



Earth Manifesto

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

From Dr. Tiffany B. Twain, "great-granddaughter of the highly esteemed writer Mark Twain"
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Crucially important midterm elections took place in November 2018, and the stakes in these elections is crystal clear. *We the People* need to see exactly what is happening.

The great progressive Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once observed, "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 money 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.

An English historian once observed, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Think about this! Not only does power corrupt, but power concentrated in the hands of a minority party that controlled all branches of the federal government until the midterm elections (when Democrats won a majority of seats in the House of Representatives) has shut out the voices of those in the majority who oppose divide-to-conquer schemes, abuses of authority, fraudulent tax swindles and the shrewd schemes they are using to concentrate wealth and power ever more narrowly. These harms are being made worse by rash schemes that allow costs to be externalized and risks to be socialized in order to goose private profits and funnel most of them into the bank accounts of the few.

It is a simple tautological truth that things will be better for the vast majority of the people only when things really are better for the majority of the people. 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 negative long-term impacts on our country.

Fairness is the cornerstone of our great American experiment in representative democracy. The legitimacy of our government is derived from the consent of the people, so 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, and in favor of corporate exploiters over working people and the populace as a whole.

Mark Twain once famously observed, "We have the best government money can buy." Holy prescient satirical humor! Unscrupulously partisan conservatives on the Supreme Court declared in their narrow *Citizens United* ruling in 2010 that Big Money does not corrupt or even create the appearance of corruption, and now "conservative" billionaires like the Charles and David Koch, the Mercers, Sheldon Adelson and their corruption-loving cronies are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to divide people and intimidate them and prevent their voices from being heard and 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 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. They are abusing power by these means in order to push a profoundly anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic agenda.

Our commendable colonial ancestors loved liberty, opportunities and fair representation, and hated despotic abuses of authority and taxation without fair representation, so 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 goals of good governance should be, in the Preamble to the great U.S. Constitution: "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." This was one of the most brilliant statements of idealistic purpose in world history.

Trump Republicans today are unfortunately posing a serious threat to these values. It is important to understand how they are performing with regard to each of these eminently salubrious goals, so a clear-eyed evaluation follows (below).

A peaceful progressive revolution is needed right now, in light of the infamy of the despotic demagogues who doubled down to try to cement their power in place in the midterm elections on November 6, 2018. Republican politicians clearly favor corporations over people and rich people over everyone else, and men over women and whites over blacks, Latinos and Asian Americans. 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 to 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 liberal-minded people, and see that greater good goals can be achieved only by choosing more honest, honorable, unifying, inclusive and truly fair representatives.

It is consequentially tragic that voters allowed Trump Republicans to retain domineering control of the U.S. Senate for another two years, and too many Governor's offices and state Attorney General positions. It is a terrible danger to allow our democracy to be subverted from within by authority-abusing politicians who are intent on maintaining unaccountable power and using this usurped power to run roughshod over the greater good by pushing an extremely 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 costs, harms, risks and accruing liabilities for bailouts onto everyone else. At the same time, Republicans are slashing spending on the social safety net to help offset the costs of giving huge tax breaks to the richest Americans, despite the fact that this regressive Tax Cut scam is recklessly driving up the dangerously large \$22 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, his Cabinet members and hyper-partisan Republicans 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, dangerously 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.

These consequential wrongs are being enabled by unprecedented trickery through 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 that rationalizes extremely anti-egalitarian outcomes. The fact of the matter is that it is folly for conservatives to stubbornly deny that catastrophic climate change is being made incomprehensibly worse by policies that pander to Big Oil and the coal industry in order to 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 treacherous 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 the American people are facing an unfolding constitutional crisis brought on by power-abusing politicians, and at the same time humanity is confronted with an unfolding climate crisis, which the world's leading climate scientists have again warned about in the latest IPCC Climate Report. These experts say that time is very short for us to act to prevent a dangerous degree of global warming that will significantly worsen the terrible harms caused by increasingly powerful hurricanes, epic floods, extreme heat, hellish wildfires and droughts, rising sea levels, red tides, biodiversity-threatening ocean acidification and worsening poverty for hundreds of millions of people. The authors of the landmark report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change say that urgent changes, unprecedented in scope, are needed 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.

Recognizing this entire state of affairs, I proposed a good plan just before the midterm elections to revolutionarily alter the swampy status quo. "Let's call it the Duopartite Justice Solution. Here's the plan to providentially deal with the current unfolding Trump Republican Constitutional crisis and existential ecological challenges. Donald Trump, 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 22 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 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!"

The providential triumph of so many progressive women in the November 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, equal rights, improved healthcare, more affordable universal medical insurance, a stronger social safety net, greater reproductive rights for women, fairer treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers, improved safety from gun violence, and more effective protections of the vital health of the environmental commons. Support them!

