived discrepancy between what you've promised about the orientation of your administration and what you are actually doing. You have promised to "drain the swamp" of moneyed corruption; yet you have packed your administration with Wall Street insiders and ultra-rich business executives, making your promise seem laughable. You find yourself struggling to come up with executive orders and congressional bills that fulfill the promises you have made to your supporters. Yet, these seem to fall flat and far short of addressing expectations about what was promised; and hence it calls into question how sincere your promises really were when you made them, and are now.

### Do you actually care about our democracy and people's struggles?

This cuts directly to your own integrity and raises profound questions about whether or not you actually care about our democracy, about people who are struggling, even suffering, and about who will benefit the most from your policies: The American people, including your supporters; or your own self-interest and self-interest of the oligarch class, ideologically driven or not, who have been appointed to virtually all the power-holding positions of your administration.

Further, it is apparent collectively that you are taking a "slash-and-burn" approach to much of what we as a country have built up over decades. Rather than carefully examining needs and modifying approaches to better address those needs; you and your administration apparently are taking a blunt "axe" to many of the highly valued protections and benefits that have been put in place to address the needs of our people and our country. This has become so painful to witness, Mr President; and it is why there is so much resistance and so much talk of political revolution, with many searching for reasons to impeach you. The political landscape is transforming as we speak and will be very different come 2018.

### Come forth and state unequivocally what your intentions are

If your intentions are less than honorable in truly addressing the promises you've made to the American people, you need to come clean with those who sup-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

ported you and tell them that, Mr President. That means coming forth and acknowledging that your *real* intent was simply to give the people some hope, but with false or unfounded promises—stated with bravado to cheering crowds—in order to get elected. That would be acknowledgment of political campaign cynicism, but admitting it early on would be an expression of “honesty” that you ambitiously overstated your ability to accomplish your intended goals.

Whereas, letting the lies fester like an infected abscess would eventually be seen as a severe betrayal of the trust your supporters placed in you and your presidency. Right now, most still support you and want to give you more time; but what about the end point when the promises go left unfulfilled. At some point, they will wake up and hold you personally accountable. Like that political commercial that was so devastating years ago, they’ll be asking you: “Where’s the fucking beef, Mr President?” It gets down

to who you really are, Mr President, what values you hold and share with ordinary American people, and what kind of legacy you want to be known for on out in time.

Are you all for the billionaire class of oligarchs “harvesting” our country, under their economic and political control, for their own financial gains, as indeed it appears? Or are you for American democracy, with individual and societal health, and a fair shake for all. These strategic differences on where the benefits are directed are incompatible.

The strategic problems are very real; and this strategic success program addresses the most critical of these in an effective, pragmatic way. I’m going to ignore the massive cynicism and proceed under the presumption that you really do care about our democracy, want the people individually and collectively to have agency in their self-determination, and that you would like to see our people and society be healthy, fruitful and prosperous, with a reason-

able likelihood of realizing a viable future for them and their offspring. You could certainly prove me wrong about that; but I’ll take that risk.

It will take all aspects of this strategic success program for this hope to come into fruition. Let me say again, I’m not laying out some “proposal” for you to “pick-and-chose” and “negotiate” over; “Gee I like this, but not that; and I don’t believe in those points.” If your mindset is stuck there; forget it!

First of all, I don’t have any power and it would be presumptuous of me to think otherwise; all I have is analytical insight and a desire to help you see that this way forward will be successful for the American people, and for you personally and politically. This is indeed what it will take for a healthy America with a viable future. If you think otherwise, you will fail. You will fail the American people; and your administration will flounder and fail and you will find your legacy on the wrong side of eternity.



Image 26. Constitution of the United States of America

# Vision for a Viable American Future

## Reframing Our Values Worldview: *Money—versus—Life*

**T**his will challenge your core assumptions about the world, Mr President; and certainly that of the oligarchs and plutocrats who make up your administration. But what I'm about is analyzing and solving problems on behalf of people and our living Earth; not assuaging entrenched misinformed ideological beliefs, regardless of how much money and influence are behind such beliefs.

Let's take a "high-level" view, which I believe you refer to as "keeping it shallow" (meaning not drilling down to many details, if I understand your statement correctly). Our health and wellbeing depend on an economy that works in partnership with the living Earth's processes by



Image 27. David Korten, author of *Change the Story, Change the Future*; *Agenda for a New Economy*; *The Great Turning*; & *When Corporations Rule the World*, board chair and co-founder of YES! magazine.

which Earth's community of life maintains the conditions of its own existence; including ours. So, we must raise our awareness and consciousness about the stories that define our culture, because that story serves as the basic framing mechanism around which we orient our values.

### *Sacred Money and Markets Story*

— VS —

### *Sacred Life and Living Earth Story*

**David Korten**

The internationally-known best-selling author, researcher and educator David Korten described himself when a young adult as "a very conservative Republican" who wanted to devote his life to alleviating poverty by "bringing the knowledge of modern business management and entrepreneurship to those who had not yet benefited from it." After obtaining an MBA in international business and a PhD in organizational theory from the Stanford Business School, and spending several years during the Vietnam War as a captain in the U.S. Air Force, he taught at both the Harvard Business School and the Harvard Institute for International Development and its School of Public

Health. He then spent many years working for USAID and NGOs in developing countries in the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia, trying to implement what he thought was the ultimate answer to poverty and suffering: American style capitalism. But he became increasingly disillusioned.

"From the depths of my conservative establishment roots," Korten writes, "I began to gradually awaken to a troubling truth: that conventional economic theory and practice is a leading *cause of*—not the solution to—poverty, exclusion, and environmental system collapse. I observed that even as GDP grew, life for the majority became less secure and more desperate... I came to see a yawning gap between actions that increase economic growth and those that result in better lives for people. This difference raised a basic question: What would development look like if, instead of being focused on growth of money, it were truly people centered—making people both its purpose and its primary instrument?"

Korten, to whom this paraphrased presentation and quotes are credited, began researching and writing books based on his direct observations and involvement in development, and began focusing "on the threefold human crisis of deepening poverty, environmental destruction, and social disintegration." He "traced the

roots of the crisis to models that made growth the goal of development and treated people as mere means.” He developed structural systemic insights and concluded that “because the dominant institutions of modern society are creations of a growth-centered development vision, the leadership for change must come from voluntary citizen action.” He helped form a “people-centered vision of the future... and examined the role of national and global structures and institutions in stripping people and place-based communities of the ability to meet their own needs in responsible, sustainable ways.”

**The misuse of trade agreements to circumvent democracy was based in corporate globalization.**

— David Korten

This led to his engagement in “resisting the use of World Bank

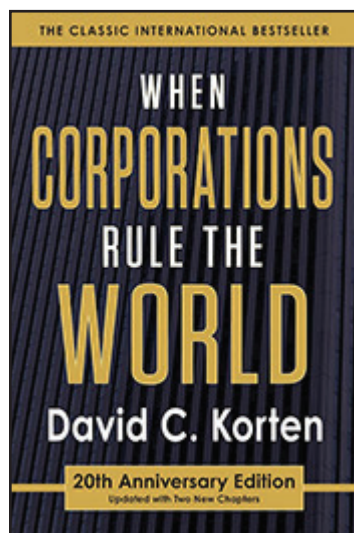


Image 28. 20th Anniversary edition (3rd) of Korten’s best selling 1995 watershed classic, *When Corporations Rule the World*.

and IMF structural adjustment programs and international trade agreements to consolidate global corporate power beyond the reach of democratic accountability... Through the WTO, the largest transnational corporations had as their purpose to craft global trade rules that would preempt the national laws of every member country... The misuse of trade agreements to circumvent democracy was based in corporate globalization.”

This led to his writing of several bestselling books, all published by Berrett-Koehler of San Francisco. These include his 1995 classic, *When Corporations Rule the World*; *The Great Turning: From Empire to Earth Community*, his treatise on the shifting balance of societal power; and *Agenda for a New Economy: From Phantom Wealth to Real Wealth*, his well-developed argument on why Wall Street can’t be fixed and how to replace it. His most recent book is *Change the Story, Change the Future: A Living Economy for a Living Earth*, whose foundational theme is defined by the essential difference between a

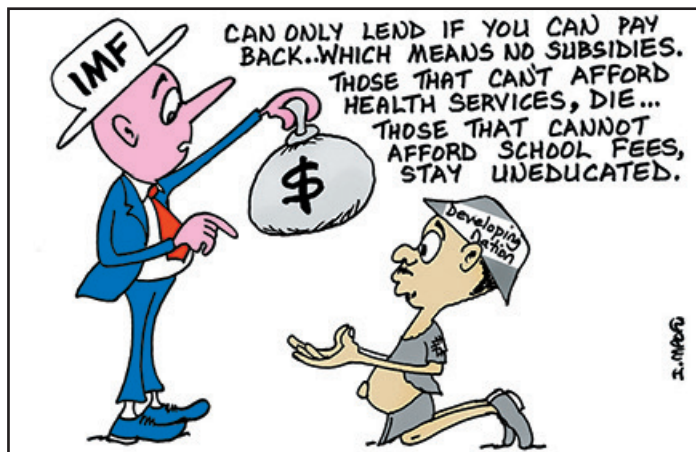


Image 29. “Africa rising was a fat IMF lie”, August 1, 2016: “The report, ‘Neoliberalism: Oversold?’ questioned whether ‘structural adjustment’ austerity measures and market liberalization, the pillars of IMF policy, had done more harm than good. ‘Instead of delivering growth,’ the IMF officials write in their report, neoliberal policies such as austerity have in fact ‘increased inequality’ which ‘might itself undercut growth’. For the first time, the IMF, which has always been strongly opposed to the policies of wealth redistribution, now thinks this may not be so bad.

There was shock and horror everywhere. This was a bit like a Vatican cardinal questioning divine conception, or celibacy. It is heresy. For decades, we have been fed the gospel that the IMF’s message of unrestricted capitalism is the one true path to prosperity heaven. That anything else is a path to hell and economic damnation. If the IMF is questioning capitalism, the world may as well end. Neoliberals are all for free markets, no restrictions on the movement of goods or money across borders, slashing government spending and, generally, just telling the poor to go away. The argument is that unfettered capitalism is what the world needs to create economic growth and end poverty.”

phantom-wealth economy and a real-wealth economy.

Throughout, Korten differentiates two profoundly different worldviews, as exemplified by the notion of “Earth” itself. “For Wall Street, Earth is simply a pool of salable commodities, with a mindset that raising the price is the only way to reduce its use; of course, limiting its use to those best able to pay — i.e. large corporations. For indigenous peoples, Earth is a living being, a self-organizing community of life that maintains the conditions essential to life and provides sustained



Image 30. Consuming ourselves to death. Though uncontrolled capitalist commodification of Mother Earth is destroying the planet, profit is considered more important. flows of nutrients, water, and energy that all its members — including humans — require.

The services Living Earth provides from her healthy generative systems are a common birthright of all and their fruits are rightfully shared... This leads to a new human path grounded in a pragmat-



Image 31. Capitalism has used Mother Earth as a slave to exploit. Mother earth is a living being. We need to develop new systems of rights to include the rights not just of humans, but of nature. “Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders. Don’t let selfish men and greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches, or its romance.” Theodore Roosevelt

ic commitment to life as humanity’s defining value; one which seeks a new public culture and deeply democratic governing institutions that support an emerging vision of a thriving living earth community. This transcends ideologies and does not easily drop into some place along the conventional conservative-liberal spectrum of political preference... It calls for developing a new economics grounded in the values, logic, and lessons of healthy living systems... It calls for the overarching notion of *ecological civilization* to describe the comprehensive transition that humanity now faces.”

## Sacred Money and Markets Story

### Essential elements of standard capitalist dogma — Republican and Corporatist Democrats

The Sacred Money and Markets story thus goes: “Time is money. Money is wealth. Making money creates wealth and is a defining purpose of individuals, business, and the economy. Those who make money are society’s wealth creators, and they are rewarded with affluent lifestyles. Material consumption is the path to happiness. Poverty is a consequence of laziness. We humans are by nature individualistic competitors; which is a blessing, because the invisible hand of the free market channels our individual and corporate competitive drive for financial gain to choices that maximize economic growth and thereby the wealth and well-being of all. A corporation’s profits are the



Image 32. The “Sacred Money and Markets Story” says material consumption is the path to happiness. Actually, less is more! Minimizing the number of things we possess and consume is shown to have significant health benefits on our own mental and physical well-being. Happiness is the path.

*measure of its social contribution. The functions of government should be limited to assuring the common defense, securing property rights, and enforcing contracts. Economic inequality and environmental damage are a regrettable but necessary and unavoidable cost of the economic growth that is essential to eliminate poverty and to drive technological innovation needed to free us from our dependence on nature.”*

Korten points out that, “Every assertion of the Sacred Money and Market story is false or misleading. Though taught in universities throughout the nation as objective science, it is bad ethics, bad science, and bad economics. It is a story fabricated by corporate funded think tanks, PR professionals and economists to put a pretty face on capitalism and gain and maintain our acceptance of a capitalist suicide economy — that is quite literally killing us. The familiar story mis-defines our nature, celebrates psychotic behav-



ior as a virtue, and promotes an addiction to material consumption we might otherwise recognize as the sign of an empty life.”

“The story is constantly repeated by corporate media and it frames every news report and political debate. And it legitimates a legal system that gives corporations more rights than people and gives nature no rights at all. Seduced by the Sacred Money and Markets story, we have become a global society of money worshippers. The making of money has become our life’s purpose, shopping



Image 33. Money has become our life’s focus, preoccupation and purpose.

a civic duty, financial markets our moral compass, the institutions of finance our temples, and economists as priests who provide us absolution for our personal and collective sins against life.”

“Choosing money over life, we acquiesce to rule by global financial markets gamed by high-speed computers. These corporate robots reduce people and nature to commodities for sale and operate as autonomous entities beyond human control. When we concede this framing story of corporate interests, we play into the divide-and-conquer strategy of elite politics. For example, rather than

argue that greater equality creates healthier societies, we argue that it is better for economic growth; thus reinforcing the very story we must discredit and replace. We lose the future to money.”

## Sacred Life and Living Earth Story

### Centered on values of caring and sharing for one another and nature

The Sacred Life and Living Earth Story thus goes: “We humans are living beings born of and nurtured by a Living Earth. Real wealth is living wealth. Time is life. Money is just a number useful as a medium of exchange in well-regulated markets. Life exists only in community. We humans are creatures of conscience who survive and prosper only as members of a Living Earth community. The prime task of any living community is to maintain the conditions essential to the life of its members. We all do best when we all do well in a world that works for all. A connection to nature and community is essential to our physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being. It is our nature to care and share for the benefit of all.

*Individualistic greed, ruthless competition, and violence against life are indicators of serious individual and social dysfunction. The economy’s assault against Earth’s ca-*

*capacity to support life and its drive to grow the gap between rich and poor indicates terminal system failure.*

*The purpose of human institutions — whether business, government, or civil society — is to provide all people with the opportunity to make a healthy, meaningful living in a balanced co-productive relationship with Earth’s community of life. Corporations that seek to monopolize resources and decision-making power in the pursuit of purely financial ends unburdened by the exercise of human conscience have no place in a healthy society. Human institutions are human creations, which humans can change. Environmental sustainability, economic justice, and a living democracy are inseparable — we have all of them, or we have none of them.”*

“This Sacred Life and Living Earth story,” Korten emphasizes, “provides a framing vision for a Living Economy that is rooted in community, works with nature, meets the needs of all, and gives every person a voice in the decisions on which their well-being and that of the whole depend. But in our ignorance, we have created and serve an economy that aggressively extracts and releases sequestered carbons and tox-



Image 34. Healthy rural community living. The prime task of any living community is to maintain the conditions essential to the life of its members.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

ins back into Earth’s atmosphere, waters, and soils to suppress the natural processes by which Living Earth maintains the conditions essential to our existence. And to what purpose? To make money for people who already have more money than they can possibly use... It is perhaps the most fundamental fact of our existence that without a healthy living Earth, there will be no humans. The right and responsibility of humans to secure the rights and well-being of nature is the most fundamental of all human rights and responsibilities.”

“For the Suicide Economy, money is the defining value. Its institutions are structured to answer to computer managed global financial markets blind to the needs of life. But the institutional structures of corporate oligarchy

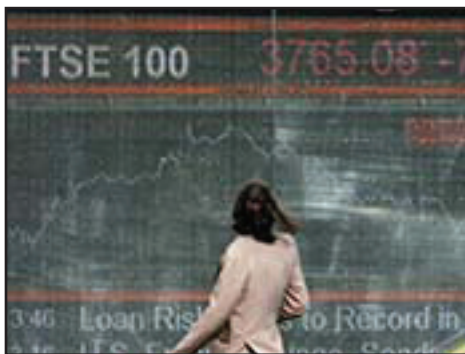


Image 35. Computer managed global financial markets are blind to the needs of life.

have never been more vulnerable. The foundation of their power is rapidly eroding as the seductive promises of the Sacred Money and Markets story lose credibility and people everywhere are relearning the arts of living in co-productive community with one another and nature... We must learn to live, with appropriate humility, in

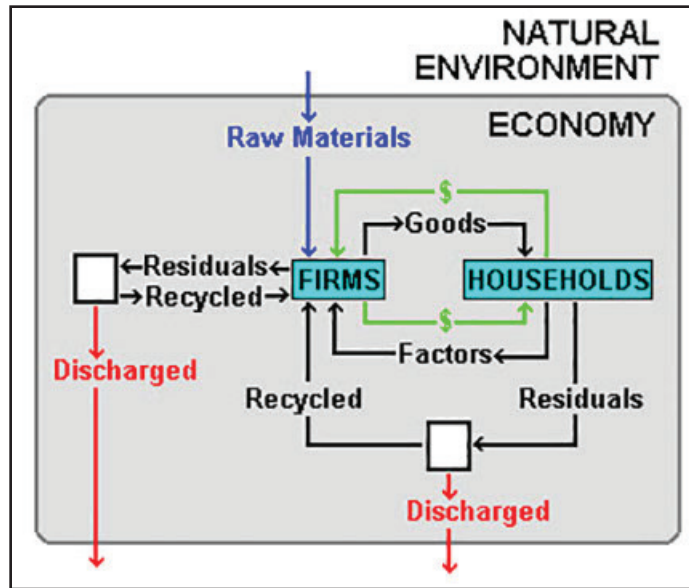


Image 36. “Scoop and poop.” Classical academic economist’s understanding of Nature’s outside, non-integral, role in a commodified Mother Earth. “Scooping up raw materials and pooping out waste” are simply not part of the “economy”.

It is interesting to point out that when Herman Daly, prominent iconoclast and renegade environmental economist for years at the World Bank, author of *Beyond Growth: The Economics of Sustainable Development*, 1996, tried to establish a simple cultural shift in thinking with a preanalytic worldview of the economy as a *subsystem* constrained by nature, merely wanting to put the above outer box diagrammatically around the economy (shaded) box, their Chief Economist and political higher ups would have none of it.

The World Bank wanted to keep the concept vague enough to keep it from cutting into business as usual ideological dogma—pushing loans in the interest of export-led growth and global integration. They insisted that the only correct preanalytic vision of the economy was with the current paradigm, diagrammatically as an isolated system (shaded box only) floating in infinite space receiving “inputs” from nowhere and exporting “wastes” to nowhere. This allowed them to define as “desirable” such suicidal goals as maximizing the present value of monetized expansion; making the economy grow as fast as possible by speeding up the flow of energy and materials through it, thus permitting people to speak of “sustainable growth”—a clear oxymoron. Present value maximization can lead to “optimal liquidation” of natural resources, the higher the discount rate the sooner the liquidation. Of course, this expansion and growth theory of development destroys the ecological capacity of the earth to support life in the future. The future is discounted and simply doesn’t factor into policy.

alignment with the structures and processes of Living Earth. This requires that we replace a money centered suicide economy with a life centered living economy that restores and sustains the health of

our Living Earth mother, equitably meets the needs of all people, and supports radical democracy... Measures of success include indicators of the health of people, community, and nature.”

Currently, Mr President, this manifests in a seeming dilemma of a progressive orientation focused on the well-being of people, particularly ordinary working class people; and the totalitarian right, focused on oligarchic corporate power and control. The disturbing truth is that “democracy”, as we know it, is “largely a charade organized and manipulated by corporate money to convince us that indentured servitude to capitalism and the suicide economy is freedom.”

It’s a false dichotomy when we actually enlighten the adherents regarding the need to focus on authentic values, including the

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

future, and employ valid assumptions regarding the core problems we face as a nation, society and humanity; and strategic solutions that benefit everyone on out in time. To do that, we need further analytical clarity.

## Real Wealth

— VS —

## Phantom Wealth

### Real Wealth

The world has a foundation of real wealth grounded in the living wealth of living people and communities in a living Earth. *Real wealth* includes land, fertile soils, clean air and water, nature, our labor, ideas, technology, physical infrastructure, tools, and all the essentials of human living. Overlaid on the stock and condition of our real wealth is a money



Image 37. The Creation of Money And Illusion of Wealth. “Banks create money out of thin air by loaning it into existence. Increasing the money in the market creates inflation. This also means the system is required to continually grow in order to offset this inflation. We have given the power over our currency to private companies — they are greedy black holes, constantly starved for more. The good news for them is they can create more money. The bad news for us is that *they can create more money.*”

system that, when working properly, theoretically serves as an exchange measure setting the price on “exchange values”. When everything is monetized, however, it leads society to the mindset that the all-important price makes everything for sale; to privatize real wealth, commodify it, securitize it, and profit from another speculative frenzy.

But Living Earth is beyond price and she is not for sale; and her rights must come before all other rights, not only because we are all dependent on her health, but in the moral foundation of her own intrinsic right.

### Phantom Wealth

Unfortunately, policies that favor Wall Street speculation have severed the money economy from the living real wealth economy. Money used to be made primarily from productive investments; investments that produce things we need and actually help society by creating jobs. Over the past few decades however, the financial system has been gamed to increase the nominal stock of money at the expense of productive investments. We have given private financial institutions — the *rentiers* of money — the power to create money by establishing interest-bearing debt accounts out of a thin air “double-entry accounting maneuver”; meaning they can loan money they don’t really have, with leverage factors 10, 20 even 30 or more times the actual cash they hold. This has led to hundreds of trillions of dollars of “financial assets” (securities, in-

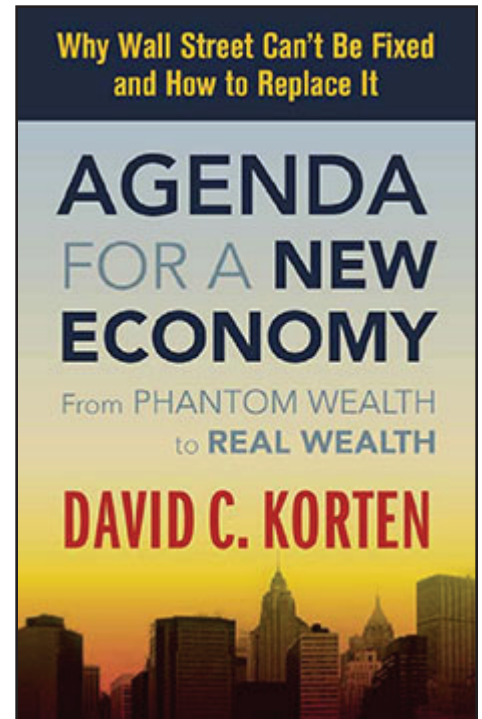


Image 38. “The system by which money is created and allocated is the ultimate instrument of social control in modern society. The simple premise is that the only legitimate purpose of an economy is to support people in meeting their needs for the basic goods and services needed for a full and healthy life in ways that are dignified and spiritually fulfilling. If existing economic institutions fail to fulfill this purpose, it is the democratic right of the people to change them. The corrupted life-destroying phantom-wealth Wall Street money system must be replaced with a life-serving living-wealth Main Street money system that favors life values over financial values, roots power in people and community, and supports local resilience and self-organization within a framework of living markets and living democracy.” David Korten

struments, and their derivatives) that far exceed the real wealth that undergirds them; making for a debt pyramid whose systemic risk of collapse continues to increase until it starts to come apart, as it did in 2008. Now, financial institutions loan massive amounts of money to each other for the sole purpose of oligarchs trading own-

ership of these financial assets, producing nothing of real value; and with a smoke-and-mirrors structure, they continually “securitize” these loans and their derivatives with the same instruments for which they borrow the money to buy them and bet on changes in their “market value”.

The Sacred Money and Markets myth says that this is equivalent to creating “wealth”. But money is not *real* wealth; it is merely a number in a computer somewhere that represents a potential claim against the procurement of real wealth. It is *phantom wealth*. Those who have learned how to game the system, including with their ever increasing political clout, have managed to continually increase and concentrate their unfathomable unearned claims against real wealth relative to the rest of society. Based on bogus economic model assumptions, and organized around the logic of finance rather than the logic of living systems, the resulting phantom-wealth economics serves as the ideological arm of the suicide economy. “Phantom-wealth economists teach and celebrate the moral code of the psychopath, consistently put the interests of Wall Street banksters ahead of the interests of living societies, and ignore the political implications of economic-policy choices... With only a short-term perspective, they insist that economics is a settled science and focus on financial returns rather than returns to the health of people and the rest of nature.” The frame itself establishes even what is meant by progress and prosperity.

“The *phantom-wealth* economist gives priority to managing money to maximize financial returns, fails to recognize that money is a claim on real capital — but not capital itself — and mistakenly treats money as the critical economic constraint.”

“The *living-wealth* economist recognizes that for a society that creates its own money supply, money itself is a false constraint. He or she will instead seek to maximize living returns to the various forms of real capital: biosystem, human, social, intellectual, and infrastructure.

## Real Capital

The *biosystem capital* includes those things produced by Earth’s nonhuman biosystems, including a stable climate, breathable



Image 39. Living Earth’s capacity to continuously regenerate biosystem capital is the ultimate resource constraint.

air, drinkable water, fertile soils, healthy forests and grasslands, and oceans teeming with fish. Living Earth’s capacity to continuously regenerate biosystem capital is the ultimate resource

constraint... In a living economy, the goal is not simply to avoid causing living systems harm. It is to work with them in ways that actively increase their health and productivity to the benefit of all species.”

*Human capital, social capital and intellectual capital* consist of humanity’s accumulated common heritage. *Social capital* involves the relationships of trust and caring that allow individual humans to function as an organized society.



Image 40. “Living Conversation” — Living cultivation of memory in the community relational context of trust.

It is the essential foundational core of democracy; and it is the moral force behind election integrity and a functioning political system. It brings us together in all our rich human diversity to discover our commonality. We deplete social capital when we monetize relationships, promote an individualistic culture of greed and materialism, and deprive all but a privileged minority of access to a secure and dignified means of living and a healthy life. Once depleted, the relationships of trust that are the foundation of social capital can take decades, even generations, to restore.

*Infrastructure capital* consists of all the various forms of hu-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

man-built and human-manufactured capital, including buildings and transportation systems, tools and machinery, and other human-produced physical structure



Image 41. Railway infrastructure, track repair crew.

essential to a healthy and productive human society. All forms of infrastructure capital require and depend on the availability of the other four forms of real capital. Public investments in public infrastructure to address public needs and the common good should be publicly financed, discussed further below as one of the four core strategic success elements.

Present-day Wall Street institutions have no interest in either real-wealth investment or any living community; they're all about



Image 42. Wells Fargo — exemplifies a culture of greed and corruption on Wall Street. Irrespective of criminal activity, which so many of these large institutions engage in; systemic corruption is inherent in the motivation and reward system of the entire financial industrial complex.

phantom wealth. They pride themselves on their ability to extract quick out-sized, unearned profits from computer-driven arbitrage, deception, insider trading, asset bubbles, speculation, corporate-asset stripping, and other socially unproductive financial games unburdened by the obligation to produce anything of value in return. In control of massive financial assets, they buy and sell the corporations that hold title to a major portion of the world's productive real-wealth resources. They hire and fire managers at will, seeking ones willing to manage for the exclusive short-term benefit of Wall Street banksters. This is a source of the system's worse perversion.

## Capitalism and the Suicide Economy

### The Capitalist's Creed

*I believe in economic growth, free markets, deregulation, the privatization of public assets and services, the unrestricted global flow of goods and investment, and a reduction of taxes on corporations, investors, specula-*



Image 43. The Occupy Wall Street movement began when a group of demonstrators gathered in New York's financial district on September 17, 2011 to protest against corruption, the unjust distribution of wealth in the country, and the excessive influence of big corporations on US policies.

"FBI raiding homes of Occupy activists", read the headlines of a US newspaper. The paper revealed that the FBI has been raiding the houses of anti-Wall Street protesters in Oregon and Washington in what the agency describes an "ongoing violent crime investigation."

Yet not one Wall Street executive has been charged with anything related to the 2008 crash; at most, these capitalist financial corporations pay a tax-deductible (subsidized) fine out of their massive cash reserves. Until such "white-collar" criminal actions are taken seriously enough to prosecute the actual people perpetrating the crimes, we will continue to see this kind of corruption.

*tors, and persons of high net worth.*

*I believe that money is wealth, inequality is good for growth, corporate mergers and acquisitions create beneficial economies of scale, and unregulated market forces drive the creation and application of beneficial technologies to end human dependence on nature and eliminate nature as a barrier to perpetual economic growth.*

*I believe capitalism is what democracy, freedom and liberty mean.*

### Fraudulent Memes — Hollow meaning where nothing is "free"

What most economists put forth as settled "economic science" is

grounded in moral bankruptcy and intellectual fraud. We are operating under a terminally destructive system that commodifies and monetizes all of life. Its language is dishonest and steals meaning.

For example, there's nothing "free" about "free markets" or "free trade" or "free enterprise". Although the intent is to position these memes in one's mind to falsely infer well-functioning true market economies, guided by some "invisible hand"; all they really mean is "free of rules that might limit abuses of corporate power." They are memes that exploit ignorance and dupe suckers; while carrying on like it couldn't be more "American apple pie, Motherhood, and God" ("invisible hand"?). See Thomas Frank's book, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism, and the End of Economic Democracy*, 2000.

These memes are empty of content related to their label-words. They are designed to keep the unwary and uninformed tethered to the Sacred Money and Market story, and have them repeat the story like a memorized creed over and over out of ignorance, unjustified pure "belief", and obsequious fealty to those capitalist overlords they've been taught to look up to all their lives. Although they are among the class that typically gets shorted, the 99%, they are expected to proselytize the Sacred Money and Market story narrative of the 0.1% billionaire class like a parade banner on behalf of the feudal capitalist oligarchs they uncritically look to as the

source of Republican corporatist dogma; duped into thinking that is what true American patriotism is all about.

David Korten, in his rewritten 2015 "20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition" (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) of his 1995 classic international bestseller, *When Corporations Rule the World*, points out descriptively and accurately the sobering reality that in the 20 years since the first edition was published:

*Corporate power is now more concentrated and operates ever further beyond human control. Its exercise is more reckless. Its political domination is more complete. Its consequences more devastating. And system collapse is more certain and imminent... The consolidation of power in a global economy ruled by corporations poses a growing threat to markets, democracy, humans, and life itself.*

### **Capitalism: Growing money for those who already have the most money**

We are relentlessly sold the PR façade that *capitalism* is the global champion of human liberty, democracy, and the market economy. Yet, what it really means is "rule by money"; specifically, *real capitalism* is the "rule of society by the owners of capital for their exclusive private benefit." Indeed, there is but one myopic goal driving this monstrous economic impact on the world—growing more money as fast as possible for those who already have the most money and hence economic and political control—out of which all good, they argue, is supposedly

bestowed on society, according to fraudulent capitalist propaganda. Look after the interests of the richest of the rich and society will come out ahead from the crumbs that are supposed to "trickle down" due to increased economic activity and job growth.

This is just old-fashioned Republican economics: Tax breaks and subsidies for people who don't need it—simultaneously praising (fraudulently) the oligarchs and plutocrats for *their own success*; with cuts in programs, services, benefits and protections for the middle class, the elderly, children, the disabled, sick and poor, and nature — simultaneously denigrating them and their dignity for being lazy, taking something they didn't earn, and blaming them for *their own failure*. They equate all that with the rational-sounding meme "fiscal responsibility", accompanied with lies about how good it will be for the country's economic growth. It's a totally fraudulent and immoral story perpetrated on society by corporatist oligarchs and their media henchmen. It just doesn't work out that way.

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**Capitalism is a real wealth extractor and concentrator, harvesting and monetizing global real capital.**

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You won your presidency by appealing to the sense of indignation felt by the working people who supported you, Mr President, the people who have been left out. And you affirmed to them that "the system is rigged" against them. This is *how* the sys-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

tem is rigged against the interests of ordinary working people. And resistance to it is all about people being able to change the power structure in order to participate in it and refocus it on the needs of people, communities and the rest of nature—that’s what is known as *real* democracy. What do you stand for, Mr President?



Image 44. Ordinary working people include the women and men first responders, like these from the Columbus, Ohio, Fire Department, as part of our socially constructed system of community protection. Capitalist dogma would have all of these public services privatized and available only to those wealthy enough to pay for them privately while their neighbor’s house burns to the ground.

In fact, capitalism as a societal organizing system pays *no* attention to its impact on the world and endeavors to eliminate or limit *any* constraints on this single focused goal. It is a real wealth extractor and concentrator, harvesting and monetizing global real capital; while seizing legal control of the assets of countries and communities that are put up as collateral for operating and infrastructure loans from this ever growing debt pyramid that can never be paid back. The outcome is unaccountable financial institutions sucking up control of ever more of the planet’s resources, societies, governments and people; while people increasingly suffer

and the needs of community, society and nature are left wanting, as they are being rendered extreme and lasting damage. This even includes the meat-hooks it has dug into human capital, with generations of young folks trying to get ahead with a decent education, which should be understood as a human right and public benefit

for the good of society; yet they end up in hock to Wall Street bankers for decades with such a financial drag the feudal banks really do “own” their lives, options and mobility well on into middle age or longer. This is *not* freedom! And it includes profiting immensely off of people’s health needs and their suffering, as it extracts everything they own while minimizing the benefits and coverage it purports



Image 45. Millennials across the country are worried about handling tens of thousands of dollars of student debt. What to do if you’re sued by a student lender or debt collector?

to offer. It’s a perverted immoral system designed to make money for oligarchs by harvesting life in all its forms.



Image 46. Why I’m telling some of my students not to go to college. Demonstrators in 2012 burn their student loan bills on the Hollywood Walk of Fame to protest the rising cost of higher education.

It is essential that you understand, contemplate and internalize this, Mr President, if you have any desire for strategic success on behalf of even yourself and family, let alone the rest of America you’ve purported to care for. We are talking about the very health of our society—our political health, population health, ecological health, and economic health. Capitalism is a system design with an intrinsic goal that extracts all of the rewards for those at the top while incurring none of the risks or costs—it’s called “socialism for capitalists” with

“austerity for people and society”.



Image 47. A massive impact on our economy from fraudulently rubber-stamped bank foreclosures. The banks got richer while former homeowners were booted onto the streets; many families from homes that have been in their family for generations. “Show Me The Note” is quite a valid request.

According to the Federal Reserve banks, and printed in their banking rulebooks, money is created when a person (you) signs a contract (promissory note) with a bank.. The bank sells your note (promissory note or deed) to the Federal Reserve the minute you sign it, and the Fed then gives that bank the amount that it then “loans” to you. Therefore, the bank is at a balance of \$0.00 dollars at the point of inception and payment for your loan. Remember, this is how money is “created” according to the Federal Reserve banking rules and regulations. The problem that these banks have is that they no longer hold the note (title) to your home, because they’ve chopped up the mortgages and placed the parts into various derivative financial instruments based on the perceived risk level.

Further, capitalism amplifies the impact, power and reach of phantom wealth with “financially engineered” products that create nothing of real value to society in return while extracting unearned profits, like a neo-feudal “privatization tax” on society. It gathers in more and more control by simply growing money from money as *rentiers* of money, increasing

its claims over the remaining real wealth of human society.

## No moral compass

Capitalism is a suicide economy, grounded in an elitist ideology of individualism supported by an institutional system devoted to the concentration and abuse of wealth for the exclusive benefit of a private ruling oligarchy. If it isn’t corralled in through societal action before; it will eventually collapse entirely around the physical constraints of our living Earth causing irreparable damage that current and future generations will suffer from.

Even our system of law, like that based on the feudal principle of the “*Divine Right of Kings*” supposedly ordained by God centuries ago, provides deference and fealty to capital and its institutions. Capitalism is our neo-feudal system-design for society.

Contemporary legal practice features a roughly equivalent principle: the “*Divine Right of Capital*” — more specifically the divine right of money-seeking corporate robots to rule over people and the rest of nature. Its application gives an artificial legal entity created by living people to serve living communities the right to destroy life to make money for other corporate entities.

It is the product of a series of decisions by a corporatist US Supreme Court, extended and codified by global agreements (misleadingly labeled trade pacts) written and promoted by corporate lobbyists to place corporations even further

beyond the reach of democratic accountability. This illogical, morally perverse, anti-democratic, anti-life legal perversion presents a major barrier to advancing a transition to peace, justice, sustainability, democracy, and a living economy grounded in sound market principles.

Corporations serve as a power-amplifying device in the hands of their oligarch owners and executives. You and the Republican Party have installed an avowed corporatist into a stolen Supreme Court seat, Mr President; while diverting attention away from the moral abomination of the impacts of this system on society with hollow and vain rightwing platitudes about how “moral” it is for this “placeholder justice” to hold down other ideological frauds that allow some to dominate others under the guise of “religious freedom” — an ugly moral fraud.

## Moral fraud

One of those frauds is that Republicans and rightwing religious fundamentalists should be able to use the levers of government to legally subvert every woman’s inherent moral agency regarding



Image 48. The right to an abortion is rooted in women’s moral agency as human beings. Willie Parkder, MD



Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

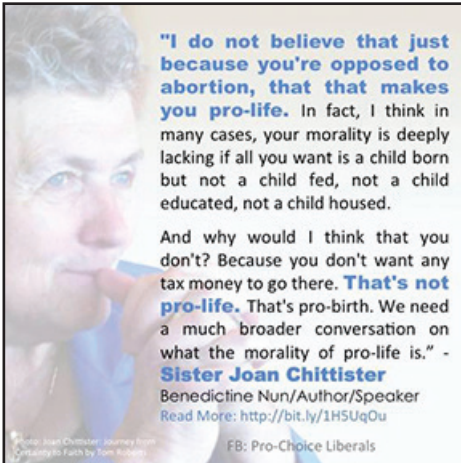


Image 49. Sister Joan Chittister, pointing out the ‘pro-life’ hypocrisy of rightwing ‘birth’ fanatics dominating women’s choice.

her own body and her reproductive liberties and choices with their own beliefs. And of course, this even extends to human sexuality, pregnancy prevention, and gender identity in general; all of which they wish to control across society under the ruse of “religious freedom” — meaning domination by some to remove freedoms from others.



Image 50. LGBTQ Rights, including the right to marry, are *human rights* in which moral agency belongs to the individuals involved, not to be decided or discriminated against by any religious sect.

Domination of human sexuality by religious beliefs is not the moral foundation of our society. Yet, this seems to be the only “home base” Republicans tenaciously

cling to regarding questions of morality; which is itself morally confused, vacuous and repugnant to anyone who values the moral notions of human liberty and individual rights. It’s a thin moral pinnacle and people are sick of the claims its adherents continually make as to its pseudo-righteousness and their efforts to have it dominate all discussions of morality, including by Supreme Court Justices.

Regarding the *real* moral issues of our time with the broadest of impacts, every pro-corporate or pro-religious bigotry decision that swings that way by a single-vote Court majority from the stolen Court seat will forever be tainted by an asterisk footnote of democratic invalidity, subject to subsequent redress by the people through later court decisions, legislation, and constitutionally clarifying amendments, especially about the farcical “personhood” of a legal fiction called a “corporation” in order to subvert and steal the essence of constitutional rights our founding document has bestowed and ensured for *real people*. Time will be telling regarding its impact on a viable future for us all.

## Global Corporate Rule – The fraud of “Free Trade” memes and its impact on people

International “free trade” agreements have one purpose: to advance the consolidation of global corporate rule, with two agendas

regarding jobs: Eliminate as many of them as possible; and push the wages and benefits for the remainder as far down as possible—except of course for top management compensation (the skimming of obscene amounts of money off the enormous cash flows they “manage” and the manipulation of stock prices through unproductive buy-backs). Ever less returns to people and greater returns to the owners of capital.

The myopic capitalist goal of eliminating people from the productive economy is merely to further enrich the oligarch executives and owners of both phantom and real capital. Two Harvard professors (School of Business and JFK School of Government) write in a [2009 Washington Post op-ed](#):

*“Since roughly the mid-1980s, the American public corporation has been run primarily for the purpose of creating vast wealth for its senior executives. True, executives have also sought to produce a return for shareholders and to deliver useful products or services to customers. And, of course, their businesses do provide jobs. But these concerns, for the most part, have been ancillary to the primary objective of enriching those at the very top.”*

### NAFTA, TPP and TTIP

Korten uses NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), after which the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) and TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) are modeled, to illustrate the widening gap between what capitalism promises and what it delivers. Contrary to popular dogma, capitalism doesn’t promote a true market economy; it extends

and deepens the corporate control of markets and resources to expropriate ever more of society's real wealth at the expense of working people, taxpayers, and the rest of nature.

NAFTA advocates, Korten documents as a prime example, "promised the agreement would increase net US exports and create 170,000 new jobs in the U.S. in its first two years. It would be a bonanza for US farmers, improve environmental standards throughout North America, lift Mexico to a first-world-level of economic prosperity and stability, and significantly reduce undocumented immigration from Mexico to the United States. The promises proved false on every account." In its first four years 28,000 small and medium sized Mexican busi-



Image 51. American cartoon caricature critical of capitalism, published in the 1911 edition of *Industrial Worker*. The graphic focus is on social stratification by social class and economic inequality—Capitalism (Money Bag on Top): We rule you; We fool you; We shoot at you; We eat for you; while 'We the People' Work for all and Feed all.

nesses were destroyed; many displaced by US big-box corporate retailers selling goods imported from Asia. Mexican agriculture in particular suffered massive losses with cheap subsidized US corn flooding Mexico, wiping out local family farms who were the guardians and caretakers of genetic seed diversity growing multiple varieties, which succumb to subsidized monocrops.

Capitalism has but one driving goal: to increase the financial assets of the world's richest people.



Image 52. "Capitalism has gone from being a radical economic theory to being seen in the U.S. as the be-all and end-all of economic thought. Any capitalistic economic system ascribes values to certain actions, creating a moral framework wherein certain actions, say the accumulation of capital, are worth more than others, like providing for the poor. The economy effects our moral decision making, often without us knowing, and many people simply act as if that is the way it has to be. It is important to re-couple the economy and moral systems in people's minds. They are not two separate things, and should not be treated as such." The Blowhard News

The rest is unintended collateral damage... The consolidation of global corporate rule reduces local self-reliance and self-determi-

nation; drives a continued race to the bottom on wages, social safety nets, and labor and environmental standards; and increases systemic risk and instability... The rich get richer and the rest struggle with unemployment, low wages, job insecurity, loss of social safety nets, and the health consequences of poor diets and toxic contamination.

The system is designed to "harvest" society by extracting its financial claims on real wealth into ever more concentration of financial assets among the few corporations and oligarchs at the top. Not only did the bottom 90 percent not benefit from the post 2008-crash recovery, for example; a portion of their previous income was redistributed upward to the top 10 percent. The biggest takers were the top 1 percent, who captured 95 percent of the total gains, with most of that going to the top 0.1 percent. The paradigm is "extract, accumulate and concentrate". The basic pattern is global and worsened in the subsequent years of 2013 and 2014. Nothing has changed, as we can see by what the current Republican congress is presenting "to help America be great again."

This is the last big grab by an unprecedented Republican governmental wrecking crew that is playing for keeps on behalf of oligarchs and plutocrats. It is attempting to manifest a final and permanent harvest of the *real* wealth, power and control of our country, the world, and our planetary living systems by exploiting the power of financial corporate capitalism to extract, accumulate,

grow and concentrate *phantom* financial wealth. These are unimaginable crimes against future generations by enemies of a viable and just future. But Korten encourages us with his far-reaching insight to tenaciously hold onto our vision for a better future.

*“As we awaken to our creative potential and the dark future we have created for ourselves, we embark on the most profound and exciting course change in human history. Although the outcome is uncertain, the interlocking institutional structures of capitalism and the suicide economy are far more vulnerable than they seem. They are inherently unstable, unable to self-correct, and destined to collapse under*

*the stress of their ever-increasing excess.”*

The institutions and theories of the suicide economy have only the power we yield to them. We have every right to reclaim our power and move forward—as many billions of people are already doing—to grow the culture and institutions of a living economy for a living Earth, and ultimately to reclaim the unearned real-wealth assets these institutions have expropriated.

Furthermore, they are fast losing credibility as awareness spreads that they engage in a war against

life for the sole purpose of advancing control by the richest among us of the declining pool of the real wealth of the living Earth they are systematically killing. In the end-game encounter with the imperial institutions of elite rule, we the people hold the ultimate advantage: We have the moral authority of an authentic and truthful story that lives in the human heart and calls us to recognize our higher nature. Our story unmasks the moral and intellectual corruption of the institutions of the suicide economy and the economic and legal theories that support it.

## A Living Pragmatic Strategic Success Program for a Viable American Future

### Preparing the Ground

#### Terminology

It is very important we share the proper and same meaning of key words in this discussion for our mutual clarity and understanding, Mr President. To be strategically successful you must let go of your tendency of trying to alter meaning of words and phrases you use that muddle and confuse the people. Those are merely small-thinking tactics and have no place in this strategic thinking—we want clarity, not confusion. So, I will define precisely the meanings I intend in this presentation as follows:

#### *Living:*

This relates to the previous discussion about focusing on life; specifically the *Sacred Life and Liv-*

*ing Earth Story* and its relationship to *real wealth*, as opposed to the phantom wealth of growing money for the financial *rentiers* of money. Money means nothing in the

long-term if it is not in support of the processes that sustain a healthy society and planet—the desired outcome for success.



Image 53. Let’s be clear; what we’re talking about here is a program that affects and benefits everyone, not just the poor, working poor, and those needing public assistance. We are talking about a viable American future *for all*, including all races and economic status, such as working professionals, business owners and entrepreneurs.

#### *Pragmatic:*

I use this term primarily in terms of efficacy of the program elements and their relative

ease of implementation through policy legislation, leveraging current governance management structures and processes when at all possible to achieve the strate-



Image 54. This means middle class families in the suburbs.

gic goals. It means dumping ineffectual, false, mythical and fraudulent ideological beliefs that have so polluted current and past proposed legislation — designed more to implement favored ideologies than solve problems — in favor of more effective and economically efficient approaches that actually do solve problems. My intent is to purposely transcend the perpetual political morass and stagnation our congress is mired in, which confuses understanding and impedes progress, in order to focus on solving *real problems* in a *real time frame* of urgency. America cannot afford to continue on this ineffectual status quo path. We must be able to implement strategically effective solutions to the serious problems that beset us and that will surely sink our opportunities for a viable future if not addressed soon.

### Strategic:

*Strategic* connotes great importance, comprehensiveness, integrated whole, time-critical urgency and long-term results, and broad scope and seriousness of threats and impacts — especially when crucial to our survival. These include the deterioration of the health of our people, our society, our planet, our democracy and governance, and the viability

of our future.

The four policy elements integral to this program address core *gateway issues* that affect all of us, now and in the future. They are broad in scope and extent of impact. If addressed properly in a timely manner, they facilitate effective solutions to a broad range of other societal challenges; if not addressed, they block the possibility of solving many other problems and indeed lead to our eventual and mutual demise. Of course, we are beset with lots of issues that are not only important, but serious; but not as gateway issues that are crucial to a broad range of problems — that is what makes these four elements

*strategic*.

For example, looking briefly at each of the four strategic elements, starting with our democracy; the health status of our democracy is ill and in a state of decline through a faulty election system and the corrupting influence of money. Without a healthy functioning democracy, the people are frozen out of meaningful engagement and participation in political power and the political decision-making process, which in turn affects the viability of our future and our ability to solve other important problems focused on people and the public common good. As noted earlier, oligarchs are only interested in getting more for themselves at the expense of ordinary people and the common social good in general.



Image 55. It means American families with immigrant roots.

Secondly, the health of our population is in decline and thus far efforts to address it are sucking the financial life out of ordinary working-class and middle-class people, while exasperating inequality. People are sinking under its weight. This represents two aspects of injustice: unnecessary suffering when beset with

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*



Image 56. It affects traditional American families.

medical conditions, which could be prevented or addressed medically; and, the extreme disproportionate financial burden it places on people who least can afford it.

Third, we are facing the certain prospect of a runaway climate with unfathomable and deepening loss of life-serving ecosystem functioning, societal infrastructure, personal property, and real societal wealth. Further, our military and national defense team have long known and identified huge implications of climate



Image 57. It means parents who are sharing and juggling work and family care responsibilities. Perhaps dad stays home to care for the kids, while mom works to pay the bills.

change for our national security and military facilities, equipment and operations.

Finally, as expounded upon earlier, our capitalist suicide econ-

omy is literally sucking the life out of our society and nations across the globe as phantom money-wealth increases (exponentially) while becoming ever more concentrated in the hands of a few oligarchs. Under the current system structure the power of money creation is privatized, meaning evermore concentration of wealth and power and that ownership of



Image 58. Perhaps a busy parent is trying to get work done at home while caring for the young children.

real capital (and phantom wealth claims against real capital) is in the hands of a few, out of reach for the public common good unless public assets become collateral for loans with subsequent claims of private ownership by private financial institutions — all while reaping unearned profits through the mechanisms of debt on projects for the public common good. The Constitution, Article I §8, gives Congress the power to “coin money”, which it has abrogated to the private financial elite (enabling these functionar-

ies to skim off immense personal wealth from the global cash flows, which is why there are so many billionaires whose wealth grows exponentially). When it comes to the public good, this corrupt and harmful structure affects the very purpose and goal of public investment—is it to grow more phantom wealth for already concentrated money? Or, is the purpose of public investment to address public needs for infrastructure, health and education, among other things, *while retaining public ownership and returns to the public treasury* — not financial capitalists.

We must assume ultimate responsibility for our strategic decisions and actions that are existential by their very nature in that they relate to our continued existence as a well-functioning and sustainable civilization. Without proper strategic solutions that address these strategic issues, our society will be increasingly crippled in the long-run and unable to meet the needs of the future.



Image 59. It means successful managers and business owners who live in upper middle-class neighborhoods, like this largely African American community in Mitchellville, Maryland.

**Success:**

*Strategic success* means achieving *strategic goals* that address interre-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*



Image 60. It means middle class renters living in the big city.

lated *strategic threats* in order to manifest *desired outcomes* on behalf of the interests of the American people, including your supporters Mr President.

Ask your military generals about “measures of merit”, such as mea-

sures of proficiency, efficiency, effectiveness, and measures of outcome. They know about military failures that might have been “effective” in doing something, but end up with disastrous outcomes nonetheless. Each of the four strategic success program elements below properly defines and addresses these aspects of success.

In fact, I’ve purposely grouped them by their related strategic goal; and hence appropriate “measure of outcome” by which the success of each should ultimately be evaluated: *Healthy Democracy*; *Healthy Population*; *Healthy Environment*; and *Healthy Economy*. If we get on the right track with

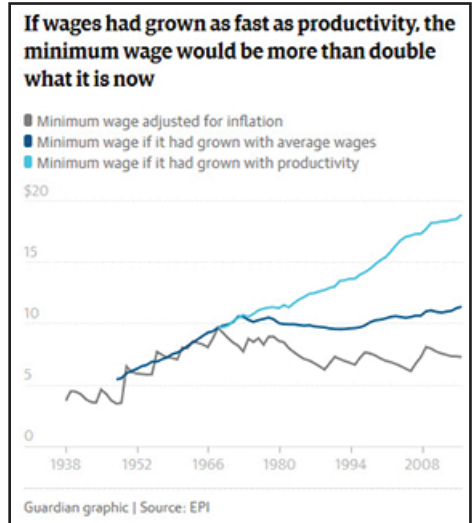


Image 62. “Inequality and Opportunity in America”, by Dominic Rushe: “Fran works six days a week in fast food, and yet she’s homeless: ‘It’s economic slavery.’”

these strategic goals, undergirded by the values of a living economy, we as a nation will be in a viable position to tackle the other immense challenges we currently face, and those that our children, grandchildren and their successors will be facing as time goes on.

This is not something you or your staff has, can or will define in an acceptable manner, Mr President; regardless of grandiose proclamations you or others may make for whatever you do. For example, you’ve recently taken an initiative on what you’ve called “election integrity” and assigned leadership of that effort to people who by their very beliefs, previous actions and orientation will spell disastrously inadequate, even harmful results; yet, you will be tempted to grasp at anything they come up with and call it “success” just so you can say you’ve done something. If you want America, and you yourself Mr President, to be *strategically* successful you cannot just say

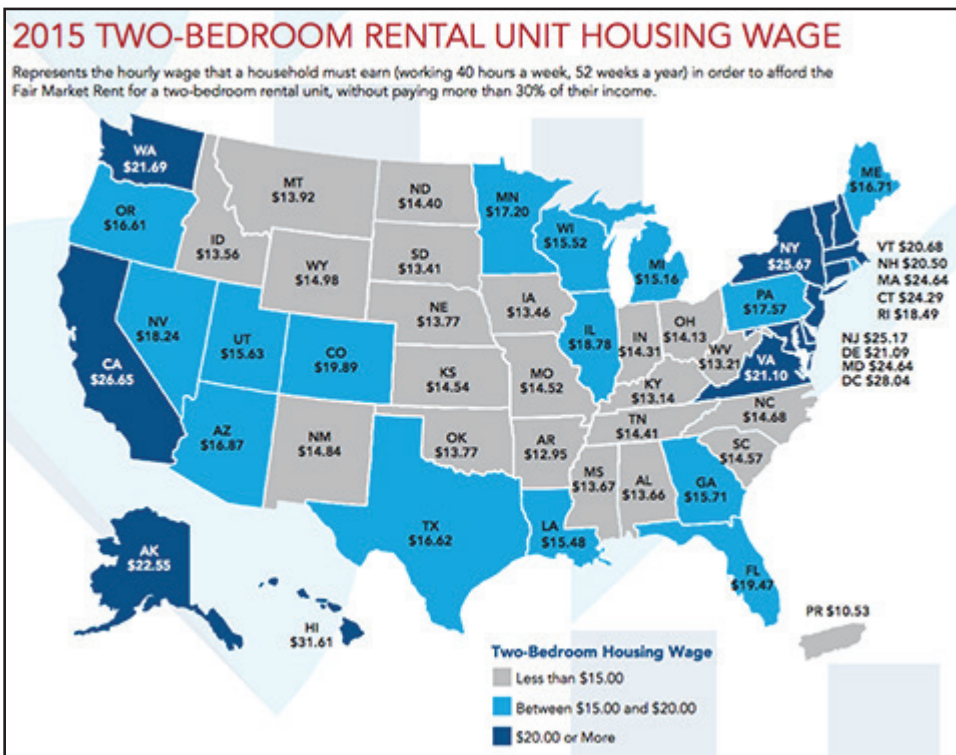


Image 61. And it means a viable future for American families struggling to make enough from their wages merely to be able to afford a two-bedroom rental unit, without paying more than 30% of their income. This graphic demonstrates how that changes with geographic location, showing by state the average hourly wage that a household must earn working full time all year, in order to afford the fair market rent. That’s \$26.65 per hour in California; \$19.89 in Colorado; and \$13.66 in Alabama. So, depending on where you live, a \$15 minimum wage may not even cover it; and the current minimum wages that are below \$10/hour doesn’t cut it in any state.

the words and expect that their intrinsic meaning will manifest just because you want others to think that they will.

This is not strategic problem solving; it's just political bullshit, and believe me people are sick of it. It will not be a strategic success, because they will not define and analyze the problem properly and will only attempt to push their favorite causes to actually undermine the very meaning of "election integrity". They will grasp onto one aspect, say, that helps Republicans continue to steal elections and try to bullshit American people by exploiting their ignorance, "solving" some ill-defined problem that doesn't even exist, and call that "success". This will not take you very far, Mr President. The election issue must be focused on American people.

### **Program:**

This word implies an integrated set of policy elements that mutually reinforce the overall goal of a healthy and viable future. Strategic success cannot be achieved by isolating each element or picking and choosing this or that. It's an integral design intended to address four key roadblocks in the way of a viable future. You don't win a war — in this case a war for the future — by saying, "Well, we'll just fight this battle or that battle, and call it enough;" because whatever is accomplished will end up withering and dying on the vine. There are multiple strategic fronts and we must address all of them in order for people to have the power and a path to subsequent-

ly address the multitude of issues our society faces now and in the future. It's about building a viable strategic path for the long-run; not about isolated political wins.

### ***Viable American Future:***

This means manifesting conditions for our country, and the broader relational contexts of civilization and the rest of nature that we exist within, that provide for the capability of living, growing and developing, of working and functioning adequately, and having a reasonable chance of survival and succeeding as a self-sustaining living system on out into an indefinite and uncertain future.

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#### **It is crucial that we think of human excellence *ecologically***

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Beyond the notion of "sustainability", with its implied claim that we can keep on as before as long as we minimally "protect the environment", a *viable future* should hold even the potential of thriving and flourishing under difficult and uncertain conditions. It involves a broad conception of human excellence and takes into consideration human virtues of the future, beginning with the capabilities needed to live a life with dignity. Such is exemplified foundationally with the virtue of justice and the place of ecology in our conception of a more collective justice and the rights of nature. It means finding what kinds of social conditions best clarify and support our dignity and decency and our relationships with each other and with the rest of na-

ture.

A viable future involves adjustments and adaptations — whether passive, reactive, or anticipatory — that can respond to anticipated or actual consequences associated with possible future conditions; and which can decrease our system's vulnerability, or increase its resilience to impacts. It means even adjusting our conception of who we are, our ideals, our understanding of shared responsibility, relevant virtues and vices, and the scale and structure of our institutions to appropriately fit the new global context.

It begs the question of who we are in terms of our individual moral character; whether it's buried in the insecurities and poisons of fear, hatred, anger, blame and violence; or the strength of such bedrock personal virtues of empathy, generosity, benevolence and grace. And who we are collectively with our social institutions and how we care for one another through them, reflecting on the scale and structures of the collective actions required. It is both a pragmatic matter and a question of value placed on the



Image 63. Bill McKibben, author, activist and co-founder of 350.org



Image 64. Allen Thompson, Oregon State University: “Never before has the collective impact of human behaviors threatened all of the major biosystems on the planet. Decisions we make today will have significant consequences for the basic conditions of all life into the indefinite future. What should we do? How should we behave? In what ways ought we organize and respond? The future of the world as we know it depends on our actions today.” From his new anthology with co-author Stephen Gardiner, *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental Ethics*.

future; and how human virtue is embedded in our relations to the Earth’s ecology — it is crucial that we think of human excellence *ecologically*. A viable future connotes and implies systemic attributes of maturity, emergence, nimbleness, resilience, durability, sturdiness, stability, hardiness and robustness. We must shift our own self-conception from individualistic consumers to neighbors, community and citizens who embrace mutual aid, help and assistance for everyone. Our current capitalist suicide economy holds none of this, and is hence suicidal.

These are not “pie-in-the-sky” notions. They are being thoroughly explored, from which I’ve drawn and paraphrased the comments above, by such lead-

ing thinkers as Bill McKibben. McKibben notes that we are now living on a fundamentally altered planet, still recognizable but fundamentally different, which he calls and spells as “*Eaarth*” to connote the similarity and difference (*Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*, 2010, Times Books).

And others like my friend and professor of environmental ethics, Allen Thompson, who explore philosophically-deep implications of human flourishing in the shifting age of global warming; where our values ought to commit us to a robust understanding of the ethical implications these changes engender and what should become of us humans in such a future (*Ethical Adaptation to Climate Change: Human Virtues of the Future*, 2012, MIT Press).

### ***Ignorance and Stupidity:***

When using these words, I do not mean for them to convey any insult; but to convey a state of mind. So, it is important to be clear on their meaning in a way that should not be interpreted as offensive when I use them.

*Ignorance* means lack of knowledge, comprehension and awareness in general and/or about something in particular. Mr President, I am not ignorant in general, but I certainly am ignorant about what it takes to manage large real estate transactions, run a bank, or manage golf course, entertainment and hotel operations. Whereas you are certainly not ignorant about those things, given that you’ve become very wealthy doing that for most of your life.

