

Earth Manifesto



The Devilish Ruses at the Root of the Rigged Status Quo

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The stakes in the 2024 elections are higher than ever before in American history. The future of our republic is at stake, along with democratic fairness, the general welfare of the people, good governance, sane leadership and the blessings of liberty. So are the stakes for social and environmental justice, and the health and sustainability of the environmental commons and biological diversity that supports us. Likewise, it is becoming ever more important that we take positive steps to protect the stability of the global climate to ensure better hopes of saving our descendants in the future from the accelerating ravages of "climate hell", and yet one Party -- the Republican Party -- opposes taking such efforts in its zeal to pander to the fossil fuel industry that supports it.

To voters, pocketbook issues are among the most important issues. Unfortunately, there is much misunderstanding and deception and confusion and devious blame-shifting in our world today about pocketbook issues and the role of politics in them. Likewise, there are seriously unfair causes and consequences of how the economy is structured. And our national policies and priorities are askew in social issues as well as economic ones.

Tens of millions of Americans are justifiably angry about the decline of their economic and security prospects over the last few decades -- and they have valid grievances due to the following seven compelling and woe-filled reasons:

Reason #1. Working people have been subjected to a colossal swindle. More than \$50 trillion has been "stolen" from working people in a massive on-going heist, according to a report from the non-partisan RAND Corporation in 2020 that found this unimaginably gargantuan total has been redistributed from the bottom 90% of Americans to the wealthiest 1% in the 40 years from 1980 through 2020. This is why most American families could afford a home, two cars, education, and healthcare with one breadwinner 50 years ago -- with bigger families -- and yet struggle to do so today with two parents working.

Contributing factors in this sorry state of affairs including stagnant wages despite big increases in productivity, and inflating costs, and fewer unionized jobs providing stable positions with good pay and benefits. Also to blame are dramatically increased healthcare costs and costs of higher education, that have led to substantial credit card debt and student debt for many families. And there are high costs of childcare, and very high costs of housing. These factors have been made worse by a reduction in the relative value of minimum wages and the relative value and availability of social safety nets and benefits over the last few decades -- like the value of pensions, social security and unemployment benefits, which previously helped families manage economic uncertainty.

All of these factors together have created a more challenging economic environment for modern families, making it harder to achieve the same standard of living that was possible for previous generations.

Reason #2. The federal tax system has been made too regressive, rationalized by the trickle-down big lie, starting with Ronald Reagan slashing the top marginal tax rate from 70% to 28% while in office. This has shifted a heavy burden of taxes and interest expense obligations onto all taxpayers in future years who are part of the 99%, in favor of those in the top 1%. And the Republican Project 2025 revealingly vows to make a further huge shift in the burden of taxation from the top 1% to everyone else, irresponsibly allowing this debt swindle to continue.

Reason #3. This colossal national debt scam has contributed to the national debt having increased by \$34 trillion since 1980, at the same time that the net worth of people in the top 1% has gone up by more than \$40 trillion.

Republican tax cut policies are a main culprit in this irresponsibly inequitable increase in the concentration of wealth, facilitated by public borrowings, which has made it easier for rich people to abuse power and wield malign influence.

Reason #4. Union representation has been greatly reduced, declining from a peak of 35% of the work force in 1955 to only 10% today. This deprives tens of millions of working people of bargaining power and better pay and benefits. The excess power and influence of corporate America over our political representatives and policy-making is to blame. This is a reflection of deep-seated corruption in our business and politics.

Reason #5. Corporations have moved millions of jobs abroad. This "offshoring" has hollowed out many regions where manufacturing takes place, like in the Rust Belt of the Midwest, with drastically negative impacts on many people's lives. Offshoring persists in a larger context of globalization and automation, and these forces have led to job displacement and wage pressure in many industries, reducing job security and wage growth for many workers.

Reason #6. Influence peddling and political misrepresentation allow abuses of power and poor governance, along with widespread schemes that allow many costs to be foisted onto individual in society who are victimized.