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 authority 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 the use of democracy-undermining strategies that involve the diabolical Demagogue's Playbook: dividing people, hijacking their emotions,

scaring them, scapegoating others, stoking racial resentments, shifting blame, exploiting anti-immigrant fears, hyping up tribal partisanship, inciting violence, and brainwashing people about what is going on. And they are deceiving the populace about the true nature of their discriminatory, inequality-stoking, exclusionary, stupidly short-term-oriented policies.

To help Republican politicians get away with similar shrewd schemes and swindles, Trump and his minions vehemently attack reporters, journalists, writers and critics, calling them "enemies of the people". In actuality, these people are patriots who represent our best hope for preventing ruthlessly 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 taking away the rights of women to reproductive freedoms, and want 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 making extreme gerrymanders of hundreds of congressional districts to deprive millions of Americans of fairer representation, and they engage in blatant campaigns to suppress the vote in many states, especially in Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Kansas, Texas and North Dakota.

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 above and 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 really 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 fueled by *Dark Money* to fool people into supporting candidates who are pushing their far right agenda. One of their nefariously brilliant 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 constitutes true American patriots who oppose their abuses of power.

On top of these illegitimate schemes, Republican politicians have been brazenly abusing authority since the fateful day two years ago when these "conservatives" took the reins of power and begun waging an insidious Orwellian assault on American founding ideals, democratic values, ethical norms, honesty, decency, truth, propriety, righteousness and numerous rules of law and the provisions of the U.S. Constitution itself.

Recognizing the great Enlightenment Era purposes for which our great U.S. Constitution was established, let's look to see clearly exactly how Trump Republicans are doing with regard to good government goals.

How are they doing with regard to forming a more perfect union? Horrible! They are using divide-and-conquer tactics to make it easier to abuse power and further concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few. They are using inflammatory rhetoric to demonize those who oppose them, including the free press, Democrats and liberals. And their rule is being accompanied by a spike in hate crimes.

How are they doing with regard to establishing justice? Lousy! Republican politicians are working against this priority by fostering more intense economic inequalities and facilitating discrimination and perpetrating grotesque injustices and waging an unjust war on cannabis users and entrepreneurs. They are taking advantage of hyper-partisan polarized tribal emotions to accomplish these goals, in what is a discriminatory white nationalist patriarchal attempt to perpetuate racial and gender injustices, and their actions are making social and environmental injustices significantly worse.

How are they doing with regard to insuring domestic tranquility? Terrible! Republican strategies and propaganda are dangerously contrary to this goal because they are stoking resentments, misdirecting anger, inciting violence, creating heightened anxieties, riling up their narrow base of supporters, and pushing national priorities that

strongly favor the domination of our society by rich people and white males. It is becoming extremely important at this critical juncture to see beyond what Trump is doing with his deceitful tweets and violent rhetoric in a zealous frenzy of Nuremburg-like political rallies, and in his efforts to fool the people and sell them down the river by rallying support for his exploitive and deceit-filled agenda.

How are Republicans doing with regard to promoting the general welfare? Give us a break! They are looting the public treasury by indulging in regressively structured Tax Cut swindles that hyper-stimulate economic activities with excessive amounts of deficit spending, riskily driving up public debt. 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, to be offset by balanced budgets or surpluses during boom times and periods of low unemployment. In connection with these wrongheaded expedient actions, Republicans are depleting resources at an irrational rate to funnel most of the resulting profits into the bank accounts of the richest 1%, thereby treating our home planet like a business in liquidation and woefully ignoring the well-being and security of the 99% -- and of everyone in all future generations.

How are they doing with regard to securing the blessings of liberty to the people, now and in posterity? Not good! They are forming conspiratorial alliances with repressive authoritarians in many countries abroad, 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 the common good.

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: 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, areas around rivers and lakes, national forests and national wildlife refuges from development, 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.

Great solutions to the biggest challenges facing civilization 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, redesigned 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 to make sure the growth of national indebtedness is reduced.

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 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 posed little threat to *We the People* of the United States of America, yet Republicans hyped up people's fears about these refugees to try to retain their power. In truth, the real national emergency is that Republicans are striving with desperate measures to maintain their oppressive power for another two years, and if unchecked, our democracy will continue to be converted, rather insidiously, into a more authoritarian hegemony over the people.

The American people could easily vote Republicans out of power if more women, young people and black and Hispanic voters turn out in greater numbers. Minorities have the power to quash the nativist appeals of anti-immigrant campaigns by Trump Republicans. But Donald Trump is frenetically trying to mobilize white males with his bombastic rhetoric and histrionics. "Trump's America has become a grim place for Latinos. Two-thirds 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 percent approve of Trump's presidency." Vote accordingly!

True patriots oppose and protest against corruption and political malfeasance and eco-villainy, and against financial treachery 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 supporting those 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, worse and increasingly perverse injustices, severe inequities and ecologically insane national priorities, and it is high time that we take action to head again in the right direction.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain