



A Clarion Call for Common Sense Action: An Open Letter to the American People

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January 4, 2020

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Dear Rachel,

Democratic fairness and good government of the people, by the people and for the people are under assault by corrupting power-abusing factions. This is proving the great progressive Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis to have been right when he said, "We can have democracy in this country, or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." Despite this understanding, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few has been dramatically increasing in recent years, threatening the health, well-being, personal security and freedoms of the American people.

Fairness is the cornerstone of our great American experiment in representative democracy. Since the legitimacy of our government is derived from the consent of the people, it is the duty of our representatives to honestly promote the best interests of the people and the common good. Unfortunately, the reins of power have been seized by deceitful demagogic politicians who are double-crossing people by ruling ruthlessly in favor of the rich, rather than in the best interests of the vast majority of the people. Compounding this sin, these abusers of authority are consistently siding with corporate exploiters over working people and the populace as a whole.

The English historian Lord Acton is also being revealed to have been correct when he observed, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Think about this! Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that he has the absolute right "to do whatever I want as President." But this is NOT true in our Constitutional republic.

Power not only corrupts, but power concentrated in the hands of a minority party that controlled all branches of the federal government for two years (until Democrats won a majority of seats in the House of Representatives in the 2018 midterm elections) has shut out the voices of those in the majority who oppose abuses of authority and divide-to-conquer demagoguery and foreign interference in our elections, and Tax Cut swindles financed by borrowed public funds, and other shrewd schemes being used to concentrate wealth and power ever more narrowly. These harms are being made worse by rash scams that allow costs and risks to be externalized onto society in order to goose private profits and funnel most of them into the bank accounts of the top dogs.

What we have here is a bizarre form of corporate-controlled socialism for the rich and swim-or-sink Tough Luck capitalism for the vast majority of everybody else. The main purposes of power-abusing corporate puppet masters who are buying our representatives and controlling our country are (1) to maximize private profits, and (2) to minimize the liabilities for harms corporations are causing while evading their real social and ecological responsibilities to their employees, customers and society as a whole.

It is a simple tautological truth that things will be better for most people only when things really are better for the majority. To rectify the current highly anti-egalitarian state of affairs, I urge all Americans to vote for progressive candidates in every future election, and to demand that all of our representatives honestly represent the common good and the general welfare of the people. At this critical crossroads in history, all citizens should

vote for candidates who will steer us in safer and fairer directions, and hold incumbent Trump Republicans accountable for wrongdoing and their unsustainable negative long-term impacts.

Mark Twain once famously observed, "We have the best government money can buy." Holy prescient satirical wit! Unscrupulously partisan conservatives on the Supreme Court ridiculously declared in their narrow 2010 *Citizens United* ruling that Big Money does not corrupt or even create the appearance of corruption. Well, look here now. "Conservative" billionaires like Charles Koch, Robert and Rebekah Mercer, Sheldon Adelson and their corruption-loving cronies are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to promote an inequality exacerbating, democracy undermining and anti-environmental agenda. To succeed in their self-interested goals, they are using the nefarious tactics of dividing people and intimidating them and preventing their voices from being heard or respected. In spreading discord and resentment, they are inimically attempting to perpetrate what is proving to be the worst government the USA has ever had.

The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School confirms this contention, writing: "Developments since *Citizens United* have created countless opportunities for corrupt dealing, and they have created widespread perceptions of corruption, severely undermining public confidence in our government." Wealth-abusing individuals and corporate entities have allowed Republicans to gain control of more than 60% of state legislatures, and these red states have used narrow 5-to-4 decisions by partisan Supreme Court conservatives to weaken the Voting Rights Act of 1965 -- and subsequently impose restrictive voting laws that deprive millions of people of the right to vote. And they have refused to take reasonable steps to curtail the corruption inherent in extreme gerrymandering of congressional districts. To the sad detriment of the people, these shrewd abusers of power promote a profoundly anti-democratic agenda.

Our colonial ancestors loved liberty and fairness of opportunity, and they hated despotic abuses of authority and taxation without fair representation. This is why they declared independence from King George III and the British Empire, and set about creating a commendable new form of democratic government founded on visionary plans for good governance. They made it perfectly clear what the proper goals of good government should be in the great Preamble to the U.S. Constitution:

"We the People of the United States, in Order 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 do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

This Age of Reason declaration of idealistic purpose is perhaps the greatest expression of human intent in world history. Let us honestly evaluate how Trump Republicans are performing with regard to each of these salubrious good governance goals. Here is a clear-eyed assessment.

How are they doing about forming a more perfect union? Lousy! They are using divide-and-conquer tactics to make it easier to gain power and abuse it, and to further concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few. They are using inflammatory rhetoric to demonize those who oppose them, calling the free press "an enemy of the people" and casting demagogic aspersions on all Democrats and liberals. "Conservatives" are able to grab outsized and growing benefits for themselves only by preventing the American people from coming together in collaborative unity to enjoy the great boon found in fairer and more honorable policies, and in improved social cohesion. And their divisive rule is seriously stained by being accompanied by a spike in hate crimes.