Reason #7. Devious propaganda and spin have been very successful in enabling corporate America and anti-empathetic political factions to blame liberals who want to fix these problems, and to divert attention from the real culprits in these scams, the richest 1% and far-right apologists for them. Deceitful blame-shifting is a central aspect of MAGA-mania. Trump maniacally uses cunning demagoguery to blame liberals and "communists, Marxists, fascists, and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country." The real fascists, of course, zealously support Trump and MAGA Republicans and Christian nationalists. And if they manage to grab power in the 2024 elections, they plan on imposing Project 2025 dictates that would be consequentially onerous.

True comprehensive big picture understandings are needed to improve the lot of the vast majority of people, and thus to achieve our collective salvation. We can no longer afford to misunderstand all we see. So don't fall for devious rationalizations for selfishness and the blinding blizzard of misinformation, political propaganda, ideological spin, pernicious us-vs.-them polarization, emotion hijacking deceit, fear mongering, anti-immigrant blaming, and culture war offensives that prevent people from seeing clearly and understanding accurately.

The American people are victims of what can be accurately characterized as "mansplaining" by conservative billionaires, who push a self-serving and treacherously inequitable agenda. These wealthy individuals in our patriarchal American society use devious arguments to explain complex issues in a way that benefits their own interests, often at the expense of broader societal equity. Their explanations downplay or ignore the negative impacts that their policies and actions have on people in less privileged groups, while promoting an agenda that primarily serves to maintain or enhance their own wealth and power.

And this mansplaining isn't just a matter of providing disingenuous explanations, it involves deliberately deceitful rationalizations. Conniving factions conspire to torpedo reasoned deliberations, civic dialogue, and common good solutions. In doing this, they undercut those propitious endeavors through emotion-hijacking strategies and stoked culture war conflicts, gender inequities and class warfare.

These dynamics create a climate where divisiveness and conflict trump cooperation and mutual understanding. They discourage open-minded discussions and promote an environment where winning an argument or vilifying opposition forces takes precedence over finding solutions that benefit society as a whole. To counter these challenges, it is essential that we form a more perfect Union and promote desirable social cohesion by encouraging respectful dialogue, creating spaces where diverse voices can be heard and valued, and honestly seeking win-win solutions.

Despotic Bid for One Party Rule

Republicans have already illicitly captured the Supreme Court with a politically partisan supermajority for the foreseeable future, and they have an extremely narrow majority in the House. They also have a fair chance of winning the presidency and control of the Senate in upcoming elections. That would be harmful to the majority of people, and damaging to Earth's ecosystems and biodiversity and the safer relative stability of the global climate.

In these circumstances, the USA is teetering on the verge of despotic rule unlike any that has ever been experienced since the Declaration of Independence from the British monarchy in 1776. Enemies from within are in

striking distance of succeeding where foreign enemies have never been able to.

The MAGA Republican Party threw down the gauntlet when it called for unity at its fervent Republican National Convention in Minneapolis. But the deeply perverse unity it demands is dark and dystopian, for it is unity behind One Party Rule by far-right extremists, as set forth in their chilling Project 2025 plans. And they cynically and ominously promise that this takeover "will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be."

See Clearly. The shattering contours of this One Party Rule are contained in the MAGA Republican 900-plus-page "Guide to Snuffing Out American Democracy", as the Sierra Club characterizes it. "Project 2025 is the far-right's playbook for an authoritarian administration the likes of which have never been seen in America before. It would open the door to corruption and make it even harder for the American people to have a say in our government and its policies. This dangerous plot would threaten our democratic institutions and freedoms, and give corporate polluters the keys to our government, allowing them to rewrite our laws, bypass Congress, and undermine the will of the people."

Project 2025 is the most brazen and baldly stated declaration of corrupt intent in American history. And many state legislatures in Republican-controlled red states are already implementing an odious variety of the sorry provisions advocated in this dangerous document.

The unprincipled main persons and organizations behind this One Party Rule are wealthy "conservatives", giant corporate entities, fundamentalist Christian nationalists, scheming influence peddling politicians, anti-immigrant demagogues, right-wing extremists, fascistic authoritarians, and a Supreme Court composed of an illegitimately constituted and politically partisan supermajority of Republican Justices in robes. And all of these conspiring factions would be united behind the Trojan horse Donald Trump and his confederates, who are acting as irresponsible, insidiously pernicious and dangerously treacherous plotters against democratic fairness and the vital protections provided by the U.S. Constitution. Shame on those who are sycophantic loyalists in support of this cabal of traitorous factions.

