



Earth Manifesto

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

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Democratic fairness and good government of the people, by the people and for the people are under concerted assault by corrupt power-abusing factions. Mark Twain satirically stated that we Americans have the best government money can buy -- and since then, the price has gotten extremely high. Surely, the great progressive Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis was 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 money and power in the hands of the few has been dramatically increasing in recent years, threatening and degrading the health, well-being, personal security and freedoms of the American people.

As countries around the world experience an extremely destabilizing episode of the proliferating spread of the contagious coronavirus, this pandemic is severely impacting people's lives almost everywhere, especially those in the bottom half of the socioeconomic ladder -- like many disposable "essential workers". This is sadly having the effect of diverting attention from the urgency of the many issues evaluated in this manifesto, like climate change. But the long-term implications of the crucial importance of these ideas will not be diminished. And the desperate measures that are being used to cope with the resulting health adversities and highly unequal economic calamities are causing the national debt to explode, having increased by more than \$7 trillion since Donald Trump took office. This makes our insider jerry-rigged house-of-cards economy even more vulnerable to future shocks.

Our political leaders have indulged in the risk-heightening folly of backing ourselves into a tight corner, profligately driving up debt by cutting taxes to stimulate economic growth and facilitate excess profit making, while failing to invest in the greater good. In doing so, they are hindering preparations for a challenging future, and instead are engaging in an overarching form of malfeasance and myopic fiscal irresponsibility. It is notable that the pandemic is not only a terrible public health crisis, but also a serious social and economic justice issue.

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. 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 being revealed to have been right 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, foreign interference in our elections, Tax Cut swindles financed by borrowing 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 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 top dogs.

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 inequitable state of affairs, I urge all Americans to vote for progressive candidates in every future election, and to demand that all of our representatives really try to 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.

In a funny counterpoint to Mark Twain's sarcastic observation, "We have the best government money can buy," Will Rogers expressed a contrary idea: "It's a good thing we don't get all the government we pay for." Will Rogers, "Oklahoma's Favorite Son", was a humorist, vaudeville performer, newspaper columnist, astute social commentator and film star who once said, "If Stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?"

LOL. 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, the Mercers, Sheldon Adelson and their corruption-loving cronies are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to promote a highly anti-egalitarian, anti-democratic and anti-environmental agenda. They are getting away with this by driving culture war wedges between people and fooling them, confusing them, betraying them and intimidating them to prevent their voices from being heard and their best interests from being respected. By cultivating discord and resentment, they are inimically perpetrating what is proving to be the worst and most future-endangering 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 helped Republicans 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 then they imposed restrictive voting laws that deprive millions of people of the right to vote -- especially Blacks and other minorities. And they have taken this opportunity to corruptly rig our elections through contorted extreme gerrymandering of congressional districts. To the sad detriment of the people, these shrewd abusers of power pathologically promote a profoundly democracy-undermining agenda.

This situation reached a critical impasse after the November 2020 elections, when the majority of Americans, by a 7 million vote margin, chose Biden/Harris over Trump/Pence -- and Republicans seditiously refused to accept the democratic verdict and tried desperately, with ludicrously despotic stubbornness, to overturn the outcome.

Good Government Goals

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. In the Preamble to the great U.S. Constitution, they made it perfectly clear what the goals of good government should be: "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. Politicians today who mercilessly work against these noble purposes should be removed from office.

Since Trump Republicans are posing serious threats to all these values, it is important to understand how they are performing with regard to each of these eminently salubrious goals. Recognizing the great Enlightenment Era purposes for which our great U.S. Constitution was established, let's look to see clearly exactly how Republicans are performing with regard to good governance goals. Here is a clear-eyed evaluation.

How are they doing about forming a more perfect union? Lousy! They are using divide-to-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 vilify and demonize those who oppose them, slandering Democrats and liberals, and calling the free press "an enemy of the people." And their rule is being accompanied by a spike in hate crimes.

How are Republicans doing with regard to promoting the general welfare? Miserable! They are looting the public treasury by indulging in regressively structured Tax Cut swindles that hyper-stimulate economic activities with excessive amounts of fraud-tinged deficit spending. This is adding to the opprobrious tax burden that every taxpayer in every future year will be obligated to pay. Poorly controlled piling on of debt is imprudent, AND 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 harsh spikes the number of jobless people. Keynes astutely made it clear that deficit spending must be offset by balanced budgets or surpluses during boom times and periods of low unemployment.