How are Republicans doing with regard to promoting the general welfare? Miserable! Extreme inequalities are being made radically worse by the Trump economic and political policies. Their 2017 Tax Scam loots the public treasury in a corrupt indulgence in regressively-structured Tax Cut swindles that hyper-stimulate economic activities with excessive amounts of deficit spending. This is adding to the opprobrious tax burdens that every taxpayer in every future year will be obligated to pay. This strategy is imprudent, for it violates the sensible prescriptions of the influential economist John Maynard Keynes, who recommended stimulative deficit spending by the government during economic hard times, when slack business activities lead to hardship-engendering jumps the number of jobless people. Keynes astutely made it clear that deficit spending must be offset by balanced budgets

or surpluses during relative boom times and periods of low unemployment -- like right now.

The current \$23 trillion national debt already represents a shockingly large \$70,000 debt for every man, woman and child in the country. And this obligation is increasing by \$3,000 every year, with no planned relief in sight. Judgment day will be rattling!

In connection with these expedient short-term-oriented actions, Republicans are wrongfully treating our home planet like a business in liquidation, depleting resources at an irrational rate and woefully ignoring the well-being and security of the 99% -- and of everyone in all future generations. And they are doing this not for the common good, but to give most of the resulting profits to the richest 1%. Investors are rationally exuberant as the destined-to-be epic year 2020 begins, pleased as punch to be able to cash in on the current corrupt administration's extremely selfish shortsighted scams. The proverbial spiked punch bowl must be taken away!

How are they doing about insuring domestic tranquility? Abysmal. The pursuit of reasonable prospects for security and happiness and equanimity are under furious assault. Twisted Republican spin and rationalizing propaganda and shrewdly self-serving strategies are dangerously contrary to this desirable goal, because they hype-up resentments, misdirect anger, create heightened anxieties, rile up their narrow base of supporters, incite violence, and push national priorities that strongly favor the domination of our society by rich people, ruthless corporate entities, white males and a narrow-minded political base. Women of the world, unite! It is becoming extremely important at this critical juncture to see beyond what Trump is doing with his deceitful tweets and violent rhetoric and zealously frenzied Nuremburg-like political rallies. What he is really doing is pursuing his own greedy and power-hungry self-interest by trying to fool the people, and to sell them down the river by rallying support for his exploitive and deceit-filled agenda.

How are they doing with in establishing justice? Give us a break! Republican politicians are working against this priority by fostering more intense economic inequalities, and facilitating discrimination, and perpetrating grotesque injustices that include rashly waging an excessively unjust war on cannabis users to help control and oppress the populace. They are taking advantage of hyper-partisan polarized tribal emotions to accomplish these narrow purposes, in what is a discriminatory white nationalist patriarchal attempt to reward elites and perpetuate racial and gender injustices. The amount of corruption in the USA has spiked under the rule of Trump Republicans, and the federal government is continuing to try to deprive women of reproductive rights, and to violate the constitutional balance of powers, and to pursue policies designed to increase the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few while imposing austerity measures on the masses. These, and many of their other actions, are making social and environmental injustices significantly worse.

How are they doing in providing for the common defense? The writing on the wall is ominous. Dangers are spiking, and will get worse as aggravated strife, climate destabilization, increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees, shortages of depleted resources, and accelerated extinctions become insidiously worse. With the drone assassination of the head of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Quds Force on January 2, 2020, the risk of terrorizing retribution and a *Wag the Dog*-like war have dangerously increased.

How are they doing with regard to securing the blessings of liberty to the people, now and in posterity? Not good! They are reluctant to honestly adhere to the will of the people, and refuse to take strong stands for human rights here and abroad. They are posing serious threats to democracy, and forming conspiratorial alliances with repressive authoritarians in many foreign countries, and they are whittling away at personal freedoms at home instead of fairly promoting propitious, positive, inclusive and unifying plans that serve to improve the general welfare and advance common good goals.

These reflections make it clear that Trump Republicans are posing serious threats to all the eminently salubrious values articulated in the Preamble to the Constitution. Every politician today who mercilessly works against these noble common sense purposes should be thrown out of office.

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay published the Federalist Papers in 1788 to promote the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Right at the beginning of these Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton

warned against populists who endanger the constitution and rule of law. Those who have threatened liberties and overthrown republics, he wrote, have usually "begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people ... commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants." Tyranny is antithetical to the many blessings of liberty.

As the RMS Titanic was sinking on April 15, 1912, there weren't an adequate number of lifeboats, and there was a "women and children first" protocol for loading the lifeboats, so many of the wealthy male passengers in first class went down with the ship. Today, rich males demand they go first, and be spared any inconvenience at all.

Preventing smart reforms and obstructing intelligent courses of action are strategies that in themselves are unacceptable abuses of authority.