Constitutional democracies have robust balances of power to protect people from abuses of authority by ensuring that government operates within a framework of principles and laws that safeguard individual rights and freedoms and make people more secure. These socially advantageous protections include ones against arbitrary rule, unfair treatment, and the infringement of fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the press. A healthy separation of powers is one of the key provisions in constitutional democracies that help prevent tyranny and uphold the rule of law. This protective structural feature of checks and balances is strengthened by good accountability provisions, and the great value of an independent and impartial judiciary.

Knowing this, it was a shock to see the six Republican Supreme Court Justices corruptly make an absurdly expansive ruling on presidential immunity on the last day of its 2023-2024 term. This decision flung the Country's doors open to coldly-calculating politicians, and was highly unethical because it made *We the People* much more vulnerable to divide-to-conquer schemers and aspiring abusers of authority and those eager to skirt the rule of law and defy the Constitution.

This ruling was a model of how NOT to create new judicial precedents, because it created broad ambiguities in what the president can legally do in office. The ruling is like a gilded invitation to various rogues and grifters, and coup plotters and insurrectionists, and to any future despotic dictator wannabes to be able to do whatever they want in office, no matter how undemocratic or socially detrimental or immoral or contrary to the greater good.

This decision is like leaving a million loaded guns lying around that have defective safety catches. It would be an existential danger to allow, by hook or by crook, the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government to be dominated by MAGA extremists who clearly demonstrate loyalty to one hubris-filled man, rather to our Country and the common good.

In their immunity ruling, in what columnist Jamelle Bouie describes as a "bid for infamy", the Supreme Court's Chief Justice John Roberts and his Republican colleagues have imposed new meaning on the Constitution according to what they want it to say, rather than what it says. This is a stunning case of judicial activism that is at bizarre and duplicitous odds with conservative Justices' usual preoccupation with history and Constitutional originalism.

"We don't know how this opinion will play out," writes Jamelle Bouie in the *New York Times*. "If Trump wins a second term, there is a real chance that it will empower presidential lawlessness of a kind that no living American has experienced, at least in this country. *Trump v. United States* would become, in short order, one of the worst opinions ever issued by the Supreme Court."

Corrupt Intent

The Big Money corruption of our elections and national priorities and lobbyist-determined policies is so starkly clear that it makes the Supreme Court's claims about Big Money patently absurd, strongly resembling a Big Lie. Conservative Justices actually wrote in the 2010 *Citizens United* ruling that because Super PAC funds were not being spent in coordination with a specific candidate's political campaign, they "do not give rise to corruption or the appearance of corruption." More than 14 years have passed since this wrongful decision, and the evidence is overwhelming that Big Money is severely corrupting our national priorities and policies, and governance. As victims of the Parkland High School mass shooting in Florida once declared, "We call BS."

With their absurd ruling on presidential immunity to favor Trump, the Republican Justices on the Supreme Court are rewriting the Constitution to place the president above the law. It is a terrible time in history for this to happen, because the Republican candidate for president in 2024 has demonstrated more perhaps than any American politician in history that he cares more for himself than the Country. He cares only about factions loyal to him, not to all, and he poses a grave threat to those who criticize him, oppose him, or honorably try to hold him accountable for violating the rule of law and the Constitution. He also threatens the current and future general welfare, and democratic fairness, and the common good.

Trump wants to gut the federal workforce and replace them with MAGA loyalists who will do whatever he wants. One main criteria for tens of thousands of public servants to be hired in a second Trump administration would be a highly unprincipled one: that every prospective civil servant would be expected to be zealously willing to bend the knee to Trump by parroting the big lie that the demagogic con man actually won the 2020 election.

The great novelist and philosopher Mark Twain communicates wisdom to us from more than 100 years ago, telling us that loyalty to one's country is the real thing, not blind allegiance to its institutions or officeholders. Today, the King/dictator wannabe Trump demands loyalty to himself over principled loyalty to Country and the Constitution.