You are very knowledgeable about those areas of business; in fact, you’ve been well educated about finance and real estate with a degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. In my MBA program, especially in finance classes, we learned that Wharton is one of the top programs in finance in the nation and I have high respect for their graduates. Even though I have an MBA, however, you wouldn’t want me to make buy-sell decisions about any of your vast and successful real estate holdings, *believe me!* Not because I don’t know anything about it; but because I hold no specific expertise or experience in that area and would likely fuck things up royally!

That doesn’t mean I’m *stupid* and couldn’t learn what was involved, given enough time and tutoring; it just means I don’t really know anything about it and I’m smart enough to admit that; and further, I do not let my ego in any way be attached to that state of ignorance. It just is what it is. Hey, there’s lots of stuff I don’t know. Being *stupid* or *dumb*, on the other hand, mean lacking the *ability* to absorb ideas or impressions, or lacking in intelligence or reasoning ability, which may be congenital or a temporary state.

Mr President, I don’t think you are stupid; but you are ignorant about many things, like I am. What seems to be an unhelpful weakness for you is that, by your public statements you seem often to not be aware of your level of ignorance about certain topics, and yet isn’t it your ego that stands in the way of that aware-



ness? Perhaps you think that others think you *should* be knowledgeable about some particular thing, so you speak and act as if you are, which gets you into difficulties you don't want or need. I mean this very politely and sincerely, Mr President, since I'm really trying to help you with this lengthy letter by drawing your attention into a more strategic level of thinking and awareness about crucial strategic success issues; and away from tired, worn out, preprogrammed, unthinking "knee-jerk" ideological reactions and beliefs, and their associated ineffectual policies. This has nothing to do with who's smarter or any effort to put one down over what they know or don't know, yet think they know. We have to start from where we both are, with mutual respect. So I offer this guidance about things I'm pretty knowledgeable about. Of course, you can either accept that or reject it; but I'm not about to argue with you about any of it, I just want to help enlighten you about these important areas.

By the same token, Mr President, I am very knowledgeable about many things you are not. Whereas your business experience is in sales and large deal-making, my experience and education is more in scientific areas and industrial operations. I'm highly educated as a scientifically knowledgeable systems engineer, with a PhD in Industrial Engineering, an MBA and an MS in Statistics; with lots of expertise about data and data analytics. I like to analytically examine complex systems to find better ways to manage them and solve problems related to system

behavior and systemic interactions. So, as I proceed, I hope to share with you insights I've developed that will help America and help you be a strategically successful president on behalf of the best interests of all Americans, including your base of supporters. To hell with this "Corporate R&D" (Republican & Democrat) political duopoly that has so failed the interests and needs of the American people. *It's time for the people to lead*; to lead Congress to do the right thing. Let's transcend the failures and lead a strategic path to a positive viable future for everyone.

### ***Fraud, Malfeasance, Treason, Traitor, Faithless, Disloyal, Betrayal:***

These words are employed in this letter-essay as descriptive technical terms based on Webster dictionary definitions. This is not about denigrating individuals by "name calling"; nor is it about some slight regarding "personal loyalty". These words are necessary, unfortunately, to describe the behavior, statements and actions of high officials and important decision makers that negatively impact America and its people. The essence of these words is *betrayal of trust*; being untrue to what should command one's fidelity or allegiance.

*Malfeasance* means wrong doing or misconduct, especially by an official in a public or formal position.

*Fraudulent* means intentional perversion of truth in order to induce another to part with some-

thing of value or to surrender a legal right; an act of deceiving or misrepresenting.

*Treason* is not simply its Constitutional legal definition, by which Congress can charge the crime — "making war against [the U.S.]... Adhering to our enemies, giving aid and comfort..." as described in the Constitution, Article III §3, regarding actions against our country. *Treason* by dictionary definition is in fact, "the betrayal of trust; the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender holds allegiance." This includes conduct by officials that undermines the government, or its core institution of trust — meaning a properly functioning democracy. And that goes directly to what you have referred to, appropriately, as "our precious election process". If this basis of trust is undermined by deception, which it has been already as I will note below, it constitutes a destructive violation of faith and confidence the American people need to have in the pillars of our constitutional government.

*Traitor* is someone known in law as a person who commits treason. Further, a traitor is someone who betrays another's trust or is false to an obligation or duty. Its Latin root means an "act of handing over; betrayed" ... as in a serious betrayal of trust.

*Faithless* means not true to duty; not to be relied on; untrustworthy.

*Betray* means to lead astray; to intentionally undermine.

*Disloyal* means a lack of com-

plete faithfulness in thought or words or actions to someone, a cause, or country—*our* country; yours and mine, Mr President.

## Integrity and Leadership

### — Essentials for Strategic Success

**The most crucial barrier to success—YOU:** Mr President, I've noted earlier that one of your strategic weaknesses is your perceived lack of integrity and trustworthiness; real or not. From the public statements you make, I know you don't want anyone to think that; but it's true and we must work within weaknesses of that potentially crippling frame in order to have a chance at strategic success, which is what this is all about. Further, as I've also noted, you've demonstrated that it is very difficult for you to recognize and accept the breadth and depth of your level of ignorance and incompetence about many topics; yet you struggle to convince people otherwise, often coming across looking foolish in the process. This is a frank reality that may be hard for you to hear and impossible for you to accept; I am not naïve to that, but I'm willing to work with it if you are. There *is* a way to transcend it.

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**There's no other way, given where we are right now...**

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*Reality* is not what *you* (or your staff) say or seem to think it is, Mr President. That's simply a game that is wearing very thin as time

moves on in your presidency. If you continue to behave in a way that obfuscates truth with propaganda, certainly around these strategic success issues, you will surely not even be able to get a viable program started, let alone be successful with it, regardless of the photo-op fanfare you enshrine it in. You must be able to transcend that immature and ineffective mode of thinking and behavior into a "wisdom" mode, I've described earlier. I'm up for big challenges; how about you?

This is in fact the most crucial factor in the way of success and there is only one way to overcome it. And that is by putting trusted, competent, and independent leadership and expertise, with unquestionable integrity, in charge of this overall strategic success program and each of the four strategic elements—*and then not touch it*, or quibble about it in midnight tweets. It needs to be "stand-alone sacrosanct". I will point out who these people are below, overall leadership and by each strategic element. Whether or not they wish to be involved will be up to them and your own ability to overcome your strategic weaknesses in order to convince them to pick up the mantle of this strategic leadership on behalf of the American people, and at your request as president. If you can do this, it will be a mark of true administrative leadership; if you can't, you will continue to fight and squabble over trivia while strategic issues get left wanting and strategic success evades your grasp.

## Your role as President

Your role, as President, would be to "own the entire program," lock-stock-and-barrel, including its people and leadership, and then go out and sell the complete package to your massive base of supporters, explaining to them how you've awoken to these strategic needs and why it's in their best interest and in the interest of all American people and our country's future as a whole. And the purpose of that would be to have *them* light a fire under their Republican congressional representatives and senators to pass this program.

*The true power is in the hands of the people!* Forget trying to lobby and make deals with this House Speaker, the moral "*slitherin*" of congress, and the rest of these swamp rats, whose ideological fervor and subservience to money-eyed interests binds them to false ineffectual approaches while blinding them to genuine compassionate concern for real people. All they think about is money, themselves, and getting reelected (or preventing someone else from being successful and reelected), while keeping their voter-base in a state of sustained ignorance so they won't notice that the public treasures are being stolen right out from underneath them.

From their state of hypocritical delusion, although most claim "Christianity" as their religious belief system, none of them seem to ask themselves, "Spiritually and practically, what would Jesus do, given this is all about life and a healthy future?" Are you going to

blindly and willfully succumb to a self-serving infantile belief system you don't really understand at the insistence of others and religious dogma ("It's all about *me* being saved so I'll go to heaven!"); or would you rather truly awaken and be brave enough to adopt the values, integrity and independence of this amazing prophet and focus that on a healthy future for America and its people?

You beat them all with your independence, remember Mr President? And the only reason they are still sticking with you is because of their fear of your massive base. That's your army of supporters; so mobilize it to do this good for the country. Lead them to this strategic vision for a viable American future, Mr President. As disgusted as I am with the Democratic side of the aisle and the hypocrisy of their craven corporatized national leadership (my own independence is showing here), I think that there is high likelihood that many of them will get behind it as well. And, under your leadership as President, we can then transcend the ideological quagmire that is literally sinking our country. It's really up to you; and there's only one way to give it a chance to work.

Let me emphasize again, there's no other way, given where we are right now. If your untethered ego implores you to touch it by trying to stick some little immature trivia in so you can claim, "Hey, it was bad until I stuck my part in"; or if you fuck with its leadership in anyway, like trying to "steer it" by insisting on putting "your guy" in there on the team,

it won't go anywhere. It'll never have a chance to breathe and get off the ground. If you interfere by trivializing matters with your oversized ego and propensity for self-aggrandizement — "It's *me*; it's mine; it's all mine" — nobody of consequence will join you and it will fail. You must grow up, Mr President; it's time.

If you can't mature into a strategic wisdom mode of thinking, Mr President, it will fail. Am I clear enough about that? Touch it and you poison it; fuck with it in any way and you destroy it.

### **"I'm the *only one* who can fix it!"**

But if you can do this, Mr President, you may ironically be able to manifest the most audacious



Image 65. An audaciously difficult challenge, Mr President. And the thread is knotted and twisted and doesn't behave very well. Photo © Carlos Velayos

claim you or anyone has ever made — *ever*: "I'm the *only one* who can fix it!" That claim can only have a chance to realize its fruition in one very specific way.

You've probably heard of the Bible story, something about passing through the eye of a needle, no? Well let's not be naïve about the difficulty of manifesting this success; it will be like trying to line up and thread *four* needles, not necessarily lined up in a neat row, with a *hugely* audacious strategic success program for the American people that no one has *ever* been able to do. You will have to exhibit the sustained strength and courage to stand up against very strong special interests, like you told your supporters you would — especially those of your own oligarchic plutocratic class, who will probably hate you for even trying it. Audacious courage, Mr President.

This is also where your leadership comes in; you will have to draw the billionaire class of corporate financiers and power-brokers into an understanding that what is in the best interests of America and our future aren't necessarily in their short-term financial interests — so tell them to quit trying to sell ordinary working-class and middle-class Americans the crock-of-shit that more money for them means jobs and good things for us! Simple-minded regular folks — lifetime Republicans, many of them — in the past may have eaten up that line of bullshit and regurgitated it as part of their "Republican conservative identity". But it doesn't sell anymore, Mr President; people are waking

up, especially the younger generations. There's even a recent article point out that young Republicans are fleeing the Republican Party in droves ("The Young Flee the GOP", May 19, 2017, NYT).

Is your loyalty to a sinking party ship? Or is it to the American people who were so fed up with the corruption and business-as-usual they voted for you because you promised to "fix it" and "drain the swamp"? Who better to shake up, recalibrate and re-educate the billionaire class than you, Mr President, as one of their class?

It's high time to be in their face and ask them the soul-searching question: "Don't we billionaires have enough already that we won't sacrifice a good bunch of it for the good of our country and the America people? Do you not care about people who are struggling and those who suffer? Do you not love your country? 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country', as former president Kennedy so profoundly put it."

Some even arrogantly and blatantly despise people without means and are convinced the end-game is all about them getting more for themselves — pure greed: "The one who dies with the most toys and biggest bank account wins." Wins what? Heaven? Like that amazing prophet and spiritual leader would, you will have to lead them to the well of compassion and concern for a viable future where everyone benefits, and to find the spiritual path of transcending their own selfish interests and greed — think about how big desert camels are and how

small the eye-of-the-needle is, Mr President. But of biblical magnitude or not; it can be done! Are you able and willing to make the attempt — are you *really* the "only one who can fix it"? Let me help; please read on.

### Here's the absolute bottom line, Mr President

It deserves repeating: If you even touch *any* aspect of this program, or let anyone else fuck with any of it, including and especially the designed-in integrity and expertise of its leadership, you will surely poison it. For certain, whether you intend it or not, you will destroy its integrity; people who might be willing to lead it while you're still president will abandon it and you, and you will accomplish nothing, ending up owning the losing mantle of strategic failure. This just may be the one hurdle to success you are unable to overcome; your ego seems to be so fragile and beyond normal bounds that you need continual outside approval, making it virtually impossible for you to let go and not mess with things yourself in order to put your own "stamp" on it and claim personal credit for everything.

I know this is "in your face" frankness; but you really need to hear it and internalize it if you want to be strategically successful for America. Strategic wisdom calls for humility and grace; and instead of pointing *to yourself*; it calls for the maturity to point away from yourself and credit others. You seem to have grown up with a "win-lose" mindset you've not

been able to let go of since childhood. Crushing everyone in your way; learning to always grab all the credit for yourself whenever something goes well and blaming others with humiliating personal insults when you don't "get your way". I adjure you to awaken from this immature, ineffectual and self-destructive behavior, Mr President; for the good of the country *and* yourself. Whatever "fatherly advice" has guided you in this regard, it now sinks you.

Strategic leadership is about *leading*, not doing or "ordering people to do" from a perceived position of formal power; like you claimed when saying about our military generals regarding orders you give them that might violate the Geneva Convention, "If I tell them to do it; they'll do it. I've always been a leader; I've never had trouble leading."

That is dictating; not leading. I'm sorry Mr President; you are deluded about what it means to lead. *Real leadership* is about accomplishing things through others, when you have no power to do the seemingly impossible, and let them shine in the light of their own success. It's about having the humility to acknowledge others with the credit for pulling it off successfully. You need to "own the program" in a different way, Mr President; and I will explain how in order to clear the way for strategic success. If you can do that, you will be known on out in time as "The only one who could do it," which should be enough credit for yourself. If not, you will be known as "The one who didn't do it, but could have," when the

country depended on you the most. This is an existential choice for you, Mr President, in the ultimate realm of “winners and losers” for the future.

## Where to turn for leadership integrity

Without designing and building in this *strategic leadership integrity*, forget it; nothing will work, because your own public behavior comes across as antithetical to integrity, trust and honesty. The point, Mr President, is not to deny that reality and try to fight a losing battle to counter that impression; but to simply accept it and work within those limits toward strategically successful results that, in the end, might shift that impression. That will either happen or not based on the strategic fruits of the program; but not because you personally claimed “*it was immensely successful and only I...*” Don’t poison it, Mr President, from a position of emotional insecurity. The personal challenge to modify this behavior is huge, I know; it calls for healing a part of your upbringing you’ve never got around to addressing. It doesn’t mean you can’t do that now.

Further, neither the national leadership of the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party carries the kind of integrity we need for strategic success; in fact, the opposite. The entire Republican Party is “out-to-lunch”, which is obvious from the sack-of-shit bills and budgets they’ve been proposing and dumping in your lap, if they can get anything through. They now even have to try and

slip in and out of their own district towns during congressional recess without being noticed in order to avoid facing the ire of public anger and outrage they’re causing — that same anger that put you in office, Mr President. Where do *you* want to be with all this?

The Republicans have already demonstrated their inability to govern the nation; all they know how to do is tear things down and, like immature little brats, threaten to sabotage our government if they don’t get their way. Their proposals are all ideological dogma; none of it addressing the strategic challenges our country faces. They don’t even know what those challenges are because the corrupting influence of campaign finance has made congress unaccountable and unresponsive to the American people.

And the DNC is still shunning the wisdom of progressive leadership as they show themselves to remain the craven sycophants of Wall Street they’ve been throughout the past election; still never missing an opportunity to denigrate and exclude Bernie Sanders,

whose independence they seem to fear more than anything. As an American citizen and patriotic military veteran, I’m really sick of the national-level old-guard of both parties; aren’t you, Mr President? It’s really an auspicious time for you to completely shift gears and bring on independent leadership with integrity to address these strategic issues, don’t you think?

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**Bernie is the only one who has the credibility and integrity to make this program work.**

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This all might seem like a difficult environment to navigate; but actually, it’s just the opposite. It opens up the opportunity to transcend the morass and turn to highly respected *independent leadership* to head up this entire strategic program on behalf of our country. It would be delegation at its best, Mr President; and, assuming you internalize the points I’ve made above, it is the only path to successfully thread the strategic needles. It is that which would make you *strategically successful*;



Image 66. Bernie Sanders is the window to a viable future, Mr President.

nothing else.

## Senator Bernie Sanders, Independent of Vermont

As you well know, Bernie is currently the most popular and respected politician in America. There is unbelievable enthusiasm for this honorable man. During the campaign you've even recognized that by showing him the deference of respect in many statements you've made. We're not starting with someone who's hated and despised, like the Democratic candidate was. Bernie is the only one who has the credibility and integrity to make this program work. He has consistently railed against many of the same attributes of our broken system that you did during your election campaign, Mr President; so this really calls you out on whether or not you really meant any of what you've said to your supporters.

Lots of people are judging that you're a hypocrite who certainly didn't mean any of it, as demonstrated by the character and background of the people you've brought into your administration. Bernie is independent, although he does caucus with the Democrats simply because the Republican ideology is so fucked up and harmful to the future of our country. Yet, he places blame directly on the Democratic Party itself for its massive electoral failures over the past several years by not representing the interests of ordinary working people.

Loyalty to one's country must take precedence over party loyalty,

however, which is perhaps why Bernie has remained an independent—in fact, a progressive independent democratic socialist—throughout his political career. People highly respect him for that, because he focuses on the needs and wellbeing of ordinary people; not Wall Street money. Already, his supporters are encouraging him to lead a break-away *real* progressive “People's Party” in anticipation of the 2020 election and an intransigent Democratic old-guard. It's his independence that provides this narrow window of opportunity at this paradoxical and ironic moment in our history. I'd want to be on the winning side of that; what about you, Mr President?

I have no idea how he'd react to you reaching out to him to pick up the helm and midwife this program through; but I'd bet, if you follow the advice I've laid out, he'd be interested in exploring it with you. There are already bills in the works that address various aspects of it; so again, we're not starting from scratch.

But, of course, you must respect

his independence, wisdom and honesty, like tens of millions of Americans do; and support, not pollute, his leadership work. At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, George Washington observed regarding the imperfection of our founding document: “Let us raise this standard to which the wise and the honest can repair.” At this moment, we crucially need to repair our governance, using whatever tools and process are available to us.

Enough said about overall leadership; more on the expertise and leadership for each program element below. We need to build up the new and transcend what has been failing us for so long. Trust me, Mr President; I've been following these issues for a long time, and I know where the key expertise and integrity is to be found—I also know that you have not yet found it. Are you not yet tired of the dysfunction, chaos, backstabbing and fear that pervades your administration? Then think strategically.

## Strategic Framework — Understanding the Strategic Landscape

### Core Values Behind 'Government vs Private' Ideologies

At its core, Mr President, this persistent struggle is a matter of

who America belongs to; its constitutional purpose as ordained and established by “We The People”; and our common heritage and ownership of the common collective good. If we were in direct conversation, I'd ask you

directly: “Who do *you* think, Mr President, this country belongs to: the American people; or rich business owners and corporations?”

The later either want to own everything directly through privatization or want full control of our government and social levers of power to serve their private interests. To do that, oligarchs want to keep citizens atomized with no collective power; they want it all for themselves and they want money to rule.

What the people want is protection of our common heritage and effective civic participation in public power about everything that affects their lives—and *government* is the institution our constitution gave birth to through which collective public power can manifest for “We the People.” Government is *not* the problem; it is the vehicle through which the people can influence the decisions that affect our common collective good and the future of our society. Whether or not it’s working properly is something for the people to address.

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**Government is *not* the problem!  
Government is the vehicle  
through which we the people  
can influence the decisions that  
affect our common collective  
good and the future of our  
society.**

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Mr President, we first need to take some time to address and transcend a false duality that is ever employed by ideologues to keep our country’s governance tied up by their own shackles and chains focused on their own ben-

efit that, at a minimum, hampers our ability to effectively understand, analyze and address what ails us and what benefits us as a nation, now and in the future. However successful you’ve been in life financially, your perspective is extremely narrow, whether you think so or not; so if you read on with an open mind I believe you will find this discussion quite interesting and enlightening—and that is my goal.

This means examining this contentious moral dilemma from several viewpoints by bringing to the fore thoughts from some prominent thinkers on the subject. We cannot proceed effectively without taking this head on and debunking these shallow pseudo-arguments that forever divide our country; and that requires a more mature understanding. Such arguments are of the genre that typically employs the fallacious “government = bad” trope.

They are based on an improper framing designed to confuse, muddle and misguide people’s emotional response in order to keep the balance of power in the hands of rich oligarchs of the corporatocracy where people have no democratic say or control over policies that directly impact them now and in the future. If the societal power regarding our common heritage and the common good does not reside in our social and government institutions—which are ostensibly responsive to the will of the governed and should *not* be under oligarchic corporate control; then it is left in private hands whose focus is always to enrich themselves, typically at the

expense of the rest of society and our environment, and certainly is not guided by the will of the governed. Privatization doesn’t mean *freedom*; it means a few rich oligarchs of the corporatocracy control what our society looks like and what our possibilities are for the future.

## Freedom and Rights

For decades, in fact centuries, our country has been mired in this endless charade of whether or not it is good or bad for government to have a meaningful role in our society. And if so, what role; beyond perhaps the libertarian minimalism of limited freedoms that, although important, inappropriately enshrine the primacy of “negative liberties”—those protecting people *from* violating each other’s rights: i.e. securing life (freedom from harm), liberty



Image 67. George Lakoff, cognitive linguist, philosopher, and expert in metaphorical framing. Lakoff describes himself as “a realist, both about how the mind works and how the world works. Given that the mind works by frames and metaphors, the challenge is to use such a mind to accurately characterize how the world works.”

(freedom of speech and religion), and property rights (enforcement of contracts). Under this doctrine, characterized by simplistic “Don’t tread on me” memes, it is argued that individual freedom is maximized, when in fact it becomes severely myopic and limited.

The notion of “freedom”, George Lakoff writes (paraphrasing below), “is one of the most contested words in political discourse and has become the central weapon on the front lines of everything from the war on terror to the battles over religion in the classroom and abortion... Should Social Security, for example, be privatized and taxes for the wealthy cut in order to enhance individual freedom? It is a high-stakes war over the most central idea in American life.” (*Whose Freedom? The Battle over America’s Most Important Idea*, 2006, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, NY)

## Corporate Invasion and Oligarchic Control of Government and Society

Regarding the “personhood of corporations” sham that has been used to co-opt our Constitution, and the associated “economic liberty myth”, Lakoff makes clear that corporations are not persons, but behave more like governments. “Under the economic liberty myth, corporations, via the corporations-are-persons metaphor, are seen by corporate libertarians as deserving of freedom and liberty, and subject, like people, to the oppression of government—rather than being part of the oppression of government.”

In fact, the narrative that attempts to equate corporations with people is a farce on its face, since its premise ignores entirely the extreme power disparity between “one person” and “one corporation”. “Adherents to the economic liberty myth talk about individual initiative, responsibility, and freedom, but their policies apply overwhelmingly less to individual people than to individual corporations and the people who own and run them.” In his chapter titled, “Assault of the Corporate Libertarians” (*When Corporations Rule the World*), David Korten points out that “free-market ideology reshapes our institutions of governance in ways that make our most urgent problems more difficult to resolve. And the neo-liberal free-market mythology has reduced economics to an ideological shield against intelligent introspection and civic responsibility, which in most university education makes for a strong element of ideological indoctrination, with the sanctification of greed; actually betraying the intent of their intellectual patron saint, Adam Smith.”

In fact, whereas democratically accountable governments are ostensibly instituted by and accountable to the “will of the governed”, and represent the vehicle through which people can direct the character and future of their society; corporations are not democratically accountable, via elections or openness of operations, to the general public; and thus, Lakoff argues, the “economic liberty” myth should not be applied to them. “Far from operating as a real and genuine market econ-

omy, large corporations use vast amounts of taxpayers’ money, often in extravagant and wasteful ways, via tax deductions, tax breaks, subsidies, exploitation of public services, and the dumping of externality costs onto society, which taxpayers must ultimately deal with. Further, they often consolidate their sovereignty over an industry and then, with competition highly restricted, can set high prices justified not by costs but by a desire for higher profits.

This is operation outside of the market, like a private government. When this happens, corporations have, essentially, the power to tax citizens, with money going to corporate profits—a form of taxation without representation. Beyond that, they determine a great deal about the everyday lives of citizens, from possibilities for health care, kinds of news available, kinds of energy used, type of transportation available, what food is available to eat and how safe it is.”

## Reclaiming the Politics of Freedom

Cory Robin addresses (paraphrased below) the centerpiece of conservative ideas that have dominated American politics for 30 or more years (“Reclaiming the Politics of Freedom”, *The Nation*, April 25, 2011, paraphrasing). “The centerpiece of that dominance is the narrative that the market equals freedom and government is *the* threat to freedom. When in actuality, the market is a source of constraint and government an instrument of freedom. It centers on



an issue of power and the ability to own one's agency in the process of reclaiming one's power."

"Without a strong government hand in the economy, men and women are at the mercy of their employer, who has the power to determine not only their wages, benefits and hours, but also their working conditions and lives and those of their families, on and off the job." For example, how many people have to be available on their cellphone 24/7 in order to respond at the whim of the employer? This is not freedom!"

We must change the false framing of the argument about government. "Government need not be a source of constraint, as conservatives claim. Nor is it designed to protect citizens from the vagaries of the market, as many liberals claim—a formulation that depicts citizens as needy and passive and opens liberals to the charge of paternalism and condescension. When government is aligned with democratic movements on the ground, as Martin Luther King Jr understood, it becomes the individual's instrument for liberating herself from her rulers in the private sphere, a way to break the back of private autocracy. The politics of freedom is a politics of individual and collective emancipation."

"The politics of freedom does not dismiss the value or importance of state resources. But rather than conceiving of them as protections against the hazards of the market or indices of public compassion, it sees them as sources of power, as the tools and instruments of personal and collective advance."



Image 68. Albert Borgmann, professor of philosophy, University of Montana.

"Armed with universal health-care, unemployment benefits, public pensions and the like, I am less vulnerable to the coercions and castigations of an employer (or partner). Not only do I have the option of leaving an oppressive situation; I can confront and change it—for and by myself, for and with others. I am emboldened not to avoid risks but to take risks: to talk back and walk out, to engage in what John Stuart Mill called, in one of his lovelier phrases, 'experiments in living'".

### Taking Ethical Responsibility for our Country

Modern era philosopher of technology and reality, Albert Borgmann (*Real American Ethics: Taking Responsibility for Our Country*, 2006; *Technology and the Character of Contemporary Life*, 1984; *Cross-*

*ing the Postmodern Divide*, 1992; *Holding On to Reality*, 1999; all of University of Chicago Press) asks us to reevaluate our role in the making of American values and consider what we have in common. "A nation," Borgmann writes (paraphrasing his points below), "provides a fair scope for ethics. We tend to be the spoiled beneficiaries of our ancestors. America was built, to be sure, on the destruction of Native American culture and the subordination of African Americans and women. But in the end, it has worked to make for the inclusion of all over the expanse of a continent."

"The great virtue of a nation is that the people comprising it take responsibility for one another and for what they have in common. 'Taking responsibility' in a patronizing way is clearly unacceptable. But taking responsibility for what we obviously and perhaps detrimentally do to one another is recognition or realization rather than intrusion. What do all these people of one of the most diverse societies in the world have in common? They share a vision of the good life, regardless of their station in life—the cleaning woman or the Wall Street financier. There is mobility in society, yet not as much as the rich like to claim to give their status the glow of hard-earned merit and less than the lower classes imagine so they can allow hope to prevail over realism. What social and economic mobility there is, at any rate, should build a highway of common understanding across the thickets of diversity."

The crucial point is that "we are

always and already engaged in drawing the outlines of a common way of life, and we have to take responsibility for this fact and ask whether it is a good life, a decent life, or a lamentable life that we have outlined for ourselves. Ours is a decent society. But it has troubling features. The common lack of knowledge of physics, biology, geography, history, and politics is embarrassing. Average health is declining and physical fitness is poor. Civic engagement and personal relations are ailing. Knowledge and command of music and the arts, whether popular or elite, are stunted. Awareness of Churchill's principle is dim. (In 1943, when the House of Commons had to be rebuilt due to Nazi bombing, Winston Churchill reminded the Members of Parliament: "We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us.") Public support of the poor in this country and around the world is the most miserly among the industrialized countries. Our stewardship of the environment is indifferent. The public realm of this country is busy and messy, and most of the public places of recreation and celebration we owe to our great-great-grandparents and are always under assault."

"The troubling features we share in the public realm are simply the lamentable outside of the deplorable inside. In order to put all the consumable treasures of my home within easy reach, the public realm favors utility—that is, transportation links and shopping facilities along with the utilities to support them. The trend to push production, consumption, and affluence, in turn, makes us

forget the poor and neglect the environment."

"The reality of moral standards have been articulated by modern theories of ethics. The landmarks of decency and the virtues of excellence prominently include equality, dignity, and self-determination. The notion of dignity gives equality substance. Dignity as a moral landmark is *inalienable* dignity, the kind that need not be acquired and cannot be lost though it can be violated. Equality and dignity circumscribe justice in its least requirements—that everyone in this country be fed, clothed, sheltered, educated, and given medical care, and that we make every effort to extend this kind of justice to everyone on the planet."

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**Virtues that we and the people in other nations take to be characteristically American are generosity and resourcefulness**

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Moral standards founded on a framework of decency—e.g. equality, dignity and self-determination—are fleshed out by practices and norms of personal moral excellence, including the traditional virtues of wisdom, courage, friendship, grace and the economy implicit in the Churchill principle. We need to add to that the political virtues of care—justice in caring for equality; stewardship in caring for the environment; and design in caring for the quality of Churchill's principle. "Ethics is being equal to the claims of persons and things, in particular to the claims that make us lesser people if we ignore

them. Ethics has to become *real* as well as theoretical and practical. It has to become a making as well as a doing. Real means tangible; real ethics is taking responsibility for the tangible setting of life. Real also means relevant, and real ethics is grounding theoretical and practical ethics in contemporary culture and making them thrive again."

Borgmann summarizes by pointing out that "American ethics" has to be relevant to our people in the context of a relatively young country. "Virtues that we and the people in other nations take to be characteristically American are distinguished by two such virtues: generosity and resourcefulness, when we as individuals and as a nation have been at our best. *Generosity* is the characteristic way in which we have fused the virtues of friendship, grace, justice, and stewardship. *Resourcefulness* is the American fusion of the virtues of wisdom, courage, economy, and design. Technology as a form of culture that has shrunk the physical largeness of our country, also has a corresponding tendency to let generosity and resourcefulness shrink as well. Of course, the virtues of this country have always been imperiled, and sometimes they have crashed and burned, but the danger that now besets them is unusually subtle and difficult to counter."

## Foundations of the Moral and Political Divide — A Family Affair

George Lakoff analyzes the source of our moral and politi-

cal divide, which we characterize by the labels “progressive” and “conservative”, and clarifies it by examining how our values are framed by our experience and understanding of family and our related perceptions of spirituality and “God”. “Our country is divided by two dramatically different moral and political worldviews.”

Whereas, on the one hand, the traditional progressive ideal of freedom has resulted in a long history of an expansion of America’s most treasured freedoms by a nation of activists. For example, by increasing inclusiveness and protections with the expansion of citizen participation and voting rights, expansion of opportunity, worker rights, knowledge, public health, consumer protection, diversity of media and free speech, and access to capital.

On the other hand, that has been hijacked by the rise of radical conservatism and the right-wing, effected by its devastatingly coherent and ideological redefinition of freedom, repeated over and over; while progressives have not only failed at every turn to counter this attack, but also have failed to recognize its nature and, even worse, have failed to articulate their own intuitive understanding of freedom. The constant repetition of the words “liberty” and “freedom” by the right-wing message machine is one of the mechanisms of the idea theft in progress. The right wing is claiming these words as their brand leading to cultural and political domination. It serves the purpose of the right when the public believes that conservatives and progressives share the same

meaning of these words, because they give deference to the prominent conservative framing.”

Notions of justice, equality and fairness are linked to freedom, as Borgmann has illustrated; but, without a deeper understanding, all of them are subject to highly contested meanings in all but the most trivial cases, depending on one’s worldview frame. Lakoff’s analysis goes to their core with the foundational constructs of one’s worldview regarding an idealization of family life. This encompasses not only the idealized nature of “family”, “family values”, and “nation-as-family” metaphor, but even one’s spiritual conception of “God”. This takes us to our very upbringing; and these worldviews differentiate into two broad conceptions, we label “progressive” and “conservative”.

### *Freedom and the Conservative View*

The “conservative” view of freedom arises from the conservative worldview, whose underpinning is the “*strict father family model*”, with associated values applied to politics via the “*nation-as-family*” metaphor. The idealization goes as follows: “There are two parents, a father and a mother. Morally, there is absolute right and absolute wrong. The strict father is the moral authority in the family; he knows right from wrong, is inherently moral, and has the authority to be head of the household, and to mete out punishment and rewards.

Fundamentalist

Christianity

starts with the idea that God is a strict father: Under the theology of Paul, you obey his commandments, and you go to heaven as your reward; otherwise, you are punished with eternal torture in hell. With Christ, you get a second chance, but again, it is heaven if you believe and obey and hell if you don’t. Going to your reward — to heaven — is the ultimate freedom.”

### *Freedom and the Progressive View*

The “progressive” view of freedom is organized around the “*nurturant parent model*” of the family, which centers on empathy, responsibility, and strength. This idealization goes as follows: “Both parents (if there are two) are equally responsible. There is no gender hierarchy. The job of a parent is to nurture his or her children, to raise the children to be nurturers of others! Nurturance involves the virtues of empathy and responsibility (for both oneself and others), as well as everything that responsibility requires: strength, competence, endurance, and so on. Nurturant parenting is the opposite of permissive parenting, since it stresses caring about others, responsibility for oneself, and responsibility for others. Nurturant parents are authoritative without being authoritarian. From empathy and responsibility, all progressive values, both within and outside the family, follow.

In traditional Western religions (and analogously in Eastern spirituality and philosophies), God is seen as a nurturant parent, offer-

ing unconditional love with a nurturant morality, calling for empathy with responsibility for those less able to take care of themselves. Spiritual freedom lies not in heaven but living a moral life on earth. For progressive Christians, more than focusing on beliefs and rewards and punishment regarding the afterlife, it means following and emulating the teachings and exemplars of the paradigmatic Jesus of compassion, love, care and concern for the wellbeing others."

The conservative view is more individualistic, self-centered and focused inward; while the progressive view is more collective, other-centered and focused outwardly.

## The Commonwealth Principle

From this progressive ideal, the infrastructure of freedom is founded on the 'commonwealth principle'. "A nurturant family uses its resources for the good of the family as a whole—for the common good—so that each member can have the freedom to pursue his or her individual goals. There is a version of this at the heart of progressive politics, an idea as old in America as the colonies: pooling the common wealth for the common good so that individuals can have the resources to be free to pursue their individual goals. The idea is that the central role of government is to use the common wealth for the common good to make individual freedom possible."

"Freedom is a visceral concept,"

Lakoff emphasizes. "It is tied, fundamentally via metaphor, to our ability to move and to interference with moving. The metaphor of freedom as freedom of motion thus has two important parts: freedom *from* and freedom *to*. Freedom requires not just the *absence* of impediments to motion but also the *presence* of access. Inhibiting freedom is, metaphorically, not just throwing up roadblocks, holding one back, taking away power, imposing burdens or threats or harm; but also failing to provide access. Why is there a program called Head Start? Because of the metaphor that life purposes are destinations to be reached. Freedom is the freedom to go as far as you can in life, to get what you want in life, or to achieve what you can in life."

## FDR: Four Freedoms and an Expanded Bill of Rights

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt famously pointed to four freedoms, on "the path to a freer, more equal and democratic America." (Harvey J. Kaye, *The Fight for The Four Freedoms: What Made FDR and the Greatest Generation Truly Great*, 2014, Simon & Schuster, NY)

"On the afternoon of January 6, 1941, FDR went up to Capitol Hill to deliver his Annual Message to Congress. He not only proceeded to propose measures to address the growing threat of Axis powers—Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Imperial Japan—he also gave dramatic new meaning to *All men are created equal... Life, liberty, and the*

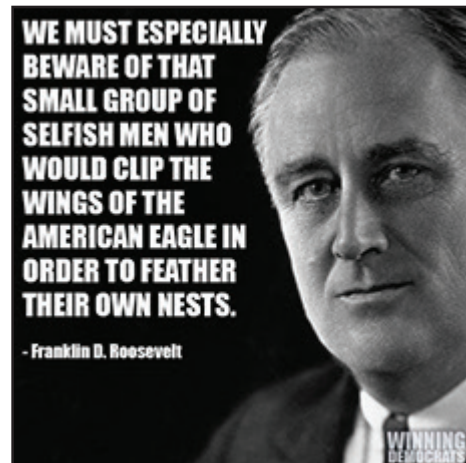


Image 69. President Franklin Delno Roosevelt. Four Freedoms and a Second Bill of Rights.

*pursuit of happiness... We the People of the United States... A new birth of freedom... and Government of the people, by the people, for the people...* Articulating Americans' grandest ideals and strivings past and present, Roosevelt defined a cause and a generation:"

*In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.*

*Freedom of Speech*

*Freedom of Religion*

*Freedom from Want*

*Freedom from Fear*

## FDR's Four Freedoms

### *Freedom of Speech:*

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

### *Freedom of Religion:*

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own

way — everywhere in the world.

### ***Freedom from Want:***

The third is freedom from want — which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants — everywhere in the world.

### ***Freedom from Fear:***

The fourth is freedom from fear — which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor — anywhere in the world.

Kaye proceeds, “On January 11, 1944, Roosevelt delivered his Annual Message to Congress on the State of the Union. In it, he not only re-affirmed his determination to pursue the Four Freedoms for both America and the world. He also articulated the Freedoms anew, especially freedom from want and fear, in the form of an Economic Bill of Rights for all Americans; noting ‘And after this war is won we must be prepared to move forward... We have come to the realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence’... And evoking Jefferson, the Founders, and Lincoln, he contended that ‘In our day these economic truths have become accepted as self-evident,’

and ‘We have accepted, so to speak, a second Bill of Rights under which a new basis of security and prosperity can be established for all regardless of station, race, or creed.’”

### **Economic Bill of Rights**

This Second Bill of Rights included:

#### ***Jobs:***

The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the Nation;

#### ***A Living Wage:***

The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;

#### ***Economically Viable Local Family Farms:***

The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;

#### ***A True Market Economy:***

The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home and abroad;

#### ***A Home:***

The right of every family to a decent home;

### ***Universal Health Care:***

The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;

### ***Social Security:***

The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;

### ***Free Public Education:***

The right to a good education.

“In sum, he stated: ‘All of these rights spell security. And after this war is won we must be prepared to move forward, in the implementation of these rights, to new goals of human happiness and well-being.’ But he did not leave this audacious declaration there. Distinguishing ‘clear-thinking businessmen’ from the rest, he alerted his fellow citizens to ‘the grave dangers of rightist reaction.’ Then, putting Congress itself on the spot, he said: ‘I ask Congress to explore the means for implementing this economic bill of rights—for it is definitely the responsibility of Congress to do so.’ And finally, linking the question of addressing the needs of the veterans to that of ‘implementing’ the new bill of rights in a universal program of economic and social security, he declared: ‘Our fighting men abroad—and their families at home—expect such a program and have the right to insist upon it.’”

Of course, as it is today, “Con-

gress was not moved. It not only passed a Revenue Act, which he would dub in his veto message a 'tax relief bill providing relief not for the needy but for the greedy.' It overrode his veto... where he wrote: 'We yearn to renew America's purpose and promise and reinvigorate America's strength and prosperity. And yet we have seemingly forgotten how we might do so. We sense that we, too, have not yet fully explored the democratic way of life, but seem to have forgotten that Democracy is never given. It must be taken... It is time for the country to become fairly radical for a generation.'"

### The Common Good and Our Common Needs — Infrastructure for Freedom

Drawing on FDR, Lakoff states the collective: "The common wealth builds the infrastructure for freedom. This includes things required for physical security — *freedom from fear* — such things as, say firefighters for fire, police for order, army for defense, FEMA and the National Guard for disasters and emergencies, the criminal justice system, and on. It includes things required for family security — *freedom from want* — such things as Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, unemployment insurance, disability insurance, public housing, and homeless shelters. It includes things required for public health; such societal protections as food inspections, the FDA, the CDC, the EPA. Public health provides

*freedom from harm* via disease, unhealthy food, dangerous pharmaceuticals and pesticides.

This list goes on and is long, including: transportation, communication, public education, government funding of R&D, banking and finance (the federal and state banking systems, the SBA, the Commerce Department, and the FTC), the courts, the SEC, and environmental freedom (both *freedom to*, say to connect with the natural world; and *freedom from*, say from the imposition of industrialization, noise, pollution, war, crime, unscrupulous businesses, and all the rest)."

### Freedom and The Constitution — The Dynamic Living Foundation of Our Country



Image 70. Our Constitution — a dynamic living document undergirds our progressive dynamic freedoms. Freedom is realized in its expansion over a long time.

Contrary to the conservative "deification" of the all-knowing "Founding Fathers" — and the related false frames of standard self-righteous arguments regarding "judicial originalism", "judicial textualism", "judicial restraint", "strict constructionists" to which conservatives juxtapose and project on others the false frame of "judicial activism" — *freedom* is by its very nature a dynamic concept with roots in our dynamic founding documents.

### Rigor mortis — or — Imbued with the Spirit of Life

Local Durango attorney and former State Legislator, Michael McLachlan, a Marine Vietnam Veteran and member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar, wrote (paraphrasing) in a recent op-ed (*The Durango Herald*, May 27-28, 2017) that *Originalism* is a derivative of religious fundamentalism, based on faith alone. Originalism as a constitutional doctrine only surfaced in 1980, and it challenges the entire range of precedent not in accord with originalist thinking. It was a different world with a different state of knowledge when framers, mostly wealthy lawyers, wrote 230 years ago. No woman, child, Native American or minority group wrote or signed the original Constitution. No tenant, employee, developmentally disabled child or landless person was a framer.

The question is whether our judges are bound to view the Constitution through the framers' eyes only or is it an evolv-

ing document which changes its meaning over time to reflect our history, experience, scientific facts and the exponential growth of knowledge we have acquired since 1787? Originalism is a granite wall erected to perpetuate the values, prejudices and limited state of knowledge available to the framers 230 years ago. It is an unrealistic view of today's world, outdated and elitist. It is gender biased, it disrespects minorities, is undemocratic, gives judges greater power than other branches of government and gives excessive meaning to words of the framers. It is a mindset intended to obscure the basic legal rights of those who were not the framers.

McLachlan concludes that the appointment of strict originalists should be challenged by all who believe the Constitution is a living document to be viewed according to the circumstances and time in which it is used. That time is now 2017 America.

Regarding justice, we need "freedom judges", Lakoff emphasizes, who are "judicial expansionists who have expanded our freedoms based on ideas implicitly there in the Constitution. These include the expansion of voting rights; of public education; of public health; of protections for consumers, workers, and the environment; of science; and so on. Radical conservative judges are anti-freedom judges. Do they want to take us back before the expansion of our freedoms or forward to a greater expansion of our freedoms? Are they profreedom or antifreedom? Antifreedom bills are legion in the Congress as controlled by radical

conservatives. They go against the grand tradition of progressive freedom in this country."

The framers of the Constitution knew they were fallible and built that understanding into the structures of our foundation and governance, as noted earlier by the reflective quote from George Washington at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, "Let us raise this standard to which the wise and the honest can repair." Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes put it best when he said, "A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged; it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used."

George Lakoff sets the notion of freedom in the context of our history. "Progressive freedom is dynamic freedom. America has always been a progressive country, and the progressive ideal of freedom has been cherished, defended, and extended over more than two centuries. Freedom is realized not just in stasis, or at a single moment in history, but in its expansion over a long time. What contemporary conservatives call freedom is a radical departure and threatens freedom as we have known it. Radical conservatives work on contracting American freedoms; progressives work to expand them."

### **Liberty, Equality, Fairness and Unfinished Work**

Of course, political philosophers have argued throughout the cen-

turies about how the notion of liberty balances with equality and what values ought to be guiding decisions. Transcending even that, a broader frame can be built around the normative notions of liberty and equality, with fairness and justice central elements. This runs throughout the points of Korten, Lakoff, Borgmann and Roosevelt noted above. As a society consisting of communities, we can claim that government ought to show equal concern and respect for all citizens beyond just liberties, such as the good of each citizen in terms of opportunity, resources, wellbeing, and capability. On one side, values point to individualism and concern for self; on the other, values point to egalitarianism, community and concern for others. Where is the moral compass?

But does this duality not miss the point of what our nation is, as characterized by the three most important documents in American history: the Declaration of Independence; the Constitution; and the Bill of Rights?

Indeed, every 4<sup>th</sup> of July, we celebrate our declaration of free and independent rule, formally beginning our quest for liberty and equality as a nation. Although all three documents were drafted by educated white men of property, many of them slave owners; they are based on the essential idea that all people have certain fundamental rights that governments are created to protect. Some rights were deemed intrinsic, inherent in all people by virtue of their being human and that certain of these rights are unalienable — they

cannot be surrendered to government under any circumstances.

The Declaration and Bill of Rights set limitations on government; the Constitution was designed both to create an energetic government and also constrain it. The Constitution empowered the central government to preserve these blessings for “We the People of the United States...” with the stated purpose to form “a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity...” In the minds of Americans, they are symbols of the liberty that allows us to achieve success and of the equality that ensures that we are all equal in the eyes of the law, moral agency, and our rightful claim on a viable future for our-

selves and our descendants.

But there were growing pains for our nation in what and for whom it meant to be free; and what the essence of government was about. That made these foundational documents a “living documents standard” for which “the wise and honest” would from time-to-time, depending on circumstances, need to repair and update. The circumstances we face now put the question of a *viable future* directly in our collective faces, regardless of our differences. We must recognize, acknowledge, and understand our collective unfinished work.

It took the Civil War, which President Lincoln in his short Gettysburg Address called “a new birth of freedom”, “dedicated to... unfinished work... so nobly advanced”; and uttered perhaps his most quoted and famous words

regarding the enduring value of our government as being a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” The essence of his statement is a democratic government focused on the needs of people.

This fractured history has hurt our country a great deal, and as is clear from recent events it has left us with a legacy of unresolved institutional racism, fear, blaming of “the other”, and resentment, which has prevented us from moving forward on so many crucial needs. I doubt it will ever be entirely “laid to rest”; but it’s time to step out of the false duality of liberty and equality, and transcend its shackles.

In 2017 we arrive at the precipice of an ominous and uncertain future. We must refocus our energies on a viable future, regardless of our legacy of differences.

## PROGRESSIVE AMERICANS

### STRATEGIC VISION for a Viable American Future

(Gateway issues first—then *We The People* can take care of the rest)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Healthy Democracy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Fix our democracy first</li> <li>» Election justice &amp; integrity</li> <li>» Money out of politics (corruptn)</li> <li>» DemocracyNow.org (indp/trust)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Healthy Population</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Comprehensive universal H/C (full MEDICARE: all in—no one out)</li> <li>» Progressive financing (de-concentrates elite capital—1%) (addresses inequality—the 99%)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Healthy Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Price on carbon → Energy Choice (Carbon Fee &amp; Dividend)</li> <li>» Distributed clean energy (Local Renewable/Energy Indep)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Healthy Economy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Public Projects → Public Bank (dump Wall Street <i>phantom</i> wealth)</li> <li>» Infrastructure/Commons/Edcn</li> <li>» Strong local economy → Jobs</li> <li>» Living wage → Real wealth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Poster links → [www.TheUnheardHerald.com](http://www.TheUnheardHerald.com) OR [f](#) Root For Bernie



Image 71. “Strategic Vision for Viable Future” poster showing key program elements



## Strategic Framework — Analytic Structure

### Taking Stock — Recap of Context

#### Politics, Values, Beliefs, Ideology, Money and Taxes

Mr President, if you're still with me, let's step back and take stock of where we are. I've spent the first part of the letter to this point addressing anticipated counters to this strategic program, which are all based on various aspects of self-interest—not the interests and needs of the American people. Whether its you personally, Republican dogma, or the capitalist worldview of the "Corporate R&D" political duopoly's focus on more money for corporations, financial capitalist and the über-rich; whether it's the privatization and austerity of neoliberalism, the impossible "perpetual growth" paradigm of the capitalist suicide economy, the ignorant "government is bad" frame, distraction by the false liberty-versus-equality duality, or misunderstanding of the very nature of our Constitution as a living breathing document—none of it carries water when we come up against the problems that portend existential threats to the viability our very future.

I don't care about what your ideology is, Mr President; in fact, fuck your morally vacuous Republican ideology, however it is presented or argued. It's a ruse to divert attention from serious

examination of reality. I've debunked the overall efficacy of these various themes and the ability of this mindset to actually address *real* problems with *real* solutions. They do nothing but promote self-interest domination and control of the world by the plutocratic financial elite. Like a relentless plague of parasites, this corrupt self-serving system continues its single-minded focus of extracting ever more real capital wealth from nature and the economy, artificially amplifying it into ridiculously absurd amounts of phantom wealth built on a corrupt financially engineered pyramid of debt, and increasing its concentration and power in the hands of a few oligarchs as they skim off obscene amounts for themselves, having learned very well how to game the system.

It has produced multi-billionaire families racing to become the first trillionaire phantom wealth concentrator, while claiming supreme capitalist feudal dominion over as much of our dying earth as possible. They are the ones who push their ignorant followers to keep singing the "government is the problem" meme so they won't notice or complain about their complete corporate takeover of government. It's not "government vs private"; it's big "corporate-government" capitalist establishment vs small true-market local economies and a populist uprising of ordinary people who are getting left out. The billionaire class oligarchs truly love "big government" when

its under their control, which they can then focus on increasing their wealth, increased oppression and criminalization of dissent against the corrupt system, militarization of our society, and projection of military power and global reach, while extracting their largess and eliminating public participation in power—participation that is the essence of democracy.

All this while wreaking havoc on the environment and burdening ordinary people who are simply trying to make a life in an economy that doesn't serve their needs. Now please stay with me, Mr President, because we need to ferret out root causes of our predicament: namely the concentration of income and wealth, and the co-opting of our tax policy in favor of corporations and the über rich who manage and own them. We need to understand what classes get most all of the economy's income money and where it is becoming concentrated. We also need to understand how this is affecting our tax policy and the relative contribution of this class to our overall tax revenue. This is especially timely, given that your words indicate "tax reforms" that will only exacerbate the problem.

### Concentration of Income and Wealth

#### Strategic Threat to America's Future

To claim that the oligarchs and corporations need yet more tax

relief and to label that as “good” in order to “grow the economy and create more jobs”, like you and your Republican henchmen always do, Mr President, is the continuation of a tired and fraudulent lie, and it’s a moral abomination, which only exacerbates the concentration of wealth, increasing inequality throughout our population.

Earlier we examined the impact on those who are struggling at the margin of minimum wages (Image 61 and Image 62 on page 38). This is not an economic system that serves the needs of everyone or nature; it serves the accumulation of more wealth by the most wealthy among us. It’s able to do that by controlling government and the legislative process.

This increasing concentration and inequality has very negative impacts on our economy. “As those at the top continue to enjoy the best health care, education, and benefits of wealth, they often fail to realize that their fate is



Image 72. Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics. Author of dozens of books and hundreds of articles; including *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future*.

bound up with how the other 99 percent live.”

Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz writes, (2012, *The Price of Inequality: How Today’s Divided Society Endangers Our Future*, Norton, NY), “A major theme of this book is that inequality is the result of political forces as much as economic ones. Progressive tax and expenditure policies (which tax the rich more than the poor and provide systems of good social protection) can limit the extent of inequality. By contrast, programs that give away a country’s resources to the rich and well connected can increase inequality. Our political system has increasingly been working in ways that increase the inequality of outcomes and reduce equality of opportunity. We have a political system that gives inordinate power to those at the top, who use that power not only to limit the extent of redistribution but also to shape the rules of the game in their favor, and to extract from the public what can only be called large ‘gifts’.”

“Economists call these activities *rent seeking*—getting income not as a reward to creating wealth but by grabbing a larger share of the wealth that would otherwise have been produced without their effort. Those at the top have learned how to suck out money from the rest in ways that the rest are hardly aware of. In the process of taking wealth away from others, it subtracts, not adds, to society for in the process of taking it away via rent extraction on capital, societal wealth gets destroyed.”

“The process of financial deregulation, beginning in the 1980s,

has led to scores of financial crises, of which the crisis in 2008-09 was only the worst. These market failures were *not* corrected because the financial sector used its political muscle to make sure that the sector’s private rewards remained well in excess of their social contributions—one of the factors contributing to the bloated financial sector and to the high levels of inequality at the top.”

This phenomenon is an attack on our country, Mr President; and it has deep roots going back decades tied to a few oligarchs and their disciples under the guise of “libertarianism for capital”. In her



Image 73. Nancy MacLean on Democracy Now! Author: *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America*

2017 book, *Democracy In Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America* (Viking, NY), author Nancy MacLean researches and writes a deep examination about what is really happening to American politics. Paraphrased from her synopsis, “Behind the headlines of billionaires taking over our government is the surprising story of deep and

troubling roots, where the well-heeled radical right's vast network doesn't want simply to change *who* rules, but to fundamentally alter *the rules* of democratic governance as we have known it in the United States. While billionaires like Charles Koch now drive the effort, they did not start it; a white intellectual in the embattled Jim Crow South did."

MacLean's new exposé brings this serious attack on America, and its racist roots, to light by documenting for the first time, "the strategy Nobel Prize-winning economist James McGill Buchanan and his collaborators developed over six decades to disempower the majority. Buchanan was making a last-gasp attempt to preserve the power of the white elite in the wake of *Brown-v-Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's attempt to desegregate education in America. Right-wing corporate donors and their foundations were only too eager to support his work in teaching others how to divide the citizenry into 'makers' and 'takers'. His billionaire Koch brother disciples exploited the utility of Buchanan's ideas by deploying a vast, many-armed apparatus to carry out a strategy steered by it. While employing language and strategic moves in order to hide its true intentions from even its own base of support, and using dark money and radical right politics, Buchanan figured out a way to prevent those without great property or power from using their majority votes to better their lives. There can be no denying now the logic and the endgame of the capitalist right's relentless push to remodel

our public life."

This is not what American democracy is about, Mr President; just ask your supporters. It is an all out attack by extreme right-wing oligarchs on America. Evidently, people like the billionaire Koch family elites think America should be exclusively for them and their financial interests; while the rest of the country just goes along for the ride. This is what the Republican Party has become—the essence of its moral failure.

"Without Buchanan's ideas and Koch's money, the libertarian cause would not have succeeded in its stealth takeover of the Republican Party as a delivery mechanism. With longtime loyalists now in the administration, backed by a phalanx of fighters in the House, the Senate, a majority of state governments, and many courts across the country, their agenda includes: measures calculated to kill off unions, keep millions of citizens from voting, privatize everything from schools to highways to Medicare and Social Security, stop any action on climate change—and transform the legal system and amend the Constitution to lock all of this in place permanently." Your supporters would want to know, Mr President: Is this really what you are a part of? The deceit of this system begs for maximal exposure.

MacLean concludes her exposé with a sobering commentary: "The libertarian cause, from the time it first attracted wider support during the southern school crisis, was never really about freedom as most people would define it. It was about the promotion of crip-

pling division among the people so as to end any interference with what those who held vast power over others believed should be their prerogatives. Its leaders had no scruples about enlisting white supremacy to achieve capital supremacy. And today, knowing that the majority does not share their goals and would stop them if they understood the endgame, the team of paid operatives seeks to win by stealth. Now, as then, the leaders seek Calhoun-style liberty for the few—the liberty to concentrate vast wealth, so as to deny elementary fairness and freedom to the many."

"The real public choice is whether or not this is the country we want to live in and bequeath to our children and future generations. If we delay much longer, those who are imposing their stark utopia will choose for us. There will be no going back."

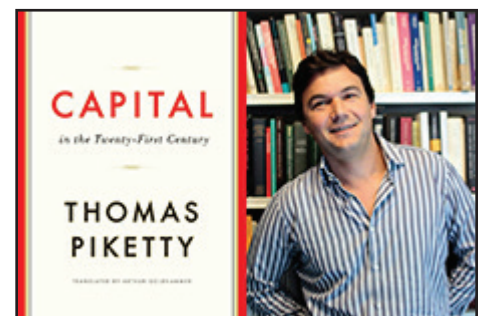


Image 74. Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*. "Questions about the long-term evolution of inequality, the concentration of wealth, and the prospects for economic growth lie at the heart of political economy. Piketty's findings will transform debate and set the agenda for the next generation of thought about wealth and inequality. The main driver of inequality—the tendency of returns on capital to exceed the rate of economic growth—today threatens to generate extreme inequalities that stir discontent and undermine democratic values." (from the book cover)

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

## Income Concentration: Who's getting the income?

Let's actually look at this question. This has been examined recently in great detail with scholarly rigor by Thomas Piketty, in his acclaimed 2014 book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Harvard University Press); and explored further along with his colleagues Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman in recent publications, including "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data", in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 2016, and in a recent working paper, "Distributional National Accounts: Methods and Estimates for the United States", July 6, 2017. This work has been widely reported on in various publications, blogs, magazine and journal articles, and it is the source of the wealth and income distribution graphs to follow.

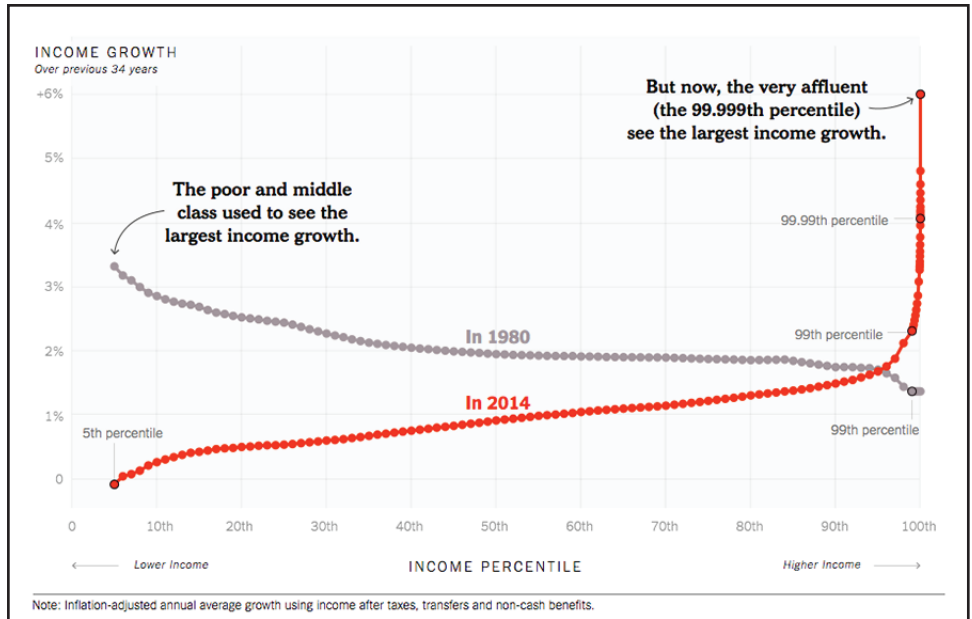


Image 75. Income Growth Rate vs Income Percentile (income class), over two 34 year periods, labeled: **1980**, the post-war growth period (1946 to 1980; gray downward sloping curve); and **2014** (1980 to 2014; red upward sloping curve), the era of the Reagan-Thatcher neoliberal economic agenda—"supply-side" economics, meaning tax and subsidy policies that favor owners of ("supplied") capital, with its fraudulent "trickle-down" promise.

Three things to notice: The post-WW II income growth rate prior to 1980 (gray curve) was higher for lower income levels, meaning lower-wage labor-productivity gains were being rewarded along with favorable progressive income taxes, than that of the higher wage earners (*downward sloping* gray curve); whereas since 1980, income growth was non-existent for low income families (near 0%) and income grew faster and faster the higher the income level (*upward sloping* red curve). In the post-war growth period to 1980, even the top 5% had a lower income growth rate than the rest of the population, which can be seen with the sharp drop off in the gray curve from the 95th to the 100th percentile.

Secondly, for 95% of the population, or we could say for *all* "middle income class" levels (income percentiles on the x-axis) up to about the 95th percentile (that level of income demarking the top 5%), the post-war income growth rate was higher than that of the recent 34-year period from 1980 to 2014 (red curve); in fact holding an income growth rate between 2% and 3% for the lower half of the population (below the 50th percentile), with the lowest incomes reaping the highest growth rates. From 1980 on, however, the greatest transfer of wealth from the poor and middle class to the rich can be seen not only from the extremely low growth rates (<0% to <1%) for the lower half of the population, but the rapidly increasing growth rates for those at the top. This is the *effect* of "supply side economics", where it all "trickles up".