In connection with their wrongheaded short-term-oriented expedient actions, Republicans are treating our home planet like a business in liquidation, depleting resources at an irrationally profligate rate and woefully ignoring the well-being and security of the vast majority of Americans -- 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 were exuberant as the destined-to-be epic year 2020 began, pleased as punch to be able to cash in on the current corrupt administration's extremely short-term-oriented scams. But then the global coronavirus pandemic caused extreme stock market volatility, and created a need for further desperate debt-financed measures to prop up asset values in the face of lockdowns, social distancing and economic malaise. So now the opportunity to take the proverbial punch bowl away has vanished, and much more debt financing is coming. This is "Disaster Capitalism", as Naomi Klein incisively explains it in *The Shock Doctrine*.

Pope Francis articulated a farsighted vision and philosophy early in his papacy, in a controversial encyclical on climate change and poverty. In this document, the Pope blamed "unbridled capitalism" for ruining the Earth, and he bemoaned the tragic effects this is having on the poorest people, in particular. Reforms are needed now!

Many trillions of dollars of loans, relief spending and bailouts since March 2020 have caused the chasm to reach unbelievable new extremes between Wall Street exuberance at the generous fiscal abandon and Main Street suffering at the terribly misguided failings and tyrannical obstinacy of current Republican leaders.

How are they doing in establishing justice? Give us a break! Republicans are working against this priority by fostering more intense economic inequalities and discriminating against many groups of people, and perpetrating grotesque injustices and obstructing remedial measures. They are taking advantage of hyper-partisan polarized tribal emotions to accomplish these narrow purposes, in what is a discriminatory white nationalist patriarchal ploy that perpetuates racial and gender injustices. These and many of their other actions -- like continuing to wage an unjust war on cannabis users -- are making social and environmental injustices significantly worse.

How are they doing about insuring domestic tranquility? Horrible! Twisted Republican propaganda and their strategies are dangerously contrary to this desirable goal because they hype up resentments, misdirect anger, create heightened anxieties, rile up their narrow political base, and push national priorities that strongly favor the domination of our society by rich people and white males. Women of the world, unite! It is becoming urgent at this critical juncture to see beyond what Trump is doing with his deceitful tweets and violent rhetoric in zealously frenzied Nuremburg-like political rallies, and in his efforts to fool the people and sell them down the river by rallying support for his exploitive, safety undermining and deceit-enabled agenda.

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 adhere to the will of the people by championing human rights, either here and abroad. They are forming conspiratorial alliances with repressive authoritarians in many foreign countries, and they are whittling away at personal freedoms at home, and democracy itself, instead of fairly promoting propitious, positive, inclusive and unifying plans that serve to improve the general welfare and advance common good goals.

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 as demagogues, and ending as tyrants." Tyranny is antithetical to the many blessings of liberty.

As the RMS Titanic was sinking on April 15, 1912, the ship did not have 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 that 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.

Misguided Priorities

There are hundreds of things government should deal with, and they should be sensibly prioritized. Shamefully, however, the top two Republican priorities since January 2017 have been: first, to eviscerate the Affordable Care Act, causing millions of disadvantaged Americans to lose medical coverage, in order to eliminate a small tax on the investment income of wealthy people. Recognizing that gender inequities are among the harshest of all injustices in our patriarchal society, we should heed the perceptive understandings of Martin Luther King, Jr., who once famously declared that injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane of all forms of inequality. Injustices related to basic health care, pre-existing medical conditions and reproductive rights are particularly opprobrious to women, and they are just one aspect of a multitude of gender inequities, including many being exposed by women aggrieved by sexual harassment and assault through the #MeToo movement.

The second top Republican priority has been to give big tax breaks that overwhelmingly benefit those who don't need them, irresponsibly financed by borrowing huge amounts of money that will oppressively burden every taxpayer in every future year. Having already run up the national debt from less than \$1 trillion in 1981, when Ronald Reagan signed on to Arthur Laffer's ideological Big Lie trickle-down tax-cutting "supply side" economic theory, to more than \$27 trillion today, we should chuckle derisively, but know well how consequentially this contributes to increased vulnerability of the people and heightened risks of our economy to adverse developments.