The Project 2025 plans for the civil service would focus on choosing opportunists and ideological extremists and assorted grifters to be part of a new regime who would treacherously defy their Oath of Office in order to do Trump's imperious bidding. And proponents of the plan are assembling these loyalists right now.

Also, Trump wants to use the military to deport millions of immigrants, and to crush dissent. He is ruefully eager to weaponize the Justice Department and use government power to investigate, harass and punish anyone he views as a threat to his power. He also wants to pardon convicted criminals who stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021. He basically wants to trash the Constitution and get away with circumventing the rule of law.

It is wrong to abandon *We the People* to a Constitution-abrogating and rule-of-law-violating abuser of authority who is an increasingly unhinged cult leader that wants to move our government toward totalitarian One Party Rule.

Shortly before Trump spoke on the last day at the Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, former professional wrestler Hulk Hogan took the stage and bellowed this refrain: "Let Trumpmania run wild!" There is no doubt that "Trumpmania" would have terrible consequences for most Americans, and be contrary to the best interests of billions of people around the world.

The crucially important 2024 elections aren't just about the choice between two extraordinarily different old men to be president (before Joe Biden decided not to continue his run for reelection and anointed Vice President Kamala Harris as his successor). "It is much bigger than that. It is, in fact, about the choice between two different futures. In one future, where Biden's leadership continues, we can organize to expand our rights, protect our communities, and use the power of the federal government to advance climate justice, economic justice, racial justice, and more. Under a Trump presidency, we'll be back to the daily chaos and the struggle of stopping the worst of his attempts to divide us, further dismantle democratic norms, and roll back our rights and freedoms."

Think about this. "In a time of dictators, Trump tried to overthrow the results of the 2020 presidential election and install himself in power against the wishes of the people. President Joe Biden voluntarily turned away from reelection in order to give the people a better shot at preserving our democracy." So said the admirably insightful historian Heather Cox Richardson on July 21, adding, "He demonstrated what it means to put the country first."

There is far-reaching truth in the understanding that "personnel is policy", and while the Biden administration has fought for the integrity of our federal civil servants, Trump wants to fire tens of thousands of them and replace responsible public servants with thousands of loyalists and people who worked on the nefarious anti-democratic Project 2025 plan. So the writing is on the wall, and is scrawled in a big ugly ominous offensive script.

Trump, seeing the recent glaringly bad optics of Project 2025, has tried to distance himself from the scheming plans, writing on his lie-promoting "Truth Social" social media platform, "I know nothing about Project 2025. I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."

That inconsistent set of rhetorical assertions is a bizarre collection of consequential deceptions. It was, after all, at Trump's posh Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach that a hundred extreme conservatives gathered in April 2022 to raise money for the Center for Renewing America, "a conservative policy shop whose most recent annual report emphasized a 'commitment to end woke and weaponized government'". Its founder, Russell Vought, a former head of the Office of Management and Budget under Trump, and a leading candidate to be the White House chief of staff in a second Trump term, was in attendance. ... His group is a kind of ivory tower for far-right Republicans, issuing white papers with titles such as *The Great Replacement in Theory and Practice*. In 2021, he wrote an op-ed for Newsweek that asked, "Is There Actually Anything Wrong with Christian Nationalism?"

That quote comes from a "Letter from Washington" article in *The New Yorker's* July 22, 2024 issue, titled INSIDE THE TRUMP PLAN FOR 2025. The Center for Renewing America "is one of roughly two dozen right-wing groups that have emerged in Washington since Trump left office. What unites them is a wealthy network based on Capitol Hill called the Conservative Partnership Institute, which many in Washington regard as the next Trump Administration in waiting. Its list of personnel and affiliates includes some of Trump's most fervent backers," including the rogues Mark Meadows, Stephen Miller and Jeffrey Clark.