The providential triumph of many progressive women in the November 2018 elections gives great hope for our country to recover from the anti-democratic Trump madness. Democratic women didn't just run against Trumpian policies, they ran for something -- fairer justice, more inclusive opportunities, greater equality of rights and privileges, universal medical care, an improved system of more affordable health insurance, a stronger social safety net, greater reproductive rights for women, fairer treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers, greater safety from gun violence, and more effective protections of the vital health of the environmental commons. These representatives deserve recognition and reward for their laudable public service. Support them!

Imagine the implications of the curious fact that the human psyche is subject to what psychologists call "the illusory truth effect." Even when we know something is not true, we are subtly swayed by hearing it repeated over and over and over again. In our "post-truth world", deviously manipulative politicians and promoters of propaganda and twisted spin and persuasive advertising take advantage of this propensity of people to believe in relentlessly repeated information and disinformation. Twitter thrives on such outrageous disinformation.

This is a Bizarro aspect of the world we live in, to have people tend to believe things they know to be false. This phenomenon "is a glitch in the human psyche that equates repetition with truth." Master manipulators exploit this particular cognitive bias to gain power over the populace, and to abuse this illegitimate influence.

When leaders act as "bad actors" to prevent reforms and torpedo intelligent courses of action, this itself is an unacceptable abuse of authority. In twenty-twenty hindsight, we are going to be keenly aware how these master manipulators have taken shrewd advantage of this "illusory truth effect" that makes human beings susceptible to believing something is true even when they know it is false, just because it has been repeated so often.

A peaceful progressive revolution is needed right now, in light of the infamy of despotic demagogues who are doubling down to try to cement their power in place. Republican politicians clearly favor corporations over people, and rich people over everyone else, and men over women, and whites over blacks and Latinos. For the government to regain the confidence and trust of its citizens, *We the People* took the first step by rejecting the "Devil's Triangle" of GOP control of the White House, Congress and an extremely partisan 5-4 majority on the Supreme Court. Let's ignore all the manipulative spin and ugly attacks on progressive policies and priorities, and push back against all the vitriolic diatribes against Democrats and liberals, and recognize that greater good goals can be achieved only by choosing more honest, honorable, unifying, inclusive and fair representatives.

It is consequentially tragic that voters allowed Trump Republicans to retain domineering control of the U.S. Senate in the 2018 elections for another two years, and also to occupy too many Governor's offices and state Attorney General positions. Make no mistake about it: partisan rulings by the illegitimate 5-4 majority of "conservatives" on the Supreme Court are deeply subversive of our founding ideals -- and of social and environmental sanity. It is a grave risk to allow our democracy to be subverted from within by authority-abusing politicians intent on maintaining unaccountable power and abusing this usurped authority by running roughshod over the common good through their unwisely unfair agenda.

It is clear that elections have consequences, and with increasingly consequential issues facing humanity, it is the right of the people, indeed their duty, to reject the ruthless rule being imposed on the people by a scheming and manipulative minority party of deceivers, grifters and corporate abusers of influence who seem hell-bent on

aggressively striving to exploit resources to maximize private profits and funnel these short-term gains into the pockets of the few -- and to foist the resulting costs, harms, risks and accruing liabilities for bailouts onto everyone else. At the same time, Republicans are trying to cut spending on the social safety net to help offset the costs of giving huge tax breaks to the richest Americans, despite the fact that their regressive Tax Cut scam is recklessly driving up the \$23 trillion national debt by adding trillions of dollars more money borrowed from all taxpayers in the future to add to these fiscally irresponsible and nefariously unfair top priorities.

Donald Trump and his Cabinet members and hyper-partisan Republican loyalists in Congress are demonstrating an extreme lack of responsibility by pushing this agenda that gives huge tax giveaways to influence-abusing rich people while compounding this far-reaching folly by dangerously driving up the public debt and wantonly depleting resources, polluting the environment, harmfully perpetrating tragedy-of-the-commons ecological harms, failing to take steps to reduce climate destabilizing greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere, and treacherously sacrificing the common good.

The Pending Impeachment Trial in the U.S. Senate

If you fling your arms into the air and command the waters of a salty sea to part, you will be disappointed. In deciding proper courses of action, it is valuable to know what is actually possible. "Moscow Mitch" McConnell thinks it will prove to be politically impossible to remove Donald Trump from office, due to the effective stranglehold that partisan Republican politicians have in the U.S. Senate. We'll see.

Donald Trump's extortion of Ukraine is only the tip of a sea of icebergs of shady dealings, fraudulent activities, corporate corruption, violations of laws, and conspiring collaboration with authoritarian rulers who are repressing their own peoples. Looming ever-larger over this morass is extreme short-termism and existential environmental irresponsibility. Just as about 90% of a floating iceberg's mass is submerged below the water line, most of Trump's treacherous activities are being kept secret from the people, and Trump and his lawyers are obstructing justice and refusing to abide by constitutional checks and balances. And Fox News and deceitful politicians are conspiring together to keep people in the dark, as if preaching a "Mushroom Theory of Management -- "keep them in the dark, and feed them with bullshit."