Finally, for the richest of the rich—the 1%—since 1980 the growth in income skyrockets from about 2% per year for the top 1-out-of-100 (1%) American households, to 4% per year for the top 1-out-of-10,000 American households, to 6% per year for the top 1-out-of-100,000 (the richest 2500 households). This represents *not* "reward for merit" as the right always claims in their "maker" vs "taker" narrative; but the active on-going theft and concentration of societal production and wealth—this extreme growth is the *phantom wealth* the financial institutions of Wall Street, including hedge funds, "create out of thin air" and concentrate from speculative bets on fraudulent financial devices, like those derivatives that caused the 2008 crash based on a massive debt pyramid of 100s of trillions of dollars.

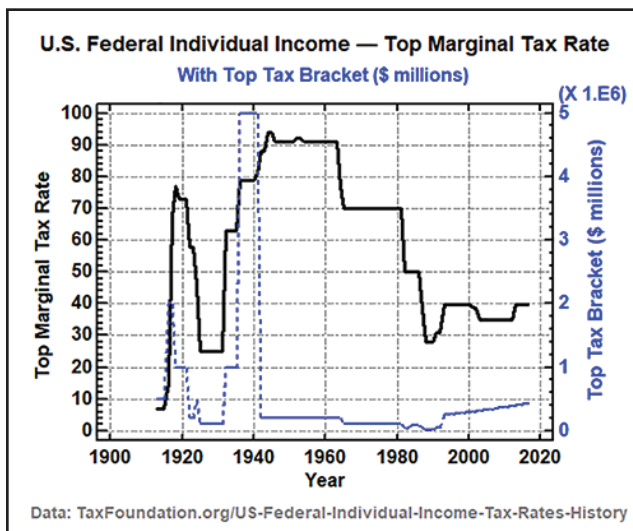


Image 76. Top Marginal Tax Rates and Tax Brackets. Note the severe rate drop from 1982 on as the Reagan neoliberal policies take effect; this low of top marginal rates have not been seen since the 25% of 1925-1931, when the capital markets crashed in 1929, leading to the Great Depression.

Mr President, may I assume, given your Wharton education in finance, that you like charts, graphs and maps as much as I do? In order to understand how extreme the concentration phenomena is let's walk through a few of the images to illustrate to you and your supporters the nature of this concentration of income and wealth, starting with income.

Image 75 shows how the growth in income is distributed across income level over two periods of time: the post World War II growth years, 1946-1980 (gray curve), when the top marginal tax rates on the rich (Image 76) were above 90% from 1944 to 1963, remaining at 70% or above until 1982, when President Reagan's "supply-side" tax policies dropped it drastically to 50%, then below 30%. And overall our economy was doing quite well for the middle class in the three decades *before* Reagan, was it not?

Image 75 also shows the reverse, once the neoliberal policies and the "supply-side" tax rates for the rich in the Reagan-Thatcher years took hold, 1980-2014 (red curve) where growth in income for most of the population had become anemic; while it began to scream for the richest of the rich as they took in an ever larger share of our economy. This graph in itself debunks the absurd notion that "further lowering taxes on the rich" will benefit the middle class. It won't; in fact, it will only exacerbate the concentration shown at the high end of the red curve.

That's the farce of the fraudulent lie the Republican Party and Wall Street Democrats have been per-

petrating on the American people for decades now. It's societal theft by the billionaire oligarch class and doesn't work for the vast majority of the American people. "Just keep them ignorant, in the dark, and with mere 'socially conservative' platitudes, they'll keep voting their 'Republican identity' like they always have and the 1% can steal it all for themselves."

My intent, Mr President, is to *wake people up!* Including you, your supporters, and anyone else who are uninformed about these facts. Enough is enough!

If your favorite slogan "make America great again" connotes anything meaningful for the American people, it must mean a shift in policies that would result in bringing back the higher and more progressive income growth rates (gray curve in Image 75) for the masses — the 99%; while reducing it "greatly" for the billionaire class of oligarchs, one of whom is you. But that's not what you've been putting out about your party's plans for a total reform of our tax code, is it Mr President. You cannot gut our government by saying, "Well, everyone will get a tax cut, with the most going to the richest of the rich so they'll create more jobs." That line of bullshit is simply so the uninformed will think it's all good. Those fraudulent claims must be over, Mr President. The American people, including your supporters, need *effective* policies that actually help them and our economy; not more bullshit and empty platitudes.

In fact, your rhetoric to your base of supporters and the rest of America begs the question:

"Which people truly *are* 'your people', Mr President?" Because what you're trying to sell the American people is a crock of shit with a slogan; while the billionaire oligarchs will yet again run away with the store.

The red curve in the Image 75 graph clearly shows how the richest of the rich financial, real estate and corporate barons are again taking it all for themselves. Look at the red curve, Mr President! Where are you on that curve? Most all of the income gains have *already* been going to the very top! This is not only morally repugnant; as these economists point out, it is severely damaging to our economy and our democracy. It's just more theft by the top.

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### Enough is enough, Mr President; people are waking up!

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Do you think people won't notice the continued theft? Do you think they are not already waking up? I think what got you elected to office is that you co-opted this deep-seated populist anger over the establishment elite taking everything for themselves, while leaving at most crumbs for the rest of us.

The big question now is what you will do about that anger. Because, if all the Republican Party can come up with are tax policies that even deepen the gouging of our economy, while claiming yet again the fraudulent narrative that "it will all *grow* the economy faster", they will pay the price come the elections of 2018 and 2020.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

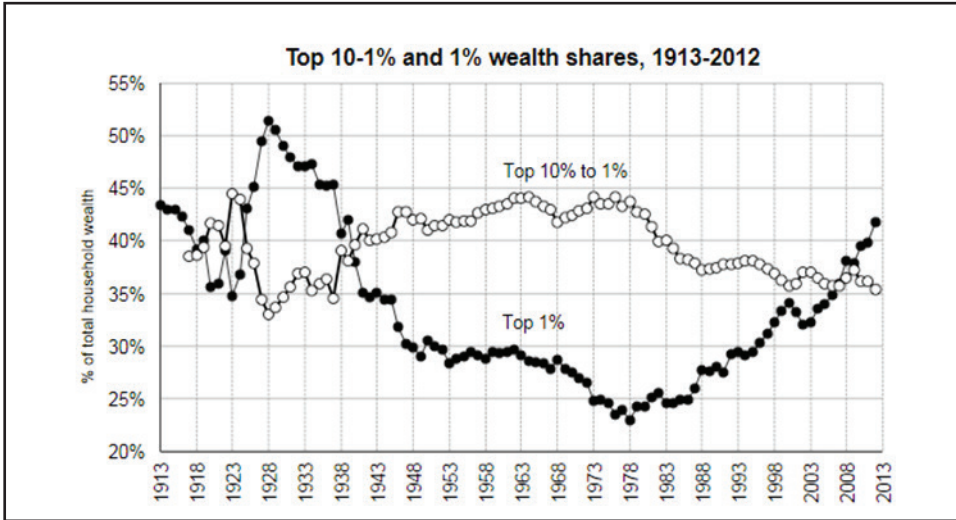


Image 77. Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913 - Top 10% & 1%

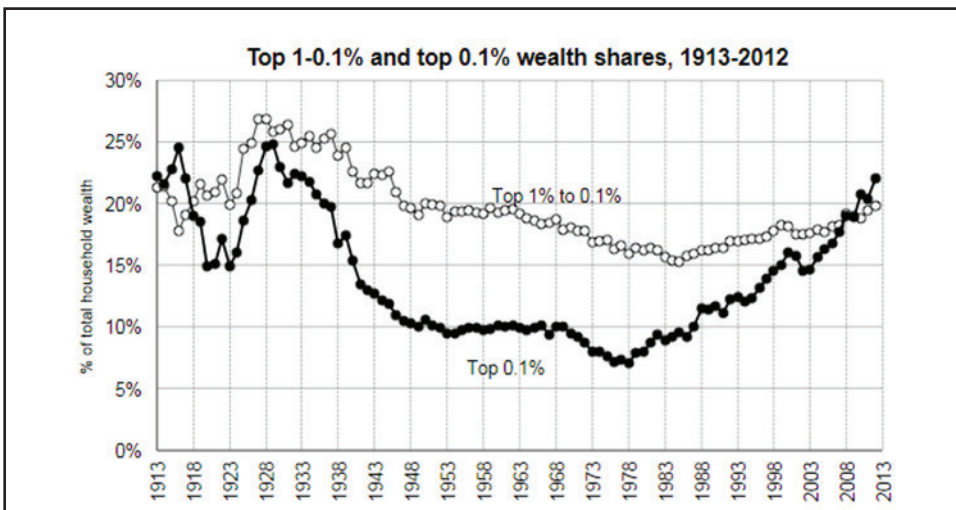


Image 78. Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913 - Top 1% & 0.1%

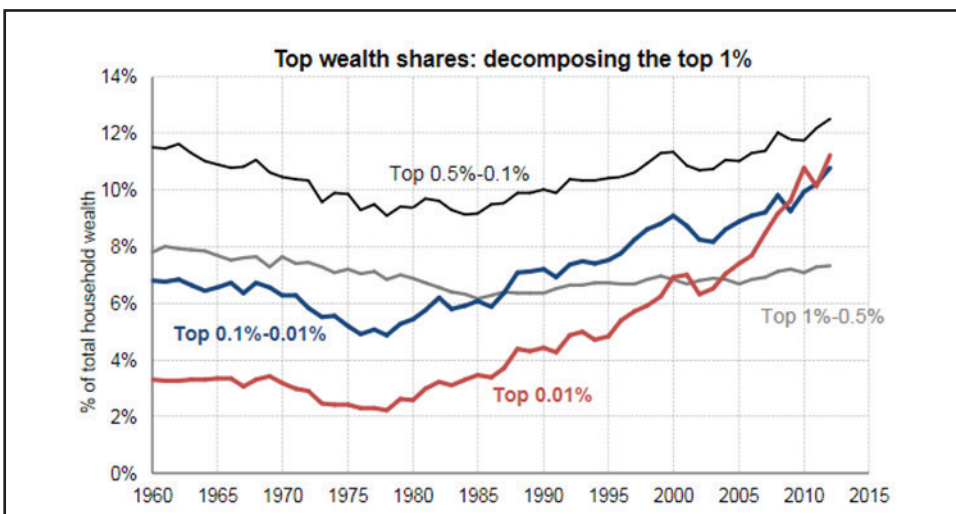


Image 79. Surge in top wealth shares are concentrated in Top 0.1% and Top 0.01%

## Wealth Concentration: Where does the money go?

### Top 10% of Wealth:

Now let's examine the end result in terms of accumulation and concentration of wealth. We'll parse out the top wealth and see that it is truly the tiny few at the very very top who are getting most of it all. We'll also see how the total wealth and composition of middle class wealth has decreased and shifted over time for all but the top few.

Let's begin by looking at how concentration of wealth has shifted over the major events of the past 100 years, which is illustrated by a successive breakdown of wealth concentration in Image 77, Image 78 and Image 79. The top graph shows that of the top 10%-to-1%, the wealth share by those from the 90th percentile to the 99th percentile (all but the top 1%) was about 35% from the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s; while the top 1% share peaked above 50% of all wealth just before the infamous 1929 capital market crash and subsequent collapse of the economy. While the top 10%-to-1% wealth share increased and held a relatively stable share of between 40% and 45% from the pre-war years all the way to the Reagan years, the share of the top 1% dropped steadily and drastically from 1929, through the depression to the post-war period, leveling at about a 30% share of all wealth, to even 25% through the 1970s. That means there was less concentration at the very top

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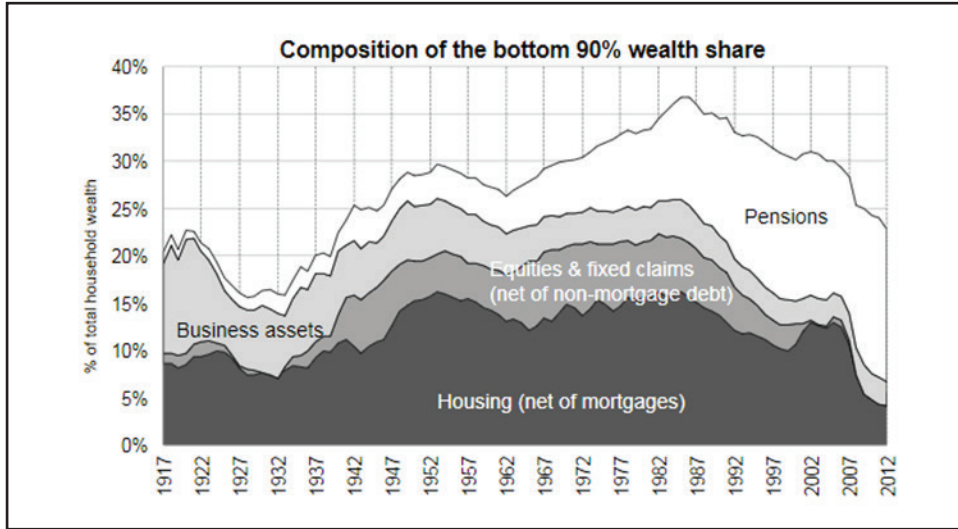


Image 80. Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913 - Composition of bottom 90%

than we have now.

As the bane of the Reagan neoliberal “supply-side” policies began to manifest negatively for most of the middle class, the wealth of even the top 10%, all but the top 1% (90th-99th percentiles), actually dropped as well back to the pre-Depression level near 35%; while the top 1% share increased from below 25% in the mid-1970s to over 40% and still climbing as wealth concentration continued to increase into the new millennium. This illustrates the ever increasing concentration of total wealth into fewer and fewer hands as time moves on.

But the next two graphs show that even that is still deceiving, because the top wealth is not evenly distributed among those of the top 1%. In fact, it’s still highly skewed to even a tinier fraction of 1%. From the middle graph we can see that the top 99th-to-99.9th percentile (all but the top 0.1%) increased wealth share steadily by about 5 points over this period of the Reagan years to now; whereas the top 0.1% increased its

wealth share by about 15 points, three times as much. And the bottom graph breaks that out even further to show that of the top 1% the surge in wealth growth is concentrated in the top 0.1%-to-0.01% (blue line); and even greater rate of increase in the very top 0.01%, or the top 1-out-of-10,000 households (red line). The richest of the rich did extremely well under Reagan policies while the middle-class didn’t fair well at all.

This is the manifestation of ever increasing wealth concentration into fewer hands as time moves on, while the bottom 90% gets left further and further behind. That is, beginning with the Reagan era we’ve experienced the greatest mass transfer of wealth in modern times from the middle-class and poor to the ultra rich.

**Bottom 90% of Wealth:**

Image 80 shows what has happened to the wealth share of the bottom 90% of households during this same period, basically the broad middle-class. First note

that middle-class wealth throughout this period is mostly held in the net equity (market value less mortgage) people have in their homes (black shaded area); with some holding additional wealth in capital equities, business assets and pensions. This means that policies favoring those who hold most of their wealth in financial capital securities (the top 10%, say) do not favor the middle class, most of whose wealth is held in the American dream of owning their own home.

Notice also that *total* middle-class wealth of the bottom 90%, the top cumulative line, increased sharply and steadily from about 15% of total household wealth (with the richest 10% holding the remaining 85% of wealth) as we came out of the Depression of the 1930s on into the mid-1950s. It then climbed throughout the 1960s and 1970s to over 35% of total wealth due largely to union-negotiated increased wage income and better pension benefits. The wealth accounted for by pension funds and pension annuities increasingly became the next largest share of wealth holdings, beyond home ownership. Again, this is what “middle-class wealth” mostly means; it is not made up of “excess discretionary cash” that middle-class people might “invest” in financial capital equities. It’s day-to-day living wealth — *real wealth*.

Home ownership wealth held fairly steady at a little over 10% of total U.S. household wealth from the 1950s to the late 1980s, when it declined steadily through the Bush I and Clinton years, with a temporary revival in the late

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

1990s through the Bush II years, before crashing to less than 5% as Wall Street institutional excesses wrecked the economy again, causing the “Great Recession” of 2008.

Consequently, total middle-class wealth began to drop steeply as the neoliberal “supply-side” Reagan policies began to take their toll on the middle-class. This man-

ifested largely due to loss of total home ownership value, and later the value of middle-class capital equity holdings that got wiped out during the Bush II years, when yet again Republicans took a budget excess and shoveled it out in massive tax breaks for the rich. It becomes clear that neoliberal policies, especially tax policies favoring the elite, aren’t just helping

the rich get richer; they hurt the broad middle class of our society and the poor get poorer.

### Income Composition of the Top 1%

Now let’s examine the composition of the top 1% of income; that is, from where it is derived, because this has huge implications regarding tax rates and where our tax revenue actually comes from. This class of people, from which the Republican oligarch base comes, by co-opting government power has managed to get policies in place that tax “capital rent” income, from unproductive “do nothing” activities except moving money around, at a much lower rate than even their own productive labor income (being paid for doing something productive). Image 81 shows how most of the income of the top 1% for the past century has come from “capital returns” rather than from their labor to produce something useful.

Progressive post-war policies through the 1970s led to a growing economy from which the middle-class benefited by earning a fairer share of productivity gains; while it actually suppressed both labor and capital income of the top 1%. But now in fact, one can see that the “capital rent” portion is only increasing well into the second decade of the new millennium, while the portion from their salary compensation for their labor has leveled off. This is why multi-billionaires like Warren Buffet of the Berkshire Hathaway investment firm actually pay a

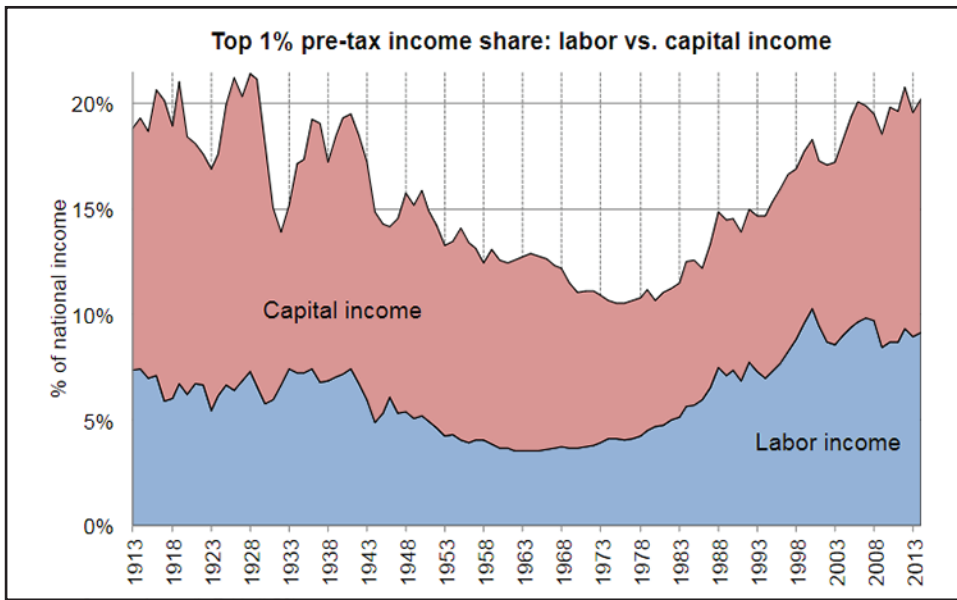


Image 81. Share of capital and labor portions in income, top 1% wealth class.

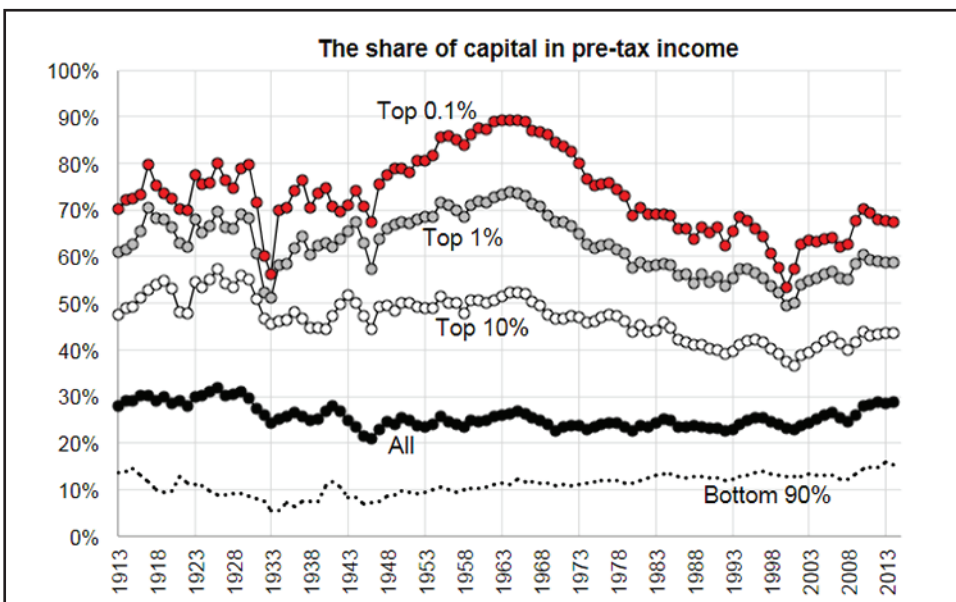


Image 82. Share of “capital rent” income in total pretax income by wealth class.



lower tax rate than his wage-earning secretary; an absurdity he so publicly and famously pointed out.

Again, the same extreme concentration phenomenon manifests for the very top. Note in Image 82 for all income (black line), the share of capital returns income has run pretty steady at between 20% and 30% for the past century. But that one line hides the skewed distribution of capital rent income. The middle-class (bottom 90%) has had only 10%-15% of their income from capital returns, because most of the working class gets 85%-90% of its income from wages and salaries.

The top 10% (line with white-circle data points), however has been getting from 40% to 50% of its income from capital returns. The skewing gets more extreme for the top 1% (gray-circle points) and top 0.1% (red-circle points). The top 0.1% (1-out-of-1000 households) has gotten most of its income, between 60% and 90% of it, from capital returns; again, taxed at a much lower rate than labor income. This is the level of income that Republicans claim is still taxed too much.

It is true that some of this capital income would come from actual investments in productive capital, like plants and equipment—that would correctly be called *investments in real capital*. But, we know that from the late Clinton years on, that Congress passed laws deregulating financial institution so that they could create more loans to place more speculative bets on convoluted derivative financial instruments—and that would cor-

rectly be called *speculation* on the *phantom wealth* of unproductive financial instruments. It grows more *phantom money* (numbers in some computer account) for the extremely rich, but does nothing to help the economy for everyone else. It is “undergirded” by a house-of-cards debt-pyramid on the order of several hundreds of trillions of dollars, far exceeding by orders of magnitude any *real capital* assets upon which it is supposedly based. And this is the sandbox where the top 0.1% play; as can be seen by the immediate jump in the share of their income that comes from capital when these “make money out of nothing” laws were passed as we entered the new millennium.

Finally, to get a feel for what levels of actual income these various percentages (10%, 1%, 0.1%, etc) relate to, Piketty *et al* (noted earlier), provide a table showing the distribution of national income in the United State in 2014. The table below is an extract showing pre-tax income groups.

The threshold income for the Top 10% income group is \$119,000 with an average group annual income of \$304,000. That means the “lowest annual pretax income” of that group is into a six-figure income. To make the Top 1% group requires a minimum income of \$458,000; while the average income of that group is \$1.3 million. That is, the “1-percenters” make at least almost a half million dollars a year, averaging \$1.3 million. Thus “The 1%” would include many successful small business owners and professionals, such as doctors and attorneys. And for the Top 0.01% income group, shown in some graphs above, the threshold annual income to make that group is \$9.6 million, with an average income \$28.1 million.

Compare that with the bottom half of the country, 117 million Americans, whose average income is an abysmal \$16,200. Even the “upper middle-class”, the 50th to the 90th percentile (94 million people), starts at just \$36,000 with an average income of \$65,300.

Income group	Number of adults	Pre-tax national income		
		Income threshold	Average income	Income share
Full Population	234,400,000		\$64,600	100%
Bottom 50%	117,200,000		\$16,200	12.5%
Bottom 20% (P0-P20)	46,880,000		\$5,400	1.7%
Next 30% (P20-P50)	70,320,000	\$12,800	\$23,400	10.9%
Middle 40% (P50-P90)	93,760,000	\$36,000	\$65,300	40.4%
Top 10%	23,440,000	\$119,000	\$304,000	47.0%
Top 1%	2,344,000	\$458,000	\$1,310,000	20.2%
Top 0.1%	234,400	\$1,960,000	\$6,000,000	9.3%
Top 0.01%	23,440	\$9,560,000	\$28,100,000	4.4%
Top 0.001%	2,344	\$47,200,000	\$121,900,000	1.9%

Image 83. Piketty, Table 1: The Distribution of National Income in the United States in 2014.

## Income Taxes and Capital Wealth

And so we are continually fed the fraudulent “supply-side” dogma that if we just give corporations (and the rich who own and run them) more tax breaks it will grow the economy and create more jobs. This is a myth that seems to be self-perpetuating.

The focus of capitalists is ever to maximize returns to their owned capital by reducing overall labor costs and the share of production revenue returned to workers who actually make and produce the products. This they accomplish by sending jobs overseas and/or replacing labor by automated capital equipment; so that in both cases the owners of the capital reap a greater portion of the returns on what the firm produces. That is why for the past three decades, improved labor productivity has not gone to workers; the owners of capital have taken it all.

But the Republican claim is always that America’s “top marginal tax rate on corporations” is too high; in fact, “one of the highest of all industrialized countries” at about 39% (combined Federal and State), “hurting our competitiveness.” However, the top rate is not actually what most corporations pay; overall the average *effective* tax rate is much lower, running about 27.9% now. And some very large multinational corporations pay no U.S. income tax at all, including such big names as GE, PG&E, Pepco Holdings, International Paper, Priceline and many others!

For example, it has been widely

reported that at least 1-out-of-5 profitable corporations pay no income taxes (“20% of big companies pay zero corporate taxes”, CNN-Money, 4-13-2016). “Prior to 2012, the GAO estimated that 24% of profitable large corporations owed no income tax in 2011, 22% owed nothing in 2010 and 21% owed nothing in 2009.”

### Many large profitable Fortune 500 companies pay no income taxes, yet want more tax breaks

A recent study by the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy of 258 profitable Fortune 500 companies, reported on by the New York Times (“Profitable Companies, No Taxes: Here’s How They Did It”, NYT, 3-9-2017), showed that even though those companies earned more than \$3.8 trillion in profits, overall they paid an average effective tax rate of just 21.2%. And this varies by industry sector; for example utilities paid an average tax rate of just 3.1%; industrial machinery, telecommunications and oil, gas and pipeline companies paid roughly 11.5%; and Internet services paid 15.6%. Of the 258 companies studied over the 8-year period between 2008 and 2015, 100 of them, nearly 40%, paid no total income taxes in at least one year of the 8-year period; including firms like Exxon-Mobil, Verizon, and Boeing.

The co-author of the study pointed out that: “When the biggest companies aren’t paying their fair share, that means the rest of us are left to pick up the slack. It means small business and middle-income families are paying more.”

A variety of loopholes and tax-dodging methods are employed to reduce their effective tax rates, including executive compensation in stock options where the companies get to deduct huge “payout losses”; shifting activities offshore and booking profits overseas out of IRS reach (one five-story office building in the Cayman Islands is now the ‘home’ to more than 18,000 corporations); and various tax subsidies. The biggest beneficiaries of tax subsidies over the 8 years of the study include the following:

- AT&T (\$38.1 billion)
- Wells Fargo (\$31.4 billion)
- JPMorgan Chase (\$22.2 billion)
- Verizon (\$21.1 billion)
- IBM (\$17.8 billion)
- General Electric (\$15.4 billion)
- Exxon Mobil (\$12.9 billion)
- Boeing (\$11.9 billion)
- Procter & Gamble (\$8.5 billion)
- Twenty-First Century Fox (\$7.6 billion)
- Time Warner (\$6.7 billion)
- Goldman Sachs (\$5.5 billion)

By keeping the uninformed masses focused on the “taxes are too high” myth of top marginal corporate (or individual) tax rates, people miss the opportunity to understand how it relates to our economy. They then get bamboozled into supporting politicians who push legislation to give more tax breaks to corporations and the rich; because, they are told, it will help more investments grow the economy and create more jobs.

We need to look at it differently.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

## Benchmarking Tax Revenue by the Size of the Economy

Economist and former Secretary of Labor under the Clinton administration, Robert Reich, makes a clear and cogent argument that the proper way to determine whether or not our tax structure is too large is *not* by looking at the top marginal tax rates; but by benchmarking tax revenues, by various sources, against the size of the economy, and examining that comparatively across multiple industrialized economies. He points this out in his 2015 book, *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few*, (Knopf, NY). And in his online blog, *The Resistance Report*, posted by *The Reich Report*, he sets it in the context of recent tax reform proposals by Republican law makers.



Image 84. Robert Reich, author of many books, including *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few*; and his popular blog *The Reich Report* and *The Resistance Report*.

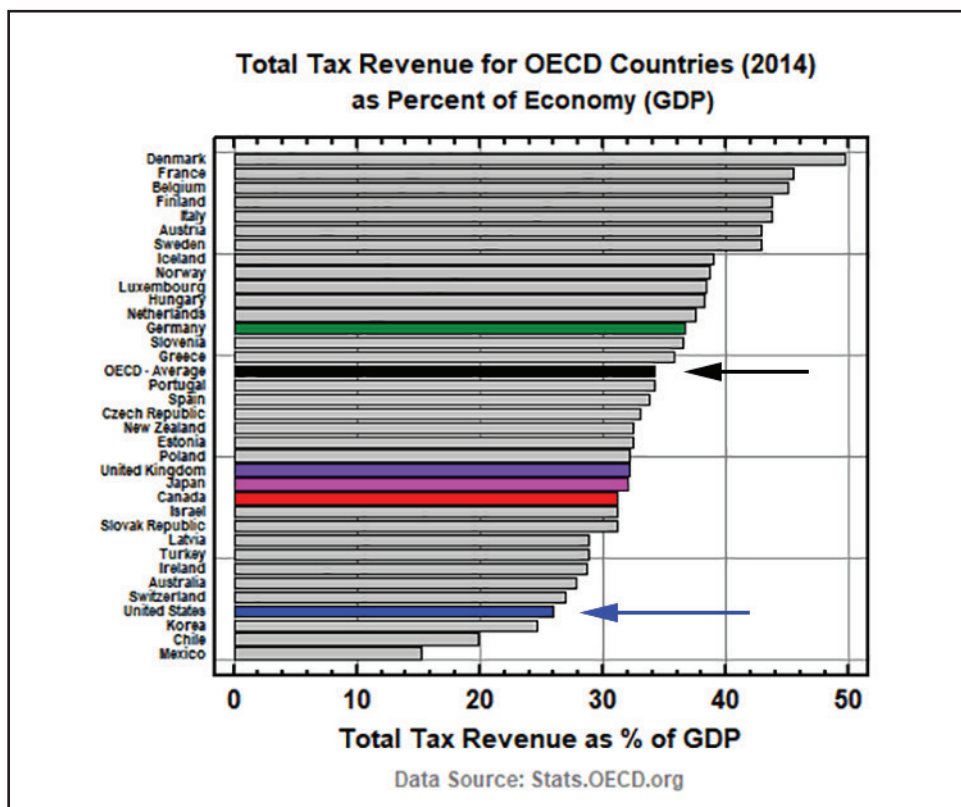


Image 85. Tax Revenue benchmarked by size of the economy (% of GDP); comparison of industrialized OECD countries. Note that the U.S. has the 4th lowest taxes of all 35 OECD countries at 26% of GDP, with only Korea, Chile and Mexico lower; and it is well below the OECD average of 34% of GDP. Even Germany, the U.K., Japan and Canada tax revenues are all above 30% of GDP.

Reich makes the point that, not only is the average effective tax rate of all U.S. corporations, after tax deductions and tax credits, 27.9%, much lower than the top marginal bracket of 39%; when compared with the size of our economy, the U.S. already has the fourth lowest taxes of all OECD industrialized economies. Further, the typical effective tax rate among all advanced nations is 27.7%. And yet, Republicans continue to use the ruse of top marginal tax rate to perpetuate the myth that our taxes are much higher than other competing industrialized countries; and therefore we need to “cut taxes”. This is how the very rich keep getting away with taking more and more.

Reich points out that both the Reagan and Bush II administrations made the same weak argument to implement huge tax cuts; which made for huge deficits harming both our economy and government revenue and programs. The wealthiest 1% in the U.S., he emphasizes, already pay the lowest taxes as a percent of their total income and wealth as any major countries, and the lowest in the U.S. itself.

Further, amnesty for global corporations sheltering income abroad won't help the economy. A *Wall Street Journal* article titled, “Report: Repatriation Tax Holiday a ‘Failed Policy’” (*WSJ*, 10-10-2011, Kristina Peterson) point-

ed out that when it was tried in 2004, corporations used the extra cash to pay shareholders more dividends and buy back shares of stock to boost stock prices, thus benefiting only the owners and the executives, who held stock options to buy stock at much lower rates, thus a windfall for their individual “capital income”. Corporations did not use the tax holiday windfall to invest in productive capacity, R&D, or jobs. Profits are at all time highs and corporations are flush with cash. There is absolutely no reason to lower corporate taxes, Reich emphasizes.

Mr President, yet again you are dealing with a non-problem, while ignoring the biggest problems. Corporate taxes and taxes on the wealthy are not too high; in fact, they are not high enough. The only way to deal with our problems, like inequality, is to invest in the American workforce; that is, education (including early childhood education), job training, and infrastructure that links Americans together and improves the productivity of Americans. You invest in people, Reich says.

The view is further muddled by these “deficit scolds”, like the so called “Freedom Caucus” and what’s left of the Koch-co-opted “Tea Party”, do not distinguish between spending on today and investing in the future. Reich demands that, instead of following the “deficit scolds” or the corporation and Wall Street tax cutters, we need to stop this madness. We need to fight for public investments in our future.

To underscore Reich’s points, let’s break out some actual num-

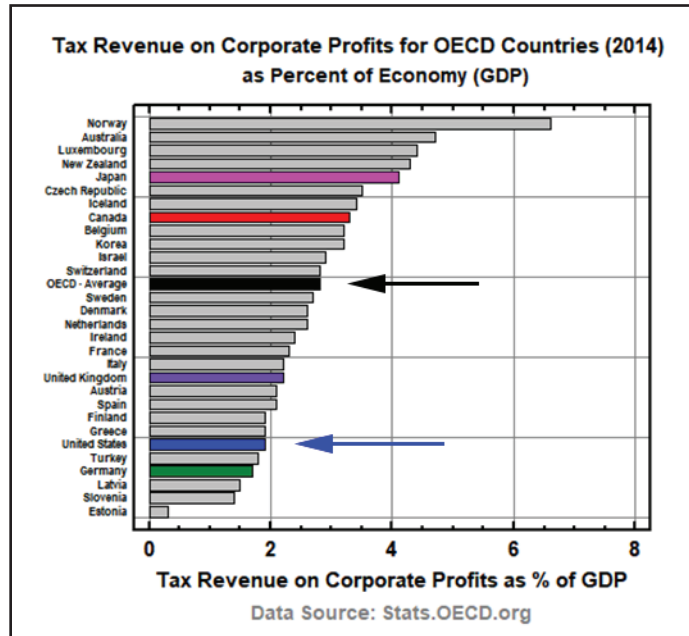


Image 86. Tax Revenue on corporate profits as % of GDP, by Country. Note how low the U.S. corporate tax revenue is compared to all other OECD countries.

bers on this Corporate Tax Revenue picture further (Image 86). Looking at tax revenue from corporate profits as a percent of GDP, we readily see that the U.S. is less than 2%; only five OECD countries are lower: Turkey, Germany, Latvia, Slovenia, and Estonia. Graph-

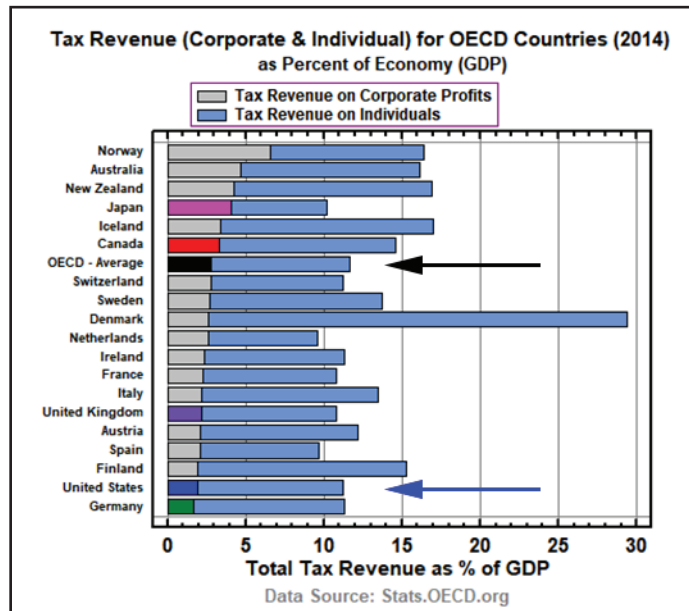


Image 87. Total Tax Revenue—Corporate and Individual, sorted by corporate tax revenue— shows the U.S. taxes are not too high.

ic pictures of the data tell the *real* story. And when we add in the tax revenue from Individuals (Image 87), we can see that the U.S. is among the lowest of industrialized countries.

To demonstrate that this is not some recent fluke, examine these rates for the selected five countries and OECD average over time, from 1965 to 2014 in

Image 88, Image 89, and Image 90. For total tax revenue compared to the size of the economy (percent of GDP), the top graph shows that the U.S. had a lower tax revenue than Canada, Germany, and the U.K. throughout, except for Japan, which was consistently lower only from 1965-1980.

Of particular pertinence to the fraudulent Republican arguments for the need to lower corporate taxes yet further, note that the middle graph shows that the U.S. tax revenue from corporations (blue curve) dropped sharply as Re-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

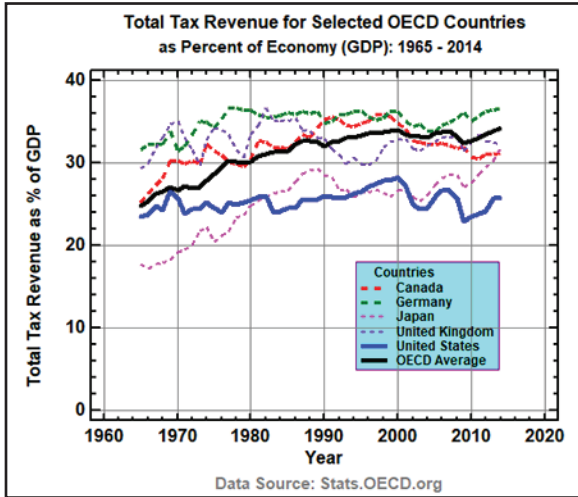


Image 88. Total Tax Revenue % of GDP, 1965-2014.

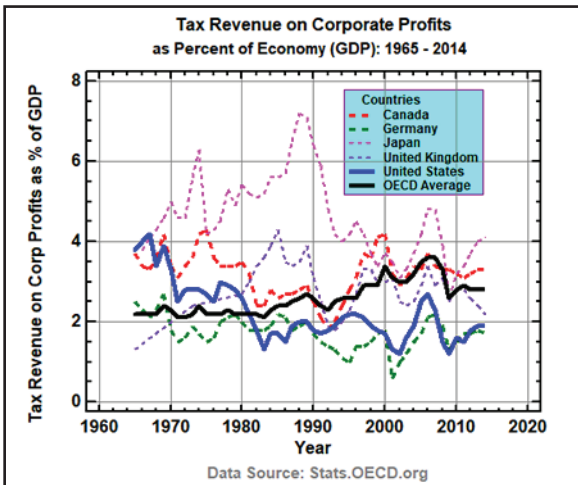


Image 89. Tax Revenue from Corporate Profits % of GDP, 1965 - 2014.

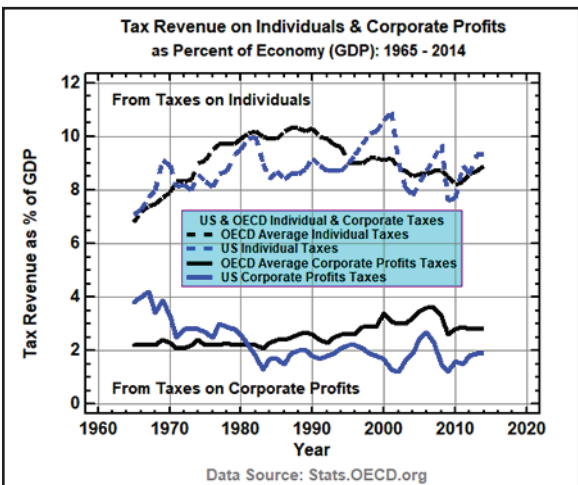


Image 90. Tax Revenue from Individuals and Corporate Profits, 1965-2014.

gan policies kicked in, and holds low mostly below 2% of GDP; whereas it was twice that in the 1960s when marginal tax rates were much higher. Yet during the same period of post Reagan neo-liberal policies the average tax revenue of OECD countries (black line) actually increased above U.S. levels.

Finally, the bottom graph breaks out tax revenue from individuals and corporate profits for the U.S. and average of OECD countries. Comparing to corporate tax revenue history, noted above, individual tax revenue fluctuates considerably, dropping in conjunction with the corporate rate at the start of the Reagan era, then jumping sharply in the mid to late Clinton era, and dropping again drastically when Bush II instituted huge cuts; but had to be raised yet again due to the severe deficits the Bush cuts caused.

The meta “big” picture here is that, based on contribution to tax revenue, as a portion of the size of our economy, and compared both to other major countries and over time, the problem is *not* that our taxes are too high, especially for corporations; but that tax policy needs to be focused on working people in the middle.

## De-concentration of Income and Wealth

The overall strategy to address the problems we face, especially inequality, is to *deconcentrate* global income and wealth in a way that improves life on this planet. The continued fraudulent narrative and lies, Mr President, which even you yourself propagate, are being exposed for what they are—empty ideological promises for which the current system will not deliver. They only further enrich corporations, their executives and the 0.1% oligarchs who make millions and tens of millions of dollars every year. Once the population awakens from the fog and stupor of its ignorance and confusion to see the true light of this horrifying reality before them, they will not readily be induced to go back to sleep with yet more bullshit. They will fight for what’s right. Isn’t that what your supporters have indicated to you?

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**What we need is to *deconcentrate* global income and wealth in a way that improves life on this planet. To claim that the oligarchs and corporations need yet more tax relief is the continuation of a tired and fraudulent lie.**

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Think about it, Mr President; while you and the Republican Party are preparing yet another massive tax giveaway to the rich with a fraudulent argument that everyone will “win”, everyone else is actually losing out. But you say, “Hey, everyone will get a ‘tax-cut’, so don’t look too closely

at what the rich are getting, because they are the ‘makers’ and ‘job creators.’” It’s bullshit, and your Republican Party hacks who sell out their integrity to corporate donors damn well know it.

“Worker income”, where wages are compensation for *effort*, carries the greatest tax burden; whereas, “do-nothing income” from renting concentrated capital is taxed at lower rates, because there is a vortex of money and power that has seized control of our political system. The *rentiers* get outsized returns due to ownership; not because of anything they do. This leads to poverty in the midst of riches. In the long run, Stiglitz discusses at length, “this leads to massive inequality and unequal societies, which are not efficient, are not stable nor sustainable, and are not democratic due to the concentration of power. We have macroeconomic policy and a central bank by and for the 1 percent.” We need to change our world view.

## Tapestry of a Life-Affirming Future — Fighting the Battle for Truth

In contrast, I’ve woven a tapestry of a new life-affirming story and conscious progressive values and ethics that offer hope for a viable future, built on a solid frame that carries the burden of enlightening not only you, Mr President, but your supporters and anyone else who cares to take the time to address our future. Whereas most

of your administration is in denial and efforts relentlessly to keep a lid on the facts of reality and keep the population in a state of widespread ignorance, using worn out threadbare tactics in order to retain its grip on power for the über rich; I fight the battle of truth.

My goal is to pull back the curtain on this systemic fraud engulfing the American people and wrecking our environment and chances for a viable future, by leading them out of this valley of ignorance and enlightening them to a different and better future that is still fully possible. The oligarch elite count on the people not looking, and especially not understanding, while they further harvest our society for themselves.

But the window to a viable future is fast closing, Mr President. Again, I ask you, what side of eternity do you want your legacy to be a part of: a one-way decent into the hell of suicidal planetary destruction; or a path of life-affirming hope and collective effort to preserve the blessings of Creation and a viable future for everyone and the rest of nature? These choices are not mere labels amenable to manipulation by your grandiose bullshit, because frankly Mr President, it is becoming ever more clear that you don’t know what you’re talking about. They represent the reality of parallel universes; only one of which will manifest.

### Problems and Solutions — Why Nothing Gets Done

Mr President, the reason real

problems our nation faces don’t get addressed with real solutions that work is because our current crop of politicians, in particular Republicans and their cohort of Wall Street Democrats, lead with ideologies that don’t address real societal problems, as much as they argue otherwise. Instead, the endless ineffectual and rancorous debate and arguments all revolve around issues of power and control based on ideological dogma. They simply push their failed ideological belief system, instead of understanding and solving problems. “Hey, let’s just give everybody a tax cut; won’t that be great? That’ll keep the masses satisfied and quiet... for a while anyway... maybe through the next election cycle, so we can retain our positions of power.”

They are solicitous of ideological purity and how that is defined; they make acquiring and retaining power the goal, regardless of what happens to their country. Those who play this game may claim they care about their country; but they are not patriotic Americans if that means looking out for the best interests of the American people. They are simply scam artists intent on seizing and retaining power, control and more personal wealth.

Problems go wanting for lack of proper definition and serious attention — even while their impacts are hammering us in the face with unfathomable suffering and economic loss. This is undergirded by immense fear on the part of politicians, media and financial institutions, that if the dots are connected, and root causes identified

and surfaced for open public discussion, the entire can of worms will spill out with the fraud of what this system purports to promise fully exposed. The system isn't working for us and they are deathly afraid they'll have to talk about *that* before the American people. Those brave enough to step out first, face the prospect of it becoming a career limiting, if not career ending, move.

In recent decades, all the Republican Party has done is block, prevent, take away, sabotage, threaten, limit, reduce or eliminate programs, policies and moneys that help the American people. The Party has proven they know nothing about effective governance; nor do they care as long as they retain power by whatever fraudulent means necessary; the country be damned.

The tactic they use is to corral and commandeer the country's revenue and redirect it for such things as a bloated military budget, ever the "look tough" sanctuary of political cowards, most of whom never even served their country in the military. They serve their clients instead; the oligarch class, with subsidies and tax giveaways for corporations and the ultra rich; justifying it with failed ideology and empty promises. That keeps everyone in a perpetual state of argument over ideology, rather than solving problems.

They force our country to borrow from private capital institutions, which generate phantom money out of thin air while clawing in ever more control over real capital assets as collateral; bringing our country (and others around the

globe) to its knees in our ability to address the problems that beset our society. Then they scream about the debt limit, their ultimate means of blackmail-leveraged extortion, and make empty claims about our children having to "pay it all back". Yet in actuality, they care so little about the debt level, that when there was a budget surplus at the end of the Clinton administration that could have been kept going and put toward "paying down the debt", if that's what they truly believed; Bush II gave it all away to corporations and the rich based on the same old lie, resulting in deficits so immense Congress finally decided they had better raise taxes to help stem the flow of red ink. And the current tax bill? They keep this charade going with a strategy of sustainable ignorance for their base — many of them your supporters, Mr President — along with a handful of "socially conservative" platitudes the moneyed elite could care less about. It's a scam that is destroying our country.

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**There is absolutely no reason to lower corporate taxes. We need to fight for public investments in our future.** — Robert Reich

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This intransigent stalemate of ideologies poisons and paralyzes our politics and leads to massive cynicism among the populace. Mr President, our population is suffering and our planet is dying. If we hope to create a viable future, we have to find the path out of this malaise. The people must be empowered by a healthy democracy that works in their interests.

That is what my effort to inform you and your supporters is all about. We need to focus on solving strategic problems; not pushing pet ideologies. That means finding the maturity to approach problems with some analytic rigor and structure when defining and addressing the problems.

## Analytic Criteria for Addressing Problems

This structure includes asking such questions as: What are the strategic threats, strategic urgency, strategic goals and desired outcomes, and what strategic opportunities exist or can be created. And it means asking what strategic policies and leadership will address these threats and how they might be implemented in a pragmatic effective way that leverages, where possible, off of existing governance policies and management structures, programs and processes. Let's examine these concepts a bit, then apply them in addressing identified strategic gateway issues. This will put some flesh on the "Strategic Vision" skeleton outlined in the poster summary presented above, Image 71 on page 56 .

Let's examine the key aspects of this analytic structure. We will incorporate this frame when laying out the strategic program elements.

### Strategic Threats:

These are threats to the very viability of our future. Recall earlier under the heading "terminolo-

gy” how we are using the words “strategic” and “viable future” (page 36 and page 39):

**Strategic** connotes great importance, comprehensiveness, integrated whole, time-critical urgency and long-term results, and broad scope and seriousness of threats and impacts—especially when crucial to our survival.

**Viable future** means manifesting conditions for our country, and the broader relational contexts of civilization and the rest of nature that we exist within, that provide for the capability of living, growing and developing, of working and functioning adequately, and having a reasonable chance of survival and succeeding as a self-sustaining living system on out into an indefinite and uncertain future. A **viable future** should hold even the potential of thriving and flourishing under difficult and uncertain conditions.

With this understanding we include such threats as moneyed corruption to the health of our democracy, the means by which people have power. And the health of our population; the health of our environment; and the health of our economy.

Strategic threats make for *gateway* issues; because unless they are addressed in time, they block our future ability to address not only those strategic issues, but everything else.

### Strategic Urgency:

Some threats are so serious their consequences are irreversible. If, for example, our democracy is about to be fully stolen through the corruption of our election process by various means, our voting becomes meaningless and we may never be able to recov-

er the integrity of our elections, thus descending into the likes of a corrupt third-world dictatorship where only money and oligarchs rule and we are never able to “vote out” such corruption once it is entrenched. The will of the people becomes a meaningless cliché. It is strategically urgent we fix our democracy first; else, “we the people” will never be able to correct the system in order to address anything else that besets us.

Likewise, our planetary climate system is breaking down and will soon reach, if it has not already, tipping points of no return. To face runaway global warming, with all its permanent consequences, is to face ominous strategic urgency.

### Strategic Goals and Desired Outcomes:

Problems need to be defined in terms of desired outcomes and related goals. That is the only way of properly focusing strategic policies and measuring their success, in terms of their design to address the desired outcomes and our ability to implement them effectively. Currently, politicians just say, “We’ll do this... or that... for the American people,” whether it’s tax breaks, health, immigration, or whatever. Rarely do we witness them defining a problem, proposing policy legislation and stating how it solves the problem, and identifying measures of outcome by which the success of the policy will be measured.

This is why I’ve organized this “*Strategic vision for a viable American future*” around four strategic elements. Of course, the overall

desired outcome is a *viable future* for us all.

The strategically urgent gateway elements fall into four defined strategic outcomes: Healthy Democracy; Healthy Population; Healthy Environment; and Healthy Economy.

We can keep beating around the bush about everything else while getting mired in the quicksand of endless ideological marketing (i.e. “Privatization and more tax breaks for the rich will save us all!”), like we’ve done for at least four decades. But the outcomes have demonstrated its ineffectiveness in addressing these strategically crucial goals: our democracy is not healthy, as even corruption in our primary elections have proven that it is not responsive to the will of the people, if it ever was; we don’t have a healthy population; we don’t have a healthy environment; and we don’t have a healthy economy.

And it cannot be emphasized enough—it’s not because corporations and the rich don’t have enough money and pay too much in taxes. The opposite is true; they have too much money and don’t pay enough in taxes, while the population ends up paying too much for things like health care and medicine.

### Strategic Opportunities:

Sometimes solutions that address strategic threats are staring us in the face, if we’d only look and recognize them. For example, we already have a very popular single payer health insurance sys-



tem that has been working for decades, although it has aspects that need to be improved so health care is truly comprehensive in health services covered, full population coverage, easy accessibility, and that addresses any form of corruption. We need a publicly financed, privately delivered health care system, based on the morality of care giving—not the profit motives of corporate capitalists. It needs to eliminate private premiums, deductibles, and co-pays. Working people should pay no more than they already do in payroll deductions for these public benefits. It should be fully financed by a focused progressive tax structure that funds it all by deconcentrating income and wealth at the top levels, where all the money has gone over the past several decades. Simultaneously eliminating the waste and overhead of private health insurance, as well as empowering the system to negotiate fair costs for drugs and medical equipment, will lower overall health care system costs by at least a third.

It is called MEDICARE FOR ALL, Mr President. The structure, systems and processes are in place; people are easily enrolled and the provider payment system is in place. All we need to do is expand the system capacity to cover everyone and empower the system to negotiate treatment and drug costs. A comprehensive “Medicare for All” system leverages off of existing management structures and processes, which makes it pragmatically implementable in a management sense.

It’s a management no-brainer,

Mr President. Are you a politician, who merely pushes ideologies; or are you a manager, who seeks effective and easily implementable solutions to serious problems?

Instead of this effective and easily implementable solution to our health care coverage, the Republicans and Wall Street Democrats forgo this strategic opportunity by insisting on some sort of Rube Goldberg system dominated and controlled by private health insurance, which is too costly, doesn’t cover what we need, is discriminatory, doesn’t improve access to health care, and is mainly designed for capitalists to get rich off of people’s suffering due to their lack of affordable access to health and medical services. The ideologues merely push “privatization” as the *only* approach allowable, supposedly because “they hate government” and view all “government solutions as bad.” They are not interested in more cost-effective solutions that address serious broad scale problems. They make every effort to resist opening up the feasible solution space to allow for publicly based solutions through our existing governance structures.

And yet as much as you proclaim to be speaking on behalf of the American people, including your supporters; out of your ignorance and in your typically ineffective bombastic blustering style, Mr President, you continue to make ridiculously uninformed statements, like: “Single payer will bankrupt the country. Believe me; it’s very bad for our country. Very bad.” Bullshit! And shame on you, Mr President, for perpetu-

ating these kinds of dogmatic lies!

Our country will not survive this; the physical, mental and economic health of our population will continue to deteriorate and we will all suffer because of it.

Similarly, our economy does not incorporate the full cost to society of carbon-based energy sources. We can address this simply with a revenue-neutral “cost of carbon pollution” at the source, where carbon enters our economy, with a “carbon fee and dividend”. The fee is like a knob on the economy that can steadily be increased to *force* the economy away from fossil fuels, making for realistic alternative energy choices that incorporate full societal costing.

The typical ideological response that it would somehow “hurt the economy” is another fraudulent lie; the economy is what we make of it, not some “stand alone natural phenomena” that we “might injure”. In fact, shifting away from our carbon-energy addiction would massively expand the economy into other areas. Those collective fees can then be redistributed to the population through a flat dividend that by its nature is progressive, because, although the cost of hydrocarbon-based products will increase, most of the population will receive more dividend money than the increased cost of these products.

These are examples of *strategic opportunities* we simply need to move on. We can lead the world, Mr President; instead of letting other countries like China “eat our shorts” while they run away with the renewable energy economy and we go with dirty energy.

## Strategic Policies and Leadership:

These policies need to be focused on addressing strategic threats to the strategic goals that must be achieved for a viable future. Everything needs to be seen through the lens of what facilitates and furthers a viable future; and what threatens it.

Again and again, we have to keep reminding ourselves and everyone else, the policies need to transcend failed and immoral ideologies that keep us mired in the suicide economy, where neoliberal capitalist privatization muscles out publicly focused strategically effective solutions.

So, the leadership for the design and implementation of these policies must have the integrity and courage it takes to break the shackles of these privatizing ideologies, where “you can have anything you want, as long as it is based on private ownership and increasing the profits for the owners of capital.” This is a failed suicidal belief system and will never get us there, because by its very nature it cannot prioritize the public good as its focusing goal. The system design is strategically flawed when it comes to serving the needs of society.

The system is locked into serving the money growth interests of capitalist owners and corporate executives. Hence they have to continually create and sustain the fraudulent myth that all good for society will drop out of that focus and that, to recall the Thatcher-Reagan propaganda, “there is no other choice”. There certainly

are other choices, Mr President. But it will take courageous, focused, and wise leadership to bring them to fruition.

## Pragmatic Implementation:

Strategic policies should be concise and focused on strategic threats impacting desired outcomes. They should be free of largess and all the various ideological and private-interest “exceptions” and “political favors” crap that politicians typically burden every bill with. That may be the way sausage-law is made; but it is not the way strategic problems are solved.

It’s strategically urgent we abandon the business-as-usual approach to writing law; and the horse-trading bullshit riders to appease ideologues in order to “get something—anything” passed. If what’s passed is not effective in addressing the strategic problem; it’s meaningless to pass it. You can’t bullshit the public into believing you’ve accomplished something “great”, Mr President, if all you have is a Republican sows ear and trinkets to work with. Trying to do so simply further degrades your integrity and leadership. Its design will fail upon efforts to implement it and your bullshit will be exposed.

For example, a fee-and-dividend bill could be written in, say, three pages, and be designed to take advantage of existing accounting systems to collect the fees and re-distribute the dividends. It’s simple accounting math. However, if it is loaded up with *any* exceptions, because that opens the

door to exceptions for everyone’s favorite moneybag lobbyist; or if politicians want to commandeer a portion of the dividends, making it a tax; it will be problematic in its implementation and fail.

## Gateway Issues First

As noted throughout, there are lots of important issues we need to deal with as a society. However, there are these few issues that have such a major impact and if they are not adequately addressed first, we will never be able to address the rest of what ails us efficaciously and sustainably because the viability of our future will drift evermore out of reach. The future becomes more problematic; not more viable. These are priority core *gateway* issues that *must* be addressed in order to have a chance to address anything else.

If our democracy doesn’t work, the American people are robbed of their right to be engaged and effect policies that address their needs. Who controls us then are corporate capitalists whose energies will forever remain focused merely on growing more money for themselves; fraudulently sold to the rest of us with lies, without regard to what happens to people and the rest of nature. There will be no reprieve from this situation and our planet will die from various ills initiated and perpetuated by a suicide economy.

If we don’t have a healthy population, people will suffer and our society and its economy will continue to be degraded. The same for a healthy environment and a healthy economy.

# Sabotage, Subversion, Treason and The Grand Theft of America

## We Are a Country in Reverse — Socially, Economically and Morally

### Pandering to Madness

Mr President, at this point in my writing we need to step back once again and take stock of the first year of your presidency and administration, as the context has changed drastically from when I wrote the beginning pages of this open letter-essay to you, with my first file save February 6, 2017, just 17 days after your inauguration. At that time I had the hope, as your more conscious supporters surely did, that you would step forward out of your caustic campaign mode into a mature leadership role with the wellbeing of our country your primary concern.

However, as I attempt to finish this document by Christmas 2017, toward the close of your first year in office, it has indeed become a small book, throughout the writing of which I have had to take cognizance of evolving developments. It will be published with the date of November 7, 2017, the anniversary of my [3rd Edition of \*The Unheard Herald\*](#) and my 71st birthday. Of course, that's also the date of our recent interim special elections as well, where Democrats made major gains over even longtime incumbent Republicans up and down the national, regional and local tickets, portending an ominously dire future for the Republican Party.

### Imminent Demise of the Republican Party

This party's days are clearly numbered, Mr President; you know it and they know it. Which is why they are pulling out all stops with every dirty trick in the book to "pass-in-a-flash" a monumental bill with no public input, hearings, analysis, or debate (only the promise of a few back room deals to get all party members on board, later ignored). It is legislation designed to grab everything they can on behalf of their rich donor class while they still hold the last vestige of power they will ever hold. They promise even yet more harm to the American people before they're done. After completing the looting our treasury for the richest 0.1%; with smug glee their leaders intend to attack our very earned benefits of Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare we've enjoyed for decades, now claiming there's no money left for the people's needs. But, after this kind of attack on services the people need and demand, they will never again be able to rebuild any semblance of a decent respectable political party out of the smoldering moral and political ruins they have made out of their own party.