The vicissitudes of fate are fickle, so it is hubristic folly for the fortunate few to foist a Tough Luck political system onto the populace. It is unethical to forsake the vast majority of the people to rashly give wealthy elites ever-larger shares of the spoils of capitalist systems. Knowing that negative circumstances can befall anyone at any time, and that both diseases and accidents can afflict any person at any age, the only rational national plan for healthcare is one that provides medical care for everyone at an affordable price. Since it is simply true that, of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane, it is crazy to coddle profiteers and speculators by playing politics with health insurance, medical care, pharmaceutical drug prices and lethal issues like opioid addiction and racially unjust mass incarceration. Comprehensive solutions need to be devised that holistically address the root causes of such problems.

Illuminating Way of Seeing

Today, humanity is being confronted with challenges that are increasingly global in nature. These problems pose more significant risks than ever before in the history of civilization. Our human activities are threatening the world with climatic instability, worsening heat waves, destabilized Arctic polar vortex cold snaps, terribly destructive wildfires, insufferable droughts, failed crops, rising sea levels, a heightened vulnerability to man-made and natural disasters, the spread of contagious diseases and heightened risks of pandemics, widespread refugee crises, devastating conflicts, overpopulation, inexorably greater demands on the planet's finite resources, compromised ecosystems and diminished biodiversity.

One main cause of these increasingly dangerous risks is stimulated consumerism and wasteful production and consumption. Arrogant greed and excessive aggression and the continued rapid growth in the number of human beings on Earth are also contributing factors. These forces put humanity on a collision course with the limits of the carrying capacity of the Earth to support us. Rainforests and temperate forests are being clear-cut, and wetlands, fisheries, coral reefs and wildlife habitats are being destroyed, and we are even adversely altering the alkaline balance of Earth's oceans and the gaseous composition of the atmosphere. And simultaneously, streams and lakes and seas are being polluted, and aquifers, topsoil, minerals and supplies of fossil fuels are being

wastefully depleted worldwide, causing an accelerating deterioration of basic life support systems. This is making it more and more important for us to begin enacting measures to protect ecosystems, conserve resources, strengthen family planning programs and educate and empower women, contributing to the greater well-being.

Let's be honest with ourselves, and *See Clearly*. There are almost 8 billion people on our home planet today. All the most consequential challenges we face today will be made worse by this overwhelming human tide. Resources will be rashly depleted, fresh water supplies will become scarcer, pollution will get worse, and greenhouse gas emissions will cause ever more extreme weather events like the powerful hurricanes, torrential rains and destructive wildfires that afflicted locales around the globe in recent years. And coastal flooding and storm surge inundations will become more harmful as sea levels rise.

Ambrose Bierce defined politics as "a strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles." The intense political strife we are experiencing today is a titanic struggle for the hearts and minds of men and women. It is an ugly struggle, in essence, between forces that seek to give powerful privileged persons ever-greater benefits and influence, and opposing forces that champion greater fairness and advocate wise and far-sighted planning to protect the public and safeguard assets and prevent ecological catastrophe -- and limit abuses of power inherent in inadequately regulated capitalism and domineering rule by hyper-partisan politicians.

With humanity engaged in a vast uncontrolled experiment in casino capitalism and stimulative debt-financed tax cutting, and with inequality being stoked and an increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a power-abusing few, it is unfortunate that the federal government under Republican control is failing in its critical obligation to address big problems. By giving unleashed power to the executive branch and big corporations, "conservatives" have abandoned fair-minded governance in favor of the detrimental influence of Big Business over the fates of working people. This facilitates bad management of natural resources, and irresponsibly fails to protect people and the biosphere from predations and damages.

Republicans try to manipulate public opinion by charging progressive proposals as being "socialism." As they aggressively defend their national policies by telling people that Democrats want to impose socialism on our country, they broadly confuse issues. A clear-eyed understanding, however, reveals that the goal of fairer progressive plans are simply, as the incisive economist Paul Krugman put it, to have "a market economy, but with extreme hardship limited by a strong social safety net, and extreme inequality limited by progressive taxation." That, in essence, is not socialism.

When conservatives scream "socialism!", they are revealing they really don't want to have an honest debate. Their opposition to "socialism" is partly a campaign to prevent a redistribution of income and wealth downward to benefit the vast majority of Americans. It is also a stubborn defense of their ideological claims that income and wealth should continue to be redistributed upwards to mostly benefit the richest Americans. The Trump tax cut is the most recent giveaway involved in this strategy. At a cost to every taxpayer in every future year of about \$2 trillion over a 10-year period, the cuts largely redistribute income upwards to rich people and fortunate recipients of the biggest inheritances, and to corporate shareholders and high-end "pass-through businesses". When government revenues are diminished due to cuts in taxes, budget deficits go up, and those who do the tax cutting argue that we must cut social safety net programs.