What remains secret is a thousand-fold more incriminating of Trump's treachery, and that of his enablers, than mere extortion of Ukraine's leaders as a favor to give Con Man Trump personal political advantages. As the drip-drip-drip of incriminating revelations continues to come to light, the Trump Republican and Fox News propaganda machine will falter in its bogus spin. "Heading into the new year, Democrats will continue to question why Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell remain so eager to block witnesses from testifying in the Senate impeachment trial. What do they have to hide? Democrats could very likely get a boost in their quest for a fair trial by court rulings that shred Trump's pervasive blockade of executive branch cooperation. But even if Senate Republicans succeed in blocking a meaningful trial from proceeding, they will still face the distinct possibility of major revelations continuing to surface in 2020 that ultimately haunt their reelection bids."

Real News - Sad!

Think about this unbelievable fact. Donald Trump and Ivanka and Don Junior all signed a letter in early December 2009 urging President Obama to "lead the world by example" at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, which was at that moment about to take place. The letter, published in a full page ad in the New York Times, sensationally declared, "If we fail to act now, it is scientifically irrefutable that there will be catastrophic and irreversible consequences for humanity and our planet." The letter added that investing in clean energy "will spur economic growth, create new energy jobs, and increase our energy security, all while reducing the harmful emissions that are putting our planet at risk."

Fast forward 10 years, and we see the Trump family has found religion, and perniciously thrown the fate of life on Earth to the wolves by unleashing profiteering by the oil and coal and natural gas industries. In the Bible, such greedy kowtowing to Big Money on the false alter of Mammon is rightly portrayed as evil. The Trump family has sold their souls, trading the safety, well-being and sustainability of human existence for money and power. In

doing so, they are sacrificing honesty, integrity and responsibility for their own exceedingly short-term-oriented personal gain, to the severe detriment of humankind and millions of species of life on Earth. In this mad choice, their top goal is deplorably transactional and materialistic. They are seeking to maximize the amount of wealth generated in the short term — and to make damn sure the power-abusing elites monopolize the lion's share of it.

Evidence proves emphatically that the corporate world cannot be trusted to do the right thing when it comes to protecting either the public health or the environment. Since corporations are much too narrowly focused on achieving their two main legal purposes of maximizing profits and protecting management and shareholders from legal liability, governments must take responsibility for creating truly fairer societies. We must stop allowing corporations to foist costs and harms and risks onto society.

We need smarter governance and more long-term-oriented national decision-making. *We the People* deserve better than the corrupt status quo. We want food safety, clean drinking water, protections from being exposed to toxins and pollution, workplace safety, gun safety, greater well-being through fairer and more inclusive policies, and better security from heightening dangerous human-exacerbated "natural disaster" impacts being caused by extreme weather events.

Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accords was a hypocritical action that is rash, retrogressive and selfishly expedient. It is a coldly-calculated case of pandering to powerful profiteers at the expense of future well-being. This decision is "a shameful mistake of historic proportions", stated Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. This mistake reflects Trump's "America First" disdain for international cooperation to solve global problems.

This act is enabled by millions of Trump supporters in his narrow and easily manipulated political base. This rogue move is hostile to people in almost every other country on Earth, and indulgently myopic. It is a money-grubbing anti-environmental act that is antithetical to intelligent foresight and collaborative fair-mindedness, and contrary to environmental justice, sustainable living and respect for peaceable coexistence.

At the bottom of the 2009 open letter about climate action, an African proverb is quoted: "If you want to go quickly go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Trump has obviously decided to go it alone in climate obtuseness, and the condemnation from the majority of political and business leaders was swift and unforgiving. California Governor Jerry Brown succinctly summarized the folly of Trump deciding to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Accords, saying, "It's odd. It's wrong. It's dangerous." The Sierra Club's Michael Brune wrote, "Our grandchildren will look back with stunned dismay at how a world leader could be so divorced from reality and morality. He is abandoning millions of Americans who will bear the brunt of climate disruption -- from record floods to droughts and wildfires and hurricanes that destroy people's homes and livelihoods."

This action is a dumb "doubling down" on the scam of corrupted government peddling influence and allowing individuals and corporate entities to socialize more costs by externalizing them onto society. It would be much smarter to formulate powerful monetary incentives to positively influence people's behaviors. Putting a fair price on carbon emissions would be a good start. For a bigger picture understanding of what Trump and his minions are doing, including Scott Pruitt and then the coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler at the Environmental Protection Agency, and Ryan Zinke and then David Bernhardt at the Department of Interior. see *The Top Ten Ways Our System Is Rigged*. You'll also get an earful about the ruses involved and the long litany of personal improprieties being perpetrated, along with the corrupt consequences of these backward plans.

There is an old saying in the design community, "Don't cling to a mistake just because you spent a long time making it." It may be hard to admit when we are wrong about something and are living a mistake, but it is much worse to deny this and instead let it impact the public health, vitality, security and future well-being.