While there are still some good folks whose intergenerational identity is so intermeshed with the Republican Party "in name"

who haven't yet woken up to what's happening *in their name*; the American people at large are now waking up and actively engaging the political future of their country in droves. So, let me say it again; this is indeed the last time — *ever* — the Republican Party will hold the power to wreak this kind of carnage on our country. The viability of our future will not survive another round of this devastation. The only question is how much permanent damage they will be able to do before they are overthrown in upcoming elections. Most Americans, the polls show, are as horrified as I am about the severe and lasting damage this Republican Party is doing to our country. As Teddy Roosevelt said, it is morally treasonable; and all that your administration represents in the face of this, Mr President, is lies, distortions and confusion. It's mind-boggling that we don't see even a small handful of Republicans with the concern, care and courage to stand up against this wholesale looting of our country through a tax scam for the richest 0.1% that will destroy families across our nation; while you merely purport to "offer them a few bones and scraps" and sell it as a big tax cut for the middle class.

You have now had almost a full year to present yourself; and quite frankly, Mr President, I find myself simultaneously saddened and

infuriated by the heartbreaking actions we are witnessing from your administration. Although I've written this in an honest and candid fashion, ignoring the cynics, as I noted at the beginning that I would; it has become ever more clear that your administration is intent on doing severe damage to our country. You personally insist on claiming credit for anything you perceive as success and claim as good, whether or not true; and refuse to accept even the hint of accountability or blame for failures or anything bad. However, whereas most of the population simply blames *you* because of that, I want to continue to separate you personally from your administration and the actions of Congress.

Throughout I've endeavored to write under the presumption that, regardless of what is done "in the name of" your administration or your Republican Party, *you personally* have always been in a position to change and independently abandon what is clearly is not working in the best interests of the American people and shift to something more positive, were you to awaken to that. Yet, as time moved on, that presumption has become less and less tenable, as we witness your blatant lies, knowingly or not, out of ignorance or with certain intent, that are expressed before the American people on just about anything, especially what you attempt to "sell" the American people presented in policy legislation and its impacts. But, for the time being let's continue to hold that positive presumption for the purpose of discussion, although I'll press you on it further; because I believe

anyone who has taken the wrong path is amenable to change, even you, Mr President. But the cynical group-think of your greedy and selfish Republican Party and its intent is another matter entirely.

The fact is, Mr President, that instead of stepping into your role as president with the mature behavior of a national and world leader, we have witnessed a steady stream of pandering to the worst social elements of our society, which you seem to believe is the true character of your base of supporters. That's a horrid projection on the majority of truly good hardworking people who voted for you! They are not what this lowly base behavior represents; they simply wanted something better for the people, which establishment politics, the elites of both Democrats and Republicans, has failed to give them for decades and they believed you would, as you had promised.

They've felt left out, Mr President; like they've been standing and waiting in a line for decades for their "American Dream" to manifest from the promised rewards for their years of hard work and fealty to one or the other of the only two political parties they've known. It's a line that not only hasn't been moving forward for them, they get further and further back in the line because it seems that special interests like those of the rich are always cutting in up front. This makes these folks susceptible to being taken advantage of from propagandistic confusion of authoritarian demagogues, like you yourself and your henchmen, Mr President.

Their honest anger gets co-opted and redirected toward blaming "other people", instead of against the system you and the Republican Party oligarchs and neoliberal Wall Street Democrats represent. All they know is that it is so unfair. That's a cynical atomization strategy that takes advantage of people's struggles and suffering to sow division and fear and get the people distracted; blaming others, rather than seeking a better understanding of what actually is failing, how and why. And that is a key factor of how fascist elements get their start in democracies, a point which philosopher Jason Stanley makes so clearly in his Alternative Radio talk, "[How Fascism Works](#)", on 9-28-2017.

Yet, in the process of your pandering to the bigotry, hatred, misogyny, racism, anti-LGBTQ, anti-immigrant, and white nationalist purity of these base elements, you project a clear insult on the dignity of your honest hardworking base of supporters who are not representative of those more base elements. People who simply believed in you for the promises you've made do not deserve to be lumped in with this base behavior, characteristic more of rightwing extremists, lost nut cases and religious fanatics. Your behavior, statements and actions, Mr President, are placing you firmly with this later group; not with the good honest people you purport to represent.

It is these good hardworking American people, I've made clear at the start, not the nut cases, on behalf of whose interests my effort is intended to represent.

## What “swamp” did you intend to drain, Mr President?

Further, and more crucially to our future viability, although you promised to “drain the swamp”, whatever you meant by that, your administration has been filled with the ultimate establishment swamp rats, from whom, it has become clear with their actions, behaviors, words and policies, they do not have in mind the best interests of the American people, nor the future of our country.

We are going backward under your administration, Mr President; not into “greatness”, but into madness and the ultimate demise of our country, its institutions, values and its very social structure. What’s at stake is the future of America for all of us; even for you, your children, theirs and for all of our posterity. As we witness this farcical effort by this morally bankrupt Republican Party to gut our revenue and by borrowing heavily, into deficits of well over a trillion dollars, merely to pay off their donor class of billionaire oligarchs in order to continue receive their future campaign favors and largess so they can retain power, we find our society, our people, and all the good we have built up for America under attack on multiple fronts.

## Grand Theft of America

Mr President, as you already know, I am a war veteran, having served my country, the United States of America, with distinc-

tion in combat during the Vietnam war. Regardless of the platiitudes you or anyone else offers to veterans, you have no sense how placing your life on the line for your country affects one’s sense of patriotism and ownership of the wellbeing of their country. It’s hard enough these days to even get people to take enough responsibility for their country to vote; let alone stand up for it and defend it with their lives.

So, when I witness the subversive undermining and outright sabotage of our government and the honorable institutions of our democracy we’ve developed over decades, by people—*traitors*—in your administration and this current Republican Congress, there is no more accurate characterization of it than *treason* (see page 41 for meanings). The overt betrayal of our values and principles is heart-wrenching.

We’re not talking about mere policy differences, Mr President; we’re talking about undermining our “sacred voting process”, the outright theft of votes from American citizens, the subversion of our healthcare system, the undermining of our protections, the gutting of our revenue and subsequent theft of our benefits (“now no money to pay for them”), our common infrastructure, and on. This is not the first time I’ve written about this in an impassioned and methodical way; because this is an ongoing theme for the Republican Party—a party that has become nothing more than the enemy of the American people and our democracy, while in service of an oligarch class of billionaires,

who want it all for themselves, regardless of who gets hurt or destroyed in the process. The cruelty and mean-spiritedness of so-called Republican “leaders” in Congress appears to be endless.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina 12 years ago, and the abysmal response by the then Republican administration under Bush II, I wrote a 40-page essay, titled: [\*The Grand Theft of America\*](#), September 21, 2005. It is worth offering again, Mr President, my impassioned opening words in the following sidebox, which I meant to inspire, and call forth action from any and all citizens who come across them.

The theme of the *Grand Theft of America* essay differentiates the focus of “government”, “private” and “corporation” in civilization; then examines the root causes of systemic government failure to provide the governance and services the people need and demand. Drawing from some specific quotes entirely relevant to our current discussion, it identifies the goals and mechanisms of this grand theft; and it underscores the earlier development and the damage your administration is doing to our country and how it is doing it, Mr President.

**Government—the realm of people in civilization:** The focus of *government* is people. It is the corruption of government that is disabling and disastrous, not “government.” Government is the name we give to the people, structures, and entities that civilized societies and their communities set up to “govern” various collective functions of their societies—for the mutual benefit of all.

## From [\*The Grand Theft of America\*](#), by Root, September 21, 2005

I am an American. I am an American citizen. I am an American patriot. I write what I write because I love my country, the principles upon which it was founded and because my country faces ominous threats to its very survival as we know it—threats that are never more pressing than this very moment. I write what I write and say what I say because it is the right thing to do when one is called to a higher moral purpose.

Our country and its constitution are in the process of being stolen by the very people in “formal charge” of its protection. *Democracy* is indeed fragile and by its very open, diverse and diffuse nature it is ever vulnerable to perversion, corruption, oppression and ruin. It is readily undermined by subversion, if not subject to blatant robbery, from power structures that relentlessly effort to steal power from the people, thus co-opting the essence of democracy—saving, perhaps, a residual bone left as its faintest resemblance in the now discredited farce of “the vote.” If we citizens do not stand up to protect our constitution and democracy through our words and non-violent actions, in short order we will see the last of its powers and protections wane into the dry ink of hence meaningless and impotent words on old parchment paper kept under lock-and-key that once represented a dream for a free people at the birth of our nation. We will continue to see these powers subsumed and exploited by a tiny minority of power-wielding people who represent nothing but their own agenda—and that agenda is readily apparent as the *domination and control* of the planet and all aspects of planetary life ...

As they smile and shake your hand, offering you reassurance, they amp your fears while they gut your country and the livelihoods of its people, its future and that of the generations that follow. This is the state of an infamous perversion of democracy to which the neo-Republican Party has descended. Yes, yes, they paint themselves over and over with these words “democracy, growth, jobs...” and tell you relentlessly that it’s all about the “freedom” of “your” money and “your vote” that they placate you with. But it is not their words by which they should be judged; it is their decisions and actions, and the subsequent outcomes that have real effects on real lives of real people for which they need to be scrutinized and held accountable. When it comes to their choices between money, property and people, most of the people lose every time.

These people are traitors to the principles that form the foundation of our country, who masquerade themselves as owners of the name “United States of America” and who commandeer and exploit the American Flag, wrapping themselves in it as if it were their own personal corporate logo. Upon that image, they project their private agenda as the “American agenda” and go about their criminal takeover, domination and exploitation of the world, leaving ordinary Americans the options of apathetic and cynical resignation; cheering them on in ignorance, fear or greed; or, struggling to counter this behemoth monstrosity with minimal means, if terrific courage and purpose. These people disgrace my country before the world.

When I served my country as an officer and Vietnam combat veteran in the United States Air Force, I took an oath to uphold and protect the Constitution of the United States of America against all enemies—domestic as well as foreign. I internalized it as a lifetime oath and I live it every day of my life. Being a free patriot means supporting the core aspects of our Constitution, including its checks and balances on power, and a vibrant free press on behalf of the people.

Yet I even have a higher moral calling than this. I am one of several billion human beings on this planet we call *Mother Earth*. Like all other human beings, *my* soul has manifested from the spiritual realm into the physical form of *my* body. Together, *my* soul and *my* body become “*I*”. It is *my* body—a gift from God, if you will—and it is *my* soul that is empowered to make moral choices about what *I* do with *my* body, naked in *my* soul before God and all of creation. The essence of human morality is embedded in *choice*. The denial of choice is the amoral, if not immoral, imposition of domination and control—by someone else’s choice. I can choose to waste this blessed life I am granted or I can choose to serve a higher purpose. As my soul is blessed with the gift of my body, *I* am simultaneously called to purpose and responsibility as a human being, beyond all boundaries, beyond all borders, beyond all allegiances, beyond all beliefs, beyond all dogmas... to serve the best interests of humanity and the planet we inhabit.

My words are my sword and with this sword I will tenaciously endeavor to cut through the *ignorance* upon which this *paradigm of domination and control* depends to acquire, hold, sustain and entrench its power. With my words I will continue to focus the brilliance emanating from the light of truth and understanding in ever increasing intensity on the forces and constructs that underpin this destructive paradigm.

**Private—the realm of self in civilization:** The focus of *private* is self. What's wrong with that? Well nothing in some contexts and a whole lot when it comes to the nature of what we call civilized *society*. If it relates to education of our people, for example, or providing core infrastructure services or the management of our national treasures and resources, "private" means transferring control from public decision making by public institutions, whose mission and focus is directed at serving the interests and needs of the people, to private decision making by a few to serve their selfish interest of growing money and dominating others. But more than that, it means the invasion of the domination and control paradigm into all sectors of public life. It means the seizure of the freedom for public involvement in decisions crucial to the well-being of people's communities, public institutions and society at large. The result of "privatization" is a gutting of public institutions and the waning of democracy since democracy needs to be implemented through more effective redistribution of concentrated wealth—not magnifying its concentration. The power of scale (and leverage through the corporation device) represents a structural antithesis to democracy.

Society needs funds from the economy and a balance of wealth distribution commensurate with the overall well-being of humanity. *Public* funds need to be put into *public* services that the people decide they want and need to enhance the general well-being of society as well as caring for those who are unable to care ade-

quately for themselves. It's called civilized progress; it's known as *compassion*. But all this they bash as "waste" and then grab it for themselves and let the rest of us live with the costs—we usually refer to that as greed.

**Corporation—the realm of the device in civilization:** The focus of *corporation* is leveraged power. The *corporation device* is the ultimate lever of power with its own paradigmatically innate agenda of growing money, increasing power and ensuring its survival in perpetuity. Any functionary participant not acting in line with the paradigm of this device is ejected from the system—no rebels need apply. Which CEO is going to stand up and say for the sake of civilization, "enough is enough!" and still keep his job?

The corporation is a self-selecting device that underpins the domination and control paradigm. It is a concentrator of capital and power for the device itself and a concentrator of wealth and power for the relatively few dominant owners who control the device and wield it as their lever of global influence. Its dominance leaves no room for any other guiding philosophy for humanity than the growth and accumulation of money. Such a device that has no self-regulating mechanism results in the cancerous expansion of financial capital, and this relentless and expansive pressure leads to ecological and societal destabilization and destruction as its ultimate outcome. It is the focal device of the domination and control paradigm. It only answers to another device, an epidevice

called the *financial capital market*. This device seeks and rewards entities that are better than others in growing money—the more the better, the faster the better.

In a collective sense, the corporation device is the underpinning of capitalism. In harmony they constitute "a single world-dominating order," and even though it still has not reached everywhere, it cannot be reformed, cannot be satisfied with less than everything, and has the institutions in place for its purpose.

Without a drastic change in its driving purpose, the restructuring of its power and influence, and the reestablishment of societal control of this device, it sets the modern-day benchmark for what we might call an *evil force*. It is out of anyone's control and heading the planet toward catastrophic failure of its ecological and societal systems.

Capitalism is not what most people take it to be. It is not a rational system of markets in which freely constituted individuals create wealth in healthy competition; which is the garb its adherents try to clothe it with. It is, rather, a device-driven construct that integrates earlier modes of domination and generates a gigantic force field of profit-seeking that polarizes all human activity and sucks it into itself. We might also properly label that an *evil force*, around which all the rules of the system have been rigged. Isn't that the essence of the claim you made that got you elected, Mr President? What did you mean by "the system is rigged"? You've never been clear about that.

But this is in fact what the Republican legislative effort is all about, Mr President; to rob us of affordable healthcare and rob our treasury and our earned Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security benefits; and privatize it all in order to dominate it and harvest its cash flow that should be returned to the people. Regardless of what you campaigned on, your current fraudulent lies about it all being good for working people, jobs, pay and the economy, and not being designed to further enrich the richest of the rich, including yourself, will come crashing down upon you as more and more people wake up to the *grand theft of America*. Saying, “here’s a few bucks for you, middle America;” while this oligarch class runs away with the greater wealth of the store will only enrage broader America as they wake up and realize how they are being conned and fleeced — sold to them by *your* words, Mr President.

While my claim is that the corporation device, manifested collectively as capitalism, is inherently driven purely by the goal to grow money for its owners, thus subverting true market forces wherever feasible; others argue about meaning of words and the *rules* of capitalism as the heart of the problem — and who has the power to make them — that form the basis of our socio-economic structure and its regulating mechanisms.

## Sustained Confusion and the Struggle Over Words

This is the essence of your MO

(modus operandi, or method of operation), is it not, Mr President? “Facts are mere ‘white noise,’” as one of your operatives put it, when the goal is simply to keep the public in a state of confusion so they don’t know what to believe. Thus you can keep putting out lies to muddy the waters of truth, with the intent of flooding the channels of public discourse so much that it becomes a game of “what words the public hears most often and loudest, that affect what they believe.” So, it becomes who controls the meaning of what words — not the truth — that is important. This is the tactic of public thieves. That is why I’ve been so clear about the definitions of the words I use.

As an aside, my [2nd Edition of \*The Unheard Herald\*](#) was exactly about taking on a marketing shyster who, as the board chair of our local natural food co-op led an effort to try and sell our \$2 million co-op out from underneath the co-op members to a corporate entity hell bent on buying little independent co-ops, for the mere price of assuming the \$275,000 mortgage. He had no rational argument; he simply kept asserting, “It’s an incredible deal for the members; it’s an incredible deal!” — based on nothing for the member-owners! And he got the rest of the board to keep repeating that meme. That’s it; they had nothing else! So, several of us led a member revolt to recall the entire board; and we saved our local co-op from being stolen by taking them head-on. And that’s the kind of thing happening to America, Mr President.

Multitudes of books have been

written by highly respected and prominent political economists, policy experts and political philosophers about this phenomenon. There exists a struggle over the name and meaning of “capitalism”; and the same for “democracy”. Some want to hang onto the word and a positive notion of “capitalism”, drawing from the way it performed in earlier times. Some argue that words like “capitalism” and “democracy” have been so co-opted, or challenges to their meanings so tainted by negative connotations of Marxism or Communism, for example, as if there’s no other choice than capitalism, that you can’t engage in a conversation about either of them, without clarifying terms at the outset. Again, we cannot assume the same shared meaning in debate without clarification.

## Capitalism:

Eminent public policy expert, Robert Reich, from whom we’ve drawn earlier, in his 2015 book and recently released Netflix movie, both titled *Saving Capitalism: For the Many, Not the Few*, argues not that capitalism can or can’t be reformed; but that indeed, it *is* such a powerful force that it *needs to be constrained* by the rules that govern the markets within which it operates, else by its very nature it is a rampant runaway device that imposes disastrous results on society. And it is not only what the rules are that is important; but who has the power to control and define them. If we’re going to have a “capitalism” that serves our economy



properly, the rules by which it operates must be under democratic control of the public, via our power through our government. But that is very problematic, given the power held by corporations in the “Corporate-Political-Complex” we live with.

Although for a long time, Reich notes [paraphrasing], he has called for “an activist government that raises taxes on the wealthy, invests the proceeds in excellent schools and other means people need to get ahead, and redistributes to the needy;” he says he now realizes that falls short, missing a key point. Because, it “overlooks a critically important phenomenon: the increasing concentration of political power in a corporate and financial elite that has been able to influence the rules by which the economy runs.” This undeniably represents the cabal you’ve brought on as your administration, Mr President, to take over and run our country. You didn’t “drain the swamp” at all; like you promised. You’ve put the swamp thieves in charge.

And that this is where, Reich argues, the focus needs to be — “government’s more basic role in setting the rules of the economic game. Large corporations, their lawyers and lobbyists, Wall Street billionaires and their political lackeys have for many years been actively reorganizing the market for their own benefit and are exerting a growing influence over the makeup of those rules wherever devised. The consequences have been a market organized by those with great wealth for the purpose of further enhancing their wealth;

which has resulted in ever-larger upward *pre*-distributions *inside* the market, from the middle class and poor to a minority at the top. That’s not happening as a result of market activities; it’s literally a ‘pre-distribution’ by virtue of their domination and control of the rules defining the market.”

“It begs the question of how the market is organized and whether that organization is morally and economically defensible... The problem is not government or the size of government; but whom the government is *for*. The remedy, if we want to ‘save capitalism for the many’, is for the vast majority to regain influence over how the market is organized. The only way to reverse course is for the vast majority who now lack influence over the rules of the game to become organized and unified, in order to re-establish the countervailing power that was the key to widespread prosperity five decades ago. That’s when capitalism worked for most of us rather than for only a relative handful.”

Isn’t that what you were telling your supporters last year, Mr President, with your “make America great again” slogan? If not, what did you mean; or did you just intend to con people with a false hope? Look what you and your Republican collaborators are doing now; it’s entirely the opposite!

Reich made this movie, produced by Inequality Media, about “saving capitalism for the many” to inspire and wake people up to this very fact; and for everyone to get engaged with the future of our country. We are at the precipice

of losing it all if we don’t make a concerted effort to save it. And indeed, we are waking up to the con en masse, Mr President!

Everyday, there’s yet another horror story about this scourge on our society, where your administration takes advantage, yet again, of the gullibility of so many of your followers. Even as I write this today, December 17th, it has just come out that your Department of Labor, in cahoots with the National Restaurant Association, is intent on changing labor rules for tips, so that restaurant workers’ tips, their main source of income, become the property of employers, not workers! These workers are often not even paid for overtime, and many employers cheat them on even their regular hours. And as the #metoo movement grows, we know that restaurant workers face a disproportionate amount of harassment, discrimination, and poverty. Tipped restaurant workers have the lowest minimum wage in the country. It’s hard to fathom how ethically low your administration will go, when your administration wants to see the restaurant owners steal their fucking tips! It is an unbelievably cruel attack on low-income Americans. How do you justify this to your hardworking supporters, Mr President?

### **Democracy:**

The same can be said over the struggle for the perceived meaning of the word “democracy”. The historically catastrophic phenomenon we are witnessing should indeed be seen as an *expected*

outcome of the myopic notion of “ideologically managed democracy,” which is the only vision that emanates from the “freedom-for-money” Corporate Political Complex assault on America, while it simultaneously characterizes the decision-making impotence of the general public in our modern-day political world. In fact, these ideologues like to keep the masses confused by equating the meaning of the two words as an empty mantra: “democracy = capitalism = democracy”; where the rich control and grow while the lower classes consume and fume.

It’s a “totalizing ideology” in the sense that corporations and billionaire oligarchs, and their Republican political hacks, are obsessed with control, expansion, superiority, and supremacy. It’s what political philosopher Sheldon Wolin calls “inverted totalitarianism,” but is only partly a state-centered phenomenon in that it primarily “represents the *political* coming of age of corporate power and the *political* demobilization of the citizenry. It successfully projects power inwards by encouraging and exploiting a symbiotic power relationship between traditional government and the system of private governance of the modern corporation.” (Sheldon S. Wolin. 2008. *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. Princeton University Press.)

“Although the intellectual construct of ‘capitalism’ was conceived in the late 18th Century as a decentralized power structure

offering an antidote to centralized power, one of Adam Smith’s fundamental contentions for it to work was that *individuals* were capable of making rational decisions about the management of their own capital *only* on a *small scale*. But the rapid emergence of the business corporation device opened forms of concentrated interconnected power structures that marked the presence of private power on a scale and in numbers previously unknown.”

This is resulting in a concentration of private power that is unconnected to a citizen body and thus only has one agenda, previously stated as growing and concentrating money, regardless of the impact on others. “As the momentum of political and social democracy of the U.S. in the 1930s waned with the outbreak of World War II, the merger of state and corporate interests resulted in an unprecedented combination of power with totalizing tendencies whose very nature is to continually challenge established political, moral, intellectual, environmental and economic boundaries. It also created and promoted a consumer culture that focused the nation on private pleasures while accepting political passivity.”

“A major consequence,” Wolin writes, “is the construction of a new imperial identity that is less democratic. That new identity involves questions of who we are as a people, what we stand for as well as what we are willing to stand for, the extent to which we are committed to becoming involved in common affairs, and what democratic principles jus-

tify expending the energies and wealth of our citizens and asking some of them to kill and sacrifice their lives while the destiny of their country is fast slipping from popular control.”

### *A Benchmark for “Evil”:*

What if, in the evolution of humanity, well-meaning rational experimenting human beings created a technological device, which they expected to serve limited well-defined and valid needs for humanity in a beneficial way? Yet, over time human control of the abstract device subtly slipped away as the device morphed and coalesced into a complex of devices that not only escaped human control, but actually commandeered it by design into complicit single focused service to the device through its motivation, evaluation and reward system for the human element? What if humans then realized too late that this device complex, now becoming evermore free from constraints and systemically compelled to enlarge itself with its insatiable drive to grow, accumulate and concentrate money, finds itself consuming anything and everything on its horizon. Those within the device complex who are best at promoting its paradigm are rewarded by contractual engagements allowing them to skim off obscene amounts of personal wealth from unfathomable money flows. But the device complex is designed to eject any individual who questions its legitimacy, the impact of its excesses, and indeed the paradigm of growth it-

self. With no one able to reset its controls, the device complex will continue until the stability of the life support systems of the planet, the resilience of socioeconomic systems, and all things sacred about life succumb and collapse under its rapacious appetite, leaving a catastrophic wasteland in its wake and the survival of civilization and our species in question. What if???

Now *that* is something we might properly call a *benchmark of evil* — an uncontrolled device complex on the loose that is destroying the planet. And is that not what we face with this disastrous uncontrolled ideological construct made up of artificial device entities called “corporations” and a device complex we could properly call the “Corporate-Capitalist Political Complex”? Salvation will only come when the stake of truth is driven into the heart of this ideological dragon with such fierceness, tenacity and finality that no doubt is left when the unimaginable suffering and destruction its ideas have wrought are exposed with properly understood *measures of outcome*. Ideas have consequences. Enlightened human beings must stand with strength and moral conviction to prevent the resurrection of such a device in its current form. But first they must preserve the ability to do so — and time is running out on genuine democracy.

## Root Cause Factors of Systemic Government Failure

It is offensive, unpatriotic and

damaging to our country for Republicans to categorically trash and castigate “government” as the “problem” in support of their agenda of private domination and control by the tiny minority of extremists who own and control vast empires of capital. As some government functions in fact do degrade and fail to meet expectations and standards — a hallmark trait of Republican administrations — we must be discerning about the source of the failure, rather than mind numbing and thought blocking ideological rhetoric that attempts to trash the institution civilization calls *government*. There are five major proximate sources of failure, all of which do severe damage to our country and its ability to function properly, which is why these people who employ these means need to be thought of as traitors to their country:

i. **Funds:** The ideological gutting and misdirection of funds, including a stream of tax breaks that overwhelming benefit the rich, ultra-rich, and the corporation device at a time of great national need and distress, which should call forth sacrifice by all rather than a party of riches for the tiny minority of elite;

ii. **Staffing:** Filling top level positions with corporate skills, incompetent cronies, political patrons, frat-boy college roommates, or dogmatic ideologues who cripple or destroy the internal machinery of entire agencies through mismanagement and/or intent (see [“For the GOP: Incompetence is Feature, not a Flaw”](#));

iii. **False and Misleading Infor-**

**mation:** Systemic distortion of information, lies, secrecy, selective disclosure, and intentional leaks to attack opponents and confuse or mislead the public; while rejecting evidence-based thinking, sabotaging and deleting true accurate scientific information and their methods of data collection, management and communication;

iv. **Corruption:** Corruption in personal behavior, conflict of interest, theft and the funneling of public funds to cronies in the private sector through unethical contracting policies; and

v. **Fear:** Driving fear and confusion *into* all levels of the organizational complex; exactly the opposite of what enlightened sages like Dr Edwards Deming spent a life time teaching American and Japanese industry — *drive fear out of the organization*.

This is how they go about taking control of our country and destroying our government. All of these in turn, are in the service of the overriding Republican agenda of *domination and control by private interests* that serve some other purpose than the common good of our country — and *this* is the *root cause* behind the *grand theft of America*.

The result is increasing oppression at home, empire abroad, regional if not global instability, increased risk to our health and safety, inability to prepare for unforeseen disastrous events (intentional or acts of nature), environmental degradation, exposure to planned or unplanned interruption in critical resources, an ever mounting national indebtedness

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

to private financial institutions so monumental it will cripple our future for generations, increasing repression against any protest to the contrary, and the criminalization of dissent and the free exercise of First Amendment Rights. These are the *outcomes* of the Republican agenda for domination and control by private interests. They don't want government—in any form, in any country—to serve as a model that works! So, here and abroad, they undermine it with their rhetoric, decisions and actions—and then they point to the mess they've created and say: "See? Government doesn't work." But the reason it doesn't work is that the people responsible for managing it (the political administration) are subjecting it to

wholesale sabotage. This is nothing less than a treasonous attack on the viability of our country by domestic enemies of the state.

No worries to them, however, because they can count on their ability to sell lies and fake stories to the public; while they continue to sucker the most gullible of their "base", who are asleep, still grasping their Republican identity, and awash in ignorance. And, with a compliant corporate media to propagate their fake stories and propaganda narratives, they can always spin any closer look off into the ionosphere. If all that fails, or even as a preemptive strike, they can personally attack the very dignity and veracity of whomever denies or challenges them, with a disgusting stream of ad hominem.

a Hurricane Katrina, Sandy, Harvey, Irma, Maria and so many others, they come in after the fact acting like "leaders," but looking like buffoons tossing roles of paper towels to suffering people, and say something stupid for the cameras like: "Rest assured, America. I'm in charge now; we're going to get to the bottom of this!" And shortly thereafter, while still nothing is fixed and people are still suffering, "We've done a fantastic job. I'd give us a 10 rating!" Then onto some more photo-ops on military ships and with military troops to show how "in charge" and tough they are.

This is your administration, Mr President. And we are so on to you. But you could yet change for the better. No?



Image 91. Healthy Democracy



Image 93. Healthy Environment

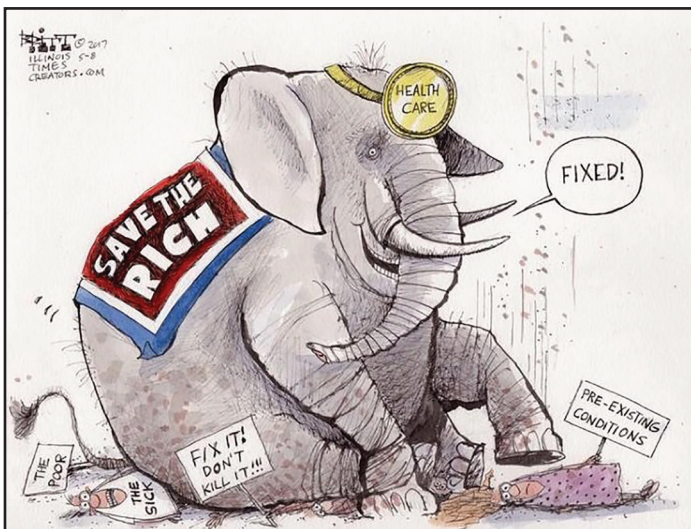


Image 92. Healthy Population



Image 94. Healthy Economy

# Strategic Success Program — Core Policy Elements

## Healthy Democracy

Leadership: Larry Lessig, Ari Berman, Greg Palast, David Cobb



Image 95. [Lawrence “Larry” Lessig, Harvard Professor of Law](#). Author of: [Republic Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress—and a Plan to Stop It](#) (2011); and the new edition (2016), [Republic Lost: The Corruption of Equality and the Steps to End It](#). Also producer of many [videos](#). Lessig ran briefly for President in the 2016 Democratic Primary, under the notion of a “[referendum president](#)” to restore the principle of political equality and un-rig the rigged system—until the DNC shifted the goal posts to prevent him from participating in the Primary Debates.



Image 96. [Ari Berman, Investigative Journalist](#) for *Mother Jones Magazine* and *The Nation Magazine*; Fellow at the Nation Institute. Author: [Give us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America](#) (2015). Interviewed several times about election integrity on [Democracy Now!](#) This October, 2017, Berman wrote a feature *Mother Jones* article, titled: “[Rigged: How Voter Suppression Threw the Wisconsin Election...](#)”



Image 97. [Greg Palast, Investigative Journalist](#) for *Rolling Stone Magazine*, *BBC*, *The Guardian*, and *Democracy Now!* Author and Film Producer: [The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: A Tail of Billionaires & Ballot Bandits](#) (2016) and its 2017 post-election release [The Case of The Stolen Election](#). Palast has been investigating vote thieves and ballot bandits and the billionaire dark money behind them, all the way back to the theft of the 2000 election by Bush II and before.



Image 98. [David Cobb](#), Green Party presidential nominee in 2004; [Jill Stein](#) campaign manager 2016; and co-founder of [Move To Amend](#), which calls for a 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to prohibit equating money with speech, and for limiting constitutional rights to “natural persons only.” Cobb has led multiple vote recount efforts and was the manager of the 2016 recount on behalf of the Green Party. He wrote in *Mother Jones* last year that “[recounts at their core are about ensuring confidence in the integrity of the voting system.](#)”

**Strategic Threats:** Stolen elections; Subversion of Democracy; Corrupting influence of money on elections and policy legislation serving only the rich; Degradation of news and information — sources and access — in coverage and accuracy of content

**Measures of Outcome for a Healthy Democracy:** Verifiability of accurate elections, election processes and equipment; Guarantees all citizens will be able to easily exercise their voting rights and that their votes will be accurately counted in a timely manner; Citizen equity in campaign finance through public financing, eliminating corporate and big money lobbying contributions, closing revolving door; Equal representation via elimination of gerrymandering, and providing for ranked-choice voting; Guarantees that election results will be determined by popular vote count; Media independent of corporate influence; Free, fair, open and neutral Internet services for everyone

## Leadership

The leaders who have the crucial expertise, courage and tenacity needed to address these strategic threats; who have researched, investigated, spoke, written and know the most about the strategic threats to our democracy and how to go about fixing it are: **Larry Lessig**—Corruption of money in politics, equal representation, electoral reform, and campaign finance law; **Ari Berman**—Election justice and election integrity, voter suppression, ballot and vote theft; **Greg Palast**—Influence of billionaire money on elections; election justice and election integrity, voter suppression, ballot and vote theft; **David Cobb**—Election integrity, voting system integrity and auditing, voting recount process, new Constitutional Amendment to strip corporations of “personhood” and the equating of money with speech, thereby undoing the disastrous SCOTUS decision.

The links in the above box, as well as a simple online search, lead to the wealth of professional work these democracy integrity leaders have produced. They, and in their judgment whomever *only* they refer as trusted gateway leaders to help in this effort, are the key sources of integrity for insights and policies on achieving a *healthy democracy* for the American people and restoring its integrity.

Lessig has presented [powerful talks](#) that bring forth work by others who carefully and methodically examine the plight of our current crisis in democracy and lay out a vision to correct it. Two of his Harvard colleagues even

address our inherited traditional structure of our two-party system with a recent report on the duopoly itself; identifying where and how our politics has morphed into a political industry.

## Problem: Our democracy no longer represents or serves the interests of the people

### Two Party Duopoly and Government Dysfunction

The Independent Voter Network (IVN), which emphasizes the importance of “being awake” over blind support for either the Democratic or Republican Parties, reported on a “ground breaking new report” out of the Harvard Business School about underlying causes of our government dysfunction: [“Harvard Study: Two-Party Duopoly to Blame for Government Dysfunction”, September 20, 2017](#). The authors of the September, 2017, Harvard study, Katherine Gehl and Michael Porter, titled, [“Why Competition in the Politics Industry is Failing America: A Strategy for Reinvigorating Our Democracy”](#), define politics as an industry. It’s an actual “industry”, most of whose key players are private, gain-seeking organizations; with “groups of professional politicians and key operators who have a natural self-interest in aligning themselves with one of the two major parties; including the lobbyist-politician revolving door.”

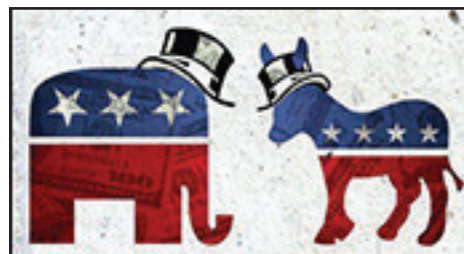


Image 99. “In the U.S. there is basically one party—the business party. It has two factions, called Democrats and Republicans, which are somewhat different but carry out variations on the same policies. By and large, I am opposed to those policies. As is most of the population.” Noam Chomsky

By that they mean, paraphrasing the IVN article and Harvard authors, “the Republican and Democratic Parties are just like the major players of any other private industry: they act out of their private and rational self-interest.” And because the private political industry controls our public election process: “Politicians have little incentive to put the public interest first if they believe that blocking legislation is rewarded by their party and inaction is not penalized by voters.” Most everything necessary to run a modern campaign and govern is tightly connected to—and often controlled by—the duopoly. “Rather than supporting solutions and finding common ground, suppliers to the industry, supplying most everything necessary to run a modern campaign and govern, make partisanship worse.”

“Citizens are beginning to understand that something is deeply wrong with our democracy. Our political system has become the major barrier to solving nearly every important challenge our nation needs to address. Our political system is not a public insti-

tution but a private industry that sets its own rules. In the process, it has fundamentally diminished our democracy. Actually, our political system isn't broken; it is delivering exactly what it is currently designed to deliver. The real problem is that our political system is no longer designed to serve the public interest, and has been slowly reconfigured to benefit the private interests of gain-seeking organizations: our two major political parties and their industry allies. The evolving structure of the politics industry has led to the failure of political competition to serve the average citizen—and to the antithesis of the outcomes we need to achieve. By nearly every measure, the industry of politics, itself, is thriving. There's just one problem. The people whom the politics industry is supposed to serve have never been more dissatisfied."



Image 100. "A rising proportion of Americans identify themselves as Independents. As of 2016, nearly 4 in 10 Americans identify as Independent, relative to roughly 3 in 10 for both Democrats and Republicans. There is increasing desire for a third major party." Gehl & Porter

Third parties are effectively boxed out. "The effect of partisan primary elections, compounded with gerrymandering, onerous general election ballot access rules

for non-major-party candidates, and other rules like the sore loser laws ... [election rules and practices] ... create major disadvantages for third party candidates, independents, and even moderates within the major parties."

Yet, like their colleague Lessig, they put forth optimism that the system can be reformed and restructured. "The purpose of our work was to analyze the system—not to comment on it, but in order to figure out how to fix it. We wanted a method to identify reforms and innovations with the greatest probability to change the system. Many of the approaches we have described are beginning to gain traction, as evidenced by the progress in moving to nonpartisan primaries and ranked-choice voting, as well as the gerrymandering and presidential debate litigation."

"The result of our duopoly is that despite all the commentary and attention on politics in recent years, there is still no accepted strategy to reform the system and things keep getting worse. We need a new approach. Our political problems are not due to a single cause, but rather to a failure of the nature of the political competition that has been created. This is a systems problem. It is up to us as citizens to recapture our democracy—it will not be self-correcting. Today the challenge for Americans is to participate not only as voters, but also to participate in the reform of the political system itself. This is our democracy, and the need is urgent."

Let's begin by examining how their Harvard colleague Larry

Lessig identifies and defines our election funding process. In particular, how it presents a money filter through which all candidates of either party must successfully pass; and the impact that has on our representative democracy. Lessig also presses us on the urgency of our situation; as we are fast losing our representative democracy. "It is the moral issue of our era."

### Two Stage Election Process

**"Boss" Tweed:** William Tweed was a politician most notable for being the "boss" of Tammany Hall, the Democratic Party political machine that played a major role in the politics of the mid-19th century New York City and State, as well as being elected a Congressional Representative in 1852.

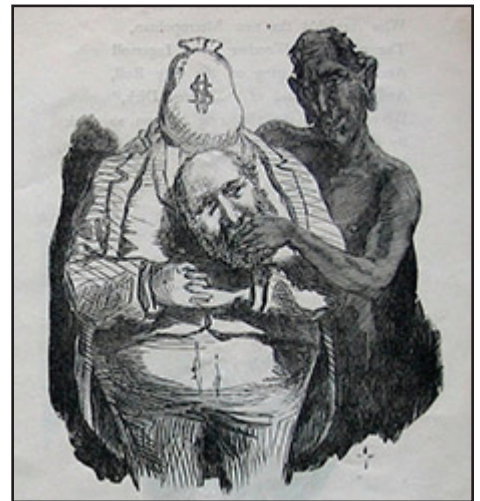


Image 101. Boss Tweed - Stole as much as \$200 million from New York taxpayers. Convicted of fraud and sent to prison.

At the height of his influence he was the third-largest landowner in New York City. Tweed is infamously known for this *Tweedism*:

*"I don't care who does the voting, as long as I get to do the nominating."*

### Stage 1: The Primary "Tweed" Filter

### Stage 2: The Election

Stage 1, where the viable candidates for elected office get "picked", represents an extremely biased filter that is dominated and controlled by a tiny few big funders representing the business and political elite classes. Regardless of the general election, where everyone theoretically "gets to vote," assuming all the problems with that go away, we are not a functioning democracy because of the structure of fund raising that has morphed into a cancer on our democracy.



Image 102. Boss Tweed — "As long as I count the Votes, what are you going to do about it?"

Funding is its own contest, with the consequence being a system responsive to the "Tweeds" only. It is a money primary. It is well known that members of Congress must spend between 30 and 70% of their time "dialing for dollars" in order to get back to Congress or get their party back into power. As they do this, like the chickens in

behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner's experiments, they learn what buttons to push to get rewarded. They acquire a "6th sense" about whose interests to support; they quickly learn to "lean to the green (money)" in order to survive on the political stage.

### Who Funds Elections?

If this is the structure of our election process, we should interrogate who the funders are. For example, Lessig points out that in the 2014 election the total number of all the people who gave the maximum amount of \$5200 to at least one candidate was 57,874 people; or only 0.02% of Americans giving \$300 million. Candidates are presumed and perceived as not credible unless they get their dollars from big funders. But it's not just the biggest funders; it's the *most relevant* funders to whom the candidates place their focus. How much is big enough to be relevant? ("[How much do the 1% of the 1% control politics? The elite takeover of American politics.](#)") Now, after a series of disastrous court decisions, we find that at this point, prior to the 2016 election cycle, a mere 400 families are giving fully half or more of the campaign contributions! Guess whose interests get the attention?

### Whose Interests Get Attention?

The most comprehensive empirical study ever done to date on the influence of Americans on policy legislation was published in 2014, by Martin Gilens and Benjamin

Page, titled: "[Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens.](#)" It covered 1779 policy issues over a 40 year period, examining a multitude of key policy variables. They found that policy decisions correlated well with the interests of economic elites and organized groups representing business interests; but not with the interests of average American voters. These two interests "have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while average citizens and mass-based interest groups have little or no independent influence. The results provide substantial support for theories of Economic-Elite Domination and for theories of Biased Pluralism, but not for theories of Majoritarian Electoral Democracy or Majoritarian Pluralism."

That is, after accounting for these two influential sets of moneyed interests, the so-called "1%" — corporations and ultra rich oligarch elites — the preferences of average Americans, the "99%", have only a minuscule, near zero, statistically non-significant impact on public policy; regardless of how much the masses call their Congress members, what the polls show, or all the protests in the streets!

The recent passage of the exclusively Republican 2017 Tax Scam "Christmas present" to this class of Tweeds, including you Mr President yourself, exemplifies and instantiates this paradigm to a tee; irrespective of their vigorous fraudulent claim that "it's on behalf of and for the American people and will help spur the economy." It is well known and



Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

widely reported that their biggest, richest, and most politically influential mega funders simply told their Republican Party apparatchiks that if they did not pass this disastrous tax scam bill, their funds would dry up. The worn out, stale and bankrupt “trickle-down” claim with which they try to sell it to the American public is pure fraud; it never has and never will create an economy that works for all of us. Robert Reich makes that abundantly clear in his most recent Reich Report video, [“The Big Picture”](#). It is simply a means for the greatest wealth transfer from the middle class and poor to the most wealthy class of Americans in the history of the world. And it does severe damage to our country in a multitude of ways.

Lessig emphatically points out that in a so-called “democracy,” which is the product of Tweedism, this is a corruption of the original design of our representative democracy. That in itself doesn’t mean “criminal,” which we know also goes on, but the corruption of a system where even meaningful decent people, Democrats and Republicans alike, who come to Congress to try and do the right thing find themselves bent to do what the Tweeds demand, because it’s the only way they can survive.

### Not What Our Founders Intended:

Lessig underscores the words of Founding Father James Madison, hailed as the “Father of the Constitution” for his pivotal role in drafting and promoting the Unit-

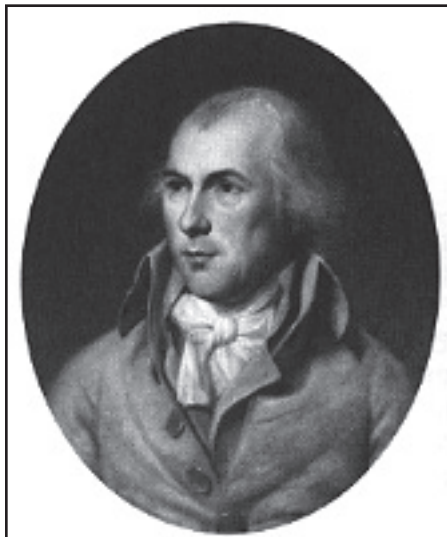


Image 103. James Madison (1751-1836) “Father of the Constitution”. Fourth President of the United States, 1809-1817.

ed States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, regarding his statements in the Federalist Papers, 52 and 57. Madison said that our system of government would be one that has a branch of the federal government which ought to be “dependent on the people alone” — an exclusive dependence; not what we have now, with the people and the Tweeds. Madison explicitly stated that, by his words “the people”, he meant “not the rich, more than the poor.”

### Abraham Lincoln philosophy on Government:

Lincoln’s words, reflecting on “a new birth of freedom” regarding the enduring value of our government, referred to it as a “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” The essence of his words reflect a democratic government focused on the needs of the people.

“of”—meaning the same people inside and outside, reflecting two-way

communication among equals; not the one-way dictatorial expression of an elite narcissistic autocrat.

“by”—meaning people running the government have the same experiences as ordinary people; which, we don’t have with billionaires and their courtiers running our government on their own behalf for their own benefit.

“for”—government’s job in a democracy is to take care of the people; care is part of democracy. Under a progressive world view, citizens care about other citizens, pay their fair share of taxes for our mutual benefit, and ensure there are resources for everyone.

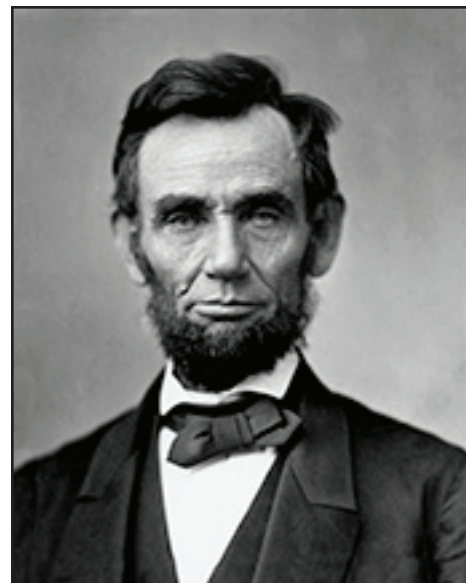


Image 104. Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) Defying Lincoln’s prediction that “the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here”, his Gettysburg Address became the most quoted speech in all of American history.

### Philosophy of a People-Focused Government:

Under the philosophy of a democratic government focused on the needs of the people, those shared resources that our taxes pay for include such things as

medical science, from NIH, for example; computer science that has come out of basic research funded by NSF and DARPA; satellite communications that are rooted in research and development by NASA and NOAA; and cell phones, GPS, and the Internet that got their starts in the Defense Department; among so many other things. And of course most all of our public infrastructure; and the public education of our children, now under severe pressure by capitalist thieves. With the privatization attacks by your administration, they even want to pollute the minds of our children from the beginning with their failed oligarch ideology and dogma.

Tax resources of ordinary citizens are supporting the system and maintaining the economy of the world with these benefits; while corporations and oligarchs withdraw ever more from their responsibility, harvesting the proceeds while dumping the responsibility for it all on the middle class and poor to cover the shortfall. Next in line due to their self-created shortfall, according to Republican leaders, is the gutting of our most basic protections and benefits: Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare. You won't even get that, America, from Republicans.

This theft is high treason against America and its people. It needs to be said that taxes are not the "evil baby to be thrown out with the bathwater," as you portray it. Progressive taxes, Mr President, are an *investment* in our society and country over time. Corporations and the 0.1%, even more the 0.01%, billionaire oligarchs have

already sucked up and concentrated most of the capital of the flows and stocks of the economy; they have no moral conscience or sense of responsibility to their country or its people. It operates as an untethered, unaccountable, and ungoverned device chewing up our livelihood. The dividends we've earned *are* the health care and other public benefits, we've already paid for as dividends.

The rightwing hierarchical authoritarian paradigm of "god over man over nature;" of "rich over poor;" of "strong over weak;" of "Western culture over non-Western culture;" of "white over non-white;" of unique domination by the claim of "exceptionalism;" needs to be abandoned and replaced by a genuine democracy. We need our representative democracy back to save our country from this gross, obscene and immoral corruption of Tweedism.

### Corruption:

Tweedism is a corruption, Lessig points out (again, paraphrasing his talk throughout), caused by a *basic inequality* that we've allowed to evolve inside of the representative system. Today, it is the tiny, very tiny fraction of people, the richest of the Tweeds, who have immensely more power. If we could address and remove that fundamental inequality, neutralizing the Tweedism, then we could crack the corruption that makes it impossible for our government to do any of the things we want it to do. This would achieve a system dependent on the people alone. We are not talking here about



Image 105. "If we could address and remove that fundamental inequality, neutralizing the Tweedism, then we could crack the corruption." Larry Lessig

wealth inequality at the core of this problem of democracy, which is another matter we've covered earlier that needs to be addressed as well; but the *equality* we must have *as citizens* in order to have a representative democracy that is *dependent on the people alone*. My question to you, Mr President, on behalf of all the promises you've made and your supporters believed in, is this: When are you and your Republican Party going to demonstrate your support for American representative democracy by your actions? Thus far, it's been pure oligarchy to enrich yourself and the class of 1-percenters you represent.

This shouldn't be a partisan issue; ordinary Americans of all persuasion want this representative democracy as their own means of sharing equally as citizens in electoral power. They want Congress

to be responsive to *their* needs, regardless of where they fall on the political spectrum, not exclusively the Tweeds. Yet, so many have become cynical about voting and so don't participate, because they realize it's been stolen from them and they don't know how to get it back. You've made false promises to get it back for them. Now we need to change their perception and their motivation, and literally wake them up to this reality, so they will take moral responsibility for their country themselves and be more engaged, because we are fast losing our country.

But the Republican Party politicians have never liked democracy, and never will. They, and the Wall Street establishment Democrats, represent the concentration of power in the hands of a few elites through corporations and rich oligarchs; not the dispersed power that is "dependent on the people alone; not the rich more than the poor," as Madison called for. Which is why they try to redefine and control the perception of the word "democracy" to mean "capitalism;" and try to undermine its processes wherever they can and distract and refocus their unaware "base" onto side issues, like the control over women's bodies and abortion; and to blame all the failures on others, like immigrants and non-white ethnicities and races. Republicans simply can't win if representative democracy is allowed to work, as it was envisioned at the beginning of our country. They have all the money; but not the votes. Democracy doesn't work for them. They want control and power; not democracy. They are not American

patriots, if that means what our Founders meant it to mean by the Constitution, its people-focus, and the processes they established.

### Hope for the Future:

This could all be fixed, Lessig points out, by the simple step of creating a statute, which Congress could do tomorrow, to create small-dollar publicly funded elections; thereby spreading out our "privately funded" elections over a large number of small funders. We would thus have elected representatives responsive to the majority of the people, instead of a tiny fraction of people, the richest Tweeds, funding and picking our primary candidates in the first stage, as well as their undue influence on the entire election process. The public would be funding the election process in a fairer way.

"We need to get a Congress that would pass fundamental election reform to even make this representative democracy possible. We need to elect candidates who have committed to this: we need 220 in the House and 60 in the Senate, regardless of Party. We need to gather in another 12 or so votes in the Senate; and a hundred in the House. That's it; and we can do this!"

Indeed, people are waking up and shaking the political establishment cages. Theo Anderson writes of a "new wave" in his January 4, 2018, *In These Times* cover story, "[Move Over, Corporate Democrats; A New Wave of Left Populists Is on the Rise — It's 2018 and candidates don't need the establishment anymore.](#)"

In fact, Mr President, it's reported that in the Spring of 2016, during your campaign, you made this appealing statement to your supporters: "Five, 10 years from now ... you're going to have a workers' party .... A party of people that haven't had a real wage increase in 18 years. That are angry." And regarding establishment politicians, you said: "The donors, the special interests, the lobbyists have very strong power over these people." This is the kind of rhetoric that took you all the way to the White House, on behalf of the people who supported you; irrespective of your actual performance since.

In fact, your staffing decisions and policies bear no relation to your campaign rhetoric. Since you got elected to office, Mr President, recent polls show that "American's fear of government corruption has risen 13 points." A recent article made the poignant comment that, "besides the domestic and foreign policy harm" you have caused, the most serious result of your time so far in office is the "harm caused to America's political system and to the democratic norms that underlie it. The result has been to fray the bonds that hold American society together. The effects are poisonous." After your first year in office, the article summarizes, "what is clear beyond doubt is that the damage the President is causing to the nation, to its domestic and foreign policies, and even more to the rule of law, to its constitutional system, to its social fabric, and to its very sense of national unity, is piling up week by week. The longer he stays, the worse it

gets.” (“[Damage Bigly](#)”, by James Mann, *The New York Times Review of Books*, January 18, 2018 issue, written December 21, 2017.)

Well, that interrupted ground swell, that got sucker-punched by both parties in 2016, may be on its way sooner than you thought.

“There was righteous fear and anger that neither major party’s establishment was prepared to tap in the 2016 election—because neither would rise to the moral challenge,” Anderson points out in the above cited “New Wave” article. “Had it chosen to, the Democratic Party might have occupied the populist vacuum” that you filled, Mr President. “But the party’s New Deal-era critique of concentrated wealth and power has been supplanted by a corporate-friendly worldview.”

“Victories by independent, anti-corporate Democrats in the November 2017 off-year elections demonstrated that the Democratic Party has the potential to again put forward a vision that inspires voters. But that slim hope depends on the creation of a progressive electoral infrastructure separate and independent from the party establishment, and thus relatively free of the influence that corporate donors wield over both parties. A poll released in early November 2017 showed that 54 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of the Democratic Party—its worst showing since 1992; while 61 percent had an unfavorable view of the GOP. The 2018 elections will provide an early, formidable test of that new progressive infrastructure’s power to upend the status quo.”



Image 106. The [message we believed in for 2016](#) is still the [message of hope for the future](#).

Lessig points to recent polls that indicate the potential for a seismic shift in 2018 due to the dissatisfaction of people with the establishment status quo in both the Republican and Democratic Parties. In his recent November 30, 2017, op-ed in *The Hill*, “[The 2018 candidates who repair the common ground of our democracy](#)”, Lessig writes that “Overwhelmingly, whether Democrat or Republican, we are angry with our government. Overwhelmingly, we see our ‘representatives’ as not representing us. Dissatisfaction with government has literally never been as great or as passionately felt.”

This University of Maryland survey that Lessig refers to found that “85 percent (87 percent-R/84 percent-D) believe Congress ‘does not serve the common good’ and 89 percent (89 percent-R/90 percent-D) believe ‘corporations and

their lobbyists have too much influence.’ Finally, 91 percent believe ‘big campaign donors have too much influence’ (90 percent-R/91 percent-D). No statistician could look at those numbers,” Lessig point out, “and see any difference between Republicans and Democrats here. We do not have a government that represents us. On this, we are all essentially agreed.”

Pointing to several progressive candidates who are demonstrating the courage to take on the established party hacks, Lessig expresses some optimism. “This unity might suggest hope. There is common ground to build upon. If we’re to ever recover a democracy, we need to acknowledge our differences, honestly. But we need to recognize that nothing is possible until we repair the common ground of this democracy first.”

The American people, especially

young Millennials, have to believe they can do something to revive our democracy. We older Americans have failed it on our watch; which means we have failed our children and theirs.

Just what *is* one’s obligation as a citizen, as a patriot regardless of political leaning, as someone who loves this country? “This corruption of our representative democracy is the moral question of our age,” is Lessig’s key point; because accomplishing *anything else* depends on it. That’s why, “*Fix Our Democracy First*”, is listed in this *Strategic Vision for a Viable American Future* as the leading “strategic gateway issue.” This is revolutionary thinking; a complete transformation of our country.

We *could* do something about it; we *can* reclaim our democracy. The only question is, *will* we do it in order to have a viable future?

Time is fast running out; we need to overthrow this entrenched Republican Party in the 2018 and 2020 elections to provide enough breathing room to give birth to its manifestation.

But it’s not just the entrenched Republicans; it includes restructuring the corporate R&D duopoly control of our election processes. That requires independent thinking and allegiance, not to a Party, but to America. That’s why this letter-essay is focused on the interests of disaffected Americans from any and all political persuasions.

We are literally “birthing the future” together. And the time is now.

## Policy: Citizen Equality Act

Lessig proposes comprehensive policy that would address not only this campaign funding issue, but other points we cover below. He presents the “Citizen Equality Act” on the webpage of the non-profit organization he founded, “Equal Citizens” (<https://equal-citizens.us/>). There are three parts:

**Part 1. Citizen-Funded Elections:** All citizens deserve an equal ability to choose our leaders.

**Part 2. Equal Representation:** All citizens deserve equal representation in elections. Eliminate gerrymandering.

**Part 3. Equal Right to Vote:** All citizens deserve equal access to the ballot box.

There have been other projects in the works fighting for similar repairs to our democracy, including: [Fair Elections Now Act](#), introduced in Congress in 2009; [Government By the People Act](#), introduced in Congress in 2014; and [The American Anti-Corruption Act](#), crafted in 2011 “by a former Federal Election Commission chairman in consultation with dozens of strategists, democracy reform leaders and constitutional attorneys from across the political spectrum, including Lessig.

We will bring the Citizen Equality Act, Parts 2 and 3, up later after we explore the problems they

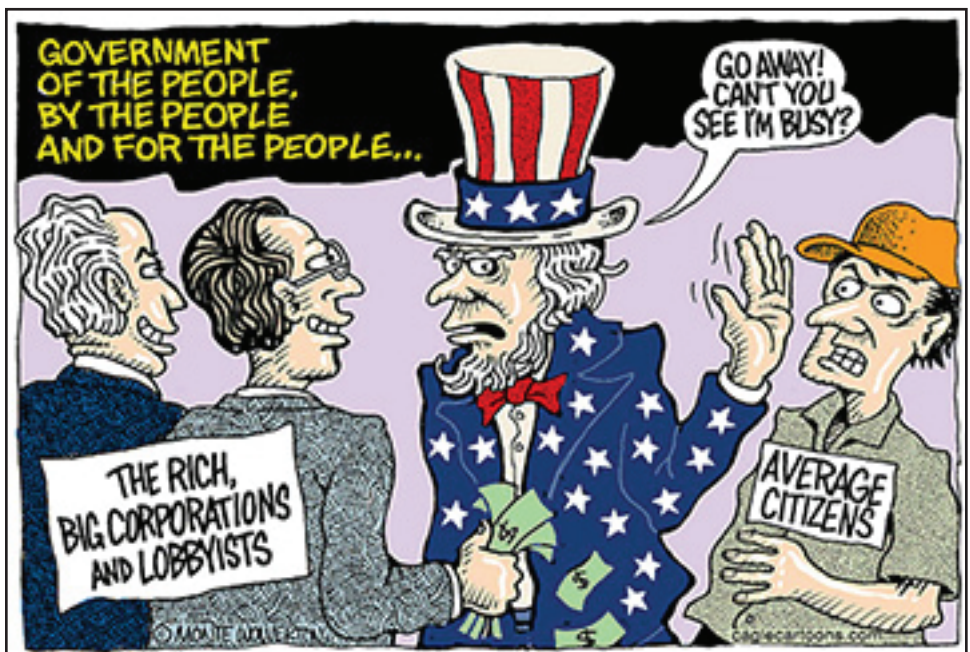


Image 107. “So, wealthy individuals and corporations are able to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence the political process? This sounds like an oligarchy.” Indeed! Jimmy Carter stated that “the billionaire class now owns the economy, and they are working day and night to make certain that they own the United States government.” The problem is, of course, that it amounts to what Bernie calls ‘legalized bribery.’ Senator Bernie Sanders wants to move toward public funding of elections to promote a more even playing field where all Americans can participate.” <http://feelthebern.org/bernie-sanders-on-political-and-electoral-reform/>

address. This Citizen Equality Act was the centerpiece referendum of Lessig's brief campaign for president in the 2016 election cycle. Part 1, Citizen Funded Elections, is the part relevant to the current discussion. Lessig says briefly that we must have citizen-funded primary elections, where the funds come from all of us through proposals like those of the various projects noted above. It is only by restricting Congressional and Presidential campaigns to small dollar citizen funding, and publicly funded elections, that will prevent them from being dependent on the tiny few "Tweeds". This is the critical first dimension.

## Problem: Electoral College — Popular Vote Winner Can Still Lose Election

There are four times in the history of our country where the elected presidential candidate lost the popular vote: 1876, 1888, 2000, and 2016.

The United States Electoral College is the mechanism established by the Constitution for the election of the President and Vice President. There are a total number of 538 votes; one for each Senator and one for each Representative. So, anyone who gets 270+ votes wins, regardless of the popular vote total.

[The Time Has Come: Reform the Electoral College Now.](#) A Constitution Amendment could change the rules of election; however that

is very hard. It would require 2/3 of the House and Senate to pass an amendment; and 3/4 of the State Legislatures to ratify the amendment. But Lessig points out that difficult approach is not needed. Article 2, Section 1 of the Constitution allows the States to award their electors any way they want.

Article 2, §1 states:

*"[The] President of the United States of America... together with the Vice President... [shall] be elected as follows:"*

*"Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in Congress..."*

So, all that is needed is for states with a total of at least 270 electors to agree to award all of their electoral votes to the Presidential candidate who wins the popular vote. If they do that, then automatically the winner of the popular vote gets the 270 electoral votes he or she needs to become President.



Image 108. Time to End the Electoral College. New York Times Editorial Board, December 19, 2016

Already, 10 States and the District of Columbia have passed laws to do exactly this. Awarding all their electoral votes to the candidate who wins the popular vote; as soon as the 270 elector goal is met that candidate wins. Together these 10 States and D.C. total 165 electoral votes. So, all we need now it some additional states with 105 electors to pass the same law, agreeing to award all their electoral votes to the winner of the popular vote. And it's done! We'll never again elect a President who loses the popular vote.

## Policy: National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

The [National Popular Vote Interstate Compact](#) was established in February 2006. As of December 2017, the 11 signatory bodies who have enacted it into law are: California; District of Columbia; Hawaii; Illinois; Maryland; Massachusetts; New Jersey; New York; Rhode Island; Vermont; and Washington.

There are another 10 states, with a total of an additional 139 electoral votes, where the law is pending in legislative sessions: Alaska; Florida; Georgia; Kansas; Minnesota; North Carolina; Ohio; Pennsylvania; South Carolina; and Virginia.

[The Washington Post](#) reported the results of a poll in 2007 that support for direct popular vote in future presidential elections showed that the idea is very popular among all political party identities: (%support/%oppose)

Democrats (78%/16%)  
 Republicans (60%/35%)  
 Independents (73%/23%)

The National Popular Vote (NPV) effort is supported by the nonpartisan nonprofit initiative [Make Every Vote Count](#) (MEVC).

## Problem: Republican Election Fraud

### Limiting Choices

Republicans primarily represent a very small group of moneyed interests, as demonstrated not only by the overall legislative influence study, regardless of party, noted earlier in the section *"Whose Interests Get Attention?"* on page 88, with these being large corporations and wealthy elites; but seen as well in blazing neon lights with the recent one-sided Republican tax scam legislation they had to quickly rush through before anyone could examine the implications of the details, with no public input, no hearings and no analysis. Not even time to read the final bill, with all its last minute deal-making scribbles, before voting on it. It was a demonstration of pure party politics on behalf of their Tweeds. Their entire emphasis is focused on benefiting the "1%"; tossing insignificant bones to the rest of America accompanied with a fraudulent sales pitch about "what an incredible deal it is for everyone." They count on a strategy of *sustainable ignorance* to get people to buy it, because they know that works.

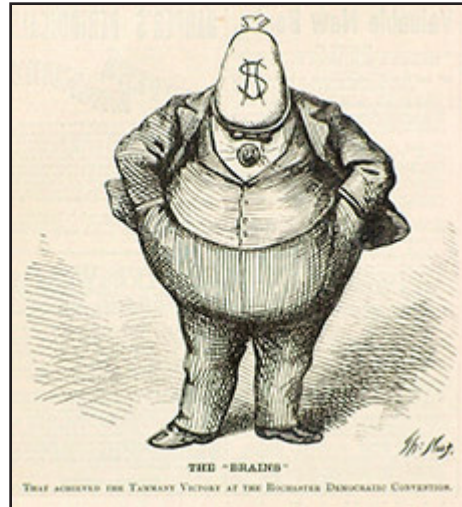


Image 109. The "Boss Tweed" effect: Single-minded focus benefiting the 1%.

If the 1% were their only voting base, however, it is not possible for them to get anywhere near enough votes to seize and hold political power on behalf of the 1% by merely winning fair elections. They don't represent the interests of the 99% ordinary Americans. Yet, they know minimally informed voters tend to vote their identity attachment, not their rational interests.

So, the Tweedism primary election filter is employed up front by big money interests to pick the primary establishment candidates, from whom the nominee will run in the general election; also from whom any of them would be beholden to the Tweeds, regardless of election outcome. With the refreshing exception of Bernie Sanders, virtually all politicians take big private money to fund their election efforts. This Tweedism at the beginning of the process is a strategy of *limiting choices*.

This, of course we know, is already a long-entrenched phenomenon in our election system. In fact, Jeremy Scahill, investigative

reporter for [The Intercept](#) journal, states it as a pithy wakeup call in the recent 2016 film honoring independent journalism in the spirit of truth-exposing muckraker I.F. Stone, [All Governments Lie: Truth, Deception, and the Spirit of I.F. Stone](#). "If we don't get to the heart of the fact that there was long ago a *coup* in this country—a *silent coup*—where corporations took total control of the process of selecting the leaders in this country, then nothing is going to change." To emphasize the stealth nature of this coup, and perhaps tacitly understanding the corporation device as an evil force, which I described in the section *"A Benchmark for "Evil":"* on page 82; Scahill quotes a well known line used in the 1995 movie, *The Usual Suspects*: "The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist."

"All the conspiracy stuff is a total side show; the coup already happened. And the most brilliant part of this is that none of these people seem to realize it."

We have noted earlier, on page 82, that this phenomenon is what Sheldon Wolin identified as "inverted totalitarianism." It "succeeds by encouraging political disengagement rather than mass mobilization, that relies more on 'private' media than on public agencies to disseminate propaganda reinforcing the official version of events... The United States has become the showcase of how democracy can be managed without appearing to be suppressed. Managed democracy is centered on containing electoral politics. Voters are made as predictable as

consumers. It is a political form in which governments are legitimated by elections that they have learned to control." (Page 44 and 47, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*, 2008)

## Padding their Voter Base with Cynical Hypocrisy

Still, even Tweedism doesn't create additional votes to insure the power results they want. Republicans employ a collection of different strategies to pad their voter base to overcome this small number of voters in their 1% class. This includes false promises to the white professional suburban class regarding their economic interests; along with propaganda to convince them their interests are the same as the ultra rich elite. Accomplished, for example, with the enduring myth of "trickle-down" economics, for which economic facts show "tax cuts for corporations and the very rich" has never resulted in economic growth "that pays for itself" because supply of capital is not the limiting constraint when corporations and the 1% are already awash in cash. It's the stagnant, even declining, purchasing power of the poor and middle working classes, which hasn't increased at all since it all started with the Reagan-Thatcher era tax policy 40 years ago.

But more importantly, it involves drawing in single-issue voters from the so-called identity politics groups of "social and religious conservatives" with Republican-stated support for isolated special interests they know are

important to them, if not important to the 1% elites. They bring them aboard, while conning these typically "low information voters" to not only vote against their own economic interests; but to in fact, out of ignorance, memorize, repeat and champion the ideological dogma they feed them as part of their overall identity attachment. They count on exploiting their emotional attachment to the "Republican Party" label; even though this party has long abandoned the ideological roots that their forefathers believed in decades ago. The name-label "Republican" has become their in-group social identity and it is extremely hard for them to wake up to what it has become and whose interests it has come to solely represent over the past 40 years. It certainly doesn't resemble even a hint of Abe Lincoln's vision for America and the Republican Party vision of his time.

Your supporters include not only these groups, Mr President, but also the populist wave of angry Americans who were disillusioned precisely with how they've been getting ripped off by this establishment class of elites. This is initially what the so-called Tea Party revolt represented several years ago, until it also was quickly and underhandedly co-opted by the coin-operated Koch Machine and steered toward the interests of the 1%; to which the "Tea Party" didn't seem to even notice or wake up to. They simply began to incorporate corporate and oligarch dogma into their rabid proclamations. This rising populism of the disaffected also has been duped into projecting their

potential salvation on this "Republican" name-label; and on you personally, Mr President. This is the gullibility the master con exploits; but like the "staunch Republican" identity groups above, much of this populist group is fast waking up and abandoning the Republican Party when they begin to see through the fraud and a better alternative presents itself.

## Subverting Democratic Elections

But yet still, it's not enough to assure majority wins in properly designed and managed fair elections where the whole population of citizens gets to participate *equally*. They simply do not represent the interests of a majority of eligible voters. So, Republicans employ a multitude of tactics to *steal* elections. The ostensive purpose of elections is to take an accurate measure that reflects the free expression of the will of the people. So, they work to sabotage and undermine the election process in every and any way they can.

Ask any war veteran, Mr President, if this is what they risked their life and limb for. To see a Republican assault tear at the very foundational fabric of our representative democracy, as if it's all nothing more than a cynical dirty tricks game where it's open season on the rules, which they think don't apply to them. I'm more of an old fashioned conservative in this regard; I think that everyone who's eligible *should* vote, or at least have an equal opportunity to vote; and that *all* the votes *should* count. I'll tell you where I am; I



Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

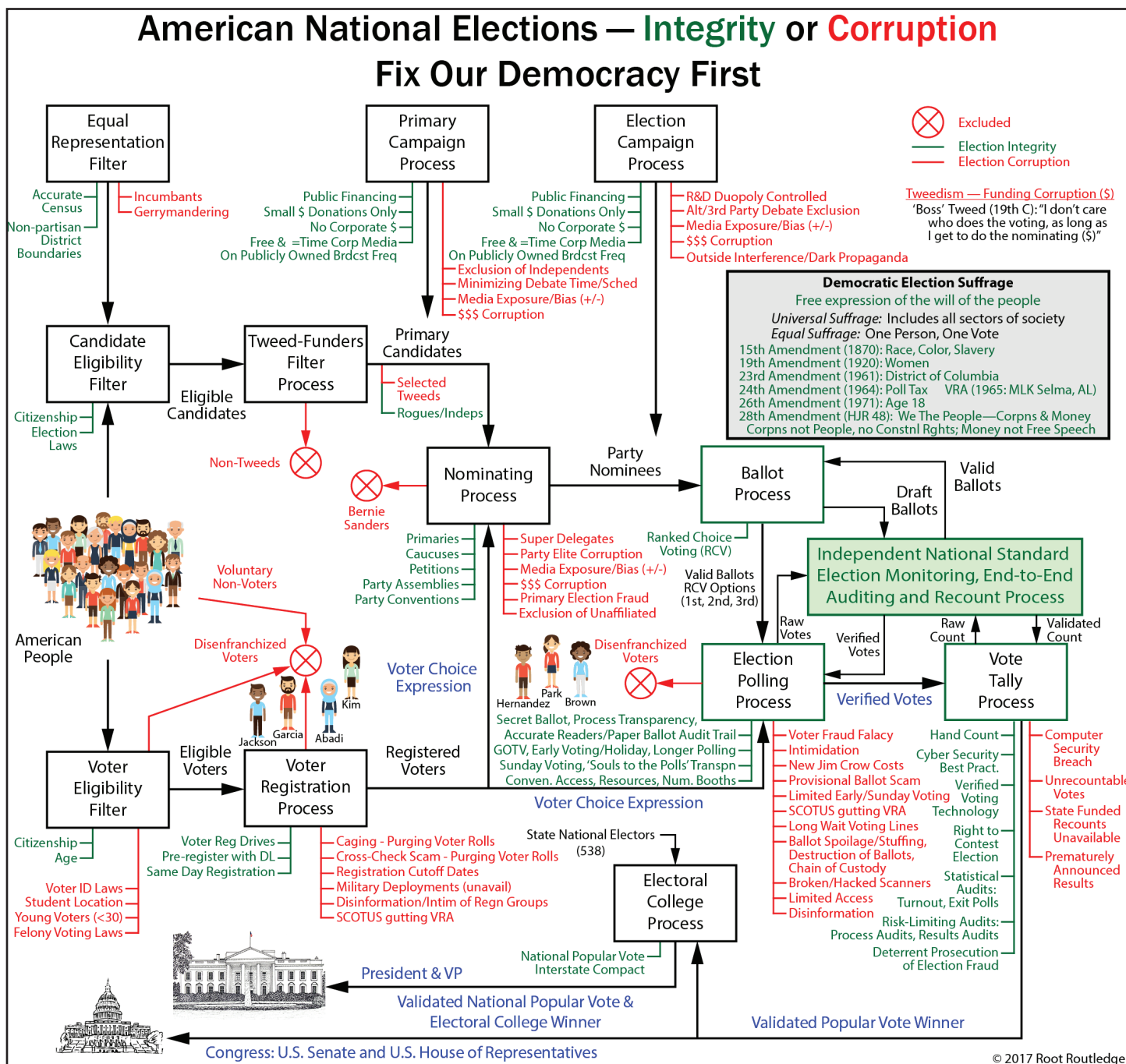


Image 110. Our National Election Process — **What we need; What we have**

view these traitors who undermine the American people's right to a meaningful vote, paid for in blood, with equal representation and have their vote counted, regardless of their demographic and geographic status, as treasonous domestic enemies who are attacking the very essence of our

Constitutional democracy. And that includes anyone who aids and abets them, including you.

In case you haven't yet taken sober account of what I'm about, Mr President; please know that I'm a patriotic American veteran who is tenaciously fighting for a viable future for his country. That's

the reason for this lengthy open letter-essay to you. And that's the reason I'm pressing you on your own lies and fraudulent claims.

Let's examine our national election process itself, and talk about a few aspects in more detail. I'm a systems engineer by profession, so I've laid out our National Elec-

tion Process as a system flow diagram in “Image 110. Our National Election Process – What we need; What we have” on page 97. Before we examine a few aspects in detail, it’s worth taking a few minutes to read through this chart, starting on the left with “American People”. The up arrow leads one through the political candidate selection process. The down arrow leads through the voter process. They meet and interact in the phases where “**Voter Choice Expression**” becomes engaged. Each process phase is shown by a labeled box, with the inputs and outputs identified as the labeled arrows going into and out of each box. Further, each process phase has attributes, color identified as either **Election Integrity** or **Election Corruption**. A red circle with an X in it represents people who get “Excluded” from the process. Thus, one can get an overview, along with a lot of detail, of our election process. It shows what’s working or could be working; and what’s not. Now lets look at why many aspects of our election process are not working and some of the treasonous Republican claims designed to limit choices and exclude segments of our population from their right to vote.

For clarity and precision, lest readers reject this claim as “over the top”, let’s recall the generic dictionary definition I’m pointedly using and referring to, on page 41, when I employ the word “treason”. *Treason* by dictionary definition is in fact, “the betrayal of trust; the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender holds allegiance.”

This includes intentional conduct by officials that undermines the government, sabotage its proper functioning, or undermines its core institution of trust — meaning a properly functioning democracy.

## Purging Voter Rolls

The first and most egregious is the purging of likely Democratic leaning voters from the voter rolls. This would of course include students, minorities, the elderly, the economically disadvantaged and poor, and geographically marginalized Americans, including those living in urban lower class areas and rural areas. This purging has happened historically with two key tactics, each employing lists of registered voters and comparing those with lists of supposed “ineligible” voters: Felons or ex-felons, in states where that status results in the permanent loss of Constitutional voting rights; and Cross-Check Lists, the infamous method used to identify supposed “Voter Fraud”, manifesting as “double voters”, or “improperly registered” voters, or perpetrators of “identity theft”, or “undocumented aliens”, “zombies” or by some other claimed nefarious means. We’ll look at each of these in more depth below.

But this is the appropriate place to introduce another one of our *Healthy Democracy* leaders, investigative journalist Greg Palast. Palast has made it his mission to ferret out, identify, investigate and expose the criminal “ballot bandits and vote thieves” and their moneyed backers. There are so many ways this happens, of



Image 111. Greg Palast Logo: Old fashioned gum-shoe investigative journalist.

course, which are all identified in the above chart. In fact, it is mostly from the work of the four *Healthy Democracy* leaders, I’ve identified as “*Leadership: Larry Lessig, Ari Berman, Greg Palast, David Cobb*” on page 85, that I’ve endeavored to make sure the National Election Process chart covers most of everything.

Palast has written many books and produced many films, but in particular his most relevant effort in this regard is his recent film and associated book, titled: [The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: A Tail of Billionaires & Ballot Bandits](#) (2016), a pre-release of which I’ve shared on my Facebook page (above link); and it’s 2017 post-election release, [The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: The Case of the Stolen Election](#), the update of which, along with all the previous content, specifically refers to the election fraud of your campaign and election, Mr President. But hey, look, you’re already president, so if I’ve convinced you and your supporters that this is such a crucial issue, please just set your ego aside for 2 hours while you watch this film and see how your Republican Party and its henchmen are destroying the foundational integrity of representative democracy. Serious stuff, Mr President. As a

patriotic veteran, it fucking pisses me off, big time! But Palast’s film is really quite enlightening, as well as frightening, if you value the foundational essence of our country. Let me summarize a few points, paraphrasing from Palast’s film narrative, because this goes all the way back to the stolen election by Bush II with the help of his brother, former Governor of Florida; and here’s how.

### Felony Voting Laws and Purge Lists

In some states, in particular Florida, Iowa and Virginia, felons and ex-felons permanently lose their right to vote, *ever again*, regardless of the dues they’ve paid back to society and any desire they might have to reintegrate with society as full citizens. In other states, including Maine and Vermont, felons never lose their right to vote, even while they are incarcerated, which one might argue is a way of keeping them engaged with some sense of social responsibility. Nineteen states require not only that incarceration/parole if any be completed, but also that any probation sentence (which is often an alternative to incarceration) is complete; the states of Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Nebraska require completion of probation plus 2 years.

But the point here is not whether or not felons or ex-felons should retain their right to vote; it’s the Republican exploitation of supposed felon lists to fraudulently remove non-felons from the voting rolls. Let’s look at the 2000

election where this fraud took place. First was the distracting cover story of the claimed win and the denied full recount in an election with an infinitesimally small raw count margin of victory.

**Bush II “Wins” the 2000 Election in Florida:** In the 2000 election, as you may know, Mr President, Bush II won the raw count by a mere 537 votes out of almost 6 million votes cast (5,825,043); that is, by only 0.009%, or 1 out of 11,000 votes cast. But before the results could be validated by a proper recount, the Florida Secretary of State prematurely announced that Bush II was the winner.

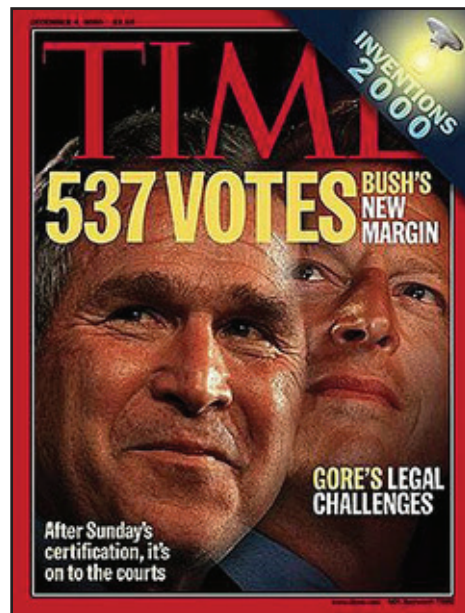


Image 112. Time Magazine Cover December 4, 2000.

That claim became the presumed “truth” as perceived by a population of lay people, which was reiterated and reinforced when the statement was broadcast widely by the media. It also imposed the “burden of dis-proof” on the Democratic Party; that is, to come

up with *substantial* evidence to the contrary in order to “disprove” the rhetorical assertion. More on this logical fallacy later. But it was kind of like pre-declaring that “Bush is presumed to be not guilty” of just grabbing the election for himself, “I win the 2000 election;” even though they just simply did that.



Image 113. Florida Secretary of State declares Bush winner of 2000 election. St Petersburg Times, November 17, 2000. These newspaper images are part of a special review of the 2000 election by the Tampa Bay Time, November 5, 2015, “[Perspective: Recounting the 2000 Recount](#)”.

So, if you think he’s “guilty”, you have to prove it. How did they ever turn an extremely close election crying out for an accurate recount, into the presumption that the Republican candidate won it? Even these recount efforts were challenged and undermined by Republican Party hacks who ha-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

rassed and intimidated the staff doing the recounting.

### Felony Purge List Fraud:

The cover narrative of a Bush II win in Florida helped bury the real truth of election fraud. Here’s how Palast describes what happened in 2000. It involved a secret list of 94,000 voters tagged for elimination from the voting rolls. The Florida governor’s office, un-

der the brother of Bush II as governor, created a false list of supposed felons, who by law were not eligible to vote. The Republican operatives then made a sloppy comparison of that list with a list of voters, most of whom were Black people, and proceeded to disenfranchise thousands of legitimate registered voters who were not felons. Palast writes: “In November of 2000, the U.S. media, lost in patriotic reverie, dressed

up the Florida recount as a victory for President Bush. But however one reads the ballots, Bush’s win would certainly have been jeopardized had not some Floridians been barred from casting ballots at all. Between May 1999 and Election Day 2000, two Florida secretaries of state, both protégées of the brother Governor, ordered 57,700 “ex-felons,” who are prohibited from voting by state law, to be removed from voter rolls.

1	Source Method	Voter Full Name	Voter DOB	Voter Race	Felon State	Felon Full Name	Felon DOB	Convicted	Felon Race
346	DOE NAM	SMITH , JC	5/25/1978	M BLA	FL	SMITH , JC	5/25/1978	M 8/12/1997	BLA
347	DOE SSB	NETTLES , MARY ANN	11/14/1959	F BLA	FL	DOE , JANE	11/14/1959	F 7/11/1996	WHI
348	DOE NAM	STEWART , ROBERT N	8/19/1948	M WHI	FL	STEWART , ROBERT NORMAN	8/19/1948	M 2/5/1987	WHI
349	DOE NAM	SEWELL , IMOGENE	8/14/1951	F BLA	FL	SEWELL , IMOGENE BREWTON	8/14/1951	F 7/18/1988	BLA
350	DOE NAM	WOODBERRY , MARIE	4/8/1908	F BLA	FL	WOODBERRY , MARIE	4/8/1908	F	BLA
351	DBT NAM	REEDER , WILLIAM T	9/10/1927	M WHI	SC	REEDER , WILLIAM THOMAS	9/10/1927	M	WHI
352	DOE NAM	FAULK , JOSEPH CURTIS	9/29/1930	M WHI	FL	FAULK , JOSEPH CURTIS	9/29/1930	M	WHI
353	DOE SDL	HIGGINBOTHAM , RANDALL J	8/28/1960	M WHI	FL	HIGGINBOTHAM , SEAN DAVID	6/16/1971	M 12/22/1994	WHI
354	DBT NAM	JACKSON JR, JOHNNY 4	8/8/1969	M BLA	TX	JACKSON , JOHN FITZGERALD	8/8/1969	M	BLA
355	DOE NSD	WOODS , LAWRENCE LAMAR	3/31/1949	M WHI	FL	WOODS , CLARENCE L	3/31/1949	M 2/3/1992	WHI
356	DOE NAM	ROBERTS , DUSTY EDWARD	11/21/1954	M WHI	FL	ROBERTS , DUSTY EDWARD	11/21/1954	M 10/12/1987	WHI
357	DBT NAM 1	BUTLER JR, DAVID RUSSELL	9/17/1959	M WHI	IL	BUTLER , DAVID	9/17/1959		
358	DBT NAM	DIXON JR, WILLIE G 3	10/3/1931	M BLA	FL	DIXON , WILLIAM G	10/3/1931	M 11/20/1981	WHI
359	DOE NAM	THOMPSON , DOYLE TRAVIS	3/23/1962	M WHI	FL	THOMPSON , DOYLE TRAVIS	3/23/1962	M 8/8/1983	WHI
360	DOE NAM	ALDRIDGE , LOYAL EDDIE	4/26/1953	M BLA	FL	ALDRIDGE , LOYAL EDDIE	4/26/1953	M 7/18/1988	BLA
361	DBT NAM 2	COOPER , THOMAS ALVIN	9/5/1973	M WHI	OH	COOPER , THOMAS	9/5/1973	M 1/30/2007	BLA
362	DOE NAM	RAMOS , MIGUEL ANGEL	12/19/1956	M WHI	FL	RAMOS , MIGUEL	12/19/1956	M 5/30/1997	WHI
363	DOE NAM	HALL , ARTHUR LEE	6/3/1943	M BLA	FL	HALL , ARTHUR LEE	6/3/1943	M 5/7/1970	BLA
364	DOE NAM	BARNES , SHANDA L	12/26/1973	F BLA	FL	BARNES , SHANDA LATAIN	12/26/1973	F 6/3/1997	BLA
365	DOE NAM	MCDONALD , WALLACE 5	2/11/1937	M BLA	FL	MCDONALD , WALLACE	2/11/1937	M 6/12/1959	BLA
366	DOE NAM	MARTIN , MARY A	2/17/1971	F WHI	FL	MARTIN , MARY A	2/17/1971	F 11/2/1993	WHI
367	DOE NAM	WILLIAMS JR, FRANK DEE	5/13/1975	M BLA	FL	WILLIAMS , FRANK DEE	5/13/1975	M 7/26/1999	BLA
368	DBT NAM	RODRIGUEZ , MICHAEL A	6/23/1976	M UNK	NJ	RODRIGUEZ , MICHAEL	6/23/1976	M 6/29/1998	

Image 114. Palast spreadsheet: The Great Florida Ex-Con Game: How the ‘felon’ voter-purge was itself felonious, by Greg Palast in Harper’s Magazine Friday, 1 March, 2002. Together with the “scrub lists”, as they call them, comprised nearly 1 percent of Florida’s electorate and nearly 3 percent of its African-American voters.

[Palast dug the list up and published it in Harper's Magazine, March 1, 2002.](#)

"Most of the voters were selected because their name, gender, birth date and race matched - or nearly matched - one of the tens of millions of ex-felons in the United States. There was a hand-written note on the State's list, 'Don't need to verify'."

Palast identifies examples with circled numbers in the spreadsheet (Image 114 on page 100) and describes some of the various problems. "David Butler (1) is a name that appears 77 times in Florida phone books. Thomas Alvin Cooper (2), twenty-eight, was flagged because of a crime for which he will be convicted in the [future] year 2007. According to Florida's elections division, this intrepid time-traveler will cover his tracks by moving to Ohio, adding a middle name, and changing his race. In fact, the list of felons itself was so fraudulent that some showed conviction dates well into the future, with years like 2020, 2024 and 2071. Thousands on the list showed no conviction date."

"Rev. Willie Dixon (3), seventy, was guilty of a crime in his youth; but one phone call would have told the state that it had already pardoned Dixon and restored his right to vote. Upon suing the State of Florida and its Secretary of State, the NAACP found that African-Americans, who account for 13 percent of Florida's electorate and 46 percent of U.S. felony convictions, were four times as likely as whites to be incorrectly singled out under the state's methodology."

Palast continues, "Johnny Jackson Jr. (4), thirty-two, has never been to Texas, and his mother swears he never had the middle name 'Fitzgerald.' Neither is there evidence that John Fitzgerald Jackson, felon of Texas, has ever left the Lone Star State. But even if they were the same man, removing him from Florida's voter rolls is an unconstitutional act. Texas is among the thirty five states where ex-felons are permitted to vote, and the 'full faith and credit' clause of the U.S. Constitution forbids states to revoke any civil rights that a citizen has been granted by another state; in fact, the Florida Supreme Court had twice ordered the state not to do so, just nine months before the voter purge. Nevertheless, at least 2,873 voters were wrongly removed."

"Wallace McDonald (5), sixty-four, lost his right to vote in 2000, though his sole run-in with the law was a misdemeanor in 1959. (He fell asleep on a bus-stop bench.) Of the 'matches' on these lists, the civil-rights commission estimated that at least 14 percent - or 8,000 voters, nearly 15 times Bush's official margin of victory - were false. When warned by the company the State contracted with to build the purge list that 'a significant number of people who were not a felon would be included on the list', they were told they 'wanted there to be more names than were actually verified'."

It is so important to illustrate some specific details of these list frauds, because by the time anyone can recognize and complain about it, of course, the election is

over and the damage done is permanent. In this case the ultimate damage includes an invasion of a sovereign country that had nothing to do with the 9-11 attack, Iraq, based on weapons of mass destruction hysteria driven by circular lies in a media-administration amplifying feedback loop; and the subsequent genesis of the ISIS terror group as a result of the invasion and the bungling of its management aftermath. Does anyone recall the period before that invasion, when we were only dealing with one dictator thug who was the head of Iraq? My god; the ramifications of Republican election fraud are unfathomable! Until, that is, we actually witness the horror of the ultimate results. And then chalk it up to something else, call it all "policy differences" and in a state of amnesia move on to the next Republican election fraud.

So many names didn't match up, Palast found as he dug deeper and deeper into this Republican election fraud; which he has done for subsequent elections as well, which we'll get to below. Other examples include a voter named Jonathan L Barber, a Black man with DOB 2/5/1966, who was matched from the list of felons with Vincent Barbieri, a white man with DOB 5/3/1962; and thus Barber lost his vote. Palast found thousands of mismatched birth dates and names. In fact, it turns out that the number of real criminals on the Florida governor's list was actual *zero*; none were actual felons! The entire list was a fraud.

Even so, voters that were purged

just didn't match up with the supposed "felons" claimed to be the same person. But most of those who lost their votes because of this list were Black—thus, more likely to vote Democrat. This is a criminal travesty for representative democracy and our country. They included veterans, like Willie Steen who served in the Gulf War, purged because he was matched up with supposed felon Willie O'Steen. Is this what we fought for, veterans?

Yet, in the year 2000, Republican Bush II won by only 537 votes. The situation screamed the potential for fraud and a full recount. But vote counts went unvalidated due to the intervention of the United States Supreme Court on behalf of the Republicans and Bushes, shutting the recount down, claim-

ing the recount was unfair. This is in violation of the 10th Amendment of the Constitution, since it was a State of Florida issue, with the recount ordered by the Florida State Supreme Court. SCOTUS had no business doing that. I guess Republicans are only about "states rights" when it serves their racist purposes. In any event, how can an accurate hand recount be "unfair". What's unfair is Republican election fraud.

Again; all the Republicans have to do is force a fraud through and be done with it. They seem never to be held accountable during or after the act of fraud. Valid elections need to incorporate the right to challenge the election; and people who perpetrate election fraud need to be prosecuted as a deterrence; regardless of their formal or informal position in the political power structure.

This tactic of purging legitimate eligible voters from the voter rolls has become a cancer on our representative democracy, Mr President. Think about it; this entire fraud in the 2000 election operated under the absurd presumption that tens of thousands of convicted ex-felons would even consider trying to put in each their single vote, thereby risking going back to prison. It's patently absurd.

Watch the Palast movie to see how he obtained the lists, which the State of Florida would not release. And also so many subsequent Republican attempts to purge voters with bogus purge lists, which Palast uncovered. The Palast team includes dozens of expert investigators, licensed detectives, combat-trained cinema-

tographers and researchers from around the world. It's a very painless, entertaining way for anyone to get "un-stupid", Mr President, about the kidnapping of American democracy. It's a crime story; the perpetrators of which are a pack of Republican political operatives and the billionaires in the shadows behind them. You, and every one of your supporters, owe it to America to watch this film.

## Subsequent Election Fraud

In 2004, the White House was stolen again with a close race in the swing state of Ohio. Using a caging list tactic, Republican operatives prevented more than 350,000 voters from casting their ballots. The margin of victory that year for Bush II was 118,775 votes, less than half the number purged.

## Caging

Robert F. Kennedy Jr, a voting rights attorney, describes caging as an illegal felony tactic with severe penalties, yet is still used by Republicans, whereby they can target entire cohorts of voters likely to vote Democrat and exclude them from the voting lists. Of course, they target Blacks and other minorities. They will get addresses of Black voters in a particular state, as an example of one caging tactic, and mail certified letters to each of those homes. If the voter is not there at the time of delivery to accept and sign for delivery, the Post Office will automatically send that letter back to the sender—in this particular



Image 115. St Petersburg Times, December 13, 2000. Republican Supreme Court facilitates the 2000 election theft.

case, the RNC. If the letter comes back, the RNC uses that letter as presumptive evidence that the voter gave a false address on his voting form and is therefore ineligible to vote. If you were deployed to Iraq, and therefore not at your home address; you lost your vote. These are what are known as *false positives*, which I'll discuss below.

There are multiple other caging tactics employed by Republicans to purge large numbers of voters based on demographics and economic conditions associated with Democratic Party preference in their voting behavior; minorities, low income, and poor. This includes Republicans challenging voters under foreclosure of subprime home loans due to job loss from a plant closure, courtesy of two of their vulture billionaires; on the grounds that their addresses are no longer valid. A triple whammy; lose your job, then your home, and lose your right to vote to boot. How much lower can this Republican Party go? There seems to be no limit with this morally bankrupt organization.

## Blocking Valid Votes from Being Counted

Again, Republicans use a multitude of dirty tricks to prevent even valid votes from being counted. This includes many reasons for claiming "vote spoilage". In fact, Palast found that over two million ballots (2,706,275), were cast but not counted due to "spoilage"; meaning something was not exactly right on the ballot. Whose votes get thrown in the spoilage dumpster? The U.S. Civil Rights

Commission found that you have a 900% higher chance of losing your vote if you're Black than if you're white. Now why is that?

In some states up to 45% get provisional ballots. But they rarely get counted; and if your name is not on the rolls they throw it out. They are commonly known as "feel good" placebo votes; you think you "get to vote", but your vote doesn't get counted.

Again in swing-state Ohio elections, and many other places around the country, an overwhelming majority of Black people typically vote on the Sunday before election day, with a "Souls to the Polls" volunteer transporta-



Image 116. "Getting 'Souls to the Polls' in Florida" Urban Faith online magazine - by Urban Faith Staff. WALKING BY FAITH TO THE POLLS: Dozens of marchers from various churches leave the New Hope Baptist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Sunday Oct. 28, 2012, en route to the African American Cultural Library to vote. "People have died so I could do this," said James Gadsen, 74, a deacon at New Hope Baptist Church, "Too many people have given up too much for me not to go vote." "We do not make an endorsement, but we urge people to consider a candidate who would do what Jesus would require," said the Rev. Nathaniel Robinson, pastor of Greater St. Paul AME Church, who led his parishioners to the polls in Delray Beach. The march reflected the tradition of many black voters casting their ballots after church on the Sunday before Election Day. This year, however, the eight-day period set aside for early voting — cut from 14 days in the last presidential election — does not include the Sunday before Nov. 6. Early voting ends Saturday. Republican Gov. Rick Scott and the Republican-controlled Florida Legislature scaled back on early voting for 2012 to suppress the minority vote.



Image 117. Early voting is required by U.S. law.

tion network to get people to the polls right after attending Sunday church services. Or they just gather all together and walk to the polls; it's an African American community event. Early voting is required by U.S. law, but Ohio's Republican Secretary of State resisted it.

When a large group of "Souls to the Polls" folks arrived, they did not even get ballots; being told there were no more. So, instead they were all herded right there at the legal polling place into a side room where they got a number to wait for applications for absentee ballots. They would get to mail in their ballots. Over one million absentee ballots were rejected and never counted. They treat the absentee like a second class provisional ballot. None of

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

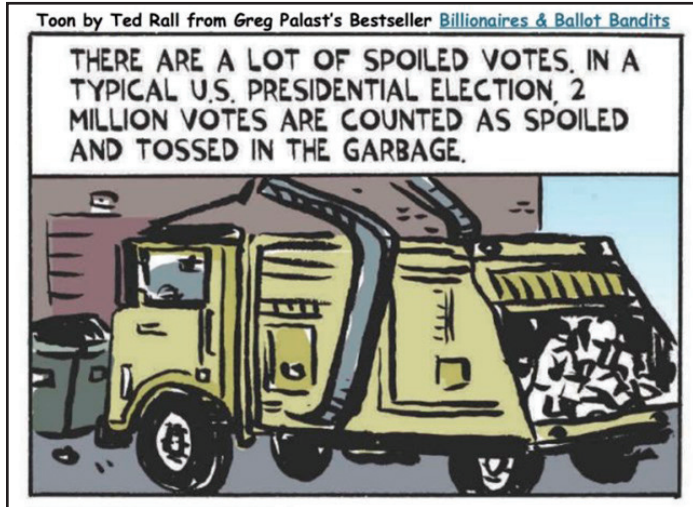


Image 118. “Placebo Ballots: Stealing California from Bernie Using an old GOP vote-snatching trick.” *Dusultory Heroics*, June 7, 2016, by Greg Palast with Dennis Bernstein. “If you’re registered as an independent voter in California, you have the right to vote in the Democratic Presidential Primary. Just ask for the ballot. Alert! Some California poll workers have been told to give “provisional” ballots, as opposed to regular ballots, to all independent (“No Party Preference” or NPP) voters in Tuesday’s Democratic Party Primary. Do NOT accept a provisional ballot. As one poll worker told me, “They simply don’t get counted. I’m not promoting Bernie, I’m promoting democracy.”

So one way to steal the election is to make sure those independent voters’ ballots end up in the garbage, uncounted. You can bet that the GOP will be shunting voters to these placebo provisional ballots in November. In the last presidential election, over two MILLION voters, overwhelmingly voters of color, were shifted to these rarely-counted ballots. That’s how they steal elections. “Provisional” ballots were created by George Bush and Karl Rove as part of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) after they swiped Florida in 2000. The Black Caucus won the right to a provisional ballot, but didn’t win the right to have them counted. They rarely are. Let’s make sure your vote counts.”

that is supposed to be done in regular early voting; but the Republican Secretary of State of Ohio did it anyway. A judge who was asked about the situation said it was absolutely uncommon and he suspects it was an overt effort to defraud Black people of their vote.

A technical gotcha that is used selectively, i.e. against Black voters, is the potential confusion around a box for “party-line”

votes; i.e. “check box for Democratic ticket vote.” But then, should I also be safe and select the individual candidate name as well? Not sure; because it’s not clear? Is it a potential sucker ploy? Vote for “Democratic Party” and also vote for the Democratic candidate, your vote can be tossed in the “spoilage” bin, not counted, because they can decide later, arbitrarily, that you “over-voted”—that is, you “voted twice”—on the same ballot! This is nothing less than the Republican dirty trick machine to steal votes.

Palast saw the “over-vote” spoilage trick eliminate 700 Democratic votes in Gadsden County, Florida in 2000. (That’s more than the 537 votes that supposedly elected Bush II.) And he saw it again in November 2016 in Detroit, Michigan, where 70,355 ballots were not counted (in part, because of the same over-vote trick, which could have easily been correctly understood with a hand recount). Throwing out those 70 thousand Detroit ballots gave the

Republican candidate a supposed 10,700 margin to win Michigan.

### Limiting Polling Locations and Voting Booths — Differential Allocation of Voting Resources



Image 119. Long voting lines due to insufficient voting resources.

Another Republican tactic is to restrict polling locations and voting resources. This causes extremely long lines and long waits for some, thus discouraging those from voting, especially working people who can’t take time off from work. This happens in heavily Democratic leaning areas.



Image 120. Long voting lines in Los Angeles due to insufficient voting locations and resources.

Voting resource allocation is often differential, with restricted resources especially in minority and



Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*



Image 121. For Black voters, mostly long lines and long waits due to limited polling locations and voting resources.

low-income areas. But they ensure there are ample resources in suburban white areas. And it makes it easy for others, especially in Republican leaning suburban areas.



Image 122. White suburban voting with ample locations and early voting resources.

Outside the city in the Repub-



Image 123. Massively long voting lines outside polling location. Miami, Florida, had the longest waits in the country.

lican leaning suburbs, where white people vote, there typically are no lines.

Back in Ohio, the Secretary of State shut down almost every big city polling station. In Dayton, there was one voting place for over 80,000 voters. A half million people encountered this situation.

This is nothing less than an all out institutional racist war on American voters.

### Republican Election Theft: Our Own Banana Republic

So, Mr President, we know that the only strategy Republicans have to obtain enough votes to win, after their hardcore supporters get them close enough to steal elections, is to exploit every scheme they can to limit the flow of Democratic votes onto official ballots and into the official vote tally process.

Are we nothing more than a Republican banana republic, Mr President? Are you a Banana Republican? I mean, just re-

cently your administration immediately congratulated the losing authoritarian oligarch incumbent candidate in Honduras, right after he simply stole the election; a guy who is a legacy from the Clinton-supported coup years earlier. One of the poorest nations in the Americas, Honduras has been blighted by years of gang violence, giving it one of the world's highest murder rates. The turnout for the vote appeared to be heavy across the country, with relatively minor irregularities reported.



Image 124. Thousands of Salvador Nasralla's supporters are shown holding a demonstration in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on December 3, 2017.

However, after polls showing the people-supported populist candidate, Salvador Nasralla, was ahead of the U.S. backed oligarch by 5 percentage points, the unpopular dictator stopped the counting, closed all access for three weeks, kept everything in secret, and then declared himself the winner. No recount; no re-doing the election, no outside observation, no oversight; just another pure and simple U.S. supported election theft in Latin America. Your administration behaved just like the immediate Clinton support for the Honduras coup several years ago that put these brutal regime oligarchs in control in the

first place. Again, against the popular will for the democratically elected president, Manuel Zelaya, who was ousted in a U.S. backed 2009 coup. There's no difference between you and Clinton in this regard, is there, Mr President. Not good for our international integrity and reputation as "the great defender of democracy around the globe," eh Mr President?

I've commented on several of the election theft tactics above that were brought forward in the Palast film; these and more are identified in the *National Election Process* chart on page 97. Look for the points in the process where Republican operatives can intervene and fraudulently restrict the flow of valid votes. We need election quality controls with audit and recount validations at all points in the process where the potential for election fraud is high.

## The Myth of Voter Fraud

We now expose this myth and hysteria about so-called "voter fraud". Through which, by the exploitation of their self-generated fear, they intend to outright steal the voting rights of millions of voters to participate in our representative democracy and have their participation count through their voting activities. It's absolutely galling.

But how does this happen? How do they get away with it? I mean, who in their right mind would vote twice, or try to vote as non-citizens, and risk 5 years in prison if they got caught? Well, according to Republicans, that

would include the absurdity of so-called "illegal aliens" intentionally risking exposure and deportation, whom they claim would be rushing to the polls by the tens of thousands in some sort of mass conspiracy to "undermine our elections" by voting fraudulently.

The motivation premise of voter fraud doesn't pass the smell test even at the start. It's a make-believe problem, formed by Republican operatives out of whole cloth, in order to filter out millions of these supposed fraudsters in a way that is blatantly focused on likely Democratic leaning voters. They do it with a compliant media to amp up fear among the masses that there is a conspiracy among Democratic leaning voters to corrupt our elections. So all Republicans cheer whenever it gets reported that these scoundrels are about to purge and block the votes of massive segments of our society; unless, of course, they just go ahead and do it in secret, which they do.



Image 125. The motivation premise doesn't pass the smell test.

Even you, Mr President, put this bullshit out as your "opinion"; which is all it takes for that to become the presumed truth among the uninformed masses. You have said in your campaign: "You have people, that in my opinion are voting many, many times. We may have people vote 10 times." And, "You're talking about probably over a million people that voted twice in [the 2012] presidential election;" citing a statement by the Interstate Crosscheck Program as "the first concrete evidence we've ever had of massive voter fraud."

Opinions are not facts, Mr President, even if you claim they are. And later you asserted that 3 million votes were fraudulently cast by undocumented aliens and other "cheaters", which is the reason you claim is why you lost the popular vote. "In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally." More of your disgraceful bullshit, Mr President, in order to con and scam the American people. You don't seem to be aware of how thin that is wearing.

## How it Starts and Propagates

But why the lies? It begins with the demands of a few billionaire oligarchs, fearful of *real* democracy taking away their power and control, who provide the intellectual cover and money to implement it through various networks of think tanks and dark funding organizations. Who's got the millions of dollars to promote this

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

voter vanishing game? Watch the Palast film to find out; he doggedly lays out the trail of money and billionaire influence right to their doorsteps and elite dinner parties.



Image 126. The Palast film is a must watch!

So it starts with people like the Kochs and their minions yelling “voter fraud!” The media eats it

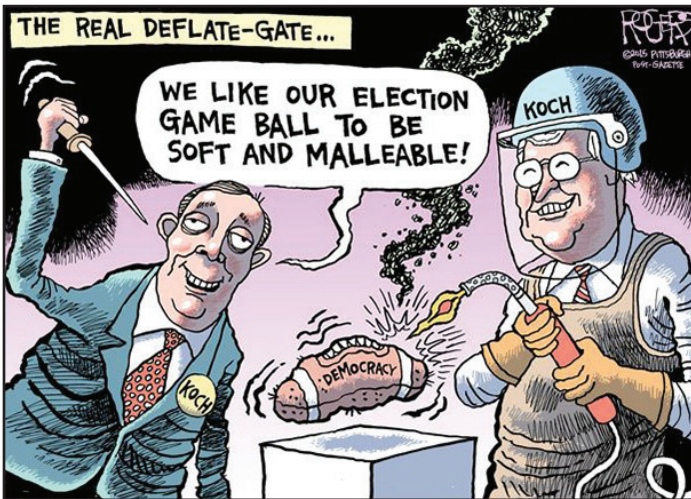


Image 127. The Koch Billionaires are behind the voter fraud myth and the attack on the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

up. Palast has video clips of false scare-tactic headlines, like: Fox News in 2014, “35,000 people voted in North Carolina and in some other state. There are over a million people that voted twice in this election. It’s the first concrete evidence of massive voter fraud.” And this, “The fact that voter fraud could be happening is an enormous threat to our Constitution and we must uncover it.”

Of course, the fact that the sky “could be falling” might also be “an enormous threat to our Constitution.” Hey, just make up the threats of a scary man “wizard” behind the current; and use it to frighten people into believing and doing anything you want them to. To the Republican mindset, apparently it doesn’t make any difference if you begin with

an absurd hypothetical premise, staking it out as some sort of fearful “truth”. It’s the premise that needs to be attacked; less than the “therefore we should purge all these voters,” which of course is a fraudulent response itself.

And the farce goes on, “There are 12 million aliens in the U.S. who could vote without proper ID.” And more scary sensational headlines like this, “Georgia Secretary of State is investigating allegations of voter fraud; mass voter fraud.” And this by the Kansas Secretary of State and currently on the farcical “Presidential Election Integrity Commission”, who is the originator and promoter of the fraudulent “Interstate Crosscheck List”



Image 128. The Republican voter fraud farce.

scheme: “In 2010 there were approximately 50 Somalians stealing my vote. But we [Kansas] are number one when it comes to guns and protecting elections. Take double voting; it’s a slam dunk to prove that. A guy’s voted in Kansas and he’s voted in Colorado. It’s a state crime and also a Federal crime.”

You see? Is he not surely the real traitor; the Republican criminal committing treason against the core of our representative democracy — people’s right to vote? Or is he that “true Republican patriot” who is just trying to “protect our elections?” Which ever he is; either way, millions of people are being disenfranchised from their right to vote and have a say about their country, and Republicans are stealing elections because of this rampant Republican voter fraud scheme.

They simply assert the allegation as a pretext and watch it dominate the news propaganda cycle, in an attempt to justify their purging with mass hysteria. So, why is it so hard to find these criminal “double-vote” perpe-

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

trators and prosecute them? It's because they don't really exist; and any evidence from these so-called cross-check lists would be dubious at best, once one found and spoke to the persons identified. That's not the reason for this entire scam. They don't want to find *real* matches; because that isn't their intent. Their intent is to create the appearance of a valid excuse in order to remove minorities from the voter rolls and thereby steal elections; not prosecute voter fraud.

"James Evan Johnson" in Virginia to prove that he is not "James P Johnson" in Kansas? Where's the presumption of guilt here? "Hey buddy, we gave you a chance to *prove* you're a valid voter; but you blew it. You didn't return the fucking card; so, the presumption is, buddy, that beyond a reasonable doubt you're a lying, cheating double-voting scoundrel; and although we're not going to check into it further and prosecute you, the Republican Party is definitely going to remove you from the voter rolls... but we won't tell you we just stole your voting rights."

about so-called voter fraud].“ The depths to which the Republican Party can sink into the cesspool of fraud is why it's so important to teach our children how to become critical thinkers; and certainly to be skeptical of anything that comes out under the name “Republican”.

They claim their are millions of dead voters, felon voters, ghost voters, alien voters. It's all lies. But, as an example to “prove their point,” one news channel obsequiously reported they even found the name “Adolph Hitler” on a vote card. Well, there you have it; the smoking gun!



Image 129. So, why is it so hard to find these criminal “double-vote” perpetrators and prosecute them? It's because they don't really exist. That's not the point of the hunt.

The tactic of Kansas is to send a card to the name and address; if the card is not returned, they presume that as enough evidence, not to prosecute but to wipe out their voting rights by removing them from the voter rolls. What's the point of sending an innocuous card, that doesn't claim anything serious like suspected voting fraud and looks like junk mail likely to be immediately tossed (meaning high probability of not being returned, by design), to

The purpose is to claim “plausible deniability” of malfeasance while stealing the voting rights of tens of thousands of American citizens. It's called *fraud*, which remember from our glossary of terms “*Fraud, Malfeasance, Treason, Traitor, Faithless, Disloyal, Betrayal*.” on page 41, although all these terms apply here; specifically “*fraud*” means: “intentional perversion of truth [claiming there is massive double voting fraud, which is threatening our elections] in order to induce another to part with something of value [e.g. their right to engage the process of democracy] or to surrender a legal right [e.g. their right to vote]; an act of deceiving or misrepresenting [the facts



Image 130. The smoking gun of voter fraud: Hitler's name found on a vote card.

It's a propaganda model, where the compliant, if not complicit, media echo chamber creates the “hysteria of mass voter fraud” to facilitate the subversive Republican theft of elections. I'll cover a bit later how we can scientifically expose this fraud and pull the rug right out from under it and the criminal perps who engage in it.

But there's more; this directly from a North Carolina elections office official who claimed they have found over 35,000 suspects of criminally voting more than once. "Our efforts yielded a number of individuals we wanted to look into further. Suspects! It's part of an ongoing criminal investigation, partnering with other states to get the cross-check information, that if there was any type of inappropriate behavior we would be able to send the right evidence to the DA, who would decide whether or not to prosecute." Sounds like it's just some good old boys trying to protect America from criminal activity, doesn't it?

This false tactic, of course, is merely setting up the bogus presumption of guilt against ordinary Americans wanting to participate in their democracy. It has nothing to do with actual voting fraud. It's like the "no-fly" list; you don't know you're on it until you want to fly [vote]; and you don't know how you got on it or how to get off it. But once on it, you are already and always presumed to be suspected of something wrong [double-voting]; you can call that "freedom lost".

And lest the Republican goal not be readily apparent, a chief Republican strategist said: "If the Black turnout drops by just 1 point in North Carolina, Democrats' winning margin there is wiped out."

This cross-check scheme would purge 10% of the Black voters in North Carolina. And if Virginia's 13% wipe out is any indication, almost 1 million Americans will have their right to vote chal-

lenged.

In Ohio in 2012 and 2014, again the ultimate swing-state, the so-called cross-check list produced 497,000 suspected double voters, and 43,000 Black voter names simply vanished, with the help of the Koch Machine directed Tea Party. The ACLU sued the Ohio Republican Secretary of State over removing masses of voters from the rolls; the biggest purge in the nation. Headlines read: "It's official: Ohio signs on to Tea Party voter 'purge scheme'." Well over 100,000 voters are gone due to Ohio's error-riddled voter purge list.

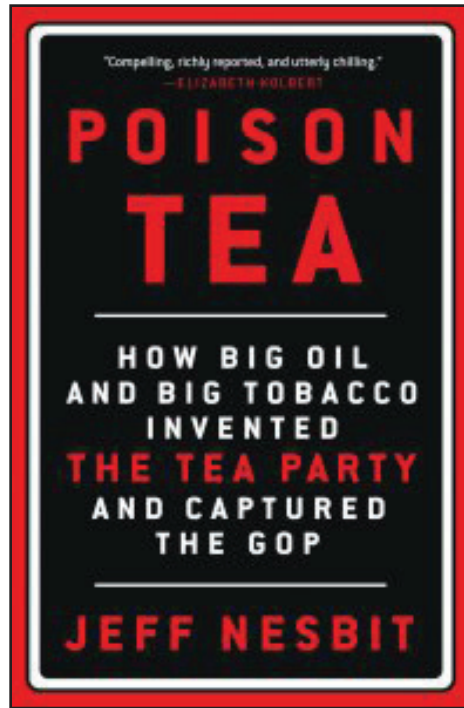


Image 131. "The Secret Origins of the Tea Party: How Big Oil and Big Tobacco partnered with the Koch brothers to take over the GOP". *Time Magazine* review of 2016 book by Jeff Nesbit.

Voting experts told Palast during his interviews that: "The Secretary of State knows what he's doing is

illegal; he's counting on bigotry to get away with it. He doesn't want to actually match people to find and prosecute the perpetrators of voter fraud; he wants to purge Blacks and Hispanics. So he picks only first names and last names to match, not even using the middle name. He's trying to make Ohio unwinnable, and the only way he knows how is by stealing American citizens' votes."

But how do they target voters of color?

## Targeting Voters of Color

Palast, a statistical expert himself, takes a deep dive into the data with the help of other professional database analysts. He reports in his film, and his August 24, 2016, *Rolling Stone* article "[The GOP's Stealth War Against Voters](#)", that they came up with lots of interesting findings. Mark Swedlund, a database expert whose clients include eBay and American Express, looked at the data from Georgia and Virginia, and he was shocked by Cross-check's "childish methodology." The most common surnames list at an incredibly high rate on cross-check databases in multiple states. For example, if your last name is "Garcia", of which there are 858,000 in the U.S., and your first name is Jose or Joe or Joseph, by this cross-check logic you're probably suspected of voting in 27 states. If your name is "Jackson", it's likely you're African American. 90% of all people with the last name "Washington" are Black. Garcia's are 91% Hispanic. Kim's, 94% Asian.

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — Thomas Paine

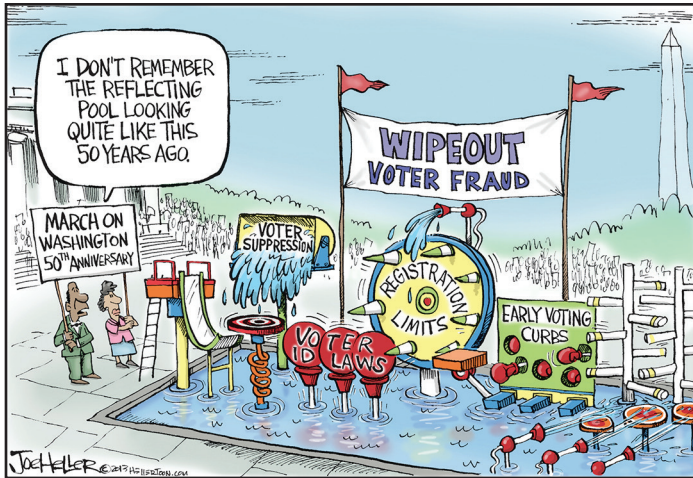


Image 132. The voter fraud gauntlet.

There is huge ethnic bias in cross-check lists, where people with minority last names are over-represented. A full 20% of minority voters in these these states are on the cross-check list. Whereas whites are 8% underrepresented in these lists; Blacks are 45% overrepresented, Hispanics are 24% overrepresented and Asians by 31%. This cross-check scam is nothing more than a cheap racist voter suppression trick. These documents, Palast and his analysts find, show literally hundreds of thousands of Hispanics supposedly voting more than one time. Asians are the fastest growing electorate nationally, increasing their political power; 1 in 8 Asian Americans are suspects on the list. Democrats capture 3 out of 4 Asian American votes.

Names like “Maria Isabel Hernandez” of Georgia is shown to have “criminally” voted a second time in Louisiana as “Maria Cristina Hernandez”.

But the various tactics of discriminatory targeting hits Native Americans as well. On January 11, 2018, Felicia Fonseca, of the

AP, reported that “Native Americans have encountered a wide range of obstacles to voting.” (“[Groups record voting rights abuses against Native Americans](#),” republished in *The Durango Herald*.) Tribes say several barriers still exist. In a hearing at the Sandra Day O’Connor Indian Legal Clinic, representatives from the Native American Rights Fund testified: “What we’re trying to show is people don’t have equal opportunity to vote, to register to vote and to participate in Indian Country than you would see in maybe a more urban setting.”

“Native Americans didn’t become U.S. Citizens until 1924, but some states restricted who was entitled to vote up into the 1960s. Southwestern states were the last holdouts. Barriers to voting persist, including long drives to polling places, laws that ban collecting ballots for others, mistreatment and intimidation of tribal members at polling sites, voter identification requirements and unequal opportunities for Native

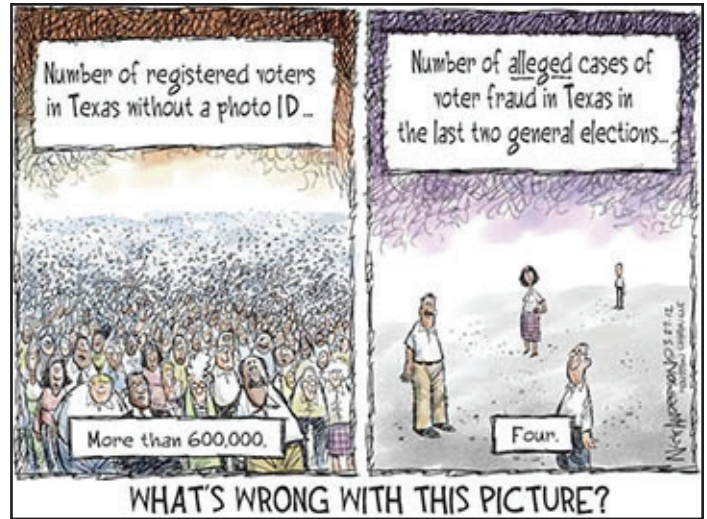


Image 133. If you manage to escape the “voting denied” scrub list, the Republicans still want to see your ID because you still might be a perpetrator of “voter fraud”.

Americans to serve as poll workers. In the 2016 general election, voting sites on reservations were open less than eight hours and voters elsewhere had days to cast ballots.”

“Our Native American voters take great pride in voting and celebrate it by making it a community event. They have had to fight hard for their right to vote and those in election administration need to dedicate the necessary resources to protect the voting rights of all of our citizens.”

### Voter ID Laws

This hysteria of voter fraud has led to all sorts of “creative ways” to suppress the voting populations that typically do not vote Republican. Requiring a “qualified voter ID” in order to vote severely impacts minority voters, including Blacks, elderly, and poor.

Republicans go to especially absurd lengths to prevent students

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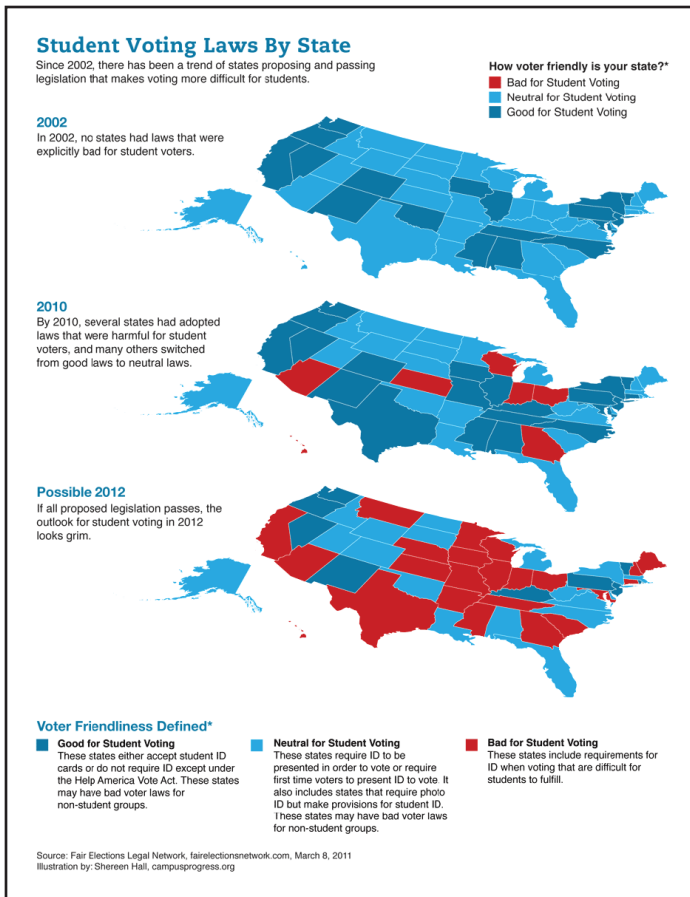


Image 134. Graphic by Campus Progress, based on data from Fair Elections Legal Network. “Since 2002, there has been a trend of states proposing and passing legislation that makes voting more difficult for students.

from voting. Students go to universities in-state and out-of-state as a normal college education routine. Why make it so difficult for them to vote, wherever they happen to be? Who was the 26th Amendment, which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18, for if not for students? Why are Republicans comfortable allowing “gun registration IDs” but not “student IDs”. Oh, of course; because once students become more educated its more difficult for them to be susceptible to the Republican strategy of “sustainable ignorance” —they’re better adept at seeing through the ruse. Republicans have managed to get more

and more states to restrict student voting.