As many observers like Martin Luther King, Jr. have noted over the years, our system is one of "socialism for the rich and rugged free market capitalism for the poor". All the policies that pundits call "corporate welfare" are ways that favorable treatment is bestowed upon particular crony corporations by the government, with the capitalist economy allowing huge corporate entities to privatize profits and socialize costs and risks.

Linguist Noam Chomsky has criticized the way in which free market principles have been applied. He argues that the wealthy use free-market rhetoric to justify imposing greater economic costs and risks upon the lower classes, while insulating the top dogs from the rigors of the market and giving political and economic advantages to those who are rich and well connected. Decrying state protections for the rich, Chomsky contends that wealthy powerful people "want to be able to run the nanny state so that when they are in trouble the taxpayer will bail them out", citing "too big to fail" bailouts as a prime example of this swindle.

In September 2008, Senator Bernie Sanders said with regard to the bailout of the U.S. financial system: "This is the most extreme example that I can recall of socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor". The same month, economist Nouriel Roubini stated: "It is pathetic that Congress did not consult any of the many professional economists that have presented alternative plans that were more fair and efficient, and less costly ways to resolve this crisis. This is again a case of privatizing the gains and socializing the losses; a bailout and socialism for the rich, the well-connected and Wall Street" Bailouts for farmers hurt by Trump's trade wars have exceeded the net costs of the bailout of the auto industry during the 2008 financial crisis.

The incisive columnist Catherine Rampell wrote provocative words in her article *Trump is the true socialist*. She talks about Trump's massive farmer bailouts, government handouts, aggressive picking of winners and losers, upwards redistribution of wealth via tax cuts and safety net cuts, and subsidies for corn ethanol and the coal industry. She has also written that Trump "has actually implemented anti-market, Soviet-style, centrally planned policies, and he has used the power of the state to punish political enemies." ... "He has merely chosen different beneficiaries (and victims) of his Big Government bigfooting," including his use of White House fiat to prop up pet industries such as coal, and hitting major trading partners with tariffs to protect the steel industry and others. Hypocrisy and intellectual deceit apparently know no bounds.

The Increase in Corporate Power is Detrimental to the People

Back when Mitt Romney was running for president in 2011, he smugly declared, "Corporations are people, my friend". I thought at the time, "Oh, is that so?" Well, let's call in the political economists, sociologists and historians, and psychologists and psychiatrists, and let's analyze exactly what kind of person most giant corporations resemble in their actions these days. Conveniently, the insightful professor Joel Bakan has already done clear-eyed research for us on this topic, and he had an American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* handy by his side. Corporations, he concluded, would be seen as pathological sociopathic psychopaths if they were regarded as people, due to their typical behaviors and inherent tendencies. He cited convincing instances in which they act in ways that are manipulative, socially irresponsible and unempathetic, and they seem to be almost incapable of guilt, remorse, moral rectitude or genuine responsibility for the greater good.

Joel Bakan emphasized the fact that big corporations are basically designed to socialize costs onto the public, declaring that corporations are "deliberately programmed, indeed legally compelled, to externalize costs without regard for the harm it may cause to people and communities and the natural environment. Every cost it can unload onto someone else is a benefit to itself, a direct route to profit." Corporations should not be given the full rights in courts of law that are constitutionally assured to real people, for too many abuses of power have wrongly been made using rationalizations like the one that says the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees corporate entities the same rights of Due Process and Equal Protection as individuals. Lawyers assemble!

Again, follow the money! Before the pandemic began, corporate profits were near all-time record highs, and yet corporations pay less than 9% of all federal tax revenue. This fact reveals a measure of the corrupt abuses of power by corporate entities, for there has been a drastic decline from 33% in 1950 of the portion of federal taxes paid by corporations. In effect, corporations have managed to get the taxes they pay reduced by more than 70%. CEOs and shareholders are thereby getting bigger cuts of profits made by exploiting working people and using up Earth's natural resources and damaging Earth's ecosystems and altering the global climate.

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 undoing of common-good regulations. 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 the total today. Profiting investors love it; the common good suffers.