It is exceedingly foolhardy to go along with Trump and his cronies. It is crazy to blindly trust in Trump, for he is one of the most deviously dishonest and manipulative men in history, and among the least trustworthy. It is dangerously stupid and socially harmful to have so many loyalists bowing down to an exceedingly flawed and dangerous man, who is angrily vindictive and doesn't give a damn about the general welfare of all the people, or women and their reproductive rights, or expansive blessings of liberty and justice for all.

Trump gloatingly relishes running roughshod with an iron heel over the common good. He loves to intimidate and bully people, and seems to relish humiliating people, especially anyone who opposes him or objects to his grifting or malfeasance by taking a principled stand against his lawlessness and his naked bid for tyrannical rule -- or anyone who tries to hold him accountable for violating the rule of law and the U.S. Constitution. And he demands absolute loyalty to himself, and cares vastly more about himself and his ego, power and money than he cares about the future of the Country. Don't believe his devious numerous lies or his deceitful emotion-hijacking rhetoric!

Trump lasciviously peddles falsehoods and pushes misinformation and twists the truth about almost everything, and does so in an orgy of Orwellian manipulation, deceptive spin, and devious rhetoric and propaganda. He is trying to torpedo democratic fairness and social cohesion to gain the benefits that result from *Divide-to-Conquer Roguery*. He lacks honor, integrity, decency and moral compass in his corruptly transactional world. And he and his acolytes often encourage political violence, which is terrible for our Country and its people.

These malicious character flaws threaten the well-being of countless numbers of people. Trump's VP candidate J.D. Vance once compared Trump to Hitler, and it is noteworthy that Trump reportedly praised Adolf Hitler in 2018 while on a trip to Europe with his chief of staff John Kelly. Trump shares similar shockingly serious weaknesses and failings with the murderous warmongering and genocidal German dictator. These flaws include being manipulative, ruthless, violence-prone, self-serving, grandiose, megalomaniacally ambitious, racially

prejudiced, and nefariously inclined to belittling others, demonizing them and humiliating them. In addition, he demonstrates fanaticism, intolerance, paranoia, devious dishonesty, and reactionary totalitarian opposition to criticism, dissent and efforts to hold him accountable to the rule of law and the principles in the Constitution.

Voters: Let's "fight, fight, fight" -- and rightly fight for ethical and moral right, NOT for rich people, corporate CEOs and the dominion-demanding far right and their dangerous plans, which are driven by unchristian Christian nationalism rather than by laudable Enlightenment era principles and values. These factions are anti-women, anti-gay, anti-lesbian, anti-immigrant, anti-inclusive, anti-fairness, anti-common good, and diabolically anti-democracy.

MAGA Republicans are indulging in noxious treachery and zealously imperious demands to overthrow the separation of Church and state, and upset the crucially important balance of powers in the Constitution that protects *We the People* from despotism.

In the New York Times Sunday Opinion section on July 14, 2024, the Editorial Board wrote a cover story about Trump: "He failed the tests of leadership and betrayed America. Voters must reject him in November. Donald Trump is unfit to lead."

Apparently only voters can save us, with the help of principled voices in the "Fourth Estate" of press and news media. The Fourth Estate has been bifurcated into responsible voices of those who stand up against corruption, and in favor of principled Right Action, on the one hand, and into many echo chambers like those of Fox News and MAGA-leaning social media sites, in which the mainstream media is regarded as "the enemy of the people".

Our state and national politics has been egregiously corrupted by emotion-hijacking, sanity-defying, grotesquely irresponsible factions who oppose the common good and the general welfare in their fervor for power, money and dominating influence. Their plans would torpedo true justice, eviscerate women's reproductive rights and universal healthcare, and exacerbate gun violence by preventing gun safety reforms. And it would devastate protections of the environment and damage the providential health and safety provided by a stable global climate. It would also terminally harm the inclusiveness of the cohesive blessings of liberty for ourselves and our heirs in posterity.

MAGA Republicans have been making unhinged and brutally malevolent and relentless demagogic attacks against immigrants for years, scapegoating them and engaging in blame-shifting to arouse fear and anger in their right-wing "populist" political base in order to gain power.

The socioeconomic state of affairs that is reflected in J.D. Vance's depiction of "hillbilly" Appalachia as well as in struggling Rust Belt cities and inner city urban areas is a stark contrast to the gated communities of the superrich, revealing a deeply entrenched divide in American society and a woefully deplorable degree of inequality.