Trump's decision is basically to allow fossil fuel corporations and other entities to increase the amount of costs they are able to socialize in order to gain artificially inflated profits. This allows investors to gain the spoils of this lax policy -- and the irresponsible plan is coupled with regressive tax schemes that allow those receiving most of the benefits to pay low capital gains taxes on them, further concentrating wealth in the hands of the few.

The United Nations not long ago warned that one million species of life are in accelerating danger of eternal extinction due to human activities. At the very same time, the Trump administration has been striving to gut provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

To help them achieve their pernicious purposes, these fake "conservatives" are pandering to right-wing factions that are hijacking Jesus' name to justify their wrongful agenda. Totalitarian short-termism in national planning simply must be overcome and vanquished.

These consequential wrongs are being enabled by unprecedented trickery using bait-and-switch scams, cost externalizing schemes, brazen efforts to artificially pump up private profits by reducing protections of the public health and well-being, accelerating the damaging exploitation of public lands, and promoting really deceitful propaganda and Big Lies about crucial matters like the trickle-down theory, which rationalizes extremely anti-egalitarian outcomes. The fact of the matter is that it is an epic folly for conservatives to stubbornly deny that catastrophic climate change is being made incomprehensibly worse by policies that pander to fossil fuel industries. Shamefully, these policies are being pursued in order to get bigger contributions of dirty money, and to wrongly give more unaccountable power to the minority ruling party. Exacerbating this folly, ideological blinders are allowing Republican politicians to despotically usurp and abuse this authority.

Clearly seeing that Republicans have been acting like despots, we should look back to the courageous signers of the Declaration of Independence, who tell us exactly what *We the People* must do when being subjected to "a long train of abuses and usurpations" that reduces the people under despotic rule -- "it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government and to provide new Guards for their future security." These honorable Founders made it clear that it is the Right of the People to alter any government that becomes destructive of "unalienable Rights" of the citizenry, "and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

Right now, we Americans are facing an unfolding constitutional crisis brought on by power-abusing politicians. At the same time, humanity is confronted with an unfolding climate crisis, which the world's leading climate scientists have repeatedly warned about in Climate Reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In November 2019, a fresh clarion call was issued by more than 11,000 scientists from around the world, from many different disciplines, who declared that Earth faces a climate emergency. The scientists published an urgent warning: "The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected. It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity."

This international group of 11,000-plus scientists is backing a study with dire warnings about how human activities have harmfully impacted the planet over recent decades. The study found that emissions of greenhouse gases are dangerously continuing to rise, and that governments are making insufficient progress in tackling the resulting crisis. It also states that scientists have "a moral obligation to clearly warn humanity of any catastrophic threat." The findings, published in the journal *BioScience*, identified six key areas for critical changes, including addressing the planet's swelling population.

All of these experts say that time is very short for us to act to prevent a dangerous degree of global warming, which would significantly worsen the disastrous damages caused by increasingly powerful hurricanes, epic floods, extreme heat, hellish wildfires, devastating droughts, rising sea levels, red tides, biodiversity-threatening ocean acidification and worsening poverty for hundreds of millions of people. The authors of the latest landmark report released by the IPCC say that urgent changes are needed -- unprecedented in scope -- to prevent and mitigate the severity of these impacts. They also say the changes needed are affordable and feasible, and that the adverse consequences are too dire to allow the status quo to continue.

A Visionary Thought Experiment

Albert Einstein famously used visualized thought experiments as a tool for understanding complex issues in physics, and for clearly conveying his concepts to others. In a positive development, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has created a thought experiment in the form of a seven-minute video titled *A Message from the Future*. She made

this compelling video in conjunction with Naomi Klein, the Canadian social activist and author of the 2014 book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. They use a thought experiment in the video that looks at the world from the future perspective of life in the year 2040. They assume in this future frame that humanity will have been able to succeed in taking big steps to solve daunting problems associated with climate change, and they reveal the great hope in the future value of such smart right action today. Watch this video online!

Getting Away with Murder

The Big Picture implications of allowing wealthy conservatives to abuse power in nations worldwide are daunting, for they pose grave threats to the common good and the liberties of people in many countries. This can be seen in the broad abuses of power being perpetrated by such authoritarian governments as those in Putin's Russia, Erdogan's Turkey, Mohammad bin Salman's Saudi Arabia, Orban's Hungary, Modi's India, Kaczynski's Poland and Duterte's Philippines. Fascist-like tendencies to rule ruthlessly are being achieved through strategies straight from the diabolical Demagogue's Playbook: dividing people, hijacking their emotions, scaring them, scapegoating others, stoking racial resentments, shifting blame, exploiting fears of immigrants, hyping up tribal partisanship, inciting violence, and brainwashing people about what's going on. And they are deceiving the populace about the true nature of their discriminatory democracy-undermining inequality-stoking exclusionary and stupidly short-term policies.