The wise Solon was a great statesman, skilled negotiator and consensus-seeking lawmaker who is known as "the father of democracy". He was chosen in ancient Athens more than 2,500 years ago to take far-reaching actions to save the republic from revolutionary strife, which was stalking Greece at the time because elite factions were

abusing their power and jealously preparing to defend their excessive privileges through force. Let's emulate Solon, and demand that our leaders be more honest in working together to find consensus solutions.

Clear-Eyed Perspective

This manifesto has materialized in our midst, like Athena, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom that sprang forth in birth from the head of Zeus. Read all about wise ideas contained in the Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto, or on Dr. Tiffany B. Twain's Earth Manifesto website. The reflections in these writings are a clear evaluation of what's happening in our societies right now, and they propose excellent solutions and smart new directions.

A peaceful progressive revolution is needed in light of the infamy of despotic demagogues who are doubling down 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 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-minded 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. The partisan rulings by the illegitimate majority of "conservatives" on the Supreme Court are deeply subversive of our founding ideals -- and of environmental and social sanity. It is a grave danger to allow our democracy to be subverted from within by authority-abusing politicians intent on maintaining unaccountable power. We citizens must not allow them to continue abusing this usurped authority by running roughshod over the common good and pushing an unwisely myopic, 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 striving to aggressively exploit resources to maximize private profits and funnel these short-term gains into the pockets of the few. We cannot allow them to continue foisting 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 national debt by adding trillions of dollars more money borrowed from taxpayer to add to these fiscally irresponsible and nefariously unfair top priorities.

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, 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.

Real News - Sad!

Evidence proves that the corporate world generally cannot be trusted to do the right thing when it comes to protecting either the public health or the environment. Corporations are far too narrowly focused on achieving their two main legal purposes -- maximizing private profits and protecting management and shareholders from any legal liabilities. This leaves the responsibility to governments to restructure systems to create truly fairer societies. We need smarter governance and more long-term-oriented national decision-making.

We the People deserve better than the corrupt status quo. In the face of the spread of contagious diseases, we want competent leadership that is honestly and unquestionably committed to keeping people safe. We also want food safety, clean drinking water, protections from exposure 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 caused by extreme weather events.

Think about the scarcely believable fact that ten years ago, Donald Trump and Ivanka, Don Junior and Eric all signed a letter urging President Obama to "lead the world by example" at the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in early December 2009, which was at that moment about to begin. 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 ten years, and we see the Trump family has "found religion", and perniciously assaulted the fate of life on Earth by supporting unleashed profiteering by oil, coal, natural gas and timber harvesting industries. In the Bible, greedy kowtowing to rich folks on the false altar of Mammon was rightly portrayed as evil. The Trump family has sold their souls, trading the security, well-being and sustainability of human existence for money and power. In doing so, they are sacrificing honesty, integrity and responsibility in favor of 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 for their personal power and profit.

Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accords was a rash action that is 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", wrote Michael Brune, Executive Director of the Sierra Club. This mistake reflects Donald Trump's "America First" disdain for international cooperation that would help solve global problems.

Millions of Trump supporters in his narrow and easily manipulated political base are partially to blame for this outcome, due to their blind support. Change sides! Trump's rogue action is maliciously antagonistic to people in every other country on Earth, and indulgently myopic. It is an environmental commons sacrificing, money-grubbing act that is antithetical to intelligent foresight and collaborative fair-mindedness, and contrary to environmental justice, general well-being, 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 allowing individuals and corporate entities to socialize costs by externalizing them onto society. It would be much smarter to formulate powerful monetary incentives to positively influence people's behaviors. Putting a reasonable 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 who they are pandering to -- 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 basically allowed 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 few.

The United Nations not long ago warned that one million species of life are in accelerating danger of eternal extinction. At the very same time, the Trump administration has been striving to gut vital provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Let's honor Dr. Jane Goodall's wise insight: "There's a saying, 'We haven't inherited this planet from our parents, we've borrowed it from our children.' When you borrow, you plan to pay back. We've been stealing and stealing and stealing. And it's about time we got together and started paying back."

To help them achieve their pernicious purposes, 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 shrewd trickery, bait-and-switch scams, 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 deceitful propaganda and Big Lies about crucial matters like the trickle-down theory that rationalizes extremely inequitable outcomes. The fact of the matter is that it is folly for conservatives to stubbornly deny that catastrophic climate change is being made incalculably worse by policies that favor and subsidize fossil fuel industries. The strategy raises lots of dirty *Dark Money* to support scheming politicians, and it undesirably gives more unaccountable power to the minority ruling party. Making this folly worse, ideological blinders are allowing Republicans to despotically abuse this usurped 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 a calamitous global pandemic, distracting us from this 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, declaring: "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 scientists backed a study with dire warnings about how human activities have harmfully impacted the planet over recent decades. The study found emissions of greenhouse gases are dangerously continuing to rise, and that governments are making insufficient progress in tackling the crisis this is causing. 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. To delay is to force people in future years to take even more draconian steps -- and face unnecessarily difficult reforms.