This extremely inequitable divide manifests in vastly different life experiences and opportunities, and perpetuating the status quo of poverty and privilege. While communities in places like Appalachia and other disadvantaged areas struggle with economic decline and social malaise, and with limited access to quality education, and with the epidemic of opioid use and social instability, the superrich enjoy insulated lives with abundant resources and far too much unmerited influence, and often perpetuate policies and priorities that favor their interests over everyone else. This disparity underscores the need for making systemic changes to address big problems and to create a more equitable and secure society. This would be the road to social cohesion and highly desirable greater unity!

Thanks to Joe Biden

President Joe Biden has led a historically effective administration, especially in light of concerted efforts by Republicans to stymie his Build Back Better plans during the pandemic, and because of the darkly cynical opposition by MAGA extremists to having him accomplish anything on immigration, border security, healthcare, employment, infrastructure improvement, climate change, or protections of the environment. They seem to be unwilling to honestly defend democracy or protect voting rights, or to try to prevent discriminatory and polarizing gerrymandering from making representation more and more grotesquely unfair. And Joe Biden honorably decided to step down to help save the republic.

At Trump's urging, for treacherous political purposes, Republicans shot down the first comprehensive border control and immigration bill in 30 years that was designed to deal with spiking numbers of immigrants coming to the

U.S. at the southern border. Senator James Lankford, a conservative Republican from Oklahoma, was one of the three main persons involved in writing the Border Act of 2024, along with Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, and Krysten Sinema, an Independent from Arizona. Lankford strongly advocated that the bill be passed in early 2024, but Trump wants this issue to remain hot and propulsive, so he cunningly directed Republicans in Congress to scuttle the bill for narrow political purposes.

In a Proclamation on Securing the Border in early June 2024, the Biden administration provided context: "There are more people around the world who are displaced from their homes today than at any point in time since World War II. Many factors have contributed to this problem. Failing regimes and dire economic conditions afflict many countries, including several in the Western Hemisphere. Violence linked to transnational criminal organizations has displaced substantial numbers of people in Latin America. The global COVID-19 pandemic upended societies around the globe. Natural disasters have forced people from their homes."

"As a result of these global conditions, we have been experiencing substantial levels of migration throughout the Western Hemisphere, including at our southwest land border." The right thing for our representatives to have done would have been to pass the 2024 Border Act.

Journalist Catherine Rampell wrote an article in May 2024 titled *The reward for Republicans who try to solve problems: humiliation*. She observed, "the GOP's inability to get behind their own border security bill just keeps getting more embarrassing. Pity poor Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.), who on Thursday was humiliated into voting against his own border security bill."

"Last fall, you might recall, Republican lawmakers refused to pass funding for Ukraine and Israel unless Democrats agreed to 'tough' border security measures. Lankford, one of the Senate's more conservative members, negotiated on the GOP conference's behalf, and he drove a hard bargain."

"Lankford got President Biden and Democrats to agree to revive a version of the controversial Title 42 border expulsion policy, which would shut down much of the asylum system without even the fig leaf of needing a 'public health emergency.' It also included more personnel for Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (one reason the major Border Patrol union endorsed it), and a stricter, faster process for adjudicating asylum claims. Progressives decried many of the asylum measures as inhumane."

It has been decades since comprehensive action has been taken on border security. During this time, immigration has surged, and the "status quo is untenable", says Senator Lankford. But Trump has so hyper politicized immigration that he puts the Country at greater risk, disgracefully doing so for the self-centered political benefit he perceives in scuttling a remedial bill.

The Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas issued the following statement on the Senate vote on the Bipartisan Border Security Agreement: "The bipartisan border security legislation would deliver the strongest border enforcement tools in thirty years. It would make significant changes to our broken immigration system, greatly accelerating the federal government's ability to remove more quickly individuals who have illegally entered the United States and do not have a legal right to stay. It would also equip the federal government with the resources to provide humanitarian relief more quickly to those who qualify for it under the law."