To help Republican politicians get away with similar shrewd schemes and swindles, Donald Trump and his minions vehemently attack reporters, journalists, writers and critics, calling them "enemies of the people". In actuality, these people are acting patriotically by representing our best hope for preventing unaccountable factions and their facilitators from depriving working people of power and exacerbating healthcare injustices and driving the nation deeper into debt to enrich the already rich, and generally creating increasingly dangerous disparities between the top 1% and everyone else. And they are relentlessly trying to take away the rights of women to reproductive freedoms, and to cement policies in place that discriminate against LGBT people.

Republican politicians can't win fair election contests because the Agenda they push is antithetical to the well-being of the majority, and contrary to the common good. Since a majority of the people opposes the far right agenda, Republican-dominated state legislatures resort to coldly calculated tactics like radically gerrymandering congressional districts to deprive millions of Americans of fairer representation, and they engage in blatant campaigns to suppress the vote, especially in Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Kansas and Texas.

Trump Republicans are using the same litany of blatantly corrupt and broadly illegitimate means to win election contests that they used in 2016 to seize power, as spelled out in deliberative detail in *See Clearly - Sanity During Insane Times* (specifically in the essay *Demagoguery and the Dangers of the Demise of Democracy*.) Instead of seeking real legitimacy by cultivating the consent of the governed, and promoting an agenda consistent with the common good and fair representation of the people, Republicans instead have continued to use all their usual outrageously dirty electioneering tricks, with their emotion-manipulating spin and lies and bullying tactics. They are propagating fear by using advertising that is fueled by *Dark Money* to fool people into supporting candidates who will push their agenda. One of their nefarious strategies is to use micro-targeting on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to push Big Lies and deliver manipulative propaganda and spread false conspiracy theories. In addition, they are making the ruling minority out to be victims of a "democratic mob", which actually consists of true American patriots who oppose their abuses of power.

On top of these illegitimate schemes, Republican politicians have been brazenly sabotaging the greater good ever since the fateful day three years ago when "conservatives" took the reins of power and began to wage an insidious Orwellian assault on American founding ideals, democratic values, ethical norms, honesty, decency, truth, propriety, righteousness and numerous rules of law and provisions of the U.S. Constitution itself.

Great solutions to the biggest challenges facing us are needed, like an intelligently designed Green New Deal, and an end to the worst aspects of the highly undemocratic, anti-egalitarian and anti-environmental agenda that is being imposed by the current regime on communities nationwide, and on working people in particular. These solutions to the national dilemma in which we find ourselves are simple, in essence. For starters, we need to reject

Republican politicians in all future elections. Then our national system of taxation must be changed by redesigning it so that more revenues are generated to pay for smarter investments in greater good goals. To do this, a more progressive tax structure is needed that is much more highly graduated, with lower taxes on the first \$50,000 every person earns, and new tax brackets that have higher rates on the highest levels of income. Such changes will be much more egalitarian by design, and should be done in ways that ensure the growth of national indebtedness is reduced. Vote accordingly!

A decade ago, I observed that the Congressional Budget Office had made an astonishing point: "Corporations are paying 60% less than the share of federal revenues they paid in 1960. Big businesses have managed to achieve this benefit by increasing the influence of lobbyists to enable giant corporations to grab a variety of special privileges for their shareholders and themselves. These perks include direct subsidies, accelerated depreciation write-offs, tax loopholes, offshore tax shelters and the relaxation of common-good rules. Now is the time to include fairer amounts of costs in every product sold." Trump Republicans slashed corporate taxes in December 2017, decreasing the amount of the tax obligation paid by corporations to only about 6% of total federal revenues today. Investors love it; the common good suffers.

Trump's seemingly strongest argument for getting re-elected is the current moderate economic growth and the low rate of unemployment and booming stock market. But even these things are fool's gold, an artificial patina of prosperity brought about by means of a stimulative public debt swindle and highly regressively-structured tax cuts, along with the unleashing of corporations to control our national decision-making, exploit and deplete resources, damage the environmental commons, externalize many costs onto the people, evade sensible regulations and get away with breaking laws that protect us from harms. This patina of prosperity is masking a lot of sins, which will come to light.

Ponder Another Valuable Thought Experiment

Since we are in the middle of the most consequential constitutional crisis in American history, we need to see clearly the specter of this roiling destabilizing chaotic turbulence that is haunting us in the land of the free. Let's adopt the brilliant Albert Einstein's use of vivid thought experiments to conceptualize ideas that are hard to adequately comprehend, and give the following close consideration.