Guess who’s behind that effort? Generation Progress produced a report, March 9, 2011, titled: “[Conservative Corporate Advocacy Group ALEC Behind Voter Disenfranchisement Efforts](#)”. The report exposes “The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative organization linked to corporate and right-wing donors, including the billionaire Koch brothers, which has drafted and

distributed model legislation, obtained by Campus Progress, that appears to be the inspiration for bills proposed by state legislators this year and promoted by Tea Party activists, bills that would limit access of young people to vote.”

Shereen Hall of Campus Progress presents a graphic showing the growth in restrictive student voting laws from 2002 to 2012, based on data by the “Fair Elections Legal Network,” which works to make it easier for students to vote.

In 2002, no states had laws that were explicitly bad for students

voters. By 2010, several had adopted laws that were harmful for student voters, and many other switched from good laws to neutral laws. By 2012, proposed legislation (the article was dated 2011) produced an increasingly grim outlook for student voting.

All of this is why the Republicans work so hard to suppress the vote in so many ways. Our election system is very racist, very biased against young voters, and very ill, Mr President. And your ethically challenged Republican Party, in actuality, is morally bankrupt. Why wouldn’t what they are doing to steal American votes and their voting rights, which remember we veterans of all colors, races and ethnicities, including proud Native American veterans, and especially young veterans, supposedly fought and died to protect, be considered high treason? How are you personally not complicit, Mr President, by putting this “double-voter cross-check” scam artist from Kansas in charge of your so-called “election integrity” commission? And yet, you make hypocritical fawning statements over veterans and “our precious election process.”

But you are not alone in this racist Republican attack against the Constitutional rights of so many millions of minority and young Americans. So, before we take a closer analytical look at the underlying fallacious reasoning behind the myth of this “voter fraud” scam; let’s look at the institutional racism of the Republican dominated Supreme Court of the United States of America (SCOTUS).

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# Republican Corruption at the United States Supreme Court

## The Republican Single-Vote Margin Destroying America

This attack on our voting system even reaches the highest levels of jurisprudence. That has blatantly manifested with the Republican Court Citizen’s United v FEC 5-to-4 decision in 2010 (pro-corporation and big money campaign financing; money is same as free speech; corporations are people); and their 5-to-4 Shelby County v Holder decision in 2013 (gutting the 1965 Voting Rights Act).

As an aside observation, Mr President, so many disastrous decisions impacting our country in monumental ways and undermining our democracy, are made by Republicans with single-vote margins; or by at most a couple of votes. These are not decisions that favor or are supported by the people. This includes the closely failed attempt at destroying the Affordable Care Act; and the *tax bomb* you and the Republicans set off recently by a 51-49 margin. This tax bomb sent a massive reverberating shock wave into the middle of our economy – without data, without analysis or review.

Like these SCOTUS decisions, there is virtually no understanding of all the harmful ramifications these decisions have and will produce. These are reckless,

unprincipled and dangerous ideologically driven actions with immense and scarcely understood ramifications for our country and its democracy. They violate any sense of wise principles of sound governance.

all members of Congress, both Republican and Democrat.

In a 1993 address, President Bill Clinton said: “Today we celebrate our noble tradition by signing our newest civil rights law; The National Voting Registration Act of 1993.”

In a 2006 address, President George W. Bush said: “Today we renew a bill to help bring a community on the margins into the life of American democracy. I am proud to sign the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006.”

The restrictions on voting, it was widely said, are a direct response

to America’s first black president; President Barack Obama, elected overwhelmingly in 2008. Immediately rightwing pundits claimed it was the result of voter fraud and started the drum beat to restrict voting access.

On June 25, 2013, the Republican controlled Supreme Court of the United States took Martin Luther King’s Dream and the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 and “burned out its heart.” That key provision being the section that held the historically justified presumption that southern states are still hell bent on preventing Black people from voting – a right Black people have paid for in blood and

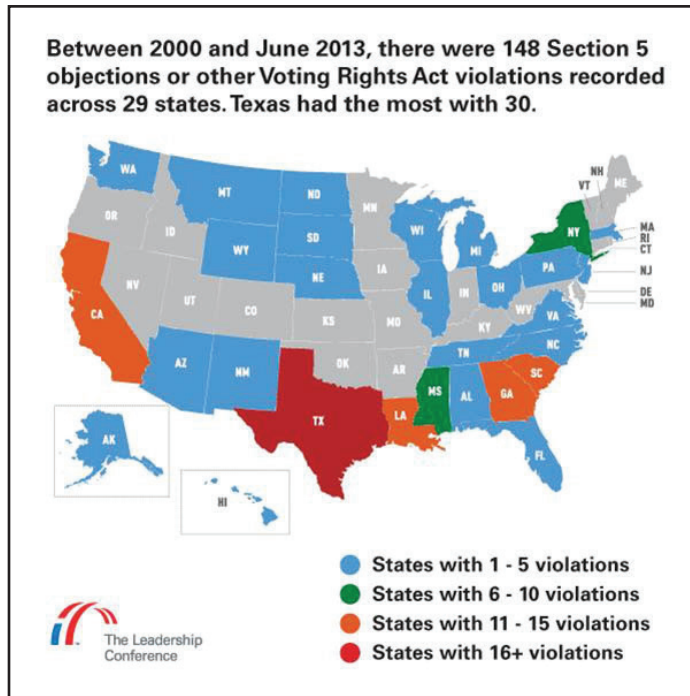


Image 135. Voting Rights Act violations from 2000 to June 2013.

## The Gutting of Martin Luther King’s Dream

President Lyndon Johnson, standing before Congress in his 1965 State of the Union address, regarding the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA), stated: “I speak tonight for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy. What happened in Selma is part of a far larger movement, which reaches into every section of America. This bill will strike down restriction to voting in all elections.” Immediately after that statement, he received a standing ovation from



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life. Thus since 1965 until 2013, whenever these southern states proposed any voting law, it was presumed that it would be biased against Blacks and other minorities, so under the doctrine of “federal preclearance” the State had to *prove* that it wasn’t biased. Since you couldn’t trust these legislatures, the *burden of proof* was on the State Legislature.



Image 136. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, wearing her black and gold “dissent jabot”. She wears this jabot when she presents her dissenting opinion from a majority decision being handed down by the Supreme Court. See the interview with the co-directors, Betsy West and Julie Cohen, of the documentary film *RBG*, at the 2018 Sun Dance Film Festival by Amy Goodman: [“RBG”: New Documentary Celebrates Life of Groundbreaking Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#). The film looks at the groundbreaking life of the nearly 85-year-old Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. 2018 marks her 25th year on the court, and she has no plans to retire. In recent years, Ginsburg’s public profile has soared as the court has swerved to the right. Ginsburg often now finds herself on the dissenting side of opinions.

In her 37-page [dissenting opinion, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, joined by Justices Breyer, Sotomayor and Kegan](#), wrote:

*In the Court’s view, the very success of §5 of the Voting Rights Act demands its dormancy. Congress was of another mind. Recognizing that large progress has been made, Congress determined, based on a voluminous record, that the scourge of discrimination was not yet extirpated... And [here being the crux of the Republican efforts to gut the VRA,] in assessing the overall effects of the VRA in 2006, Congress found that “significant progress has been made in eliminating first generation barriers experienced by minority voters, including increased numbers of registered minority voters, minority voter turnout, and minority representation in Congress, State legislatures, and local elected offices. This progress is the direct result of the Voting Rights Act of 1965... Yet voting discrimination [with second generation barriers] still exists; no one doubts that.”*

*But the Court today terminates the remedy that proved to be best suited to block that discrimination. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) has worked to combat voting discrimination where other remedies had been tried and failed. Particularly effective is the VRA’s requirement of federal preclearance for all changes to voting laws in the regions of the country with the most aggravated records of rank discrimination against minority voting rights...*

*It is well established that Congress’ judgment regarding exercise of its power to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments warrants substantial deference. The VRA addresses the combination of race discrimination and the right to vote, which is “preservative of all rights...”*

*It cannot tenably be maintained that the VRA, an Act of Congress adopted to shield the right to vote from racial discrimination, is inconsistent with the letter or spirit of the Fifteenth Amendment, or any provision of the Constitution read in light of the Civil*

*War Amendments... The Court makes no genuine attempt to engage with the massive legislative record that Congress assembled. Instead, it relies on increases in voter registration and turnout as if that were the whole story...*

*The sad irony of today’s decision lies in its utter failure to grasp why the VRA has proven effective... The VRA is grounded in Congress’ recognition of the “variety and persistence” of measures designed to impair minority voting rights. In truth, the evolution of voting discrimination into more subtle second-generation barriers is powerful evidence that a remedy as effective as preclearance remains vital to protect minority voting rights and prevent backsliding. Thanks to the Voting Rights Act, progress once the subject of [MLK’s dream] has been achieved and continues to be made...*

*Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.*

Kate Sheppard, writing about the decision and the dissenting opinion for *Mother Jones* on June 25, 2013, [“The Best Lines From Ginsburg’s Dissent on the Voting Rights Act Decision,”](#) quoted Ginsburg, stating: “Hubris is a fit word for today’s demolition of the VRA.” Ginsburg’s dissent rattled off eight examples of race-based voter discrimination in recent history, which Sheppard listed.

The 2013 Supreme Court VRA decision reversed the burden of proof—a seismic shift, opening the gates to an immediately resurgent flood of voter suppression attacks on minorities, the elderly and the poor. The presumption became that the southern state

legislatures were in fact now “unbiased”; and that, in the words of the 5-4 Republican Party line ruling, “racial voting trickery is gone; blatantly discriminatory evasions are rare; and Jim Crow practices have been eradicated.” Well, none of that was true; they were simply held at bay *because of* the 1965 VRA. The statement was instantly proved false by the response from those states.

Immediately, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida responded with votes to restructure their laws. Headlines read, “Florida steps up efforts to scrub illegal voters”; and they began a purge of 181,000 Hispanics from the voter rolls as illegal aliens. States started imposing voter ID laws of all sorts, with blatantly biased rules, like: student IDs don’t count, but gun licenses do. Just hours after the SCOTUS gutting of the VRA, Palast goes on, Alabama passed a law requiring voters to have a drivers license or a state photo ID in order to vote. Then the state shut down most of the motor vehicle offices in the 10 Black belt counties. The 1965 VRA banned all forms of trickery in voting like this. States could never adopt something like this cross-check scheme unless *the state* could prove that it didn’t discriminate against voters of color. Not many states would dare even try. Now they don’t have to.

In 2017 North Carolina, regarding their restrictive redistricting and voter identification law, the 4th Circuit issued a decision that struck down the law, stating it was clear that the *intent* of the law was to “targeted African Amer-

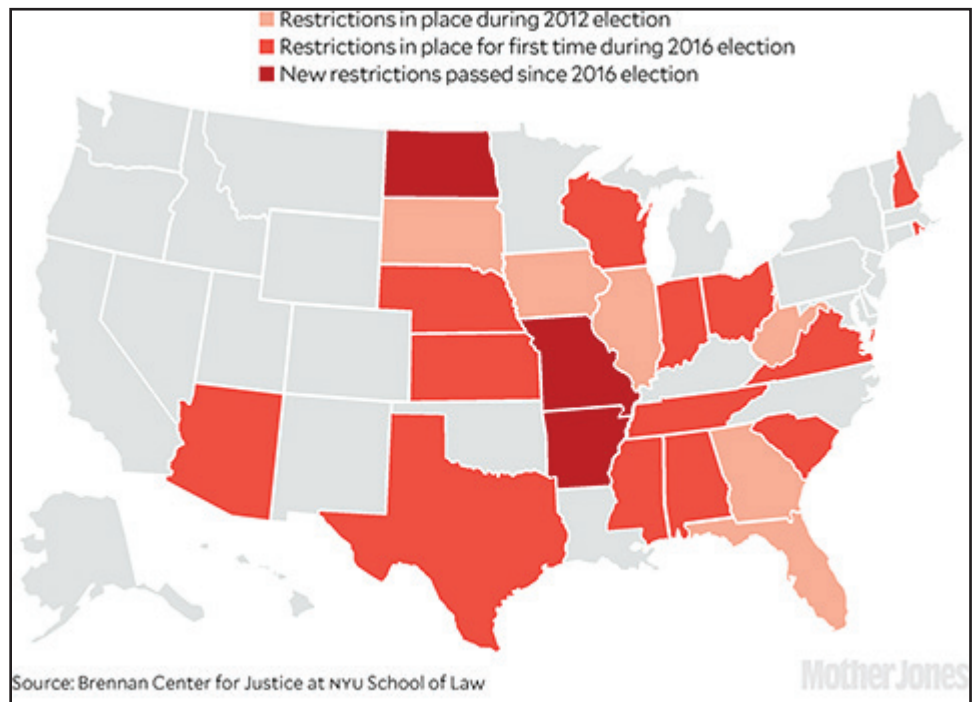


Image 137. The Attack on Voting Rights, State-by-State voting map, 2012-2016. [Ari Ber- man, Mother Jones, Nov/Dec 2017 issue.](#)

icans with surgical precision.” The current Republican Supreme Court, with its vacant Court seat stolen from President Obama filled with a right wing Republican, put a stay on that decision. We are still struggling for a democracy in which everyone can participate and be treated equally.

The SCOTUS decision flipped the “null hypothesis” presumption from one of bias by the state against Black voters, to a presumption that Black citizens had a bias to commit voter fraud. Now, whenever these states passed any voting laws, the burden of proof that the laws were discriminatory landed on those who were disenfranchised. The presumption became that these states didn’t discriminate. So they just go ahead and do it without sanction.

One attorney and State Senator

representing Selma had been on the ballots for years as an elected state senator; but when he went to vote, he found that his name was no longer on the voting list. Selma, of course, has a long history of suppressing the Black and poor vote. But now that is being multiplied by these various scams. Almost overnight the cross-check scam, with its presumptive premise that there is a wide conspiracy of minority and poor voters trying to undermine our election process by voting more than once, spread into other states like a virus. All these modern subversive Republican tactics are divisive ways of diminishing voter participation—restricting the flow of Democratic votes into the final count.

In 2016, the Republican president-elect, while “winning” the Electoral College count, lost the

popular vote by 3 million votes.

In October, 2017, moving from defense to offense, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), under the People Power platform for grass roots action, launched a 50-state Voting Rights Campaign to restore American’s voting rights and re-energize our democracy ([LetPeopleVote.org](http://LetPeopleVote.org); [Vote.PeoplePower.org](http://Vote.PeoplePower.org)). To send a strong message, they launched the campaign in Kris Kobach’s State of Kansas, where his infamous Crosscheck program was born.

### Follow the Money

Following the money trail like a true gum-shoe detective, Greg Palast finds the billionaires behind it — watch this film, where all these examples come from, paraphrasing Palast. It’s a very exciting detective story going after billionaire criminals! In this Supreme Court attack on our democracy, Palast investigates how lil’ ol’ Shelby County of Alabama, population about 200,000, got the money to bring the case all the way to the Supreme Court, as “Shelby County vs Holder”. In the film, Palast had already laid out a network of nefarious billionaire dark money tracks. Drawing from that, in the Shelby case it was just a couple of money trust funds back from Shelby that leads directly to \$100 million dollars from the Kochs. “It was Koch money,” Palast found, “that was behind the hit on the VRA and let the cross-check scam loose on the entire USA. Further, The Manhattan Institute joined

up with the Kochs to hit the VRA, whose chairman is the infamous billionaire Paul Singer, known as ‘The Vulture’ because of the way his hedge fund devours the carcasses of dying third world countries and robbing them of vital debt-forgiveness and other life support.”

Recall the centrality of the Koch brothers, especially Charles Koch, in this deep roots attack on our country going back decades under the guise of “libertarianism for capital”, which we covered earlier with the work from Nancy MacLean’s book: *Democracy In Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right’s Stealth Plan for America*, introduced on page 58. “The well-heeled radical right’s vast network doesn’t want simply to change who rules, but to fundamentally alter the rules of democratic governance as we have known it in the United States. While billionaires like Charles Koch now drive the effort, they did not start it; a white intellectual in the embattled Jim Crow South did.” The Koch’s manifest efforts demonstrate their belief that, by hook or crook, America and its institutional processes should belong to them and their oligarch minions; not to American Citizens. Time to wake up, Amer-

icans of all political leanings.

These billionaires that Palast has been tracking for decades, are treasonous enemies of our country, working to undermine its very foundation; they want to



Image 138. The Koch-head Republican Party—enemy of a properly functioning American representative democracy and the American people. Saboteurs of election integrity and voting rights. Force behind the Grand Theft of America.

steal it all for themselves. They don’t want anything like the representative democracy “dependent on the people alone” that James Madison envisioned, with “not the rich more than the poor” (page 89). And the Republican Party is their vehicle. To get some deeper insight into these characters, Palast interviewed Charles and David Koch’s brother, Billy Koch, who disclosed how they have defrauded so many, including Indian Tribes, for years. Billy Koch in a recorded tape that Palast plays for us, said about his brother Charles Koch:

“Charles has a libertarian philosophy where he believes that laws are immoral. He views himself as

being above it. So, hell go out and do whatever he wants—steal oil from the Indians, pollute the environment, etc, and when he gets caught, or finds that someone is after him, what he then does is goes out and buys all the politicians he can to counter that influence. To try to mitigate the cost of his crime. And they've been very effective at it; very effective." If you're interested in what's happening to your country, buy the November, 2017, post-election release of the Palast film that covers the impact of scams like the cross-check scheme and other nefarious Republican vote-theft tricks had on the 2016 election, "The Case of the Stolen Election" ([www.GregPalast.com](http://www.GregPalast.com)).

## The Ruse Behind the Tactics of Republican Voter Disenfranchisement

### Exposing The Pretext of So-called "Voter Fraud"

#### Logical Fallacy: Meta-Level

Let's examine this problem at two levels. At the top level, let's call it the "meta-level" to differentiate it from an examination of specific argument details, are overall broad claims. For example, Republican operatives make an unsubstantiated claim, echoed by supportive corporate media, such as: "There is massive voter fraud." By this claim they don't mean there are one or two cases

of wrongful voting; they mean American voters are "cheating" in large numbers by various means. They typically support such a claim with weak or non-existent evidence; only assertions and opinions, perhaps with some anecdotal example, "We even found the name 'Adolph Hitler' showing up on a voting card," leading to a false generalization. So why do they do it?

By asserting such a claim they pre-frame their argument in such a way that the pretext becomes a presumed problem with presumed "guilty parties" that needs to be addressed; simply by asserting it and having that assertion repeated over and over. The repetition of the assertion becomes the "evidence" for the assertion. This is the very tactic that led us into the Iraq invasion in 2003; plant the story, then refer to the repetition of the story as your "proof". It's hard to believe such a fallacious approach works to convince anyone, but it does. All it takes is a compliant corporate media and a gullible public.

This pre-framing tactic is why in our legal system accusations are not just taken as "likely true" on face value; instead, accused parties are (supposed to be) given the presumption of innocence, with the burden of proof not on the accused, but on the accuser to bring "substantial evidence" to bear on the accusation. For example, like multiple other independent instances of a similar nature, as in the "#metoo" movement.

But this "presumption against the claim" doesn't seem to hold up very well with nefarious po-

litical rhetoric. Fraudulent stories simply grow "legs" which waltz through our corporate and social media vehicles and into the minds of ordinary Americans without being challenged by any norms of in-depth thinking and truth. "Hey dude; I heard that voting fraud is rampant. What should they do about it?"

To the uninformed, the assertion itself grabs the perceived "high ground" in the argument; while it simultaneously flips the burden of proof onto anyone who challenges the claim. The more the claim is repeated; the more stronger evidence is required to debunk it. But the seriousness of this situation is exacerbated by the fact that the claim also becomes the premise upon which action is taken; supported or not. Actions, for example, where hundreds of thousands of voters have their votes stolen, before or after they've even had a chance to submit their vote. So we have to get at both the framing and the content of the claim, as well as the relevance and veracity any evidence either way.

The claim might have some apparent support, such as: "We've compared lists of registered voters in multiple states and there are lots of people with the same names on each list; so, there is obviously massive voter fraud where people are voting more than once. To be safe and protect our elections, we've eliminated all double names from the voting roles in whatever states they were found, since we couldn't be sure which one was cheating or not." This is what is happening; and Greg Palast is doing our country

and democracy an immense service by digging deep to find and expose all these nebulous cases.

This is the logical *fallacy of weak induction*, which appeals to ignorance; and it gets played all the time in political rhetoric. It constitutes what is technically called the “fallacy of acceptance of the null hypothesis” (the claim that Bush II won, for example), when the data does not provide for a severe enough test for that claim. It ignores entirely the role of error in the inference; and thus cries for validation (through a full hand recount, in the Bush II case for example).

In plain English, to the uninformed mind the fallacy means that the one first out with their narrowly focused narrative spin regarding some result or claim (“Voter Fraud”, or “I Won”, for example) grabs the “high ground” of “presumed truth”. All others must then endeavor to counter, or “dislodge” the notion; as opposed to starting with no bias, and then asking what is the most likely scenario and how to decide.

Marketers call this “positioning”; which was made famous with the marketing classic, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind – How to be seen and heard in the overcrowded marketplace*, by Al Ries and Jack Trout, two New York City advertising gurus. Their idea first hit the scene with their 3-part series of articles 45 years ago in *Advertising Age* in 1972. Their classic book was first published in 1980, which I read as an MBA student in the early 1980s, but it is still in print with its latest copyright [2001 by McGraw-Hill](#). And it’s still

a hot topic in the field, with the basic premise being: “Marketers [of anything, products or ideas] should try to occupy a specific position in the mind of the consumer. In other words, you’ve got to knock out the enemy before you can occupy the position,” ([“How Al Reis Positioned the Positioning Concept”, \*Ad Age\*, September 26, 2016](#)). “The biggest mistake marketers make is focusing on the creative advertising and not the marketing. Marketing is not logical; you’ve got to win in the mind, and you can only win in the mind with a narrow idea.”

Let me point out here, that this also constitutes the fallacy of your own rhetorical strategy, Mr President; where you know you must grab everyone’s attention with some simple narrowly focused comment. You cynically make false claims and toss things out into the media cauldron as “true”, that are not true; causing everyone else to run around chasing their tails to “prove” that the presumption of truth of the claim is pure bullshit. That includes your direct attack on our Constitutionally protected press; you and our minions just keep repeating over and over that everything the press is putting out is “fake news”. I know that’s the underhanded tactic you learned growing up in your own business and media world. But, that behavior is destructive to the very foundations of our representative democracy, which requires some level of trust in our democratic institutions, especially a free press. You’re really doing a lot of damage to our core institution of democracy, Mr President.

Yet, you know you can exploit the ignorance and gullibility of your base, who will believe anything you say, and drive the daily media cycle with this tactic. And with a supportive media echo chamber, you are able to pollute the political dialog enough to reframe at least one perception of reality – yours. From observing almost a year of your performance and statements, the presumption needs to be that whatever you say is more likely than not, pure bullshit. Why you do that is another question. But, this is certainly the consequence of a life-long self-destructive pattern, Mr President, where you continually undermine your own integrity. Nobody of consequence believes you. Does that not matter to you?

As a nation, our people do not appear to be well versed in critical thinking, which is why these fallacies seem to be so effective in confusing the populace while stealing the store of democracy. People may sense that there’s something wrong with a rhetorical argument; but they don’t seem to be equipped with the tools, or even desire, to expose it as fallacious. That appears to be particularly true with your supporters, Mr President, who either believe most everything you say, or out of loyalty make excuses for you, simply ignore your false claims, or are ever forgiving of your weaknesses.

## **Voter Fraud in General: Non-Existent**

Let’s dig deeper into the veracity of the details regarding the “vot-

er fraud” claims and how they are structured. Voter fraud could come in many forms, including voter impersonation, voting despite being ineligible (i.e. non-citizen voting), or double voting, the last of which occurs when an individual casts multiple ballots, each under a different registration record, in the same election.

### *The Brennan Center:*

The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, a nonpartisan law and policy institute that seeks to improve our systems of democracy and justice, has extensive resources on the issue of voting fraud. In their “Issues Note”, titled “[Myth of Voter Fraud](#)”, they emphasize that, “We must be careful not to undermine free and fair access to the ballot in the name of preventing voter fraud. Examination after examination of voter fraud claims reveal fraud is very rare, voter impersonation is nearly non-existent, and much of the problems associated with alleged fraud relates to unintentional mistakes by voters or election administrators.”

The Brennan Center focused their semiannual report on the topic, titled: “[The Truth About Voter Fraud](#)”. The report conclusively demonstrated “most allegations of fraud turn out to be baseless — and that of the few allegations remaining, most reveal election irregularities and other forms of election misconduct. Many of the claims of voter fraud amount to a great deal of smoke without much fire. The allegations simply do not pan out.” It cites numerous oth-

er studies that have reached the same conclusion.

The Center completed an extensive analysis of voter fraud, published on January 31, 2017, citing numerous studies and articles. Titled: “[Debunking the Voter Fraud Myth](#)”, the analytical report states that: “Sensationalist claims have circulated this election season about the extent of voter fraud, with some politicians going so far as to tell voters to fear that this November’s election will be ‘rigged.’ Because electoral integrity is one of the elements necessary to making America the greatest democracy in the world, claims like this garner media attention, and frighten and concern voters; while the President has continued to claim voter fraud was a problem in the 2016 election. But putting rhetoric aside to look at the facts makes clear fraud is vanishingly rare, and does not happen on a scale even close to that necessary to ‘rig’ an election.”

Exploring multiple studies, court cases, and government investigations, the concluding statements topics are: “**Studies Agree:** Impersonation Fraud by Voters Very Rarely Happens. **Courts Agree:** Fraud by Voters at the Polls is Nearly Non-Existent. **Government Investigations Agree:** Voter Fraud Is Rare.”

As part of their in-depth investigation, the Center has done a detailed examination of a database produced by the conservative Heritage Foundation, which claims “almost 1,100 proven instances of voter fraud.” The September 8, 2017, Brennan Center report, titled, “[Heritage Fraud](#)

[Database: An Assessment](#)” points out “the Heritage Foundation document claims of voter fraud are grossly exaggerated and devoid of context.” Their research “confirms what numerous studies have consistently shown: Voter fraud is vanishingly rare, and impersonating a voter at the polls is less common a phenomenon than being struck by lightning.”

“There is nothing in the database to confirm claims of rampant voter fraud. In fact, it shows just the opposite. The Heritage database includes an assortment of cases, many unrelated or tangentially related, going back decades, with only a handful pertaining to non-citizens voting or impersonation at the polls. They add up to a molecular fraction of the total votes cast nationwide. Inadvertently, the Heritage Foundation’s database undermines its claim of widespread voter fraud. This is the report the President’s ‘Fraud Commission’ members are relying on.”

### *Kris Kobach: Fraudster Attacking Democracy*

This past spring and early summer, several articles were published specifically taking on the menacing aspects of Kris Kobach’s efforts to massively disenfranchise voters with the “Cross-check” scheme he has been selling to states around the country.

**Souther Poverty Law Center on Kobach:** The *Southern Poverty Law Center* (SPLC), “dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society”,

in a June 17, 2017, article titled, "[Kris Kobach wants to decide who has the right to vote](#)", writes: "Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach has long had an appetite for nativist, anti-immigrant thinking. It led him to work as the legal counsel to a hate group. It led him to become the architect behind harsh anti-immigrant laws. And, recently, it led him to champion an anti-voter fraud effort at a time when restrictive voting laws frequently disenfranchise minority voters."

"Kobach began removing people from his state's voter rolls in 2015, making anyone who did not provide proof of citizenship within 90 days ineligible to vote. However alarming his claims, Kobach has successfully convicted just nine people of voter fraud since 2015 — primarily senior citizens who own property in more than one state. The reality — only one non-citizen conviction — hardly resembles Kobach's alarmist claims. But Kobach has built his career on his descriptions of such imaginary treachery by minority groups."

**Air Berman on Kobach:** Ari Berman, another of our *Healthy Democracy* leaders, wrote a major piece in the *New York Time Magazine* on June 13, 2007, titled: "[The Man Behind The President's Voter-Fraud Obsession: How Kris Kobach, the Kansas secretary of state, plans to remake America through restrictive voting and immigration laws.](#)" Berman writes about Kobach's desire for white rule and his fear of immigrants. For Kobach, he points out (paraphrasing), the fight to stop what

he calls 'non-citizens' from voting is intimately related to his fight to restrict immigration to the United States. "Years before the president began talking about building a wall, the fate of America's white majority was a matter of considerable interest to Kobach, who once agreed with a caller to his radio show that a rise in Latino immigration could lead to the 'ethnic cleansing' of whites."

"Kobach's chilling narrative of deceitful foreigners subverting democracy has served him well. Making people believe that voter fraud is rampant builds public support for policies that restrict access to the ballot. And claims of illegal voting by non-citizens help justify Kobach's hard-line anti-immigration agenda."

"The ACLU has filed four suits against Kobach since he was elected in 2010. All of them challenge some aspect of his signature piece of legislation, the Secure and Fair Elections Act, or SAFE Act, a 2011 state law that requires people to show a birth certificate, passport or naturalization papers to register to vote."

"Kobach has long argued that such a law is necessary to prevent non-citizens from registering to vote, a phenomenon that he has repeatedly claimed is both pervasive and a threat to democracy. The ACLU has countered that the real purpose of the law is not to prevent fraud but to stop the existing electorate from expanding and shifting demographically. Even a seemingly small impediment to registration, like a new ID requirement, favors the status quo, and in Kansas, and indeed

nationally, the status quo favors the Republican Party. While Kobach searched for fraud cases, his SAFE Act had blocked the registrations of 35,000 Kansans by September 2015."

Berman ties Kobach's efforts to what the VRA tried to prevent. "The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed tactics that prevented blacks, Hispanics and other minority groups from voting. But for decades, Republicans have fought to circumvent the law by describing their proposed restrictions — requiring specific forms of identification to vote, preventing early voting, purging voting rolls — as colorblind security measures, even though there is little evidence of any individual voter fraud in the United States."

"The ACLU has repeatedly argued that the Kansas law discriminated against minorities, young people and low-income people, all of whom are more likely to be registering for the first time and less likely to have immediate access to citizenship papers, because they can't afford them or were more transient and don't have copies of their documents at hand. No state has been as aggressive as Kansas in restricting ballot access, and no elected official has been as dogged as Kobach. Tens of thousands of Kansans have already been prevented from registering to vote because of this requirement, one in seven new registrants. Close to half of those were under 30. Kobach wants proof-of-citizenship laws to be adopted in every state."

Berman, a senior contributing writer for *The Nation Magazine*, a fellow at The Nation Institute,

and the author of *Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America*, continues to write [a long stream of articles about Kobach](#) and his influence on the current administration. Notably, “The President’s Commission on ‘Election Integrity’ Will Lead to Massive Voter Suppression”, May 11, 2017; “The Administration is Planning an Unprecedented Attack on Voting Rights”, June 30, 2017; and “Meet the Vote Suppressors and Conspiracy Theorists on the President’s ‘Election Integrity’ Commission”, July 11, 2017.

**Politico Magazine on Kobach:** Politico columnist Ben Strauss wrote an article, published May 21, 2017, about Kobach, titled: “The President’s pick to investigate his theories about voter fraud has a record of targeting older conservatives.” He describes how Kobach aggressively went against conservative seniors, even for honest mistakes. Kobach’s efforts produced just 9 convictions, while disenfranchising over 35,000 voters. “Most of them were not illegal immigrants but rather older registered Republicans. Nearly all of the perpetrators have been found using his Kansas proprietary database called Crosscheck.” “He promised he was going to deliver all these illegal alien voters in Kansas, but we’ve got nine people in two years—and most of them are law-abiding United States citizens, who just need better education.”

Kris Kobach has created a false crusade called “voter fraud”. He is not a protector of voting; he is an enemy of democracy.

## Logical Fallacy: Data Level

### *Voter Impersonation & Alien Voting Fraud: Non-Existent*

Extensive audits by researchers have “found essentially no voter impersonation fraud, since it is so easily detected. The second possibility, voting despite ineligibility, is also unlikely to purposefully happen because the risk of an undocumented immigrant subjecting himself to detection is not worth the low potential reward of a single extra ballot cast for one side. Although one academic article claimed to show that some non-citizens vote, those claims have been widely debunked. And votes cast twice within the same state are easily detected and eliminated by state voting administrators. There is little evidence of such efforts.” These are the leading remarks by a group of five highly qualified researchers who have investigated the voter fraud issue (“[Chasing Electoral Ghosts](#)”, November, 2016, *Slate Magazine*, by Sharad Goel, Stanford University; Marc Meredith, University of Pennsylvania; Michael Morse, Harvard University and Yale Law School; David Rothschild, Microsoft Research; and Houshmand Shirani-Mehr, Stanford University).

### *Double Voting Fraud: Non-Existent*

That leaves interstate double voting as the most promising route for intentional voter fraud. Pundits and political operatives

have claimed this is the source of millions of fraudulent votes. Thus enters the infamous “Interstate Crosscheck Program”; a voter-suppression scheme mentioned earlier on page 107, designed and instituted by the most culpable and influential vote theft scam artist of politics, Republican Kansas Secretary of State, Kris Kobach; later chosen to co-lead the farce called the “President’s Election Integrity Commission”.

Let’s cut to the chase and summarize the conclusions of the Goel et al. researchers, (“[One Person, One Vote: Estimating the Prevalence of Double Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections](#)”, October 24, 2017), who with their detailed study of various types of voting fraud, with a particular focus on double voting made these summary statements: “We looked at 130 million ballots from the 2012 election and found practically zero evidence of fraud. Whereas Crosscheck flagged more than 1.4 million registrations as potential duplicates that member states should further scrutinize and potentially purge. Our analysis of Crosscheck data makes explicit the large trade-off in voter accessibility sacrificed in an administrative environment that only focuses on maintaining electoral integrity.”

The tactics Republicans insist on using to, they claim, “prevent voter fraud”, including poll monitors to thwart ineligible voters, stringent voter identification laws to block voter impersonation, and ending early voting to prevent double voting, are false assurances for a non-problem. The



authors emphasize that while it's been demonstrated that there is little voter fraud for these tactics to prevent, such rhetoric and policies disenfranchise actual voters. Election rigging is not the problem. Our electoral integrity is not threatened by the little voter fraud that may occur, but rather by the disproportionate response that makes it harder for so many eligible Americans to vote.

### *Fallacy in the Crosscheck Comparison: The Evidence of Aggregate Data*

Here's the problem with Crosscheck's approach: In a country where 130 million votes are cast in a presidential election, there is a surprisingly high chance that two ballots cast under the same first name, last name, and date of birth actually belong to two different people.

The Goel et al. investigation reports that vote records only consistently report first name (FN), last name (LN), and date of birth (DOB). Data generated by the Interstate Crosscheck Program, compares individual-level voter registration records across participating states to aid in the purging of duplicate records and prosecution of double voters. Participating states upload their voter registration data each January. Kansas administrators return to each participating state a list of registrations in that state that share the same first name, last name, and DOB as a registration in another participating state, which they refer to as "potential double voters." Most of their analysis focused on

2012, in which Crosscheck handled more than 45 million voter registration records and flagged more than a million potential double voters.

A participating state receives all pairings in which a registrant in their state and a registrant in another participating state share the same first name, last name, and DOB; and that's all we can observe from vote records in multiple states. Some states even report just age or year of birth instead of DOB, which substantially increases the chance of two records sharing common identifiers.

What about Social Security Number (SSN), or just the last four digits (SSN4)? Only 1 in 10,000 distinct people with the same first name, same last name, and same DOB would also share the same SSN4 by chance. Although some Crosscheck data contain, when available, the last four digits of each registration's Social Security number; when using this the investigators found that, in the smaller set that had all of these fields, virtually all (99.5%) of the potential FN/LN/DOB pairings had different SSN4 numbers. The others had to do with the difference between early and later registration by the same person. In fact, they found that about two-thirds of potential double registrations identified by Crosscheck have at least one unknown SSN4. Thus, more often than not, an election administrator will not have enough information to distinguish good and bad matches. Based on the subset of pairings with SSN4 data, one in four potential double registrations re-

turned by Crosscheck are likely not actual double registrations.

While 3,047,626 pairs of 2012 vote records in a national voter file share these three FN/LN/DOB attributes, which is likely the source your henchmen found for your claimed "3 million double voters", Mr President; their analysis shows that although two randomly selected vote records are extremely unlikely to share a common first name, last name, and DOB, a sizable number of matches will occur naturally once we aggregate over the quadrillions of pairs of vote records in the population.

Measurement error in voting records, such as dormant "deadwood" registrations of people who moved to, and voted in, a different jurisdiction, can also affect the frequency of false double voting comparisons. In fact, their audit of poll books finds that measurement error could explain many apparent double votes. Since even minor errors in the recording of votes in a voter file could generate a substantial number of cases of illusory double voting, the investigators accounted for that in their analysis.

In summary, the authors state: "The evidence compiled in this paper suggests that double voting is not carried out in such a systematic way that it presents a threat to the integrity of American elections. Thus, there is almost no chance that double votes could affect the outcome of a national election."

The perception of Americans is different, due to the sources of meta-level logical fallacy noted

earlier. And this is the cover Republican operatives use to fraudulently steal millions of votes and win elections; and get away with it. It's perceived as a problem due to how often the meme is repeated. The authors report that studies "find that about 25% of the public believes that voting more than once happens either commonly or occasionally (as opposed to infrequently or never), while another 20% report being unsure how often it happens. Such beliefs are likely driven, at least in part, by media stories that conflate the number of observed cases of voter records sharing the same observable characteristics with double votes."

The North Carolina headline noted earlier on page 107, "35,000 people voted in North Carolina and in some other state", was based on Crosscheck's finding that the 35,750 North Carolina vote records from 2012 shared the same first name, last name, and date of birth with registrations used to vote in other states. Such media stories demonstrate the importance of clearly differentiating between (1) registration records that share common observable characteristics, (2) duplicate registrations, and (3) double votes.

Regarding duplicate registrations, they found in their study of Iowa "that roughly three-quarters of the registrations flagged by Crosscheck were in fact duplicate registrations, although election administrators often lack the necessary SSN4 to determine whether a particular match is good or bad. More importantly, fewer than 10 of the known 25,987 du-

PLICATE registrations were used to cast a ballot twice."

"In both 2012 and 2014, Crosscheck flagged more than 100,000 Iowa registrations as potential duplicates, with a matching registration in another state. In only about 5 percent of these cases were both registrations used to cast a ballot. And in all but six total cases (in both years combined), the two registrations used to cast a ballot had inconsistent middle names or different Social Security numbers, indicating they are likely different people. If Iowa used Crosscheck's guidelines for purging registrations, as some counties have done, about 1,200 registration records used to legitimately cast a single vote would have been purged in order to prevent these six potential double votes."

"This suggests that both the number of registration records that share common observable characteristics and the number of duplicate registrations are poor proxies for the number of double votes. Reporting the first two quantities in place of the last risks confusing the public about the integrity of American elections."

Confusing the public, of course, is what Republicans are all about. This is what they want to do. Kris Kobach contends that it is better to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of voters than to risk allowing *any* fraudulent votes, stating, "one case of voter fraud is [one] too many." He does exactly the opposite of what standard economical business quality assurance practices recommend: his methods incur an extremely *high* false positive rate ("Type I error",

concluding a problem exists when it doesn't, i.e. a suspected fraudulent vote) in order to protect against extremely *rare* false negatives ("Type II error", failing to detect a problem when it does exist, i.e. an actual fraudulent vote). The standard statistically correct approach is to set an acceptable false positive rate (technically referred to as " $\alpha$ "; often set a 5% or 1%, depending on the phenomenon in question) and devise a test that minimizes the false negative rate (technically referred to as " $\beta$ ") for that given  $\alpha$ .

There are economic and moral ramifications associated with each type of error. Kobach's moral argument is that it is worth destroying the Constitutional rights of millions of people to vote, to prevent that extremely rare potential fraudulent vote. Obviously, that just a bogus argument; his intent is to wipe out non-Republican votes.

It would be wise to acknowledge, the authors emphasize, that there are trade-offs between accessibility and integrity when administering elections. In the case of Crosscheck's proposed purging strategy, this means knowing how many times the duplicate registration with the earlier registration date is used to cast a second, illegitimate, vote, relative to the number of times it is used to cast a single, legitimate vote. Based on the data from Iowa, they find "Crosscheck's proposed purging strategies would eliminate about 300 registrations used to cast a seemingly legitimate vote [false positives] for every one registration used to cast a double vote."

## *Fallacy in the Crosscheck Comparison: The Evidence of Faulty Logic*

Examining the logic of how the comparison details are carried out exposes the fallacy of their methodology. To do this, we need to look at the structure of *individual* comparisons for *each name* from multiple lists of supposed double voters, and ask how *severe* the comparison test *probes* the question of its veracity. As well, we need to ask what the “null” presumption is. The “null” means the presumption that the phenomenon observed (possible double voting) would happen just by random chance, say, rather than fraudulent intent.

Without diving too deep technically, yet with the goal of some acceptable level of precision and clarity, let’s make a simple manufacturing analogy with Kobach’s purging strategy and his Kansas numbers, where 35,000 voters are purged to find and eliminate 9 possible actual double voters (that’s all he found, most of those not even fraudulent as we noted earlier).

Suppose you were a production manager making widgets and you suspected that some “off-color” looking parts were also functionally bad due to some possibly related manufacturing flaw, but all you looked at was the color; would you toss out 35,000 good parts whose color was a bit off to make sure you found and eliminated those 9 bad parts? If you did, I think you’d either get trained better, get reassigned to dumpster inspection, or get fired

(or your manager would), because you’d be wasting the company a lot of money.

We would refer to finding a truly bad part from your production line as a “positive” result because it failed the functional specification *test*, irrespective of its color. But if all those other parts passed inspection, yet because color was easily and cheaply observable, they were tossed anyway being found to be a bit off-color, making them suspicious looking, then we would refer to the 35,000 wasted parts (less 9) as “false positives”. We would have an extremely high rate of false positives where good parts were eliminated because they were falsely thought to be bad. That’s a very costly error.

This presents two issues in understanding the logical structure of the problem: First, what is the presumed “null” assumption about the parts before any visual or functional inspection is done? That they are “good” parts (would pass inspection, even though they might look suspicious) or “bad” parts (would fail inspection, because they look suspicious)?

The correct null assumption in proper industrial process management would of course be that the process is in control and capable of producing good parts, with the occasional bad part being a random anomaly; unless, of course, we found some special cause that consistently produced bad parts. Further, in testing each part we would want our test procedure to be “severe” enough that when the test declares a part “bad”, it is very likely correct; the color test would not be considered suffi-

ciently severe for functionality.

We refer to this setup technically as the “null hypothesis”, or  $H_0$ ; and we refer to its complement as the “alternative hypothesis”, or  $H_a$ . The idea is to have a “Test of  $H_0$ ” that “probes” the veracity of the hypothesis based on the measurement data the test produces. For each individual test the setup might be designated as:

$H_0$ : The part is within spec  
(Parts are presumed to be “good” and any test result that declares a part “bad” is due to random chance noise in the process, the part, or the test)

$H_a$ : The part is out of spec

The second issue of interest is, what is the proportion or frequency of “false positives”; that is, false test failures, rejecting a good part as bad? How often does that error occur and what are the implications of this error rate, in terms of its costs?

These are standard structural concepts in statistics that have been well established for decades (typically based on samples from a process or population). But when they are not properly understood and applied, they can lead to incorrect conclusions. Often, people like Kobach want to presume the “bad parts” (double voter) null hypothesis, thinking they can dodge the “burden of proof” question and get away with assuming its true with less evidence required to “prove” it. We discussed earlier how flooding the media with that propaganda becomes the underhanded tactic to convince uninformed Americans we are under a “voting fraud” at-

tack and induce an atmosphere of hysteria about it. That's how they sow the theory of voter fraud and use that to eliminate millions of valid votes.

[Deborah Mayo, a philosopher of science and statistics at Virginia Tech](#), in her ground-breaking and prize-winning work, has strengthened these structural concepts according to how well they produce reliable knowledge in the face of error; which obviates this false tendency, that we noted earlier on page 116 is a logical fallacy at the meta-level. Her recent 2010 in-depth compendium on the state of this field, co-edited by Aris Spanos, Virginia Tech professor of economics and philosophy, is titled: [Error and Inference](#), Cambridge Press.

The key question is this: When does the data provide a good test and evidence for Ho? This is the *severity* question. The correct approach, Mayo teaches the broader scientific community, is to *deny* the data is sufficient evidence against Ho, *if* the test procedure has very little chance of providing evidence against Ho, *even if Ho is false*. Stated more formally, "The data *do not* provide good evidence for hypothesis Ho if the data result from a test procedure with very low probability or capacity of having uncovered the falsity of Ho (even if Ho is incorrect)." This is what she calls the *weak* severity principle. "Such a test, we would say, is insufficiently stringent or severe. The onus is on the person claiming to have evidence for Ho to show that the claim is not guilty of at least so egregious a lack of severity."

With respect to the "bad parts" question, where Ho presumes the parts are good, the "color test" fails even this weak severity principle, because even if the part is "bad", there is very little chance the color test would provide sufficient evidence that is "bad".

With respect to the "double voter" question, where the proper Ho presumes the vote is valid and not a double vote (no voter fraud exists), the question is whether the comparison of records with the fields FN, LN, and DOB, provide sufficient evidence of a fraudulent "double vote", even if the same voter is voting more than once in more than one state. Recall, those three fields are typically all that is available on Crosscheck lists, as noted earlier in the section "*Fallacy in the Crosscheck Comparison: The Evidence of Aggregate Data*" on page 121, "vote records only consistently report first name (FN), last name (LN), and date of birth (DOB)". If these three fields do provide sufficient evidence, there would be very few "false positives"; meaning rejecting the vote as coming from a fraudulent voter, even when there could be many matches of the data in those three fields *just by random chance*.

The Goel et al. authors of the above study give the following example. "In the 2012 presidential election, for example, 8,575 ballots were cast under the name John Smith among the votes we analyzed. Just considering people born in 1970, 141 votes were cast by people named John Smith. And among these 141 John Smiths, there were 27 pairs that had the exact same birth date and

so would be flagged as potential double voters under Crosscheck's methodology. But in a group of 141 people, you would in fact *expect* to see 27 pairs that share the same birthday *by chance alone*."

This phenomenon is what statisticians refer to as the "birthday paradox". Randomly gather just 23 people in a room, and there is a 50:50 chance that at least two of them will have the same birthday. When one looks at all the possible pairings of names and birthdays across a nation of 100 million voters, one would find at least 720,000 matches *by random chance*.

These authors conclude that: "Nearly all purported double voting can be explained by the birthday paradox coupled with measurement errors in the voter data, such as errors in the electronic records, indicating someone voted when the poll book revealed they had not. Our estimate for double voting approaches zero."

Yet by the propaganda put out under the theory of "voter fraud", this corruption of minds has convinced tens of millions of Americans to "believe" voter fraud is a serious problem. Once that becomes their "null" presumption, the people are not convinced by science and statistics to the contrary. This is the difficulty of "dislodging" the preset "voter fraud positioning" in one's mind, noted earlier on page 117.

Purging people with the same FN, LN and DOB on more than one voting list is a logical fallacy and to use it to purge voters is the outright fraud of stealing millions of votes and voting rights, by this scheme in the aggregate, from

honest American citizens who simply want their “one person, one vote” say in elections.

But, as Greg Palast pointed out from the lists he acquired, they don't even match those fields properly; because the comparisons are so sloppy. They claim as matches LN only, not even accounting for father/son “Jr”, middle names or initials when available, or even whether the names have the same spellings! And it's not evenly distributed, because names like Jackson, Garcia, Kim, Abadi, Mohammed, Hernandez, Park and Brown, are all over-represented in their associated ethnicities and races; that is, they are very common names within their ethnic and racial populations and are not randomly distributed amongst the voting population, which is yet another fallacy in the Kobach Crosscheck system. Recall that's how this fraudulent system targets specific ethnicities and races; see “Targeting Voters of Color” on page 109.

Further, neither are birthdays and names randomly distributed across 365 days; they get clumped at various points throughout the year; so for some birth dates and some names at some points during the year, the probability of matches by chance is even higher. For example, if a female was born in June, there is a much higher likelihood she was given the name “June”; same with “Carol”, “Autumn”, etc.

The entire Kris Kobach Crosscheck scheme is a total criminal, logically flawed, sham on so many levels. The *intent* of its design and the way its use is recommended,

with purge strategies, can be nothing other than purely to eliminate people of “the wrong color” from the voting lists—by the 10s and 100s of thousands in each state; i.e. Blacks, Latinos, Asians and Muslims, who more often than not *don't vote Republican*.

It is clear your so-called “Advisory Commission on Election Integrity,” Mr President, was set up to lay the groundwork for a massive push of voter suppression laws and policies on a national scale, in anticipation of the 2018 and 2020 elections. Your Vice President, the titular head of this commission, is no better. Ari Berman reports in an interview on the NPR program Fresh Air, May 17, 2017, that as governor of Indiana he led a movement to restrict voting rights. He even had his state police raid an office registering voters, leading to the elimination of possibly thousands of registrations. Imagine the chilling and intimidating effect on voter registration, Berman points out, of the potential that state police might show up. He simply wants to keep alive the idea that voter fraud is rampant and vigilantly needs to be addressed. Even the U.S. Attorney General has a lengthy record of hostility to voting rights back to the 1980s. He prosecuted civil rights activists on voting fraud charges; because they were “illegally helping African Americans vote.” All defendants were found not guilty.

Even though it was reported in a January 3, 2018, statement by the press secretary, that the commission “has been dissolved;” Palast, ever hot on the trail of these Re-

publican criminals, waves a big flag to warn us “not to be fooled”. The President is “not ending the Kris Kobach scheme to attack, he's moving it into Homeland Security as per Kobach's original plan. Kobach claims DHS is exempt from FOIA requests and public hearings. Further, Kobach claims Homeland Security can REQUIRE states to turn over voter records and can secretly gather lists of ‘double’ or ‘alien’ voters—this is Kobach's ‘Crosscheck’ on steroids,” Palast exclaims. “Kobach will be advising Homeland Security and that's MORE dangerous than operating through an open committee. This is not a win for Progressives. A Democrat on the original committee stated: ‘Homeland Security operates very much in the dark; and I think people should be, frankly, frightened by that.’”

Republicans can't win legitimate elections; the only way they can seize and retain power in a supposed representative democracy is to *steal* elections. This is how they do it.

That is a crucial moral point for all the state governments, including my supposedly more conscious state of Colorado, that have been conned and suckered to get on this “Crosscheck” bandwagon and drink the snake oil poison sold to them by this unpatriotic traitor, known as Kris Kobach and his henchmen. Regardless of his stature as the Kansas Secretary of State, Ivy League degrees and whatever, and his efforts to further poison your administration's integrity, Mr President, with his role on your supposed

“Election Integrity Commission,” until recently abandoned, Kobach is nothing more than a criminal fraud who is, on behalf of the Republican effort to steal elections, trying to steal the voting rights of millions of Americans—rights all veterans have supposed fought and died to protect, goddammit! In my book, this is high treason against my country, the United States of America!

**Flipping the Null Hypothesis:** But wait! Isn't that why they want the null hypothesis to be the other way around; that the matched voter names *do* indeed indicate they are the same voter, *by presumption*, and thus their votes are fraudulent (the parts are indeed presumed to be “bad” because of the color)? What does that mean for the severity principle if the null hypothesis is flipped?

Ho: The part is “bad”

Ha: The part is within spec

After introducing the “weak severity principle” above, Mayo states the full severity principle as follows. “*Severity Principle (Full):* The data *do* provide a good indication of or evidence for hypothesis Ho (just) to the extent that the test that produced the data has severely passed Ho.” That means, “the reliability of the rule or test used to infer Ho is at most a necessary and not a sufficient condition to warrant inferring Ho.” Mayo states the meaning of *passing a severe test* more formally as follows:

*A hypothesis Ho passes a severe test with the data if:*

*The data agrees with Ho, (for a suitable notion of “agreement”) and*

*With very high probability, the test would have produced a result that accords less well with Ho than does the data, if Ho were false or incorrect.*

“The severity is not a characteristic of a test in and of itself, but rather of the test, the specific data result from the test, and a specific inference being entertained. Why this is new statistical ground differing from traditional methods, is that existing formal statistical testing does not include severity assessments. The severity principle underwrites traditional interpretation and addresses chronic fallacies and well-rehearsed criticisms associated with the traditional methods of statistical testing.”

“Probative or severe tests are tests that would have unearthed some error in, or discrepancy from, a hypothesis Ho, were Ho indeed false. Without this severity requirement for the test, one readily falls into the fallacy of what is commonly referred to as the *sins of confirmation bias*; that is, reading one's preferred view into the accounts of historical figures, say, even where this reconstruction is at odds with apparent historical evidence. Genuine evidence is data that actually discriminates between the truth and falsity of the hypothesis. It is able to discriminate a ‘true signal’ from ‘random noise’; real effect from artifact.”

The fraudulent Crosscheck scheme does none of this. It is not a severe test; it is primed to reject voters that show only a positive comparison on the three fields FN, LN, DOB; thus, when wide-

ly applied it is generating hundreds of thousands of false positives, introducing wreckage and carnage into our election system, including the blood and bodies of so many African Americans who have fought so long and so hard for this basic right of citizenship.

Regardless of whether or not the null presumed hypothesis Ho of a comparison match is pre-structured as “invalid double vote” or correctly as “random chance match”, the Crosscheck scheme readily succumbs to the fallacy of acceptance or fallacy of rejection, respectively. The *fallacy of acceptance* is interpreting “accept Ho” [no evidence against Ho: invalid double vote] as *evidence for Ho*. The *fallacy of rejection* is interpreting “reject Ho” [evidence against Ho: random chance match] as *evidence for Ha: invalid double vote*.

The Kobach Crosscheck scheme fails the test of logic. It does not pass the burden of proof; and it imposes an extreme cost on America when one weighs the relative severity of wrong conclusions. In Kobach's distorted and perverse conception of American values, the risk and consequence of eliminating the rights of thousands of valid voters is far outweighed by the risk and consequence of allowing an invalid voter. He claims, “Even one case of voter fraud is too many.”

It is incumbent upon any and all state governments whose leaders have a conscious conception of morality and an inner sense of and commitment to deep patriotism toward the principles and laws of America, to rid themselves and their populations from the

scourge and filth this Crosscheck abomination has infected their states with, and its detestable unpatriotic perpetrators, Kris Kobach and his cabal of fraudsters.

## The 2016 Election

Greg Palast has dug deeply into the 2016 election results; and the implications of the Crosscheck fraud, which he reports on in his 2017 updated version of his film: [“The Best Democracy Money Can Buy: The Case Of The Stolen Election.”](#) Ari Berman has also come at this with in depth investigative reporting, verve and severe criticism of voter suppression tactics.

Overall, they call these dirty Republican tactics “voter suppression”. Again in the previously noted NPR interview, Berman described the hard evidence of the impact of SCOTUS restricting the VRA on the 2016 election. At least 200,000 voters could have been suppressed in Wisconsin, decreasing turnout by 3.3%. There was a 40,000 decrease in turn out in Milwaukee, which has a higher population of African Americans and poor. There are still challenge cases working their way through the courts; at least 29 states that have made efforts restricting voting.

Ari Berman, author of the 2015 book, [Give us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America](#), wrote an explosive article in November/December, 2017, issue of Mother Jones Magazine, titled: [“Rigged: How Voter Suppression Threw Wisconsin to the Republican Presidential Nominee: And possibly handed him the whole](#)

[election.”](#)

“Did Wisconsin’s new voter ID law tip the 2016 election? The Republican candidate won Wisconsin by 22,748 votes. Up to 45,000 voters may have been suppressed due to the new law.” Berman, citing various sources and paraphrased here, describes heart-breaking stories of people who have long voted, or new young voters, who were not able to vote or have their votes counted due to this oppressive new voter ID law, which is the strictest ID law in the nation. “Wisconsin, which ranked second in the nation in voter participation in 2008 and 2012, in 2016 saw its lowest turnout since 2000. More than half the state’s decline in turnout occurred in Milwaukee, including some of the most impoverished areas in Wisconsin. Clinton carried Milwaukee by a 77-18 margin, but where almost 41,000 fewer people voted in 2016 than in 2012. Turnout fell only slightly in white middle-class areas of the city but plunged in black ones.” It reflects the total hardship of poor people in both meeting the very restrictive photo ID requirement and being able to vote in something as important as a presidential election.

“Three years after Wisconsin passed its voter ID law in 2011, a federal judge blocked it, noting that 9 percent of all registered voters did not have the required forms of ID. Black voters were about 50 percent likelier than whites to lack these IDs because they were less likely to drive or to be able to afford the documents required to get a current ID, and

more likely to have moved from out of state. Voter suppression played a much larger role than is commonly understood.”

The Republican story is always the same: “The ID law was necessary to stop voter fraud, blaming alleged improprieties at the polls in Milwaukee for narrow losses in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. But when the measure was challenged in court, the state couldn’t present a single case of voter impersonation that the law would have stopped.”

An extensive comprehensive survey study, Berman reported on earlier in his September 25, 2017, *Mother Jones* article, [“A New Study Shows Just How Many Americans Were Blocked From Voting in Wisconsin Last Year,”](#) found hard evidence that “as many as 45,000 statewide were deterred from voting by the ID law. Its impact was particularly acute in Milwaukee, where nearly two-thirds of the state’s African Americans live, 37 percent of them below the poverty line. Milwaukee is the most segregated city in the nation, divided between low-income black areas and middle-class white ones. Milwaukee’s election director estimated that 25 to 35 percent of the 41,000 decrease in voters, or somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 voters, likely did not vote due to the photo ID requirement. It is very probable that between the photo ID law and the changes to voter registration, enough people were prevented from voting to have changed the outcome of the presidential election in Wisconsin,” he said.

The study found racial and so-

cioeconomic disparities among those impacted by the voter restriction law. “The burdens of voter ID fell disproportionately on low-income and minority populations. More than 20 percent of registrants coming from homes with incomes less than \$25,000 say they were kept from voting by the law; 8.3 percent of white voters surveyed were deterred, compared with 27.5 percent of African Americans.” See Image 139 and Image 140 below.

turnout decreased by 1.7 percent in the three states that adopted stricter voter ID laws but increased by 1.3 percent in states where ID laws did not change. Wisconsin’s turnout dropped 3.3 percent. If Wisconsin had seen the same turnout increase as states whose laws stayed the same, ‘we estimate that over 200,000 more voters would have voted in Wisconsin in 2016,’ the study said. These ‘lost voters’ — those who voted in 2012 and 2014 but not 2016 — ‘skewed more

and Wisconsin.”  
 “Wisconsin had a particularly proud history of high voter turnout and expansive voting laws, but when Republicans took control of 26 state legislatures in the wave election of 2010, they passed a slew of laws making it harder to vote. Twenty-two states have adopted new voting restrictions since then, more than half of which first went into effect in 2016, a pattern which Wisconsin followed.”

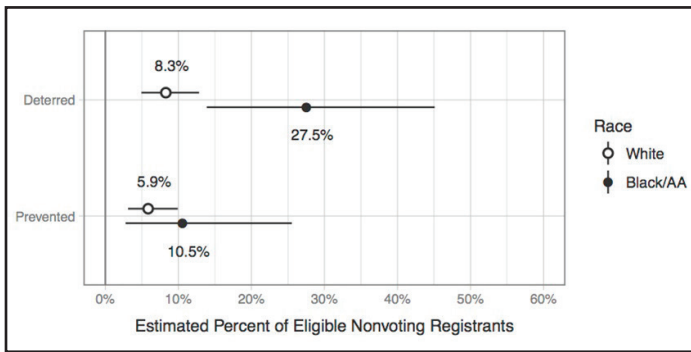


Image 139. “Breakdown of eligible nonvoting registrants by race & income.” Source, Berman, September 25, 2017, *Mother Jones* article: “[A New Study Shows Just How Many Americans Were Blocked From Voting in Wisconsin Last Year](#)”.