"The bipartisan border security legislation would provide resources for more than 1,500 additional U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel, more than 1,200 additional Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel, more than 4,300 additional asylum officers, and 100 additional immigration judges. The broken immigration system would be significantly repaired, cases would move more quickly, and the staggering immigration court backlog would be addressed."

"Importantly, as a result of the strong border enforcement tools that the bipartisan border security legislation would deliver, fewer migrants would attempt the journey to the southern border in the first place. The consequences of illegal entry would be delivered more quickly, and it is proven that the swift delivery of consequences under the law deters irregular migration to our southern border."

"The bipartisan security legislation is the result of months of hard work by both Republican and Democratic Senators and members of the Biden-Harris Administration. Everyone agrees that our immigration system is

fundamentally broken and has been for decades. This legislation would significantly fix it and provide the heroic workforce of the Department of Homeland Security the tools and resources they need and deserve to do their jobs and advance the safety and security of the American people."

"Only Congress can fix our broken immigration system. I urge Congress to do so. In the meantime, we will continue to enforce the law with full force with the limited resources we have. Our personnel have done so remarkably. Over the past twelve months alone, we have removed or returned more than 720,000 migrants who did not have a legal basis to stay in the United States, more than in any year since 2011."

"The American people deserve an immigration system that works, that enhances our security and delivers the humanitarian relief that a functioning asylum system is designed to provide. The bipartisan border security legislation does just that."

In conclusion, the stakes are higher in the 2024 elections than ever before for the future of our democracy and the planet, due to the extremist agenda pushed by Trump and Vance, and MAGA Republicans, and the Heritage Foundation and its Project 2025 and its allies and collaborators. In contrast, Democrats propose to defend democracy and fundamental freedoms, including voting rights, women's rights, the general welfare of working people, and basic rights of young immigrant Dreamers, and they fight for improvements in pocketbook issues for the vast majority of Americans. They also honorably call for equitable treatment for all, and responsible public service, and bold climate action, and social and environmental justice, and protections of the environmental commons, and fiscal responsibility, and honesty and reasoned deliberation, and Right Action on dozens of other crucially important issues.

We would be wise to remember the Contract with America in the 1990s. Back in 1994, Republicans pushed a legislative agenda that they touted as the Contract with America, but which critics saw as a Contract ON America.

Many of the policy ideas in the Contract originated at the conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation. The provisions of the Contract with America represented the view of many conservative Republicans on the issues of reducing the size of government, cutting taxes, and reforming both welfare programs and tort law.

Today in 2024, "it's Déjà vu all over again", but vastly worse, because of the Project 2025 initiative that the Heritage Foundation and extremist factions of the Republican Party are pushing. This extremist agenda should more accurately and honestly be called the Contract AGAINST America. It is, after all, an offensive initiative that reads like a blueprint for a fascist takeover of the government that would devastate democratic fairness and turn the federal government into a threat to the health, well-being and security of tens of millions of Americans.

The same Heritage Foundation that wrote the 1994 Contract with American has written this aggressive effort to transform the USA into what sounds an awful lot like an authoritarian dictatorship. The Heritage Foundation is now operated by many of Trump's current and former political allies. Its president, Kevin Roberts, is a Christian nationalist who once said the project's main goals are "institutionalizing Trumpism" and getting rid of unelected bureaucrats who he believes wield too much political influence.

The Project 2025 agenda is called a "Mandate for Leadership", and the devil is in the far-reaching phalanx of frightening details. It is ironic that conservatives tend to oppose mandates in many matters, claiming they encroach on people's personal freedoms and autonomy. But the mandates included in the dangerous Project 2025 plans would impose an unbelievable litany of oppressive, repressive and offensive mandates on Americans that would be vastly worse than mandates like wearing a mask or getting vaccinated that were imposed during the global pandemic to prevent the spread of the contagious disease, and save lives, and protect oneself and others.

"When fascism comes to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross." This statement is widely attributed to Sinclair Lewis, although there is no definitive evidence that he actually wrote or said it. The quote captures the idea that fascism in the United States would likely take advantage of religious fundamentalism and disguise itself with patriotic and religious symbolism to gain and wield dominating power.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

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