Just before the November 2018 national elections, I proposed a good plan for revolutionarily altering the swampy status quo. "Let's call it the Duopartite Justice Solution. Here's the plan to providentially deal with the current unfolding Constitutional crisis and existential ecological challenges. Donald Trump and his corrupt Cabinet and the almost exclusively male Republican politicians in Congress will have had two years of rule by January 21, 2019, so Democratic women championing progressive governance should be guaranteed the power of the presidency for the next two years, along with majority rule in the Senate and the House. New representatives in Congress should be chosen to take office on January 21, 2019. And they should be empowered to hold a national plebiscite to choose a new president to replace Donald Trump, a woman who will also take the reins of government on January 21, 2019. Then, when national elections arrive two years later in November 2020, American citizens will have an eminently good basis for evaluating which party has truly done the better job in governing during their split two year rule, based on this historic contrast of how competing ideologies and contrasting ruling policies and priorities will have impacted our country. Is it likely to be the Republicans who have ruled in 2017-2018 or Democrats in 2019-2020? Let's find out!"

Imagine how much easier it would be for voters, when Election Day arrives in November 2020, to choose the best leaders for the next 4 years, if we had adopted this propitious plan. We would have been able to see more clearly the contrast between the performance of Trump Republicans, and the performance of more progressive leaders, in making the United States of America a more perfect union.

Another extraordinarily egregious instance of our leaders failing to act responsibly was their inability to agree on renewing the Land and Water Conservation Fund for many months after it expired on Sept. 30, 2018. This is America's most important conservation and recreation fund, a program that has protected national parks and open

spaces in every state and nearly every county in the U.S. The Fund was created by Congress in 1964 as a bipartisan commitment to safeguard natural areas and water resources and our cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. National parks like the Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain and the Great Smoky Mountains, as well as national wildlife refuges, national forests, rivers and lakes, community parks, trails and ball fields in every one of our 50 states were set aside for Americans to enjoy, thanks to federal funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. It was a simple plan: to use revenues from the depletion of one natural resource -- offshore oil and gas -- to support the conservation of another precious resource -- our land and water. Every year, \$900 million in royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf are put into this fund. The money is intended to protect national parks and areas around rivers and lakes from development, as well as national forests and national wildlife refuges, and to provide matching grants for state and local parks and recreation projects. Over the years, the Fund has also grown and evolved to include grants to protect working forests, wildlife habitat, critical drinking water supplies and disappearing battlefields, as well as increased use of easements.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has invested billions of dollars over the past five decades to protect iconic outdoor places, open access for hunting, fishing, hiking and other outdoor activities, and to create local parks. From community playgrounds and ball fields to wonderful national parks, wildlife refuges and historic sites, the Fund has protected places in California alone like Muir Woods, Joshua Tree, Lake Tahoe and the Santa Monica Mountains, the Pacific Crest Trail, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Grasslands Wildlife Management Area, Baldwin Hills, Tuolumne River Parkway, and community parks, recreational fields, and trails in communities small and large throughout the state. And this Fund bolsters a huge outdoor recreation industry, which is an economic powerhouse supporting millions of jobs and generating hundreds of billions of dollars in wages and salaries, and producing billions of dollars annually in federal, state and local tax revenues.

Let's breathe deep and let go, and see clearly. Donald Trump and his Republican cronies in Congress made urgent efforts to scare the American people into thinking that there was a national emergency just before the 2018 midterm elections, when a "caravan" of refugees and asylum seekers was making its way from strife-torn Central American countries through Mexico toward the United States. In reality, this movement of migrants was not particularly abnormal, and it posed little threat to *We the People* of the United States of America. But Republicans hyped up people's fears about these refugees to try to retain power. In truth, the real national emergency is that Republicans are striving with desperate measures to maintain their oppressive power, and if unchecked, our democracy will continue to be converted, rather insidiously, into a government featuring a more authoritarian hegemony over the people.

Voters could easily throw Republicans out of power if more women, young people and black and Hispanic voters turn out in greater numbers. Minorities have the power to overwhelm the nativist appeals of narrow-minded racially discriminatory anti-immigrant Republican campaigns. But Trump and his loyalists are frenetically trying to mobilize white males with bombastic rhetoric and histrionics. "Trump's America has become a grim place for Latinos. Two-thirds of them say Trump's policies have been harmful to Hispanics, according to a Pew Research Center poll ... A majority of them say that it has become more difficult to be Hispanic in America, and 4 in 10 have personally experienced racial harassment in the last year. Only 22% approve of Trump's presidency."

True patriots oppose and protest against corruption and political malfeasance and eco-villainy, and against financial chicanery and fiscal irresponsibility. Those who blindly support politicians who are looting the country and dividing people are not honest patriots, and they are treacherous in giving their support to politicians who are failing to act to mitigate risks to future well-being associated with resource depletion, pollution, global warming and mindless assaults on Earth's biological diversity.

Many people agree with Martin Luther King's assessment that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice". But unfortunately, rogues and schemers can obviously bend our national purposes backwards toward increased inequality, worsening perverse injustices, severe inequities and ecologically insane national priorities. It is high time that we take action to once again head in the right direction. I propose that we enact a

Bill of Rights for Future Generations, and pass *One Dozen Big Initiatives to Positively Transform Our Societies*. These ideas can be found and understood on the Earth Manifesto online.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

Hannibal, Missouri

January 4, 2020

Contact at: SaveTruffulaTrees@hotmail.com

Note: This Open Letter is part of my online Earth Manifesto, whose contents are all included in one of the Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto. This potentially world-saving manifesto has materialized in our midst, in emulation of Athena, Greek Goddess of Wisdom, who reputedly sprang forth in birth from the head of Zeus, divine Olympian ruler of the universe. Read all about it in the Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto, or on my Earth Manifesto website. The reflections in these writings are a clear evaluation of what's happening in our societies right now, and they powerfully propose excellent solutions and smart new directions. Here are the titles of these twelve books.

The Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto

Common Sense Revival

Entertaining Illumination Unleashed

Existential Enlightenment

Imaginative Perspectives and Ecopsychological Insights

Healthy Recipes and Provocative Worldviews

Incisive Global Perspectives

Comprehensive Global Perspective: An Illuminating Worldview

Big Picture Perspectives, and A Pursuit of Social Activism

The Original Earth Manifesto

A Marvelous Miscellany of Musings and Evolutionary Understandings

The Rather Ridiculous Ruses that Fuel Revolutionary Unrest

See Clearly: Sanity During Insane Times

Book One of the Earth Manifesto

Book Two of the Earth Manifesto

Book Three of the Earth Manifesto

Book Four of the Earth Manifesto

Book Five of the Earth Manifesto

Book Six of the Earth Manifesto

Book Seven of the Earth Manifesto

Book Eight of the Earth Manifesto

Book Nine of the Earth Manifesto

Book Ten of the Earth Manifesto

Book Eleven of the Earth Manifesto

Book Twelve of the Earth Manifesto

See the very last link at the end of the Home Page of the Earth Manifesto online for the Tables of Contents pages for all the essays included in these twelve books. Every one of these essays can be found online, on links from the Home Page, organized in their original ever-evolving form. **Sales pitch:** All these handsome 212-page books are available right now from the on-demand printer Lulu Publishing for a little over \$10 each. This price includes a maximum allowable discount of 30% off retail for each of these twelve handsome insight-filled books.

Postscript

Mark Twain wrote 20,000 words of a sequel to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but never finished it. Think about his observations he made in this little known unfinished sequel to one of the most widely read novels in history, when he related a story about Huck and Jim and Tom Sawyer on a journey out West among the Indians. He wrote about a character who didn't talk much, but "when he talked about Injuns, he talked the same as if he was talking about animals; he didn't seem to have much idea that they was men." Yet he puzzled about "how such animals struck such a sensible religion. He said the Injuns hadn't only but two Gods, a good one and a bad one, and they never paid no attention to the good one, nor ever prayed to him or worried about him at all, but only tried their level best to flatter up the bad god, and keep on the good side of him; because the good one loved them and wouldn't ever think of doing them any harm, and so there warn't any occasion to be bothering him with prayers and things, because he was always doing the very best he could for them, anyway, and prayers couldn't better it; but all the trouble come from the bad god, who was sitting up nights to think up ways to bring them bad luck and bust up all their plans, and never fooled away a chance to do them all the harm he could; and so the sensible thing was to keep praying and fussing around him all the time, and get him to let up."

In a striking parallel, in modern times the religious right marches to the drummer of a vindictive God, and sides with political authorities to impose domineering control over people, and to support a far-right agenda that favors

evangelicals over other folks, and rich over poor, and males over females, and corporate prerogatives over the best interests of the people. I love this concept about the religion of the Native American Indians and their respect for the Great Spirit. It seems apparent that when people devote stupendous energies to propitiating a bad god, it is a much worse plan than to honor and celebrate the virtues, affirmative relationships and ethical spiritual truths of a loving good god. Hallelujah for that Twainian insight!

Joe Scarborough's Point of View

Joe Scarborough recently wrote, "Before his passing, The Post's Charles Krauthammer wrote that "the sinews of our democracy" were still holding "against the careening recklessness of this presidency." Whether those institutions can hold firm through a second Trump term remains an open question. Ever the optimist, I suspect that a country that, during the 20th century alone, survived numerous financial crises, the Great Depression and two world wars while also beating back the spread of Nazism and Soviet Communism, can survive four more years of Trump. But why tempt fate?"

"I knew Trump fairly well before he entered politics. Like many, I saw him first as a cartoonish figure, colorful but innocuous. Then I saw him as an entertainer, superficial but engaging. Then I saw him as a threat, appealing but erratic. Then, at last, I saw this reality TV president as a malevolent character, inspiring fascist chants while proving to be more hapless than any of his 43 predecessors. All versions of Trump have been cynical and manipulative, but his latest incarnation has proved to be destructive to his party, his country and the world."

"Though you may not know Trump as I once did, you do know that only a weak man speaks endlessly of his strength and only an ignorant man brags incessantly of his wisdom. Despite these debilitating flaws, or perhaps because of them, Adm. William McRaven — the man who oversaw the raid that killed Osama bin Laden — believes Donald Trump is the greatest threat facing American democracy. How voters respond to that danger in the new year may well determine the arc of our future for a generation to come."