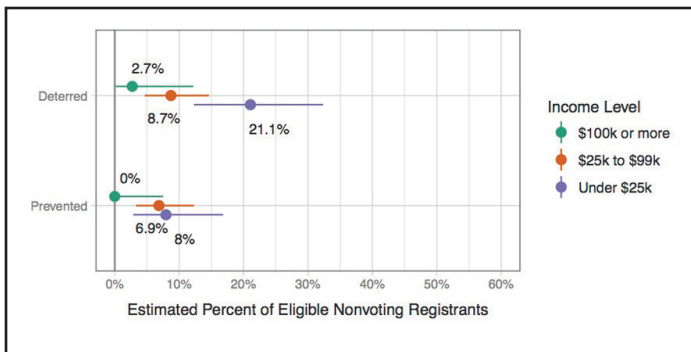


Image 140. “Breakdown of eligible nonvoting registrants by race & income.” Source, Berman, September 25, 2017, *Mother Jones* article: “[A New Study Shows Just How Many Americans Were Blocked From Voting in Wisconsin Last Year](#)”.

“Another post-election study,” Berman points to, “whose conclusions were consistent with a GAO (Government Accountability Office) report, found that in 2016,

due to ID laws, long lines at the polls, and difficulty registering. The Republican candidate won the election by a total of 78,000 votes in Michigan, Pennsylvania,

Regarding Wisconsin’s draconian voting restrictions and in response to a colleague challenging the restrictions, a Republican former State Senator and now a U.S. Congressman, stated as a matter of fact: “What I’m concerned about is winning. We better get this done while we have the opportunity.” Other GOP politicians and operatives were “giddy” about the bills restrictions, including “the board chair of the conservative Koch funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which had helped draft voter ID laws in Wisconsin and other states. Wisconsin’s Legislature cut early voting from 30 days to 12, reduced early voting hours on nights and weekends, and restricted early voting to one location per municipality, hampering voters in large urban areas and sprawling rural ones.”

This is obviously a direct attack on working people, Mr President. Does your party not understand that it’s extremely difficult and costly for hourly wage workers to vote during the work day? Of course the do, because the purpose of this Republican attack on



our country is to do exactly that in order to steal elections. Didn't you claim to be the very one who would represent the interests of hard working hourly wage Americans? Why don't you stand up for their voting rights? Why are you targeting voters with Latino surnames; which it was recently reported, your Kobach-led commission specifically requested Texas to do ("[Sham voter commission asked Texas to flag 'all Hispanic surnames' in voter records](#)").

Or, are you part of the suppression, Mr President, by enabling and abetting this unconstitutional Republican crime of election theft? The cat's out of the bag and you can't hide it anymore. For your own good and that of the nation, Mr President, you need to fire this unpatriotic crook Kobach and his henchmen as a severe liability. Tell him, that "He's a fraud, you're sick of it, and he's FIRED!" You can do that, can't you, Mr President? What do you owe him anyway? Does he have something on you personally?

"The 2016 election was the first presidential contest in more than 50 years without the full protections of the Voting Rights Act, which the Supreme Court gutted in 2013. Arizona made it a felony for anyone other than a family member or caregiver to collect a voter's absentee ballot, disproportionately hurting Latino and Native American voters in the state's rural areas. States, including Wisconsin, are making maverick changes that have a significant impact on populations that have been historically disenfranchised. Emboldened by these efforts, Re-

publican-controlled statehouses have already passed more voting restrictions in 2017 than they did in 2016 and 2015 combined. Taken together, there's no doubt that these election changes affected the turnout among young voters, first-time voters, voters of color, and other members of the Obama coalition that overwhelmingly supported Hillary Clinton."

Berman warns, "Control of Congress in 2018, not to mention the presidential election in 2020, hinges in part on states like Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, New Hampshire, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Virginia that have put new voting restrictions in place. The lesson from 2016 is terrifyingly clear: If voter suppression can work in a state like Wisconsin, with a long progressive history and a culture of high civic participation, it can work anywhere. And if those who believe in fair elections don't start to take this threat seriously, history will repeat itself."

"The U.S. District Judge who oversaw the implementation of the voter ID law, found that Wisconsin's process for issuing IDs was a 'wretched failure' that 'has disenfranchised a number of citizens who are unquestionably qualified to vote.' Eighty-five percent of those denied IDs by the DMV were Black or Latino, he noted in his ruling. It wasn't just poor African Americans who were disenfranchised. Most college IDs were not accepted under the law because they didn't require signatures or have the state-mandated two-year expiration date—a criterion that made little sense at four-year schools.

There were more than 13,000 out-of-state students at UW-Madison alone who were eligible to vote but couldn't do so without going through this byzantine process if they lacked a Wisconsin driver's license or state ID."

"The roster of people denied IDs bordered on the surreal: a man born in a concentration camp in Germany who'd lost his birth certificate in a fire; a woman who'd lost use of her hands but was not permitted to grant her daughter power of attorney to sign the necessary documents at the DMV; a 90-year-old veteran of Iwo Jima who could not vote with his veteran's ID. One woman who died while waiting for an ID was listed as a 'customer-initiated cancellation' by the DMV."

The Judge ruling on the challenge to the restrictive laws, stated: "The Wisconsin experience demonstrates that a preoccupation with mostly phantom election fraud leads to real incidents of disenfranchisement, which undermine rather than enhance confidence in elections, particularly in minority communities."

Mr President? Fair elections?



## 2018 and Beyond

So, what does the future hold for our country with the vicious attack on our representative democracy through our election system by the Republican Party? Who will the political power structure end up “representing”? How will the “countervailing” forces respond to it; or will they? Will the Democratic Party, yet again, shoot itself in the foot, like they did by ignoring, then sabotaging Bernie Sanders in 2016; before the people even have a chance to have their say in who they want to represent them in the 2018 primaries?

The troubles the Democratic Party has been facing have been common in news and comment for some time. A *New York Times* op-ed, [“The Democratic Party Is in Worse Shape Than You Thought”](#), states, “Sifting through the wreckage of the 2016 election, Democratic pollsters, strategists and sympathetic academics have reached some unnerving conclusions. What their autopsy reveals is that Democratic losses among working class voters were not limited to whites; that crucial constituencies within the party see its leaders as alien; and that unity over economic populism may not be able to turn back the conservative tide.”

“A consistent theme is that the focus on white defections from the Democratic Party masks an even more threatening trend: declining turnout among key elements of the so-called Rising American Electorate — minority, young and single voters. Unmarried women, people of color, and

millennials could cast a majority of votes in every election — but only if they vote. Turnout among African-Americans, for example, fell by 7 points, from 66.6 percent in 2012 to 59.6 percent in 2016. The biggest common denominator among voters who shifted from Democrat to Republican votes for the 2016 election is a view that the political system is corrupt and doesn’t work for people like them.”

“Democrats allowed themselves to become the party of the status quo — a status quo perceived to be elitist, exclusionary, and disconnected from the entire range of working-class concerns, but particularly from those voters in white working-class areas. But, why are Democrats losing support and seeing declining turnout from working-class voters of all races in many places?”

### National Democratic Party Doesn’t Yet Get It:

There is a ground swell of populist anger, that even the Democratic Party seems to be ignoring regarding the upcoming 2018 elections. The DNC, the Democratic National Committee, has been purging progressives from their top level ranks in favor of their neoliberal Wall Street establishment operatives, lobbyists and consultants. More of the same elite. Amazingly, they just don’t get it.

Let’s hear from popular progressive Democratic Representative Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii since 2013, formerly a DNC Vice Chair from 2013-2016, when she re-

signed to support Bernie Sanders for President. Gabbard has served two Middle East deployments as an Army Captain soldier, now a war veteran and Major in the Hawaii Army National Guard; she is a member of the House Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. On October 30, 2017, she released an important video titled, [“Tulsi Gabbard Calls for Real Reform to the Democratic Party.”](#)

The point of Tulsi’s video was to “shine light on the most recent actions by Tom Perez, Chair, and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) to cast out those who want to strengthen and reform the party, while continuing to allow lobbyists and consultants a prominent seat at the table. As she has been calling for more than a year, Rep Gabbard again called for ending the undemocratic system of super-delegates and putting a stop to the issues surrounding a lack of transparency and inclusion that has plagued the party. Instead, she says, “The party should be enacting open or same day registration in Democratic primaries to ease and encourage voter engagement.”

It’s about opening the doors and windows; it’s about inclusiveness; it’s about inviting people in; it’s about sharing power with the people, not hoarding it at the top ranks of the national Democratic Party.

In an accompanying *Medium* essay with the same date, [“Don’t Let the Party Insiders Decide,”](#) Gabbard “elaborated on the deep divides within the Democratic Party and the importance of re-

forming the DNC. In her video, Tulsi Gabbard says the DNC must put people over profits and progress over special interests." As a case in point, she reminds us that, "A little over two years ago, I was dis-invited from the first Democratic presidential primary debate after publicly disagreeing with the Chair's decision to limit rather than expand the number of Democratic primary debates. We continue to see deep divides within the Democratic Party that go far beyond substantive issue differences. I wish I could tell you that things have gotten better—that the Democratic National Committee has listened to voters across the country and has returned to our roots as an inclusive party of the people. But that's not the case."

"Recently the DNC Chair, claiming diversity, removed a number of people from the Party's Executive Committee, including Jim Zogby, the only Arab American, while allowing lobbyists and consultants to keep their positions. What did those who were removed have in common? They either supported Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Primary, supported Keith Ellison in the Chair race, or both. The DNC's approach of casting out those who haven't fallen in line with the establishment and who are demanding real reform is destined for failure and further losses."

The National Democratic Party power structure continues to ignore the progressive uprising at their own peril, indeed peril for all of us. The DCCC, the Democratic Congressional Campaign

Committee, is already ignoring what the people want and they are grasping to retain their overlord power-broker status to steer and control even who the primary candidate "winners" will be to represent the people in the 2018 general election—*before the people have their say in the primaries*. This is angering many people who demand an effective involvement.

It's an unbelievably hypocritical outrage; because the DNC and DCCC together are responsible for the loss of over a thousand seats up and down the Democratic ticket during the Obama years. It's past time for them to wake up and loosen their tight grip on dictatorial election power. Let the people in; let the people decide.

### *A Broad Progressive Wave:*

At the local level, which I am part of as a member of the Colorado La Plata County Democrats Executive Committee, in District 3, and the Colorado State Democratic Party Central Committee, there is a huge push for more progressive candidates. This past year we elected progressive state Democrat Morgan Carroll to Chair the Colorado Democratic Party. But where is the "democracy" in the Democratic Party at the national level?

The national Democratic Party establishment is back to their undemocratic tricks of trying to pre-pick winners and losers, even before the people have their say at upcoming party caucuses and assemblies. Why not simply facilitate the people's ability to have their say? Evidently they have

not learned their karmic lessons in democracy, and are sticking with high-priced "30-something" establishment political consultants and lobbyists at the national level rather than listening, with some modicum of humility, to the people at the grassroots level. They still seem to think the winning strategy is to always move toward some mythical middle ground, and reject or even "fight off" progressives. But the center is not holding in today's American politics. And progressives continue to be a rapidly and massively rising emergent force. Who is the Party's base; and where is its heart and soul?

In this time of political turmoil they could yet destroy their chance to offer *real* alternatives, by listening to the people. It's like they have a political death wish; the arrogance at the national level could yet destroy the party. Let democracy breathe, for god's sake!

The growing progressive masses are outraged. We are in political turmoil all the way around. [Indivisible resistance groups](#) witness their ranks swelling, with [two or more groups in every Congressional district](#). Thousands of groups across the nation are [taking Indivisible action in every single congressional district in the U.S.](#) "We are relearning democracy." Women and men together are marching on behalf of women. Movements are growing stronger and stronger, and they are coalescing in complementary ways. Democracy is on the move.

[Intersectionality](#) is a term now in common usage. Through an awareness of intersectionality,

we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us. Intersectionality views the various aspects of humanity, such as class, race, sexual orientation and gender, as not existing separately from each other, but are complexly interwoven, and their relationships are essential to an understanding of the human condition. It helps us better understand systemic injustice and social inequality. Belief-based bigotry and persecution, and the system of oppression they create, do not act in independent ways. At their own peril and that of our country's future, the Wall Street establishment national Democratic Party is out of touch with this people and community centered reality.

### *DCCC Stuck in the Past:*

Michael Sainato, in his January 12, 2018, "[The Real News](#)" article, "[Democrats Openly Back Establishment Candidates for 2018 Primaries](#)", writes: "The DCCC is already deciding primary races in favor of the candidates they prefer." Their support for establishment candidates "comes before the candidates have even won their primary races, in many cases against progressive candidates. Despite the competitive primaries many of their backed candidates face, the DCCC is pouring resources and funding into their campaigns before voters can even decide on who to nominate." This is the opposite from what our local county-level Democratic Party understanding is; we aren't supposed to place our support behind any candidate until *after the*

*primary election*. We invite and listen to all of them.

Even though there are multiple primary challengers in each of these districts, Sainato has interviewed many of the candidates and reports the DCCC is picking and funding their establishment favorites in at least Utah, Illinois, Colorado, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Iowa and Nevada, where he has sought out their thoughts and comments.

One of the primary challenger candidates for Congress expressed his dismay with the national party: "The DCCC has been recruiting nationwide, moderate/centrist candidates. It's a policy which they believe will attract moderate Republican voters to switch sides. Unfortunately we believe that it further ignores progressives and minority voters that are looking for candidates to get behind and participate in the process with. Any pre-primary endorsement by the establishment in contested races is disappointing and misses an opportunity for Dems to fire up the base with early primary participation." And, I might add, the "move to the center" strategy misses entirely the populist outrage the Republican Party has so effectively exploited.

Even current Congressional leaders are calling challengers and encouraging them to drop out because the DCCC is backing someone else. The center is not holding and the DCCC will be left with their "corporate establishment moderates" trying to "lean a bit towards Republicans" standing on the sidelines if they yet again do not wake up to the populist

uprising taking America by storm at this incredible moment of opportunity. The more they grasp at their last vestiges of attachment to centralized power, the higher the risk of losing again, and again, and again, and destroying the opportunity before us.

The testimonials of progressive candidates, Sainato has found, convey similar messages. "It's about the DCCC not trusting the judgment of their own people, not trusting the efforts of local party officials who have worked assiduously to make sure it's a fair fight," a progressive candidate points out. "It's about a systemic effort to disenfranchise Democratic voters." Another said, "The real tragedy of this type of collusion is that it ignores the needs of the voters of this district, who have been forgotten by the Washington establishment. Our community deserves to have its voice heard in Washington, not the other way around." And another, "It is absurd and disheartening for the DCCC to formally endorse a candidate before the local Democratic Farm Laborers members get through the endorsement process."

The anger is pervasive; "It is a sad day when party elites in Washington do not let voters decide who should represent our Democratic Party in the General Election in November... Our grassroots campaign is strong. Our positive message is bringing people together to fight for our common values. I am not trying to win over a party, I am trying to win for the people... I don't think the DCCC should be weighing in on primary contests.

It's inappropriate. We have a district organized for the party, and the DCCC could be helping it prepare for *whoever* wins the nomination... One example of the corrupting influence of money in politics is the Democratic Party supporting candidates because they can fund their own campaigns, have wealthy backers, or are friendly to corporate donors — even if they have no published platform. My district is a crucial one in the balance of power in the House and we should allow people to decide the nominee without interference." The secretive DCCC seems to be a power-broker who is ever hiding behind the proverbial curtain. Sainato concludes with this statement: "The DCCC did not respond to multiple requests for comment on this story."

But for all these grassroots cries for *real* democracy in our election processes, for the national Democratic Party Tweeds, like the Republican Party Tweeds, money seems to rule over people. In another explosive article, January 23, 2018, in *The Intercept*, "[The Dead Enders](#)", investigative reporters Ryan Grim and Lee Fang conclude that "candidates who signed up to do battle against the Republicans must get past the Democratic Party first."

To the list of district candidates Sainato investigated and interviewed, they expand the story of the national DCCC "resisting the resistance" with expansive in depth insights from around the country. They report on progressive candidates for Congressional Districts in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, Minnesota,

New Mexico, New York, Nevada, Arizona, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, California, Iowa, Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Illinois. The big question for the DCCC is always, "How much money can you raise for the party?"

Their investigation digs into why "the DCCC's failure to understand the shifting progressive electorate is costing the party," and why it matters. "Prioritizing fundraising, as Democratic Party officials do, has a feedback effect that creates lawmakers who are further and further removed from the people they are elected to represent." Well that's Larry Lessig's point regarding the "Tweeds" to a tee, isn't it. (Recall: "Two Stage Election Process" on page 87.)

But candidates are now openly rejecting the DCCC. One Congressional candidate said, "At this point I'm not interested in having the DCCC, which has a proven losing record, try to come run my campaign."

People are standing up and forming independent local groups across the country. "In the wake of the 2016 election, a group of despairing Democrats in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, formed a new political group, which came to call itself Lancaster Stands Up, to ensure that they would never be out-organized locally again. Faith leaders, small-business owners, social workers, nonprofit leaders, teachers, and students joined together as part of the historic dusting-off that was taking place all across the country."

Here in Colorado's La Plata County, local Democrats are in-

ternalizing the same lesson, having organized a subcommittee of the La Plata County Democrats, which they call "[The Club—La Plata Dems on the Move](#)." They look to "make elections fun by hosting community events that encourage people of all ages to learn more about and participate in the democratic process." People are hungry to find a place they



can go and meet like-minded people. In a rural county of 55,000 people, with the City of Durango

at its heart, population only 18,500, The Club's monthly \$20 luncheon meetings now attract more than 80 people, and a growing number each month, who come to hear candidates and invited speakers. Their latest speaker is Heidi Steltzer, a local Fort Lewis College ecology professor whose topic is: "Toward Resilience: Valuing People, Place, and Science in a Changing World." The ground is shifting right under the national party's feet.

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**"If you're disappointed by your elected officials, grab a clipboard, get some signatures, and run for office yourself." —**

**Barack Obama**

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"With their newfound confidence, Lancaster progressives looked toward local and federal elections. The group's town halls and protests began to draw eye-popping numbers of people and even attracted national attention." ("[Is This Small City the Fu-](#)

## [ture of Democratic Engagement in America?"\)](#)

Now what do you suppose President Obama meant by that message? “Run for office yourself; but in the end let the lobbyists and consultants of the DCCC decide before you even get into the primary if you get to be a viable candidate or not?” No, I don’t think that’s what he meant.

Last June, one of Lancaster progressive’s own, Jess King, who heads a nonprofit that helps struggling women start and run small businesses in the area, announced that she would be running to take out the Republican incumbent. “It turned out the Democratic Party had other ideas—or, at least, it had an old idea. As is happening in races across the country, party leaders in Washington and in the Pennsylvania district rallied, instead, around a candidate who, in 2016, had raised more money than a Democrat ever had in the district... and suffered a humiliating loss anyway.”

Apparently, DCCC has trouble seeing the writing on the wall. In addition to interviewing multiple progressive candidates, Grim and Fang reported on loss after loss after loss of DCCC establishment supported candidates, backed with lots of money, to Republicans. “The simultaneous announcement of endorsements from the top elected officials in the party is a way to send a signal that the party has chosen its candidate against populist progressive candidates. Across the country, the DCCC, its allied groups, or leaders within the Democratic Party are working hard against some

of these new candidates for Congress, publicly backing their more established opponents, according to interviews with more than 50 candidates, party operatives, and members of Congress.”

“In district after district, the national party is throwing its weight behind candidates who are out of step with the national mood. In many of those districts, there is at least one progressive challenger the party is working to elbow aside, some more viable than others. It’s happening despite a very real shift going on inside the party’s establishment, even as it increasingly recognizes the value of small-dollar donors and grassroots networks.”

### *Shedding the DCCC:*

“But change is hard, and it isn’t happening fast enough for progressive candidates. So a constellation of outside progressive groups are stepping in, seeing explosive fundraising gains while the Democratic National Committee falls further and further behind. The time between now and July, by which most states will have held primaries, will be among the most important six months for the future of the Democratic Party, as the contests will decide what kind of party heads into the midterms in November 2018. The outcome will also shape the Democratic strategy for 2020, which in turn will shape the party’s agenda when and if it does reclaim power.”

Many are not waiting. Recall the January cover story of *In These Times*, January 4, 2018, by Theo

Anderson, mentioned earlier on page 91, “[Move Over, Corporate Democrats; A New Wave of Left Populists Is on the Rise—It’s 2018 and candidates don’t need the establishment anymore.](#)” “In the process of confronting corruption in U.S. politics, this new electoral infrastructure is clarifying what it means to be a progressive. For progressives, there is the bitter irony that the primary potential vehicle for reforming the system—the Democratic Party—is entrenched in and dependent on that system of big money donors, and is deeply suspect among not only progressives but the general public.”

“A CNN poll released in early November 2017 showed that 54 percent of respondents had an unfavorable view of the party—its worst showing since 1992. (Sixty-one percent had an unfavorable view of the GOP.) Only 36 percent of registered Democrats said they were extremely or very enthusiastic about voting in 2018, one point lower than the level of enthusiasm expressed by registered Republicans.”

Will the Tweeds prevail, given the DCCC money-focused pattern of priorities once elected representatives get into office, whoever they are? Grim and Fang report that, “In 2013, the DCCC offered a startling presentation for incoming lawmakers, telling them they would be expected to immediately begin four hours of ‘call time’ every day they were in Washington. That’s time spent dialing for dollars from high-end donors. Spending that much time on the phone with the same class of peo-

ple can unconsciously influence thinking.”

Any elected Congressional Representative who spends half their time seeking money for the DCCC instead of working on behalf of their constituents and our country should have their *heart* examined, to say nothing of their head. Why did they run and what did their supporters expect of them in Washington?

One former Democratic Representative was quoted as saying, “There is an enormous anti-populist element in the party, who are most likely to be hearing from people who can write at least a \$500 check. They may be liberal, quite liberal, in fact, but are also more likely to consider the deficit a bigger crisis than the lack of jobs. The time spent fundraising,” he said in 2013, “helps to explain why many from very safe Dem districts who might otherwise be pushing the conversation to the left, or at least willing to be the first to take tough votes, do not — because they get their leadership positions by raising money from the same donors noted above.”

This is testimonial to the corrupting influence of Tweedism that so pollutes our election process. Refresh your mind by reviewing “Image 110. Our National Election Process — What we need; What we have” on page 97.

Anderson’s article makes this observation: “But what if all the attention on the party establishment misses an important, bigger-picture development?” He broadly “points to the emergence of a new model and a new infrastructure for redefining the

Democratic Party. An infrastructure that’s capable of recruiting, grooming and supporting candidates already committed to a strong progressive platform and who, though they often run as Democrats, have only marginal allegiance to or need for the Democratic Party. In other words, it’s about running progressive candidates and offering them a network of independent support, rather than pushing the party establishment left.” He speaks of groups such as, “Our Revolution (OR), and the Working Families Party (WFP), People’s Action, Brand New Congress (BNC), Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), and Justice Democrats (JD).”

Groups like “OR, BNC and JD restrict the candidates they endorse from accepting corporate PAC donations. They do allow donations from union and other non-corporate PACs, based on a vetting process. The great fault line between establishment Democrats and the new electoral infrastructure comes down to corporate influence. It’s partly an issue of optics—it just looks bad that Democrats get so much money from corporate PACs. But it goes deeper. It’s also a question of passion, and the capital that Democrats are willing to invest in reforms, such as regulating big Wall Street banks, that would benefit their constituents but are opposed by their donors.”

**Déjà vu.** Anderson recalls for us the Progressive Party platform of 1912. “The Republican and Democratic parties,” the platform said, “have become the tools of corrupt interests which use them impar-

tially to serve their selfish purposes. Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.” That’s Tweedism; and today it manifests directly from the Koch machine.

Grim and Fang continue, “If money isn’t necessarily the best path to victory, the fact that smart Washington based operatives continue to make it the key variable regardless raises the question of what other motivations may be in play.” The answer is simple, they say, quoting a former House Democrat: “It’s a racket. There were leaders in the Democratic Party that were discouraging people from donating to me. The Democratic and Republican parties are commercial enterprises and they’re very much interested in their own survival. The money race is probably more important to them than the issues race in some cases.” It’s of course characteristic of our duopoly, which we discussed earlier: “Two Party Duopoly and Government Dysfunction” on page 86.

They asked the former House member to explore that point: “How much of the focus on fundraising,” we asked, “has to do with pumping money into this ecosystem of consultants and everybody else?” He responded, “That’s what I mean, its a commercial enterprise.” They point out that what they’ve learned is “the way to win party support is to pass the phone test. If the candidates’ contacts aren’t good for at least \$250,000, or in some cases much more, they fail the test, and

party support goes elsewhere. That emphasis on fundraising can lead the party to make the kinds of decisions that leave ground-level activists furious.”

*The Intercept* got additional perspective on the DCCC from the 2016 New York congressional candidate Zephyr Teachout, a progressive activist and law professor, who won her primary campaign in New York, but lost the general election. “The self-funder business moderate ideological approach, even if you agree with it,” she says, “is a flawed strategy structurally. Structurally, they’re going to be idiots because there’s no way they can bring in the talent to do it right,” she told *The Intercept* of the DCCC’s approach to picking candidates. “Their strategy is stupid in the first place and bad for democracy, but then it’s really stupid because they have 26-year-olds sitting around who don’t know anything about the real world deciding which candidates should win.”

*The Intercept*’s Ryan Grim and Lee Fang found that, “This time around, the DCCC doesn’t want a replay of the 2016 presidential primary, with a big, roiling debate over the party’s fundamental values swamping warmed-over talking points about party unity and opposition to the GOP. The D-trip’s solution, though, amounts to asking the candidates on the Bernie Sanders side of the equation to play nice.” A DCCC memorandum of understanding asks candidates to make a pledge to them, that includes allowing DCCC to direct how their campaign will be run, and the DCCC’s

intent to “provide messaging and strategic guidance.”

“Fundamentally, what the DCCC’s phone test does is change the kind of person who can run and win, which then changes the kind of person who is representing the party to the public. Because the key variable that decides party support is fundraising, the DCCC’s decision-making is often ideological in its result, even if that was not the intent. By focusing on dollars, the party winds up with medical device executives, rather than American government teachers or football coaches.”

A few clear patterns emerged from their review of a handful of primary races: “There’s almost always an obvious political difference between the candidates the party backs and those it doesn’t, but in other areas—gender, race, sexual orientation, and professional background, for example—the congressional hopefuls on both sides of the divide are similarly diverse. In what is perhaps the crux of the issue, the Democratic Party machinery can effectively shut alternative candidates out before they can even get started. The party only supports viable candidates, but it has much to say about who can become viable.”

In one Colorado district, for example, the DCCC is supporting an establishment candidate from a powerhouse law and lobbying firm, over the progressive candidate who is a clean energy expert and entrepreneur. “State Party Chair Morgan Carroll protested the DCCC’s support for the establishment candidate over the pro-

gressive, stating, “The DCCC verbally said they would be neutral, yet in practice they just endorsed one of the candidates in CD6.”

Last year Morgan told me personally that when she ran for Congress in her Denver-area district, she had the “30-something” D-trip consultants telling her where, how and what message she “must” put forth in her TV advertising. She vehemently disagreed, but it was DCCC money so she had to acquiesce. And she lost, because it became a prime-time TV messaging battle with millions of dollars of Koch money dumped into the effort. She told me, “I knew my district; these DCCC so-called experts did not.”

Grim and Fang point out some hope, “The bad news for grassroots activists is that the Democratic Party’s leaders cannot be reasoned with. But they can be beaten.” Their *Intercept* article reports multiple examples where the DCCC backed the more conservative establishment candidate, not spending any money to help progressives, only to see their backed candidate “get smoked” by those who openly supported progressive causes. One female candidate spent less than \$300,000 and, on the back of progressive enthusiasm, won the general election.

The DCCC is still intrusively asserting its demands about candidate spending. In its “contract” with candidates it demands “that at least 75 percent of their campaign budget be spent on paid advertising. They want you to spend a certain amount of money on consultants, and it’s their list of consultants you have to choose



from. Those consultants tend to be DCCC veterans.”

But there are signs of change. “The party now looks at whether a candidate has the backing of local Indivisible or other activist chapters when evaluating potential lawmakers. That is a significant change and suggests a tantalizing future for the party. The paradoxical long-term result could be the creation of a two-party system, in which one is fueled by millions of small dollar donors and the other is backed by a handful of billionaires. And it is not an outcome the DCCC is necessarily opposed to as an institution, though the consultant factions that make a living off the current system would need to be overcome.”

“Throughout its modern history, despite an official policy of remaining neutral in Democratic primaries, the DCCC has stepped into races to boost favored candidates. Increased party primary meddling in races in parts of the country has come at a time when the DCCC is increasingly wedded to congressional moderates. The DCCC is leaning on business-friendly Democrats to take back the House. Collaboration with right-leaning Democratic groups, and deciding how to best steer resources to a growing slate of centrist Democratic candidates, is a stunning reversal for a party that has seen a groundswell of support for progressive ideas. They are lining up with PACs fueled by the biggest spenders on congressional campaigns on K Street, the term Washingtonians use colloquially to refer to a center of corporate lobbyist shops.

These PACs spend money recruiting and financing moderate Democrats.”

Progressive candidates need to focus on being progressive, not being money servants to the national party power structure. Candidates need to think carefully before signing and committing to some “DCCC Memorandum of Understanding” agreement that allows the national party to tie their hands. We should all be on the same democratic page that allows the people to decide. That’s the only way to win 2018.

### *Ralph Nader on Why the Democratic Party loses:*

With the Republican Party being a collection of unpatriotic election stealing criminals, how is it they get away with it? Why can’t the Democrats do anything about it?

“The Democratic Party is at its lowest ebb in the memory of everyone now alive. It’s lost the White House and both houses of Congress. On the state level it’s weaker than at any time since 1920. How did it come to this? One person the Democratic Party is not going to ask, but perhaps should, is legendary consumer advocate and three-time presidential candidate Ralph Nader.”

This observation begins an interview article with Ralph Nader in *The Intercept*, January 25, 2018, “[Ralph Nader: The Democrats Are Unable to Defend the U.S. from the “Most Vicious” Republican Party in History](#)”. While Democratic Party loyalists, and certainly the corporate establish-

ment wing represented by the DNC and DCCC despise Nader, [I love Ralph Nader](#). He is a true American hero, who has fought for our democracy and people all his life. If Democrats woke up to even half of what he’s been saying, we might not be losing so much and so often.

In fact, the article points out, “Nader and his organizations have previously collaborated with congressional Democrats to pass a flurry of landmark laws protecting the environment, consumers and whistle-blowers. Journalist William Greider described him as one of America’s top models for small-d democratic activism.”

But uninformed Democrats continue to excoriate him, in particular hanging on to the myth that because he won 97,000 votes in Florida in the 2000 election, he was the reason Bush II won—as if Bush didn’t steal the election; Nader stole “all those votes that rightfully belonged to Democrats.” What a bizarrely arrogant self-serving premise; Democrats acting like little Republican children blaming someone else (“illegal voters”) for stealing votes that rightfully belong to them.

If you’re still stuck in those ridiculous Democratic talking points, you need to wake up to reality by reading the documented summary in my [Edition 3](#) about what happened and why; and perhaps track down further truth about how the fiasco was handled in the courts and in the media in this November 12, 2001, *Consortium News* article, titled [Gore’s Victory](#). It makes a poignant point relevant to the next discussion about

the Republican preparations for yet another election theft 18 years hence in the 2018 election: “The national news media also showed little regard for the fundamental principle of democracy: that leaders derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, not from legalistic tricks, physical intimidation and public-relations maneuvers.”

Nader points out the difficulty in dislodging the entrenched Democratic establishment and the futility in even trying that as a potential path for change. “There are some people who think the Democratic Party can be reformed from within by changing the personnel. I say good luck to that. What’s happened in the last twenty years? They’ve gotten more entrenched.”

And, he makes a key point about the party’s continual slide, that the money-for-advertisement DCCC could well learn from: “The Democrats decided to campaign by TV, with political consultants influencing them and getting their 15-20 percent cut. When you campaign by TV you campaign by slogans, you don’t campaign by policy. As a result they took the economic issues off the table that used to win again and again in the thirties and forties for the Democrats. No; *policy* precedes message.”

“Even as labor unions, a traditional Democratic base, were getting weaker, the Democrats insisted on a TV war strategy, where labor began shelling out huge money to the Democrats for television. And as they became weaker they lost their grassroots

mobilization on behalf of the Democrats. They abandoned their base and policies directed toward making life better for their base.”

It became a TV ad money game, where “the Democrats began the process of message preceding policy. Focusing on bringing in more TV ad money means they kept saying how bad the Republicans are.” (See also: “[Democrats: A Party of Beggars](#)”, *DC Report*, January 29, 2018)

Even this 2017 “contract” the DCCC wants all Congressional candidates to sign, handing over control of their campaigns to their clueless consultants, states: “The Candidate agrees to focus on preserving at least 75% of funds raised for paid communications,” that the DCCC consultants will control. No “independent thinking” candidates need apply.

“Now once they say message should precede policy,” Nader points out, “they trap their progressive wing, because their progressive wing is the only segment that’s going to change the party to be a more formidable opponent. Because they say to their progressive wing, ‘You’ve got nowhere to go, get off our back.’ Instead, they blame progressives for interfering. They never look at themselves in the mirror. The Democrats want uniformity, they want to shut people up.”

“They make sure by harassing progressive third parties that the third party never pushes them. I’m an expert on that. They try to get them off the ballot. We had twenty-four lawsuits by the Democratic Party in twelve weeks in the summer of 2004 to get us off

the ballots of dozens of states. Whereas if we got five percent, six percent of the vote they would be under great pressure to change their leadership and change their practice because there would be enough American voters who say to the Democrats, ‘We do have some place to go,’ a viable third party. Vote your conscience; not your fears.”

“If you put Republican politicians today before the ghosts of Teddy Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, and “Mr Conservative” Senator Robert Taft, they’d roll over in their grave. That’s how radically extremist, cruel, vicious, Wall Street, and militarist the Republican Party is. Which means that the Democrats should have land-slided them. Not just beaten them, land-slided them in legislatures around the country, governorships, president and the Congress. But instead, they keep scapegoating others for their failures.”

“Unfortunately, to put it in one phrase, the Democrats are unable to defend the United States of America from the most vicious, ignorant, corporate-indentured, militaristic, anti-union, anti-consumer, anti-environment, anti-posterity Republican Party in history.”

What Nader says is historically true, and the above discussion about the DCCC validates his point to this very day. Yet, in the face of such a daunting task, because of the rising potential for a progressive revolution, I remain hopeful myself that progressives can take over this lost and unfocused party and instill some

desperately needed progressive vision for the future. Was it not Churchill who said: “Success is going from failure to failure, with no loss of enthusiasm.” But then again, maybe it was Einstein who said, “The definition of insanity is trying the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” DNC & DCCC: Either help progressives win, or move over and get out of the way. You’re hopelessly lost in your own Beltway bubble of power delusion. You’re hurting not only the prospects for Democratic Party wins; you’re hurting our country — America!

If you don’t let go, the prospects are not bright, as Nader makes note; we will only get more of the same corporate ideological dogma from the Corporate R&D duopoly. And it needs to be said that if these corporate forces and concentrated money, the Democratic Party establishment is so indentured to, can’t let go of their grasp on the party power, their very patriotism for our country is in question.

Until I changed to a registered Democrat in order to support Bernie Sanders and run to be a Democratic National Delegate for him, I was a lifetime Independent. And [I have voted for Ralph Nader for president all three times he ran](#) because he had the right insights and knew what we had to do to save our democracy and our country. I voted my conscience for my country’s sake, not my fears. Fear is a ploy the Democratic Party typically still plays to try and keep Democrats and Independents thinking, “You have no

other realistic choice. Look how bad the alternative is, don’t throw your vote away on some progressive who can’t possibly win. The only progressive alternative you’ll ever get is the corporate neoliberal establishment we give you. We own progressive votes; they’re ours by default.” That’s why the party has been such a failure in recent years.

I now call myself an “Independent Progressive Democrat” (independent in lots of ways, but independent of the DNC and DCCC, in particular). From that position, let’s continue to examine “the most vicious Republican Party in history” and how it keeps winning, because as Nader says: “the Democrat Party, as it’s constituted right now, is unable to defend the United States of America from this vicious Republican onslaught. The progressive wing is the only segment that’s going to change the party to be a more formidable opponent.”

Will the party wake up to reality in time? But wait, there is hope! Time’s up! The time is now! Let’s hit the ground running!

### *Political Revolution is On the Progressive Horizon:*

Everywhere you turn you see the rising force of progressive populism. And no one better catalyzes those forces than the most respected and trusted politician in the country, Senator Bernie Sanders. “A new poll found he is the most popular politician in America. But instead of embracing his message, establishment Democrats continue to resist him,”

writes Trevor Timm, last spring, March 17, 2017, in *The Guardian*, [“Everyone loves Bernie Sanders. Except, it seems, the Democratic party”](#).

Sanders recently conducted a “Medicare for All” town hall style meeting, which completely circumvented the corporate media. On January 24, 2018, one of the reports stated, CNN released a poll showing Sanders with a 57 percent favorability rating. Among Democrats that number was 82 percent. Do you still plan to fight this wave, DNC and DCCC, backing establishment candidates for 2018 Congress and 2020 Congress and President, instead of progressives; or join a winning growing movement? ([“Bernie Sanders summons team to discuss 2020”](#), Politico, January 25, 2018: “Sen. Bernie Sanders has remained toward the top of polls surveying the potential Democratic field without fail after his stunning 2016 bid.”)

The day after the event, January 24, 2018, it was reported everywhere, except the corporate media; in the *Huffington Post* ([“Bernie Sanders’ ‘Medicare For All’ Online Town Hall Draws Over 1 Million Live Viewers”](#)) and *In These*



Image 141. Sign at the Town Hall meeting.

*Times* (“[Bernie Sanders Just Sidestepped Corporate Media to Promote Medicare for All to 1 Million Viewers](#)”) and on January 25th in *The Wisconsin Gazette*, “[Viewership for Sanders’ Medicare for All Town Hall reaches prime time number](#).” All sources reporting that over 1 million viewers watched the event live online, in addition to the capacity packed auditorium of 450 people. This is an entirely new phenomenon.

Sanders opened with these remarks: “This is the first Medicare for All town meeting held in our nation’s capital. This is the first nationally televised town meeting on Medicare for all. And very importantly, this is the first nationally televised Senate town meeting that is taking place outside of corporate media.”

*HuffPost* noted, Sanders said it “demonstrated that a lengthy seminar on the complicated topic of single-payer health care can draw a crowd as large as many primetime cable news shows. What makes the current moment different, he argued, is that the same digital revolution that made his campaign possible also allows progressives to communicate directly with the public.”

*In These Times* commented, “The democratic socialist senator’s town hall on universal healthcare marks a new phase in the political revolution. Sanders’ town hall showed the senator—currently the most popular politician in the United States—freed from the confines of traditional mainstream media and able to dig in to issues ranging from healthcare to campaign financing to the corruption

of our political system. Sanders’ cry for “political revolution” has always been more about process than specific policy—multiplying and opening up the channels of information and fostering robust democratic engagement.”

“The Medicare for All town hall may have been but a small step, yet it confirmed that Sanders—who has about 7.5 million Facebook followers, hosts a podcast, and regularly creates polished and shareable video content—recognizes the promise of the burgeoning new media infrastructure and is moving quickly to take advantage of it. Which is a wise move if you say you want a revolution. By engaging these audiences directly, Sanders is reaching a large pool of potential voters who seek their news outside of traditional outlets. It’s Sanders’ devotion to ideas and policy that distinguishes him.”

“Sanders is well known for decrying the billionaire class and the sad state of American democracy. But what’s made him so popular isn’t anger or cynicism. It’s the fact that he seems to have a stubborn faith in people, genuinely believing that core values of equality and fairness are what drive most Americans, rather than simply the pursuit of power and profits. To address the deep problems in our country and society, he has proposed bold solutions that challenge entrenched power while providing a higher standard of living for the majority of people, whether through Medicare for All, a \$15 minimum wage, free public college or reform of our broken criminal justice system.”

“In order to achieve these radical policy changes, Sanders has made it a priority to educate Americans on both the profound challenges we face and how we can take them on. He has shown a stubborn belief that the people, supplied with the true facts of the situation, will choose to build a better democracy.”

The future for the Democratic Party is not in DCCC chosen corporate establishment candidates, based on their money raising potential. It is in furthering and supporting a progressive revolution based on what the *people* want.

The national Democratic Party doesn’t yet get it. This is about the heart and soul of the Party. Where do its values lie—money or people? Is its base establishment or progressive? The “Sacred Money and Markets Story” on page 24; or the “Sacred Life and Living Earth Story” on page 25?

## Republican Strategy — Steal More Elections

Ari Berman has come out with a comprehensive look at the Republican election corruption today in his January 24, 2018, *Rolling Stone* article, titled: “[How the GOP Rigs Elections](#)”. The subheading states: “With a combination of gerrymandering, voter-ID laws and dark money, Republicans have tipped the political scales in their favor. Will it be enough to keep Democrats from claiming victory in 2018?”

Well, if the national Democratic leadership wakes up quickly to the possibilities with a progres-

sive revolution and endeavors to nourishes it, not fight it; no, their strategy of stealing elections hopefully won't be enough this time. The Republican Party has turned themselves into a toxic waste dump. "Just three in 10 Americans have a favorable view of the Republican Party, and Democratic voters' enthusiasm to vote in 2018 tops Republican voters' by 17 points."

Progressives can win by huge margins and end the tyranny of Republican Party election theft. The only question is, will the national level party power brokers, the DNC and the DCCC, drop their neoliberal establishment pre-primary selection bias that brings in Tweed money; and get behind the progressive movement, powered by millions of people making small donations? Or, will they continue to fight progressives and lose ...and lose ...and keep on losing while driving the Democratic Party into the ground? What a crime that would be, not only for the party, but for our country.

Berman builds his story around the Wisconsin paradigm; a model of Republican election corruption. And the Republican Party is hell bent on exporting this criminal strategy to other states all around the country.

## Wisconsin Ground-Zero: Paradigm of Republican Election Theft Corruption

### *A multifaceted Criminal Enterprise:*

"The gerrymandering in Wisconsin, which experts call among the most extreme in U.S. history, is but one part of Republicans' stealth plan to stay in office. Since Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican Legislature took power, they've also introduced some of the country's harshest voting restrictions, passing laws that make it harder for Democratic-leaning constituencies to register to vote and cast ballots. At the same time, the state has become the 'Wild West of dark money,' according to Lisa Graves, a senior fellow at the Madison-based [Center for Media and Democracy](#), (a [corruption watchdog group](#) that bird-dogs groups like ALEC and the Kochs). Republican politicians like Walker are raising unprecedented sums from billionaire donors to finance their campaigns."

Quoting Eric Holder, Barack Obama's attorney general, who founded the *National Democratic Redistricting Committee* in 2016 to challenge Republican gerrymandering efforts, Berman writes: "All three of these things have to be seen as part of a whole," says Holder. "Unregulated dark money combined with these voter-ID laws combined with gerrymandering is inconsistent with how our nation's system is supposed to be set up. American citizens ought to be concerned about the state of our democracy. We could end up with a system where a well-financed minority that has views inconsistent with the vast majority of the American people runs this country."

"A beleaguered Republican Party tainted by an unpopular pres-

ident could still retain majorities in 2018 and 2020. 'It's not a level playing field,' says Tom Perez, head of the Democratic National Committee. 'There are millions of people whose votes effectively don't count.' And as a measure of the GOP's ability to maintain a political advantage, despite widespread public opposition to its policies, look no further than Wisconsin. 'We've been under a counterrevolution here for the past six years,' says Matt Rothschild, executive director of the *Wisconsin Democracy Campaign*, which tracks the influence of money in politics. 'Walker has urged other states to follow his model. Reactionary politics is a big Wisconsin export now.'" So, Wisconsin is exporting the Republican strategy of election theft to the rest of the country. This is a measure of how sick our democracy is.

## Exhibit A: Wisconsin Gerrymandering

Regarding Wisconsin's redistricting, "The GOP was in control of the state's redistricting process for the first time since the 1950s. Their aides were drawing new political districts in secret following the 2010 census. The legislators signed confidentiality agreements, pledging not to discuss the work with anyone, even though the redistricting was financed with taxpayer funds. 'Public comments on this map may be different than what you hear in this room,' read the talking points distributed to GOP legislators. 'Ignore the public comments. The maps we pass will determine who's here 10

Such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks and all it wants is the liberty of appearing — *Thomas Paine*

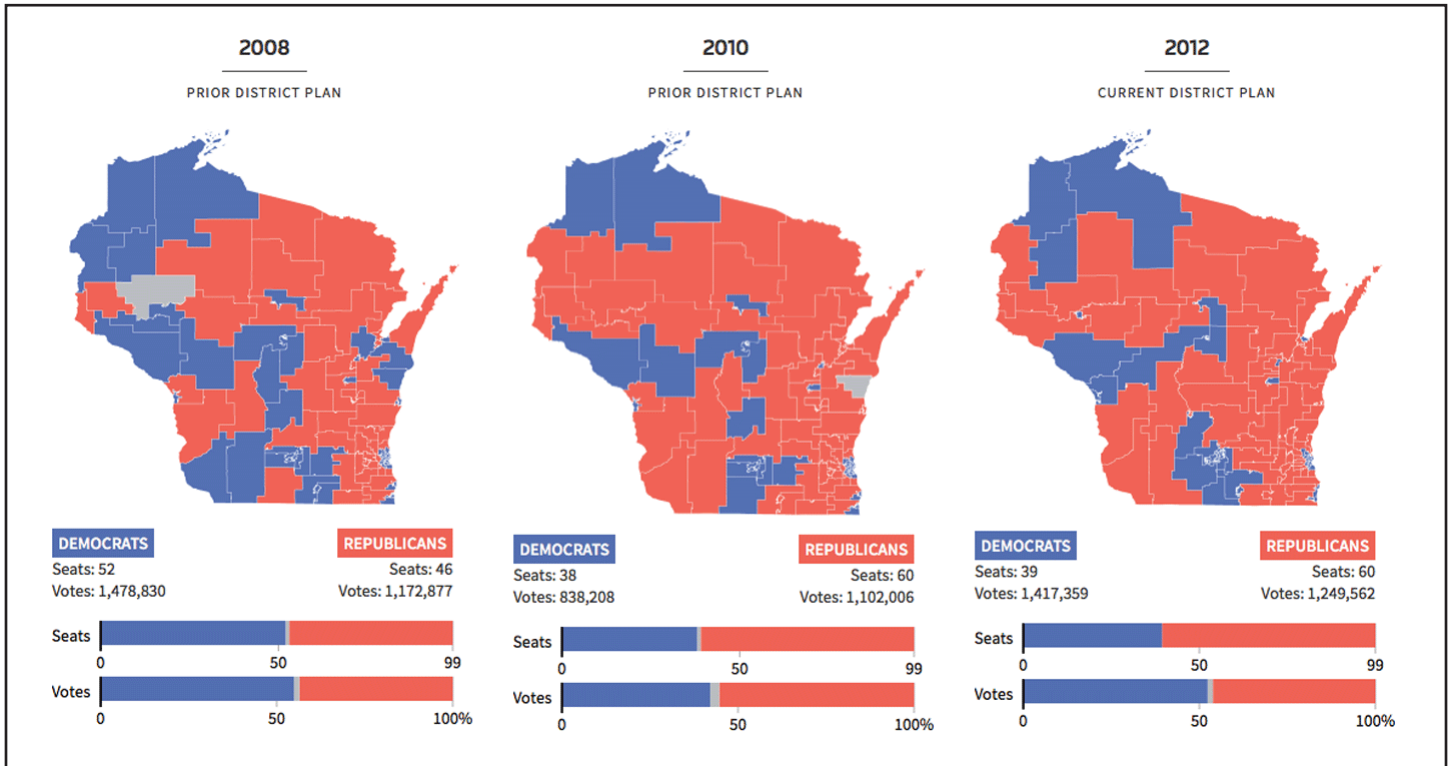


Image 142. “The Most Serious Challenge to Gerrymandering in Modern Times Reaches the Supreme Court. A Wisconsin case could break the grip of partisans on the process that defines whether elections are competitive. The Supreme Court will hear arguments over claims that Wisconsin Republicans intentionally drafted state electoral districts in 2011 to drown out the voting strength of Democrats.” [John Nichols, October 2, 2017, The Nation.](#)

years from now,’ a legislative aide told the Republican caucus. ‘We have an opportunity...to draw these maps that Republicans haven’t had in decades.’ There was one public hearing, two days later, and the reshaped districts were approved the next week on a party-line vote. One district had been radically transformed, from a 50/50 swing district to one that favored a Republican by 16 points. Both this and the neighboring senate district were politically competitive before the lines were redrawn. ‘For the citizens, their vote really mattered,’ said a former state senator. ‘That’s the way it ought to be in every single district in America.’ As a result, Republicans gained at least two seats in the state Legislature, with

Democratic voters concentrated in the urban centers of the two counties.”

“Most of the state Legislature’s Republican majority has been secured. In 2012, Obama carried Wisconsin by seven points, and Democratic legislative candidates received 51.4 percent of the statewide vote, but Republican candidates won 60 of 99 seats in the Statehouse. Under the Republican map, the number of safe GOP seats in the 132-member legislature increased from 55 to 69, and the number of swing districts decreased from 24 to 13. It’s a practically foolproof system: No matter what happened nationally, Republicans would maintain control of state politics.”

Is this James Madison’s vision

for our representative democracy, as he was drafting our Constitution? (Recall “Not What Our Founders Intended:” on page 89) No! Is this “just the way politics us supposed to work, one dirty tactic after another as if it’s all just the way the nasty game of politics is played; just get used to it?” No! “Is this just a friendly disagreement between one set of politicians and ‘our good friends on the other side of the aisle’ bullshit line we so often hear, like they’re all just part of one big private club—some wearing blue jerseys, others wearing red?” Hell no! When are Democrats going to quit whining about “voter suppression”, as if it’s just a political dirty tricks phenomenon and start calling this out as what it actually

is; *criminal election fraud* perpetrated by the Republican Party.

This is nothing less than high level treasonous corruption and the undermining of any sense of political decency, dignity, justice, fairness and equal representation in our country's democratic processes. It's criminal, if you value what our Constitution says about voting and representation. The entire point of the "one person, one vote" doctrine, which requires electoral districts to be apportioned according to population, thus making each district roughly equal in population, is fairness in equal representation — not just population numbers. The Supreme Court ruled in 1964 that "state legislatures needed to redistrict [based on census data] in order to have congressional districts with roughly equal represented populations." "[The idea behind the rule is that one person's voting power ought to be roughly equivalent to another person's within the state.](#)"

*Equal representation* — it's not what Republican gerrymandering hath wrought. It's not just a process of equaling population numbers. It's the *outcome* of equal representation that matters, when process is in question. It's about *equal representation of power*, as expressed in a fair way by the governed people.

Unless we get a handle on this corruption soon, if it hasn't already, it will completely take over control of the power structure, including making a tragic farce out of our bi-annual election carnival. As we can see, once they get control, they change the rules so



Image 143. National Democratic Redistricting Committee. "The biggest rigged system in America is gerrymandering. Together we can change that and restore fairness to our democracy. Join our fight because politicians shouldn't choose their voters—voters should choose their representatives." Eric H. Holder, Jr, 82nd U.S. Attorney General and NDRC Chairman. <https://democraticredistricting.com/> [More Information About Redistricting.](#)

*no one* can take the control away from them — *ever!* Exhibit A (Wisconsin Gerrymandering) is primal Sheldon Wolin's "inverted totalitarianism" (page 82). People need to be knowledgeable about the impact it is having on our democracy. Madison warned, "Peo-



Image 144. Founding Father wisdom in the face of modern day Republican fraud.

ple who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives them," (page 157).

### It's not just Wisconsin:

"Following the 2010 elections, Republicans had full control of the redistricting process for state legislative and U.S. House seats in 21 states, compared with eight states for Democrats. Republicans now hold as many as 22 additional House seats because of gerrymandering, according to an analysis by the Associated Press — nearly the same margin as the 24 seats Democrats need in order to take back the House. During the 2012 elections, Democratic House candidates won 1.4 million more votes nationally than Republicans, but the GOP won 33 more seats."

"Of course, Democrats have also employed gerrymandering to gain partisan advantage, including in blue states like Illinois and Maryland. But in the past decade Republicans have turned the manipulation of political lines into an art form, especially employing high-tech methods."

What will the Republican controlled Supreme Court, with its Republican stolen seat filled by a blatantly rightwing corporate justice,

have to say about it this year? “Democrats in Wisconsin went to court to contest these efforts. In November 2016, a federal court panel surprisingly struck down Wisconsin’s state legislative maps as ‘an unconstitutional political gerrymander’ that was ‘intended to burden the representational rights of Democratic voters...by impeding their ability to translate their votes into legislative seats.’ Republicans appealed to the Supreme Court, which will rule on the landmark case, *Gill v. Whitford*, this year. The justices have the chance to outlaw partisan gerrymandering not just in Wisconsin but nationwide, for the first time in American history. ‘It would be a really big deal for the court to say there’s limits on how far you can go when it comes to partisan gerrymandering,’ Holder says.”

Will Republican cynical hypocrisy prevail with this upcoming Supreme Court ruling and bring forth the true Republican colors; which by their actions they have demonstrated cannot be red, white and blue; but more like the color of sewer water oozing from a toxic waste dump? Or, will the Court’s moral conscience guide them to protect our democracy under the Constitution of the United States? The very integrity will yet again be on the line for America’s highest court, about which Article III §2 of the U.S. Constitution states regarding the Court’s power: “The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and *Equity*, arising under this Constitution, [and] the Laws of the United States...” [emphasis added].

On the positive front, there is a bit of good news, Berman reports. “The lower courts have already signaled a willingness to push back on unfair redistricting. On January 9th, a federal court struck down North Carolina’s U.S. House map, which gives Republicans a 10-to-three advantage over Democrats, the first time a federal court has invalidated congressional lines for partisan gerrymandering. But on January 18th, the Supreme Court blocked the redrawing of North Carolina’s maps, pending appeal.”

Berman’s January 24th article points out that, “GOP-drawn districts have also been struck down in Alabama, Florida, Virginia and Texas. Many of these rulings are similarly being appealed by Republicans, making it unlikely such districts will be redrawn before the 2018 elections. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down the state’s Congressional maps – which give Republicans a 13 to 5 advantage – and ordered they be redrawn in 2018, boosting Democratic prospects in the state.”

And in this fast moving season of election court challenges, it was reported by [Democracy Now! on February 6, 2018](#), that the “Supreme Court Refuses to Block PA Ruling on Gerrymandering.” The headline article stated: “The U.S.

Supreme Court has refused to block the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s ruling that the state’s congressional map unconstitutionally favors Republicans and must be redrawn. Monday’s ruling now means Pennsylvania lawmakers must redraw the state’s 18 House districts, a move that is widely expected to benefit Democrats during the 2018 midterm elections.”

But many problems are yet locked in. “In Virginia, where the party won the Virginia governor’s race and picked up a surprising 15 seats in the state’s House of Delegates in November, Democratic candidates for the House of Delegates won 224,000 more votes than Republicans but were still denied a majority. A Virginia-like result would produce few gains for Democrats in more heavily gerry-

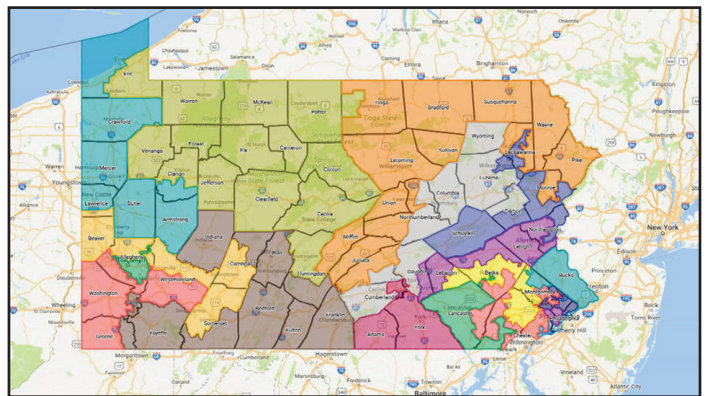


Image 145. Pennsylvania Supreme Court strikes down Republican gerrymandering. U.S. Supreme Court refuses to block the PA Court ruling. (Democracy Now! February 6, 2018)

mandered states like Wisconsin. Democrats need to win 57 percent of the statewide vote there, an almost impossible number, to take back the state Legislature in 2018, says Nicholas Stephanopoulos, a law professor at the University of Chicago.”



“Nationally, Democrats must win the popular vote for the House of Representatives by eight points to get a bare majority of seats. That might be doable given the unpopularity of Republicans, but Democrats still worry about facing a rigged system. ‘If you have a wave election in 2018, it’s entirely possible Democrats could win a significantly greater number of votes and not have the Congress that reflects that wave,’ says Holder. And that’s not how democracy is supposed to work. Hanging in the balance are basic rights for millions of Americans – the right to vote, the right to fair representation, the right to not have elections auctioned to the highest bidder. Welcome to the 2018 election season.”

### **Exhibit B: Wisconsin Voter ID Laws**

Wisconsin’s election fraud goes well beyond gerrymandering. “The 2016 election was Wisconsin’s first major election that required people to show government-issued photo ID to vote. One young working woman went to cast her ballot at a library in Milwaukee’s Washington Park, a working-class, predominantly African-American neighborhood northwest of downtown. She was registered in Wisconsin, but had misplaced her driver’s license before the election; so she brought her student ID from Milwaukee Area Technical College, a copy of her energy bill and a picture of her driver’s license on her phone. None were accepted as a valid voting ID under the law.”

“Instead, poll workers gave her a provisional ballot. It would only count if she went to the DMV to get a new license and then to the board of elections to confirm her vote within 72 hours of Election Day. But she worked full time and couldn’t get away. ‘I showed them so many different versions of me, I felt like they were trying their hardest for me to not vote.’” Recall that Greg Palast pointed out “provisional ballots are rarely counted” anyway (page 104).

It’s Republican election fraud to its core, which we’ve introduced in depth earlier; and it represents blatant systemic racism. Recall that voter IDs are supposed to prevent “voter fraud of impersonation,” which is non-existent. (See “Voter Impersonation & Alien Voting Fraud: Non-Existent” on page 120.) “After the Legislature passed the law in May 2011, a federal court found that nine percent of registered voters in the state did not have the required forms of ID. Black voters, who overwhelmingly supported Democrats in Wisconsin, were 50 percent more likely than whites to lack such IDs. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, up to 11 percent of Americans do not possess government-issued photo IDs, including 25 percent of African-American voters.”

Who’s country is this, Mr President? Please, clarify that for your supporters. Is it simply open season for Republicans to keep on stealing it on behalf of the Koch machine? Is that what veterans like me and others, fight and die for? Is this what makes America great? I don’t care whether your



Image 146. Stop the Republican hijacking of elections!

supporters are “conservative” or “anti-establishment independents”; I know damn well they want their votes to count! It’s high time for you to separate yourself from the hypocrisy of your Republican Party, Mr President. Come clean for your supporters and the rest of America, especially underrepresented and suppressed minority voters. You say you love them too and that you are not a racist. Then act like it! Actions speak louder than words; don’t you know that?

“We see these restrictions sprouting up like mushrooms in battleground states with large minority populations,” says Dale Ho, director of the Voting Rights Project at the ACLU, which challenged Wisconsin’s law in court. “Laws that require you to have a particular ID to cast a ballot disproportionately impact certain groups of voters, particularly poorer voters who don’t have the same access to documentation and IDs as the rest of us.” In a few pages, we will cover how the ACLU is taking on this attack on the integrity of our coun-

ty's democracy ("A Groundswell Movement" on page 154).

Ho continues, "Yet no evidence of fraud turned up when the county sheriff and district attorney, both Republicans, launched a month-long investigation, nor did Republicans present any cases of voter impersonation when the law was challenged in court. (The law, initially blocked for violating the Voting Rights Act, was reinstated in 2014 by a panel of conservative judges.)" Yet again, "Studies show that the kind of fraud that these laws are supposedly enacted to prevent happens less frequently than Americans being struck by lightning," says Ho.

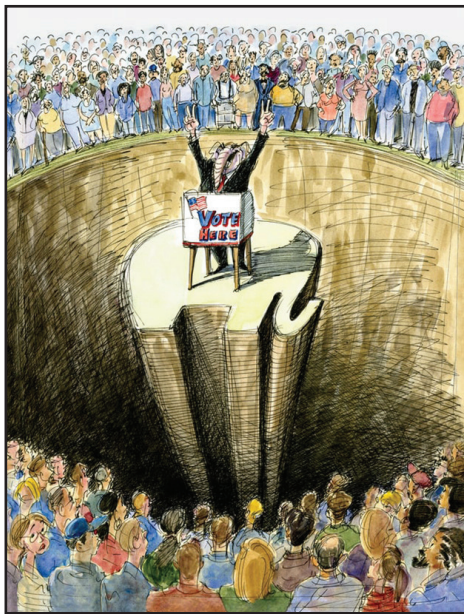


Image 147. Millions of Americans can't get there from here. Republicans want to prevent American voters from having proportional representation. They want to seize power and restructure the rules of our "representative democracy" in order to permanently steal our country, take away "representation", and hand it over to their Tweed oligarchs. This is not what is meant by the phrase in common use by libertarians, "Don't Tread On Me." [Berman's Image](#).