The triumph of many progressive women in the November 2018 elections gave great hope for our country to recover from the anti-democratic Trump madness. These women didn't just run against Trump policies, they ran for something -- fairer justice, more inclusive opportunities, greater equality of rights and privileges, positive healthcare solutions, 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 environment. These women representatives deserve recognition and reward for their laudable public service. 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 power being imposed on peoples by such autocratic governments as those in Putin's Russia, Erdogan's Turkey, Mohammad bin Salman's Saudi Arabia, Orbán's Hungary, Modi's India, Kaczyński's Poland and Duterte's Philippines. Fascist-like tendencies to rule ruthlessly are being achieved through strategies that undermine democracy and 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, stupidly short-term-oriented exclusionary 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 as patriots 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. These patriots are demanding a reversal of the increasingly dangerous disparities between the top 1% and everyone else. And they are opposing relentless attempts to take away the rights of women to reproductive freedoms, and policies that discriminate against LGBTQ people.

Republican politicians can't win fair election contests because the Agenda they push is antithetical to the well-being of the majority. 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, Wisconsin and Texas.

Trump Republicans are using the same litany of blatantly corrupt and broadly illegitimate means to win elections that they used in 2016 to seize power, as spelled out in deliberative detail in the essay *Demagoguery and the Dangers of the Demise of Democracy*. Instead of seeking real legitimacy by cultivating a well-informed 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 fueled by *Dark Money* to fool people into supporting candidates who are pushing their corrupt agenda. 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. 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. And as the 2020 elections approached, they lied about the security of safely voting by mail, and tried to undermine the ability of the U.S. Postal Service to handle mail-in ballots by removing high-speed mail processing machines and even some of the blue mailboxes themselves.

On top of these illegitimate schemes, Republican politicians have been brazenly sabotaging the greater good ever since the fateful day almost 4 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 many provisions of the U.S. Constitution itself.

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 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!

"There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics."

--- Mark Twain

Let's breathe deep and let go, and see clearly. Donald Trump and his Republican cronies in Congress made repeated 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 posed little threat to *We the People* of the United States, yet 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, insidiously, into a government featuring a more repressive authoritarian hegemony over the people.

After these words were written, a much more urgent national emergency arrived with the coronavirus pandemic, and economic disruptions are proving to be severe. This makes it even more critical that we remove Republicans from power. Voters will easily do this if greater numbers of women, young people and Black and Hispanic voters turn out. 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 devious spin, 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 corruption and political malfeasance, and oppose partisan "ideological wish list" measures in the face of the global pandemic. They also oppose financial chicanery, fiscal irresponsibility and eco-villainy. Those who blindly support politicians who are looting the country and dividing people are not honest patriots, and they are treacherous in giving 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 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 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. Let us enact a *Bill of Rights for Future Generations*, and pass *One Dozen Big Initiatives to Positively Transform Our Societies*.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

Hannibal, Missouri December 21, 2020

Gimme Some Truth, John Lennon

I'm sick and tired of hearing things
 From uptight, short-sighted, narrow-minded hypocritics
 All I want is the truth
 Just gimme some truth

I've had enough of reading things
By neurotic, psychotic, pig-headed politicians
All I want is the truth
Just gimme some truth

No short-haired, yellow-bellied, son of Tricky Dicky
Is gonna mother hubbard soft soap me
With just a pocketful of hope
Money for dope
Money for rope

I'm sick to death of seeing things
From tight-lipped, condescending, mamas little chauvinists
All I want is the truth
Just gimme some truth now

I've had enough of watching scenes
Of schizophrenic, ego-centric, paranoiac, prima-donnas
All I want is the truth now
Just gimme some truth

No short-haired, yellow-bellied, son of Tricky Dicky
Is gonna mother hubbard soft soap me
With just a pocketful of soap
Its money for dope
Money for rope

Ah, I'm sick and tired of hearing things
From uptight, short-sighted, narrow-minded hypocrites
All I want is the truth now
Just gimme some truth now