Republican cynicism is relentless, as illustrated by what one of Wisconsin's Republican Congress members said about the 2016 election: "I think Hillary Clinton is about the weakest candidate the Democrats have ever put up, and now we have photo ID, and I think photo ID is going to make a little bit of a difference."

The Republican strategy worked as intended. Turnout decreased sharply, especially in Black neighborhoods. "After the election, registered voters who didn't cast a ballot in Milwaukee and Madison, the state's two most Democratic areas, were asked why. One in 10 nonvoters said they were blocked or deterred by the state's ID law, according to a University of Wisconsin study. 'Thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of otherwise eligible people were deterred from voting by the ID law,' said University of Wisconsin political scientist Kenneth Mayer." (See Image 139 and Image 140 on page 128.) "That's why Republicans passed the law in the first place. One state senator, arguing in favor of the bill in close door session, said: 'We've got to think about what this could mean for the neighborhoods around Milwaukee and the college campuses.'"

Berman writes, "According to a study by MIT, an estimated 16 million people – 12 percent of all voters – experienced at least one problem voting in 2016. There were more than 1 million lost votes because eligible voters didn't have the right ID or they encountered long lines at the polls or couldn't register." Yet, Repub-

licans won enough electoral votes in the 2016 election "by a mere combined total of 78,000 votes in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Since the election Republicans have accelerated their efforts to make it harder to vote. They have repeatedly spread false claims about voter fraud in order to pass policies that restrict access to the ballot."

It's only getting worse. "Republican-controlled statehouses have passed more new voting restrictions in 2017 than in 2016 and 2015 combined. 'It's not a coincidence that states that were badly gerrymandered during the last round of redistricting, like Texas, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, also passed some of the most oppressive voter-ID laws,' say Holder. 'They are two parts of the same attack by the Republicans: They have systematically attacked Americans' right to vote.'"

Mr President, our country is under attack. This Republican election corruption is not designed to make our country "great"; it's designed to steal elections—and such corruption definitely does not "make America great"; it destroys our "greatness". Tell your supporters what your involvement in this is; because you swore an oath, stated in Article II §1 of the Constitution, to "faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States" and to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." Do you not believe in upholding, protecting, preserving and executing the laws of the United States? Or, do you support the theft of America by the Republi-

can Party, undergirded by a corrupt Supreme Court, on behalf of their Tweeds? Where do you stand, Mr President?

### **Exhibit C: Wisconsin Tweed Factor – Dark Money**

“In January 2010, a conservative Republican majority on the Supreme Court radically rewrote America’s campaign finance laws to allow mega-donors and corporations to contribute unlimited sums, often in secret, to political action committees. The *Citizens United v. FEC* decision gave wealthy donors unprecedented influence to buy elections, which Republicans quickly used to their political advantage. Thanks to the *Citizens United* decision, Republican committees could accept unlimited donations from corporate interests like Koch Industries and tobacco companies.”

Regarding Wisconsin, Berman describes how serious the problem is. “Scott Walker took this fundraising strategy to new heights when he faced his own recall election in 2012. Walker had long been close to GOP billionaires like Charles and David Koch, who gave \$9 million to Walker and his allies between 2010 and 2014. ‘We’ve spent a lot of money in Wisconsin,’ David Koch said in February 2012. ‘We are going to spend a lot more.’ The Kochs and other like-minded conservative donors made Wisconsin their guinea pig for destroying the progressive movement, funding a sprawling network of foundations, think tanks, media or-

ganizations and political groups that propped up Walker and the state’s Republican majority.”

“Walker asked a major fund-raiser in September 2011 how he could raise enough money to survive the recall, despite intense public opposition to his full-scale attack on unions, the number-one funder and organizing ally of Democrats. ‘Corporations. Go heavy after them to give,’ wrote his fund-raiser Kate Doner. ‘Take Koch’s money. Get on a plane to Vegas and sit down with Sheldon Adelson. Ask for \$1m now.’ Walker did just that, but instead of raising money for his campaign, he steered wealthy donors to the pro-business Wisconsin Club for Growth, which was run by a Republican operative and Koch associate. Unlike Walker’s campaign, Wisconsin Club for Growth could accept unlimited donations and didn’t have to disclose its donors. ‘The Governor is encouraging all to invest in the Wisconsin Club for Growth [which] can accept Corporate and Personal donations without limitations and no donors disclosure,’ wrote Doner. Walker’s fundraising spree gave the governor and his allies a huge advantage over his Democratic opponent, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett – \$58.7 million to \$21.9 million – and he easily won the recall by seven points.”

Berman describes in detail a story of how, after Walker’s recall election in 2013, this kind of dark money led to “Republicans in the Wisconsin Legislature inserting a late-night provision into a budget bill that blocked Wisconsin residents from suing manufacturers”

for poisoning from known carcinogen products they produced. The manufacturer’s billionaire owners had contributed checks totaling \$750,000 to Wisconsin Club for Growth.

“It was among the 100 ‘worst’ pieces of legislation passed during Walker’s tenure, according to a 2016 Wisconsin Democracy Campaign report.” This money corruption subsequently led into the state’s judiciary (State Supreme Court judges are elected in Wisconsin) and subsequent weakening of environmental protection laws by the state’s legislature. And, “bills passed in the middle of the night” moved into more corruption in the states campaign-finance system of laws. It even “prevented investigations from focusing on political crimes like bribery and misconduct in office; and dismantled the state’s watchdog agency. ‘It was just a systematic destruction of the good-government democracy that Wisconsin had enjoyed up to the election of Scott Walker and the Republicans,’ says Jay Heck, executive director of Common Cause Wisconsin.”

### **The Tweed effect goes well beyond Wisconsin:**

Expanding the perspective, Berman says, “Nationally, \$3 billion in outside money has been spent since the *Citizens United* decision, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, with at least \$800 million of it from entities that don’t have to disclose their donors (hence the term ‘dark money’). The Koch brothers have

already pledged to spend \$400 million on 2018 races.”

“Of course, this money doesn’t just help elect Republicans, it dictates their legislative priorities. Before the release of the tax bill, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan invited Corry Bliss, head of the American Action Network Super PAC, to address a closed-door meeting of the House GOP caucus. Bliss previewed an ad campaign in support of the tax overhaul (the group plans to spend \$100 million backing the Republican agenda). The message was clear: Support the bill and you’ll be rewarded. Don’t and you’ll be targeted. ‘Like a teacher showing the kids a paddle on the first day of class, the blatant implication was that those who misbehaved would be spanked,’ one member of Congress told *HuffPost*. (The Koch brothers’ political network chipped in another \$20 million for tax reform.)”

“The tax bill was a shameless giveaway to the wealthiest Americans. Eighty-three percent of the benefits will go to the top one percent by 2027, according to the Tax Policy Center. The bill is deeply unpopular, with only a third of the public approving of it. But Republicans admitted they passed it because their donors told them to. ‘My donors are basically saying, Get it done or don’t ever call me again,’ said Rep. Chris Collins of New York.”

But on a hopeful note, Democracy advocate and Harvard law professor Larry Lessig, founder of Equal Citizens, which we introduced on page 93, made this February 2, 2018, email blast

[public release about super PACs](#): “Today we’re announcing a set of lawsuits designed to give the Supreme Court — especially the conservatives on the Supreme Court — a chance to say “no” to super PACs. I’m writing today to explain the case, and to ask for your help in spreading the word. As you may know, the Supreme Court has never ruled on whether super PACs are required by the Constitution. The case that created these disasters for democracy was a lower court case, decided shortly after *Citizens United* — a case called *SpeechNow*.”

“But as many have argued, *Citizens United* does not require super PACs. And in particular, for the conservatives on the Supreme Court — if they interpreted the Constitution to give Congress the power to protect against the kind of corruption the Framers were most concerned about, then they

would conclude that Congress should have the power to limit super PACs. We want to take that *SpeechNow* excuse to the United States Supreme Court, and ask the justices — what would the Framers say about super PACs? Because we believe that any honest read of the Framers’ views would yield one clear conclusion: super PACs are not required by the First Amendment. There’s no reason an originalist on the Supreme Court should take any different view.”

### Perils for Democracy in the Upcoming Decennial Census:

Ever on the attack against minorities and immigrants, the Republicans now want to add a question to the upcoming 2020 10-year census: “Are you a U.S. Citizen?” But that is not a rele-

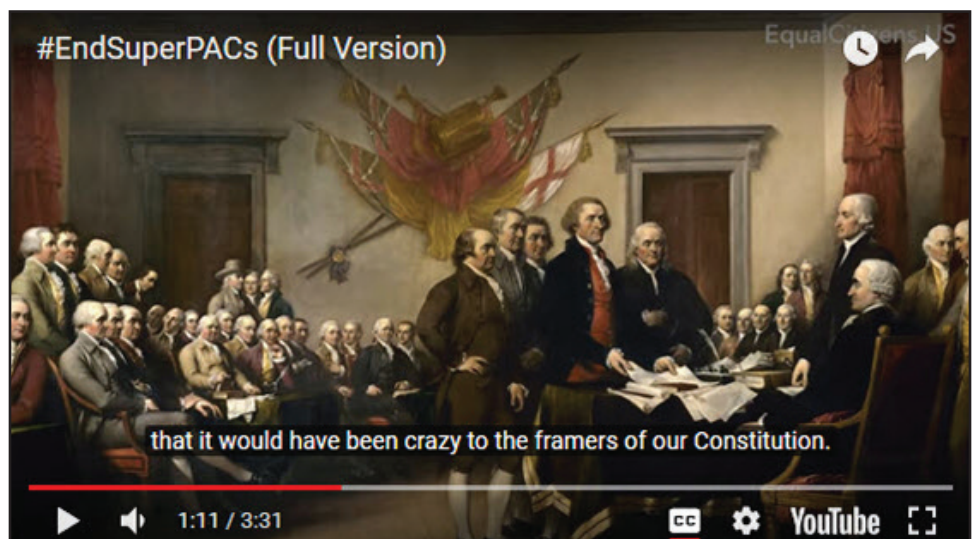


Image 148. [Larry Lessig video \(full version 3:31\) on ending Super PACs, February 2, 2018](#). “What would Hamilton think about super PACs? What you might not know is that *Citizens United* did not create the super PAC. Instead, the super PAC was born when a lower court reasoned that if you spend unlimited amounts to support or oppose a political candidate (*Citizens United*), you should be able to give unlimited amounts to a committee who would support or oppose a political candidate. That case was *SpeechNow*. We believe *SpeechNow* is just wrong.



vant question for the purpose of the census. The census was Constitutionally mandated in 1790 in Article I §2, amended by §2 of the 14th Amendment in order to determine how representation “shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers...” It is supposed to estimate the total population of the United States, and its geographical distribution, regardless of ethnicity, race or citizenship status.

In a January 29, 2018, interview on [Democracy Now!](#), Ari Berman points out the extreme distortion such a question will imbue the census with, especially in this time of rampant fear regarding immigration status. He makes clear that it will deter involvement; in fact, it “will destroy and sabotage the entire census. It will massively depress responses. Nobody, particularly immigrant groups, both non-citizens and citizens, want to answer the question, out of fear the government could use the information against them.”

Of course, this is exactly what Republicans want, because it will shift more power to typically Republican areas. “The population count is used to determine how congressional seats are distribut-

ed across the country and where hundreds of billions of federal dollars are spent. That will lead to fewer seats, fewer resources, for areas that have lots of immigrants, particularly Democratic areas, places like New York and California. And it will shift power even more to Republican areas, that are whiter and more conservative. So, this has very, very, very profound implications for our democracy. And the 2020 census is already facing an extreme number of problems, and this will just make it that much worse.”

“The census is supposed to count



Image 149. [United States Census Bureau](#). U.S. population counter at 327,155,700, on February 7, 2018. “The Census Bureau’s mission is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation’s people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by scientific objectivity, our strong and capable workforce, our devotion to research-based innovation, and our abiding commitment to our customers. Decennial Census of Population and Housing: The U.S. census counts every resident in the United States. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and takes place every 10 years.”

every person in America, non-citizen or citizen. And it’s really a constitutionally mandated accurate count. So, if the census is manipulated for political purposes or the count is done wrong, there is no way to fix that, because the census is supposed to be the final

word that determines how districts are drawn, how \$600 billion in federal funding is spent. This is one of the most important things the federal government has done, every 10 years since 1790. And it’s facing unprecedented threats from the Republican administration, from lack of funding, to the people that might run it, to this question about citizenship. It’s a perfect storm facing the census right now.”

Amy Goodman asks, “Who is behind this?” To which Berman responds, “Well, I think if you look at who the request is coming from, it’s coming from the Department of Justice, run by Jeff Sessions. And they say they need this question to enforce the Voting Rights Act, which is hysterical, because the Justice Department has no interest in enforcing the Voting Rights Act, and, in fact, is actively trying to subvert the Voting Rights Act. This is a smokescreen to try to depress responses from immigrant communities, so that immigrant communities get far less resources than other communities, with the census.”

Goodman explores further, “How do you answer those who say, ‘Well, if this is about congressional representation, they shouldn’t have it. They are undocumented, or they are not U.S. citizens. If it’s about federal aid, they shouldn’t have it, because they’re not U.S. citizens?’”

Berman responds, “Well, first off, the Constitution very clearly says, with regards to the census, that all persons should be counted. Secondly, there was a Supreme Court case in 2016 called the *Evenwel* case, that came out of Texas, where they dealt with this question. The Supreme Court very clearly said, in an 8-to-0 unanimous opinion, that districts should be drawn based on *all* people, because everyone here deserves representation, everyone here counts. When someone goes to a hospital, they don’t ask you, ‘Are you a citizen or not?’ Everyone deserves to be treated. And this would radically redefine American society by asking if you’re a citizen or not on the census.”

Welcome again to the 2018 and 2020 election seasons. How much will Republican election corruption prevail? How many elections will they be able to steal? What are we doing about it?

## Policy: Independent National Election Standards

### Election Process Quality, Monitoring, Technology, End-to-End Auditing and Recount Processes

Regarding elections, the U.S. Constitution, Article I §4, states that: “The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall

be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations.”

This of course has led to a multitude of election approaches and rules that depend on what each state has set up. However, it also allows Congress to alter any such rules and processes, which would include imposing national election standards that improve the integrity and quality of our election processes; i.e. the 1965 VRA. As we have seen from the lengthy discussion regarding all the problems we are facing, this is desperately needed for some sense of consistent quality set at the national level, to guarantee uniform election integrity across all states, districts and territories.

That is what this section is about. First, from my years of concern as an educated engaged patriotic citizen following this issue about ensuring a healthy democracy, and its ramifications for our election process (“Our National Election Process – What we need; What we have” on page 97), I have started this entire strategic section, “Healthy Democracy” on page 85, by identifying four individuals who I am confident hold the expertise, passion and interest in addressing what is needed—because that’s what they’ve been doing; which I’ve drawn from.

Let’s begin by reviewing this Healthy Democracy strategic leadership that would be fully capable of taking their own works in this area and synthesizing some semblance of an Independent National Election Standards Policy, which I’m sure they would

agree we need. But, to this point, I’ve not asked or spoken to any of them about this; in fact, none of them even know I’m writing this. So, let’s call this a “fantasy dream team” for a Healthy Democracy.

### Leadership Team:

Let me be clear about my point of audaciously identifying such a team of four experts as our “healthy democracy leaders” (“Leadership: Larry Lessig, Ari Berman, Greg Palast, David Cobb” on page 85). To recap, all four are nationally recognized, established and acknowledged experts. I do know their work; but none of them do I know personally, nor have I reached out, asked or spoken to any of them about such a role. But somehow, given their work and dedication to the cause of democracy, I do believe they would agree to participate on such a non-partisan “dream team” to craft strategically comprehensive and focused legislation that addresses the systemic illness our country faces regarding its democracy and election processes.

Because currently, Mr President, we do not have a viable democracy for our future—*by design!* The billionaire oligarchs want it that way and have been spending a lot of money to fuck with the rules in order to undermine democracy and keep it that way, as if no one will notice. But, games up! We know they despise democracy. We also know they are not in tune with what our Founding Fathers had envisioned, as we’ve made very clear throughout. Again, begging the question: “Whose

country is this? *We The People?* Or the ultra-rich oligarchs?" That's a question only the people can answer; and one to which they are fast waking up to. We're coming to take our country back.

My point in posing such a leadership team is to show a strategic path forward that we can trust; and that is what these experts can provide in terms of model legislation on behalf of our people, now and into the future. They know the system the way it is currently designed; they know the problems; they know its failures; they've met with multitudes of people; they know what people are feeling; and they know what's out there and what legislation, good, bad or insufficient, has been proposed; they know how the system gets undermined; they know where the snakes in the bush are; they won't suffer any fool; and they know what's needed. And they are all strong leaders in their own right.

The issue should be entirely non-partisan. And any partisan politicians or political operatives who think they should be in charge of it or intrude into it with their polluting ideology, including and especially you and your hatchet men like Kris Kobach and his ilk, Mr President, should be seen by default presumption as the very antithesis of what we need; as sources of our election system failures, not its salvation. This includes trying to bury their nefarious attack on our election integrity under the cloak of secrecy in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which the Republicans are attempting to do with the Ko-

bach "voter fraud" myth — quietly eliminate hundreds of thousands of eligible voting citizens from the voter rolls nation wide on a false pretext; and don't want you to tell anybody. They should not be seen as the ones who can point out the path to fixing our election process.

Obviously, we need a Congress and President who *want* to fix the system; *and* are willing to exhibit enough humility on behalf of the health of our country, to follow the lead of these healthy democracy leaders.

With but the occasional rare and refreshing exception, Bernie of course comes to mind, the current crop of duopoly politicians, overlain with the scourge of lobbying organizations like Koch-funded ALEC, have proven they do not have the interest of American people at heart. And, as we've already seen, they don't respond to the populace at large, only their funder tweeds (see "Whose Interests Get Attention?" on page 88). The point is for *the people* to tell Congress how to repair, reform, restructure, support and fix the way we democratically elect our leaders and representatives. We need to take this effort away from our current dysfunctional R&D duopoly; and as independent citizen's *lead* our representatives to comprehensively fix our election system.

These four leaders represent the most knowledgeable persons to help our people do that, because they have been publicly investigating, studying, writing and speaking about the failures of our election system, and they well-understand the problems that beset

it and ways to fix it. But it will take more than expertise; it will take a groundswell of ordinary citizens to put the pressure on Congress to listen, acknowledge that our system is broken, and demand they accept what the people want — a functioning, well-tuned representative democracy.

Now, Mr President, if you are not on board with that goal, you shouldn't be president, because our Constitution and the vision of our Founding Fathers demands this for our country and our people; and you swore an oath to uphold and protect our Constitution. But, your heart may be there, whether or not your actions follow, because you once made a comment referring to "our precious elections," did you not; or was that just cynical hypocrisy? It begs the question regarding what you really think about that, when you let go of your attachment to the "voter fraud" myth as an excuse for losing the popular vote by 3 million votes. You flat out lost, Mr President, yet you are president; so get over it and help America fix this broken election system.

Recall from the beginning of this letter-essay, Mr President, that I'm taking you for your word and holding you accountable to it on behalf of the interests of your supporters. At the beginning (page 3) I expressly rejected the cynical notion that you are lying just to get your way: "...and out of respect for the office of the presidency, cynicism and actual behavior thus far aside, I will take you for your word and address your performance against that throughout

this letter-essay — as long as you end up doing what's truly right for us all."

This is about *strategic thinking*, Mr President; not ego-reactionary thinking. It means seeking principled wisdom *on behalf of the people*; not partisan power on behalf of continued domination and control over our society by the moneyed elite. Just what *do* you think is "precious," meaning "highly esteemed and cherished," about our election system, if not having every effort be made to ensure its *genuine integrity*? Remember, Mr President, *you* are not the source of wisdom and *you* cannot define what "election integrity" means; because you lack not only the expertise, if not even the interest; due to your own making, you lack "integrity" itself, which is one of your strategic weaknesses (recall the section where I covered strategic weaknesses, "Weakness: Integrity, Credibility and Trust" on page 15). *You* cannot repair our system; but you *could* support those who do know how to do it. And that would be a refreshing move on your part, in the direction of wisdom for our democracy and our country.

### Assuring Election Quality:

Should we, as America, not have an election system "second to none?" This is what I think your supporters would agree we might demand for our "great country," no Mr President? How can we assure that our country has a high quality election system; one that strives for accuracy, timely and easy access, and simultaneously

proactively takes measure of the quality of our system, making continuous quality improvements a crucial element of its system design?

There are ample resources to draw from regarding election integrity. Along with those already mentioned, the international organization [ACE Electoral Knowledge Network](#), originally established in 1998, "promotes credible, and transparent electoral processes with emphasis on sustainability, professionalism and trust in the electoral process."

Shouldn't the U.S. hold its own on the international stage, when it comes to election integrity? I think President Jimmy Carter would agree with that, as the founder of *The Carter Center*, which proclaims it is "[Waging Peace Through Elections](#)". Since 1989, The Carter Center has observed 107 elections in 39 countries. The Carter Center observers "bring a reputation for impartiality, and their presence helps to reassure voters that they can safely and secretly cast their ballots. As the eyes and ears of the international community, observers also help deter fraud." America could use this help. Jimmy also "felt the Bern" and back in May, 2017, he revealed that he backed Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders over Hillary Clinton in last year's Democratic presidential primary.

Right now, however, we're more like a 3rd rate banana republic in election integrity; where elections are routinely stolen, often with the backing of the United States government. The ACE website "contains in-depth articles, global statistics and data, an Encyclo-

pedia of Elections, information on electoral assistance, observation and professional development, region- and country-specific resources, daily electoral news, an election calendar, quizzes, expert networks and more." They have comparative election integrity data from around the globe. They have [encyclopedic depth on electoral integrity topics](#), including: principles of election integrity (ethical behavior, fairness and impartiality, transparency and accountability); legal and institutional frameworks for election integrity; monitors and enforcement of election integrity (including audits, a complaint system, and investigations); and integrity in election administration.

But I am pointing to David Cobb to help us address this election quality assurance issue at the systems level, identifying all points within the election process where quality assurance measures must be and can be implemented; refer to the system diagram, "Image 110. Our National Election Process — What we need; What we have" on page 97. Cobb, who is described as a "people's lawyer," has lots of experience with elections, election auditing, election recounts and the reason we must have them built into our system. Cobb was the 2004 Green Party nominee for President; he served as Jill Stein's 2016 campaign manager; and he headed up management of the recount process, demanded by the Greens in 2016. He is also co-founder of the effort to end corporate rule and to legalize democracy, through the [Move to Amend proposed 28th Amendment to the Constitution](#), referred



to as the “We The People Amendment,” which was introduced in Congress on January 30, 2017.

In his *Nation Magazine* article, in the midst of the recount process shortly after the 2016 election, December 21, 2016, titled, “[Why the Green Party Continues to Demand Presidential Recounts](#),” he writes about “how we are working to make our electoral system work for all of us.” Presidential recounts, Cobb emphasizes, “are not about changing election results. At least, that is not their primary purpose. At their core, recounts are about ensuring confidence in the integrity of the voting system.”

But the Corporate R&D duopoly chose to “stand in the way of these grassroots-demanded recounts—in the case of the Republicans, actively blocking them in the courts; in the case of the Democrats, capitulating in their refusal to push for them. In an election marked by so many irregularities, public distrust, and outright evidence of hacking, Americans deserve to know now more than ever that the election was accurate and secure. That is the ultimate goal of this and every recount: to restore confidence in our elections and trust in our democracy.”

Cobb has been in this fight a long time. He led the 2004 efforts to organize recounts in Ohio and New Mexico in the wake of widespread complaints about the obstruction of legitimate voters, mostly in majority-Black precincts, and tampering with computer voting machines on Election Day. Again, the Democrats were silent. This underscores my point on page 151:

“duopoly politicians have proven they do not have the interest of American people at heart” when it comes to election integrity.

Although those investigations did not change the election results, Cobb points out the glaring problems with our voting system that they did uncover. This story will not go away. “A status report of the House Judiciary Committee, titled “Preserving Democracy: What Went Wrong in Ohio”, that he links to in the article, found “conclusive evidence that more than 100,000 voters—many concentrated in communities of color—were disenfranchised during the election. Among the irregularities caused by the intentional, illegal behavior included some 90,000 spoiled ballots, the improper purging of tens of thousands of voters by election officials, and improbably high turnout in certain counties, even surpassing 100 percent in some cases. Yet the findings were met with a near-total reporting vacuum; even as two Republican operatives in Ohio were convicted and sent to jail for their misconduct.” In fact, I recall the CEO of one of the “voting machine” companies, based in Ohio, making the outrageous statement that he “would do whatever it takes to ensure Bush II gets re-elected.” What?!? That’s criminal fraud!

But the results did lead several states to take greater caution regarding computer voting; with three states, California, Maryland, and Virginia, taking moves to phase out or ban touch-screen voting machines altogether. “It is fair to say that the 2004 Green Par-

ty recount efforts helped to nurture a nascent ‘election integrity’ movement.”

Yet, 12 years later during the 2016 presidential recount, “we see many of these same ingredients—proof of election irregularities, mistreatment of the issue from major news media, and negligence from Republicans and Democrats alike.”

“In the three days of recounting that took place in Michigan before a state judge shut it down, it was revealed that a shocking 87 optical scanners in Detroit alone broke on Election Day, causing erroneous vote counts. Moreover, 24%, or 128 out of Detroit’s 534 precincts had discrepancies between the number of names listed in the precinct’s poll book and the number of ballots in the ballot box.”

Recall, the total winning margin of votes in the three crucial Electoral Vote count states, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, was only 78,000 votes. “In Pennsylvania,” Cobb continues, “where the vast majority of voting is done on machines that leading computer scientists agree are unreliable, antiquated and easy to hack, voters do not even receive a paper ballot to verify their vote. In Montgomery County, for example, the machines claim that more than 7,000 voters took the trouble to go to the polls, but then didn’t vote for anyone for president. In Wisconsin, instead of hand-counting paper ballots—the ‘gold standard’ of election auditing—many ballots were fed into the same electronic machines used on Election Day, which would produce the same potentially faulty results.”

“The recount, simply put, has been one in name only. In fact, perhaps the biggest revelation to emerge from the recount process is the sheer extent to which our political and election system is broken. The forces trying to stop the recounts—and succeeding, in several cases—are the same ones that have been undermining our democracy and disenfranchising voters for decades. Whether it’s a court in Pennsylvania demanding \$1 million before even listening to the voices of ordinary voters, or an attorney general disregarding the rule of law in Michigan to do the Republican’s bidding, our democracy is being stolen from us in plain sight.”

“The recounts are about much more than verifying the vote. They are a way for Americans of all backgrounds and political persuasions to demand fundamental social change. Let the lesson from this effort,” Cobb pleads, “be just how far the political establishment went to use America’s broken political, economic, and legal systems to override the will of the people and suppress the vote. For if we are going to effect the real, structural change that millions of Americans are demanding, we must first understand how power operates, and recognize the critical role that a movement campaign like this one by the Green Party can play. Our drive for a world that puts people, planet, and peace over profit is growing stronger every day.”

“It’s past time that we make real the promise of our democracy. And that’s why we call for a system where we count every vote,

and where every vote counts.” Cobb then lists 14 bullet-point demands to improve our voting process; all of which I’ve made sure are identified in the National Elections system process chart on page 97.

David Cobb ends the article with a poignant observation of truth regarding the dominance of our Corporate R&D duopoly: “In today’s America, there is only one political party leading the fight for such a voting-justice movement: the Green Party.”

## A Groundswell Movement

The ACLU’s “Let People Vote” movement (#LetPeopleVote) is just getting underway. Launched in October, 2017, ACLU’s Voting Rights Director, Dale Ho, declared, “We have to attack the system as it exists.” He emphasizes that, although the defensive moves of legal challenges in the courts to disparities will continue; “We need to be on the offensive. With our supporters, we will be fighting on the ground. This is a long haul effort, for as long as it takes. The key to going on the offensive is to turn the work over to local communities, who have huge capacity and are ready to work. People Power! Raise the volume! We are a family of committed determined people who are going to change the world!”

The mission of the “Let People Vote” (LPV) campaign is: “To mobilize, to organize, and take action to *expand access to the ballot* and *make our democracy more rep-*

*resentative.*” It is put forth with a plan, and a coordinated national call to action; along with a series of state-specific calls to action, because much of important policy is set at the state and local level. The ACLU will partner with the people and organizations to have state-specific goals and calls for action in each state and the District of Columbia. These partner organizations include many of the social movement organizations, as well as efforts like “[Let America Vote](#)” that works toward winning the “right to vote” political argument, through “online and grassroots organizing, an aggressive earned media strategy, and advertising, and play a crucial role among the existing network of organizations fighting for voting rights.”

The ACLU road-map to victory involves opening and aggressively moving forward on four strategic attack fronts:

i. **Voting Rights Restoration:** This includes restoring the voting rights of convicted felons in as short a period as possible after being released; and in no sense, taking their right to vote away forever.

ii. **Election Reform:** This includes breaking down barriers that make it too difficult to vote; such as allowing Election Day registration, at least two-week early voting, and being able to register to vote online.

iii. **Districting Reform:** This requires independent redistricting commissions in all states across the country to eliminate the gerrymandering of bizarre district boundaries. This gross

abuse of power by state legislators is a system that ends up allowing the legislators to choose their voters, not the other way around. It is a system where the controlling duopoly party in the state legislature, Republican or Democrat, gets to determine how district lines are drawn, which ultimately determines who votes for which member of Congress and State representatives. Many states have so manipulated the processes that states where the electorate is split virtually 50:50 between Republicans and Democrats, are represented by, say, a 70:30 or even 75:25 split in favor of the gerrymandered party; typically a Republican tactic, but both parties are guilty of it.

**iv. Combating Voter Suppression:** This is a full-blown effort to take on Kobach's racist and treasonous tactics to take away American citizens' right to vote. Whether its requiring a voter ID, birth certificate, or removing eligible voters because they didn't vote in the last election, meaning the 'occasional voter' has their rights are stolen, or the infamous voter name matches.

With the help of multiple organizations, the people are rising up. We must take our country back.

## Policy: Citizen Equality Act

On page 93 we introduced Larry Lessig's proposed "Citizen Equality Act," intended as a comprehensive policy that would address not only the campaign funding issue, which we covered

earlier; but equal representation and equal right to vote, as well. Lessig has been [speaking and writing extensively about this issue](#).

On equal votes, regarding the legal case Lessig and an "all star legal team" filed in court to challenge our currently corrupt system, Lessig states: "In a Democracy, all votes should count equally. In our democracy, when voting for the president, they do not. Because of the winner-take-all allocation of electoral votes, if you don't vote for the candidate who wins your state, your vote counts for nothing. That violates the Constitution's "one person, one vote" principle.

To recap the Citizen Equality Act:

**Part 1. Citizen-Funded Elections:** All citizens deserve an equal ability to choose our leaders. (See page 93)

**Part 2. Equal Representation:** All citizens deserve equal representation in elections. Eliminate gerrymandering.

**Part 3. Equal Right to Vote:** All citizens deserve equal access to the ballot box.

**Equal Representation:** Inside of our system of gerrymandering, we find "crimes against geography." It's a system where the politicians are picking the voters; the voters are not picking the politicians. They pick voters to create "safe seats"; both Republicans and Democrats play this game. The end result is that there are only 90 seats out of 435 that are competitive; meaning there are 345 safe seats.

So, if you're a minority party of this, you don't matter. He or she doesn't need your vote. The astounding conclusion of that is that *89 million Americans are not represented* in this system because we've structured it in a way that makes sure these people don't count. That is *inequality!*

The "Fair Vote" proposal incorporated into the Citizen Equality Act is intended to change the way these districts work to ensure we have proportional representation across the country.

**Equal Right to Vote:** The equal freedom to vote challenges the absurd ways we make it hard for people to vote, which are not accidental. The Brennan Center for Justice report, "Election Day Long Lines: Resource Allocation," has found that 10 million people had to wait more than 30 minutes to vote. This is extremely hard for working families to afford; making it a "poll tax too high for many."

This poll tax is closely related to race. It is correlated strongly with black and brown districts, which are less likely to have the resources necessary to make it possible to vote easily. That itself is more directly correlated with party, because black and brown districts tend not to vote Republican. Bernie Sanders has proposed a "Democracy Day", where voting is moved to a holiday so working people can vote just as easily as anyone.

**The Core Fight:** Lessig concludes his [TED Talk](#), from which these paraphrased words come, with the key point that this is the core fight we ought to have, over

and above all things. Why?

First is the practical reason, in that we will get nothing from this government, until we get this. We won't get climate change legislation until we address this fundamental inequality in this broken democracy. You want Congress to ensure the safety of Social Security? We will not get a government to address that problem until we fix this democracy. Student debt, and on? Not until we address this problem of democracy.

It's not that this is the most important problem or issue; it's just the *first* issue. This is the issue we've got to solve if we're going to have any chance to solve the long list of critical problems we as a nation must address.

But it's not just a practical problem; it is a moral problem. Now 400 years since slavery was brought to our shores, it's time we have a peaceful fight for equality. That we have a national campaign, involving everybody who rallies around the idea that it's finally time we stand up for this idea of equality. It is an embarrassment to our traditions that at this point in time we need movements to assert that #BlackLivesMatter. How could that possibly be?

It's because we have a political system that doesn't count as equally; we have a political system that counts some more than others. We have a political system that betrays the fundamental idea of a representative democracy. Martin Luther King said that "America is essentially a dream. The substance of the dream is expressed in these sublime words, words lifted to cosmic propor-

tions: That all are created equal."

Whatever the creator meant, the reality is that we are not equal in America today. The reality is that we do have second class citizens in America today. And the reality is that until we confront the fact that this ideal that "all are created equal" is a fantasy in America today, we will not begin to have a democracy that represents us.

We need to learn from our brothers and sisters 50 years ago who risked their lives to fight for equality, from those before us and those all around the world who are risking their lives now to fight for equality, that we need to fight for equality, to love for equality, to sacrifice for it. Because if we don't, how will we look at our children, who look back at us and say, "Look at what you inherited; and then squandered. Look at what you had; and then left to us." "Because," Lessig concludes, "we were given a nation with the potential to be the greatest democracy in the world—and we have allowed that potential to die."

## Problem: Media Integrity

### Betrayal of Trust:

Nobel Economist Paul Krugman has commented multiple times in interviews on the loss of public trust in our institutions. Public trust is an essential element of democracy. Krugman bemoans the mentality of nihilism exhibited by your administration, Mr President. You've installed department heads who revile the agency

they're in charge of, or even vow to destroy it. They are thoughtlessly privatizing anything and everything intended for public welfare. This is a complete abandonment of public trust and represents the subversion, sabotage and grand theft of our country.

Oligarchy is rule by the few. Plutocracy is rule by the wealthy. Corporatocracy is a society governed or controlled by the corporate-political complex they have subsumed under their control. Kleptocracy is a society whose leaders make themselves rich and powerful by stealing from the rest of the people; a society ruled by thieves. We have all of this in America today.

Without a strong and independent media, called for and protected in our very Constitution, a media independent of both political government and corporate forces, we are at the mercy of the propaganda these forces employ to pull this grand theft off. This is why the ideal of a free press is the essence of sustained independence in a democracy.

It's existence is often characterized by what is referred to as the "fourth estate." The intent of a free press is not only to inform us, but to get us to *think* about what is going on. It is contrasted with the phrase the "fourth branch" of government, which represents a propaganda machine that not only is not independent, but does the bidding of the administration. The result is to confuse the people and flood the public discourse, not with fact and analysis, but with fabrication and opinion. The intent is to get the people to

comply with what the rulers want them to think and to control their behavior. It's strategy is sustainable ignorance; and it works well with an uncritical and marginally informed, if not misinformed, populace.

Mr President, you have attacked the very foundational institution of a free press; while you've enlisted the rightwing press and media as your "fourth branch" propaganda mouthpiece to do, say and propagate your bidding. Your very rhetoric and actions are undermining our democracy; making it difficult for you to convince your supporters and the rest of the American people that you actually care about our democracy. Your staffing decisions are a disaster for our country and they betray the trust your supporters placed in you.

Mike Lofgren, a former career Republican Congressional staff member, in a piece titled, "[Republican Experts](#)," writes: "The nightmare of this administration is where wildly incompetent pseudo-experts run riot through the government and endanger the well-being of the general public. America has become a laboratory to test whether its institutions can weather the present flood of Republican expertise." He goes on to list example after example, and shows the damage being done. "At the commanding heights of capital, do plutocrats like the Koch brothers want an EPA that forcefully curbs the prerogative of extractive industries to externalize their costs upon society in the form of pollution? Hence the new finding of an EPA adviser

that mercury is not really bad for you, despite the common knowledge since the 19th century that the substance, which caused Mad Hatter's Disease, is a powerful neurotoxin."

Lofgren concludes by pointing out that the implications of mass ignorance were well known to the framers of the Constitution. In 1822, James Madison wrote, "A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

John F. Kennedy expressed his thoughts on truth this way: "For the *great enemy of the truth* is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived, and dishonest—but *the myth*—persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the clichés of our forebears. We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought."

### Consolidation and Control:

Award-winning communication and media experts John Nichols and Robert McChesney, in their 2013 book, [Dollarocracy: How the Money and Media Election Complex is Destroying America](#), with forward by Senator Bernie Sanders, write that it was back in the 2012 election, that "America's first \$10 billion campaign hurtled us toward a point where the election

process itself ceases to function as a means for citizens to effectively control leaders and to guide government policies. It solidified the power of a new class in American politics: the fabulously wealthy individuals and corporations who are radically redefining our politics in a way that, failing a dramatic intervention, signals the end of our democracy."

"It is the world of Dollarocracy. The pay-to-play billionaires and corporations, and the politicians who do their bidding, have been freed to buy the media conglomerates that blow off journalism while raking in billions airing intellectually and morally reprehensible political advertising. It makes a mockery of political equality in the voting booth. What has emerged is a money-and-media election complex. This complex is built on a set of commercial and institutional relationships connecting wealthy donors, corporations, lobbyists, politicians, coin-operated 'think tanks,' beltway pundits, and now super-PACS. These relationships are not just eviscerating democratic elections, they are benefiting from that evisceration. The complex does not just endanger electoral politics; it poses a challenge to the DNA of American democracy itself."

In the Foreword to the book, Senator Bernie Sanders writes: "The full promise of a free press in America must be seen as the founders saw it: as a way of providing the information and ideas that sustain democratic discourse and enable citizens to cast informed votes. Recent times have

been rough on democratic discourse and on democracy itself. Local newspapers have closed or been downsized. Coverage of political institutions has declined. Resources for real journalism are scarce. An information void has developed; and it is being filled by political advertising and public relations spin. Thirty-second commercials shout down anyone who disagrees, diminishing honest debate and turning voters off to the political process. This is the threat we now face.”

Sanders goes on, “With the decline of independent journalism as a primary source of information about elections and governing, and its replacement by now-omnipresent political advertising, especially since the Supreme Court’s *Citizen United v. FEC* ruling, we have seen the development of an electoral equivalent to the self-perpetuating military-industrial complex that Dwight Eisenhower warned us about. The money-and-media election complex, producing a slurry of negative ads, spin, and obstruction, is not what the founders intended.”

In congruence with David Cobb’s “We The People Amendment” (page 152), Sanders points out that this is why in 2011 he introduced a “Saving American Democracy” amendment that, with a parallel purpose, says “corporations are not persons with constitutional rights equal to real people, corporations are subject to regulation by the people, corporations may not make campaign contributions or any election expenditures, and Congress and the states have the power to regulate

campaign finances.”

Nichols and McChesney make a powerful case, Sanders states, “for why it is necessary to amend the Constitution to tackle the Money Power that the Progressive reformers of a century ago warned would replace democracy with plutocracy. Further, they argue that America is ripe for a new age of reform that focuses on renewing democracy and that takes as its foundational premise an understanding that the essential act of democracy, voting, must be protected and made meaningful by legislation, statutes, and amendments.”

“John Nichols and Bob McChesney call us, as Tom Paine did more than two centuries ago, to turn knowledge into power. We can and must respond to our contemporary challenges as a nation by rejecting Dollarocracy and renewing our commitment to Democracy.”

Martin Luther King once said, “When you’re right you cannot be too radical.” The authors go on, “It is necessary to reach a radical recognition of the scope of the crisis, to understand that a discussion of a ‘broken system’ must identify the points of rupture: special-interest influence on our politics, to be sure; but also the collapse of a journalism sufficient to name and shame the influence peddlers; the abandonment of basic premises of democracy by partisans who are willing to win at any cost; and the rise of a consulting class that makes ‘win at any cost’ politics possible by shaping a money-and-media election complex every bit as dismissive of the

popular will as the military-industrial complex is. Any ‘insider fix’, by Republican or Democratic operatives, will be insufficient to address the pathologies inherent in ‘one of the worst election processes in the world — ours.’”

“The change must come from the people, with a bold willingness to subvert the dominant paradigm and to begin the world over again. America is a progressive nation, and it is time, once more, for it to progress.”

## Facts, Opinions and Fake News:

What can one say? Let’s at least point out the false “fact-opinion” logical dichotomy. The distinction is not only confusing, it is pernicious and harmful to rational discourse and debate on any issue; and there is a better way to address important issues than this false dichotomy.

**Opinions:** The world does not conveniently partition itself into either “facts” or “opinions”. That dichotomy does not logically exhaust the categories. Not only are situations overlapping, “knowing” something is one thing; being “true” is another thing. Take the statements, “Well, it’s just your opinion; you have your opinion and I have mine. It’s true for me and not for you.” These are merely confusing conversation stoppers. There ends up being no reasonable discussion; no debate and important things simply get swept under the rug. We need to block this escape route, because those using it are trying to communicate something else regard-

ing “their truth” being out there. It’s close-mindedness.

**Proof:** To claim something is a fact only when it is “proven” or “provable” is wrong. This fetishes the notion of “proof”. Proof is ambiguous. One simply invokes the version of “proof” they want, using it as a rhetorical bludgeon. Take this statement, for example: “A claim is true only if it is empirically provable.” That statement itself is not provable, so it fails its own test. That statement is false. Other than the narrow and well-defined realm of mathematical proofs, we need to steer clear of these notions of “opinion” and “proof”. It’s more fruitful to avoid this kind of talk.

**Facts and Truth:** Facts are truths about the world that are out there. The idea is to try to determine what they are. Science and critical “evidence-based thinking”, for example, doesn’t trade in proofs, but reason and evidence. The fact-opinion distinction undermines the ability for science to answer questions. It doesn’t do science the credit it deserves. That is different from “hypotheses” and “conjectures” that can be investigated. Empirical issues don’t need to be discussed as “opinion”. The false fact-opinion dichotomy is a dramatic failure in getting people to think. We need to tie these concepts together with a different more fruitful framing.

**Evidence:** Evidence is where the action is. Evidence connects facts to beliefs. The question needs to be framed as: “What reasons do we have to believe some statement or proposition?”

**To summarize the proper fram-**

**ing:**

**Fact:** A true claim.

**Belief:** Something a person thinks.

**Evidence:** A reason to think a claim is true.

**Knowledge:** To know something is to hold a justified true belief.

“Fake news” is simply a claim put out in order to get people to believe the claim; and thus disregard the supposed “fake news” source, and divert attention away from it. But when is such a claim ever supported with evidence? It is simply a rhetorical assertion; and “belief that it is a true statement,” in the minds of the intended audience, is based only on who said it — *unaccompanied by evidence*.

Collectively, such statements, in conjunction with a steady stream of “tweets” and “media blitzes”, devoid of significant truthful content, divert the attention of corporate journalism and thus the public, away from the ability to “break through” the shit storm with any reasonable discourse on important matters. This is an accurate characterization of the tactics of your administration, Mr President. Yet, like Joseph Stalin and other tyrants of yore, you have the gall to attack the institution of “the press” as an enemy of the people. Look in the mirror, Mr President. Let me remind you, the purpose of this open letter is to help you refocus on *strategic issues* and *strategic thinking*, if you wish to have any modicum of a chance for success and recover from the disaster your presidency is rapidly becoming.

So who can you trust for news?

## Independent Journalism: A Paradigm of Trust

In the recent film, “*All Governments Lie: Truth, Deception, and the Spirit of I.F. Stone*” (introduced on page 95), Jeremy Scahill points out that most all big media is corporate-owned. Corporate media responds not to a desire to seek and report truth, but to advertising, weapons manufacturers, big oil, the insurance and drug industries. Corporate media is all about investors, the stock market, advertising, entertainment and sensationalism to sustain high viewer ratings. Their business model is the standard corporate model of growing money for the owners and executives; the illusion of providing “news” is merely the vehicle through which they accomplish that goal and, as servants of power, to “manufacture consent,” as Noam Chomsky has so profoundly noted. Corporate subservient media, and the rightwing media boutiques that service the powerful, act as conveyor belts for lies — and lies take lives. Wars come from media that doesn’t challenge the lies.

Another intrepid investigative reporter, Glenn Greenwald, of *The Intercept*, comments that “conventional wisdom,” being similar to the persistent insider myths Kennedy spoke of, we might observe, “is the great enemy of great reporting.” Although there are a few good reporters working for corporate media, they must accept the corporate framework and rules; thus all they are able to provide is a veneer of objectivity and truth.

And if they buck that system too vigorously, like the story of James Risen, formerly with *The New York Times*, they get ejected from the system. See this amazingly courageous national security investigative reporter, Jim Risen, who risked being sent to prison to keep his sources secret, tell his story on Democracy Now! The broadcast was January 5, 2018, in segments: [“The Biggest Secret: James Risen on Life as a NY Times Reporter in the Shadow of the War on Terror”](#) and [“How the NY Times & U.S. Government Worked Together to Suppress James Risen’s Post-9/11 Reporting”](#). Risen is now with *The Intercept*, and his interview with Amy Goodman was about his 15,000 word *Intercept* article, titled: “The Biggest Secret”. In it he lays out how the corporate media suppressed any of his reports that might have questioned the post-911 decision making by the Bush administration, including reports on the Bush administration’s warrantless wiretapping program, for which Risen would later win the Pulitzer Prize.

Independent media is the only equalizing force to the corporate media juggernaut. It is about, what Greenwald described as *The Intercept* mission, “adversarial fearless journalism.” With a new media ethos, it works as independently as possible from all power centers and factions. This allows the alternative independent media to produce *real* journalism; the only counter balancing voice to those in power. With no advertising or corporate donations, it is able to provide a sanctuary of dissent. The people who work in this often “poverty me-

dia” environment, where funding is hard to come by, do it not just because its a career or profession; but because its a way of life.

The film, produced with honor and respect to I.F. Stone’s spirit, quotes this truth-exposing muckraker on what he thought journalism was all about. Stone answered: “To write the truth, to defend the weak against the strong, to fight for justice, to bring healing perspectives to bear on the terrible hates and fears of mankind, in the hopes of someday bringing about a world in which man will enjoy the differences of the human garden, instead of killing each other over them.”

### Exemplars of Trust and Intrepid Courage:

Having wrestled with this section in my mind, I find myself hesitant to point to specific examples of the courageous heroes of independent media, because there are so many, past and present; including, for example Greg Palast and Ari Berman, whose work I’ve drawn heavily from in order to share their investigative reporting with you. So I cannot dodge the risk of leaving out someone who rightfully should be mentioned, which is ever present.

However, I when I teach in college or industry, I teach with *paradigmatic exemplars*. Exemplars are the concrete examples that not only exhibit the pattern that characterizes a paradigm, they instantiate it in a way that makes the pattern shine brightly and clearly so that others may follow it. They represent the best.

So, I will point up two institutions and three independent journalists who have earned our trust and exemplify the courage it takes, in the face of adversity, to seek out, analyze, and report the truth to the world. While I point out these specific examples, I wish to do it in a way that honors the incredible work their staffs and colleagues perform to support them; and all those who struggle as independent journalists and independent media institutions and who work so hard to shed light on crucial, often unseen and ignored, issues that *should* concern broader society. Their work is to dig deep, ferret out the truth about what’s going on, who it affects, and why it’s important to bring it to light; and to speak truth to power.

The principle two key media institutions I wish to recognize, represent bright lights in my world. These award winning organizations not only help keep me informed, but inspire me to reach higher. They are [Democracy Now!](#) and [The Intercept](#).

But that immediately seems to fall short, because I look forward every week to David Barsamian’s [Alternative Radio](#), a weekly 1-hour program sharing talks by progressive authors and commentators, and interviews with major progressive thinkers of our time. And of course, there’s the indomitable broadcast journalist for more than four decades, earlier with CBS and PBS, [Bill Moyers](#), who with his familiar soft yet penetrating voice, has retired from reporting and interviewing, but still has a strong web presence as managing editor. And, I’ve followed [TruthOut](#)



and [TruthDig](#). There are so many, and let me not exclude [NPR](#) news and Terry Gross's interview program [Fresh Air](#), which although are not independent of corporate sponsors, are public and I listen to them for daily happenings and interesting interviews.

And let me wrap up with [Free Speech Radio News \(FSRN\)](#), which I used to listen to daily for news from independent reporters around the world; but like other independent media, it struggled financially to keep its daily half-hour program on the air. FSRN began in 2000 as a renegade organization, when freelance correspondents then filing for [Pacifica Network](#) went on strike against the Pacifica Network, due to the attempted corporate board coup that tried to stifle controversial news and even sell off the assets of Pacifica's five radio stations. They took over management and even locked the doors to keep the broadcasters out! FSRN was born out of "their belief that in order to promote and support nonviolent social change, citizens need honest, critical, in-depth reporting on struggles for social and economic justice around the world."

Pacifica, which has an incredible news and story archive, survived the corporate board coup attempt, and has sustained itself as a broadcast network for grassroots community radio. The attempted corporate coup also affected the then nascent *Democracy Now!* program that was distributed by Pacifica. Its intrepid creator and leader, Amy Goodman, went underground to keep broadcasting, which I wrote about in the [2nd](#)

[Edition of \*The Unheard Herald\*](#) as "[A Paradigm Case of Board vs Democracy: Pacifica Radio, WBAI, FSRN & Democracy Now!](#)"

These are some of the trusted giants among the independent media community. If you want to be informed about the world around us by trusted professional independent sources, you need to dump the corporate media channels, and be regular listeners, readers and viewers of programs and sources like these.

The people from these organizations who have moved me, inspired me, and have earned my deepest respect and trust, are: Amy Goodman, Jeremy Scahill and Glenn Greenwald.

Again, there is no appropriate separating line to be drawn; there are just so many shining exemplars that represent what it takes. Immediately, I think of experienced reporter and author Juan Gonzáles, who co-founded Democracy Now! with Goodman (see my 2nd Edition report mentioned earlier). I think of Nermeen Shaikh, who is a producer and co-host of Democracy Now! And Sharif Abdel Kouddous of Democracy Now! who returned to his homeland of Egypt in 2011 to report on the Arab Spring uprising and continues to report on the middle east from Cairo.

And Laura Poitras, who with Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill, are the founding producer-editor-journalists of *The Intercept*. Poitras and Greenwald produced the film that documents how they came to interview NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden about his risky and deeply patri-

otic decision to expose how we were all being illegally surveilled. [About \*The Intercept\*](#): "After NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden came forward with revelations of mass surveillance in 2013, journalists Glenn Greenwald, Laura Poitras, and Jeremy Scahill decided to found a new media organization dedicated to the kind of reporting those disclosures required: fearless, adversarial journalism. They called it *The Intercept*. As an award-winning news organization that covers national security, politics, civil liberties, the environment, international affairs, technology, criminal justice, the media, and more; *The Intercept* gives its journalists the editorial freedom and legal support they need to pursue investigations that expose corruption and injustice wherever they find it and hold the powerful accountable."



Glenn Greenwald is a [journalist](#), [constitutional lawyer](#), and author of four *New York Times* best-selling books on politics and

law. He was the debut winner, along with Amy Goodman, of the Park Center I.F. Stone Award for Independent Journalism in 2008, and also received the 2010 Online Journalism Award for his investigative work on the abusive detention conditions of Chelsea Manning. For his 2013 NSA reporting, he received the George Polk award for National Security Reporting. The NSA reporting he led for *The Guardian* was awarded

the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for public service. The film Laura Poitras did with Greenwald about receiving the NSA documents from Edward Snowden, *Citizenfour*, received an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature in 2015.



Jeremy Scahill, one of the three founding editors of *The Intercept*, is an [award winning journalist and author](#). He has fearlessly gone directly

to where the war news originates. Scahill is an investigative reporter, war correspondent, and author of the international bestselling books *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* and *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*. He has reported from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Nigeria, the former Yugoslavia, and elsewhere across the globe. Scahill has served as the national security correspondent for *The Nation* and *Democracy Now!*.

Scahill's work has sparked several congressional investigations and won some of journalism's highest honors. He was twice awarded the prestigious George Polk Award, in 1998 for foreign reporting and in 2008 for *Blackwater*. Scahill, who got his start in journalism at *Democracy Now!*, is a producer and writer of the award-winning film *Dirty Wars*, which premiered at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award. He and Amy Goodman traveled

in Nigeria's Niger Delta in 1998 to investigate Chevron's role in a massacre of civilians protesting the company's pollution of their living environment. Together with Amy Goodman, they produced a one hour audio documentary, titled: "[Drilling and Killing: Chevron and Nigeria's Oil Dictatorship](#)", available on YouTube.



Amy Goodman co-founded *Democracy Now!* with Juan González in 1996, and has been its [host and executive producer](#) since then. The Nie-

man Foundation for Journalism at Harvard honored Goodman with the 2014 I.F. Stone Medal for Journalistic Independence Lifetime Achievement Award. She is also the first journalist to receive the Right Livelihood Award, widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' for "developing an innovative model of truly independent grassroots political journalism that brings to millions of people the alternative voices that are often excluded by the mainstream media." She is the first co-recipient of the Park Center for Independent Media's Izzy Award, named for the great muckraking journalist I.F. Stone, and was later selected for induction into the Park Center's I.F. Stone Hall of Fame. Goodman has co-authored six *New York Times* bestsellers.

A fearless journalist for decades, Amy Goodman's reporting on East Timor, with Allan Nairn, and Nigeria, with Jeremy Scahill, has

won numerous awards, including the George Polk Award, Robert F. Kennedy Prize for International Reporting, and the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Award.

Having visited East Timor for the first time in the summer of 1990, 16 years after the Indonesian invasion, they went back; and on November 12, 1991, Goodman and Nairn documented Indonesian troops armed with American-made M16 rifles firing on a crowd of several thousand unarmed East Timorese civilians gathered at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, East Timor. At least 271 people were killed that day and more later as they sought medical treatment in local hospitals. They were almost killed, with soldiers coming forward, their American rifles pointed at them. Goodman and Nairn were both badly beaten, but not executed, when they kept shouting they were from America. The soldiers kept hitting Nairn's head with rifle butts, while he laid over Goodman to protect her.

They produced a documentary, [Massacre: The Story of East Timor](#), on the Santa Cruz massacre and the history of Indonesian and U.S. involvement in the Southeast Asian nation. They've since returned and have produced anniversary *Democracy Now!* specials on the massacre in [1996](#), [1997](#), [2002](#), [2006](#), and [2016](#).

*Time Magazine* named Amy's *Democracy Now!* its "Pick of the Podcasts," along with NBC's Meet the Press. PULSE named Goodman one of the 20 Top Global Media Figures of 2009. I've been listening or watching since its 1996 debut.

## Healthy Democracy — Summary

### Problem (page 86):

**Our democracy no longer represents or serves the interests of the people**

### Policy: Restructure the Politics Industry

Systemic changes that address root causes of poor political outcomes; and hold election officials accountable for delivering desired outcomes in politics: solutions, actions, and broad-based consensus.

#### A. Restructure Election Process

1. Nonpartisan Top 4 Primaries
2. Ranked Choice Voting with Instant Runoff
3. Nonpartisan redistricting
4. Rewrite debate access rules

#### B. Governing Process

1. Rewrite legislative rules — *Independent Legislative Reform Commission*
2. Day-to-day legislating
  - a. Liberate process of law-making from partisan control over governance
  - b. Support and encourage truly democratic and solution-oriented debate
  - c. Truly democratic vote-taking and legislative solutions
3. Intense public pressure
  - a. For a process for rule change
  - b. For a process of legislating to serve the public interest
4. Commit to democratic norms
  - a. Mutual toleration
  - b. Forbearance: Restraint in

exercising power

#### C. Reform Money in Politics

1. Citizen funding systems
  - a. Incentivize small donors
  - b. Government matching of small private donations
2. 100% transparency in political spending (elections & governance)
3. Eliminate funding loopholes that favor existing parties over independents
4. Constituents over donors
  - a. Dramatically reduce ROI that donors currently receive
  - b. Increase incentives to respond to constituents

#### D. Open up near-term competition without waiting for structural systemic reforms

1. Reduce barriers to new parties and independents
2. Funding pools and shared infrastructure
3. Swing coalitions of independent candidates

### Policy (page 93, page 155): Citizen Equality Act

#### A. Citizen-Funded Elections

#### B. Equal Representation

#### C. Equal Right to Vote

### Problem (page 94): Electoral College

### Policy (page 94): National Popular Vote Interstate Compact

### Problem (page 95):

**Republican Election Fraud**

### Policy (page 150): Independent National Election Standards

#### A. Let People Vote

1. Voting rights restoration
2. Election reform
3. Districting reform
4. Combat voter suppression

#### B. Election Process Quality

1. Monitoring
2. Technology
3. End-to-End auditing
4. Recount processes

[Election Process chart, page 97](#)

### Problem (page 156): Media Integrity

### Policy: Break Up Media Conglomerates

### Policy:

#### Internet & Communication

Constitution Article I §8: Congress empowered to establish post offices and post roads.

#### A. Net Neutrality

#### B. Free and Open Internet

#### C. Blanket Country with Public Internet Infrastructure

#### D. Regulate bot technology

### Policy:

### Support Independent Journalism and Media

## Defining Success and Accountability for Results

***Measures of Outcome for a Healthy Democracy: Verifiability of accurate elections, election processes and equipment; Guarantees all citizens will be able to easily exercise their voting rights and that their votes will be accurately counted in a timely manner; Citizen equity in campaign finance through public financing, eliminating corporate and big money lobbying contributions, closing revolving door; Equal representation via elimination of gerrymandering, and providing for ranked-choice voting; Guarantees that election results will be determined by popular vote count; Media independent of corporate influence; Free, fair, open and neutral Internet services for everyone***

### **Taking back our representative democracy from the unpatriotic thieves who stole it: Modern day Republican Party**

Republicans can only win by gaming the system in order to steal elections. They do not have broad appeal amongst Americans because they are the representatives of the wealthy oligarch class and corporations. They are not advocates of democracy for the people; they are advocates for their primary funders. The evidence shows that every counter argument made to that can be demonstrated to be false and propagandistic.

American working people are being cheated out of their fair participation in their democracy due to the extensive influence of big money in politics and a broken election system. These are threats to our democracy that are exacerbated by a variety of tactics employed by big money interests, political operatives, and incumbent politicians.

Today's two-party political duopoly is sick and does not serve the interest or needs of the people. It does not serve the common good; it does not "promote the general welfare," one of the purposes stated in the Preamble for "ordaining and establishing the Constitution for the United States of America." It's important to recognize that much of what constitutes today's political system has no basis in the Constitution.

For the Republican oligarch class, and the political industry, it's working as designed, and they like it that way; they do not want it "reformed" on behalf of the people. So, "there is still no accepted strategy to reform the system and things keep getting worse." [Katherine M. Gehl and Michael E. Porter](#) emphasize that "we need a new approach. Our political problems are not due to a single cause, but rather to a failure of the nature of the political competition that has been created. This is a systems problem. It wasn't always that way. America's political system was long the envy of the world. It advanced public interest and gave rise to a grand history of policy innovations that fostered both economic and social progress. Today, however, our political system has become the major barrier to solving nearly every important challenge our nation needs to address. The structure of the politics industry, and the nature of the competition that has been created, have failed to serve the public interest and deliver the outcomes most citizens want and need. Politics has become a private industry that sets its own rules, allowing it to pervert some of the basic principles of what most of us think we know about representative democracy."

"One thing has become abundantly clear: Our political system will not be self-correcting. The problems are systemic and structural, involving multiple factors that are self-reinforcing. Today the challenge for Americans is to participate not only as voters, but also to participate in the reform of the political system itself. This is our democracy, and the need is urgent."