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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 deceitfully 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 exceedingly high. Surely, the 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 experienced destabilizing waves of various successive mutations of the contagious coronavirus, this pandemic severely impacted people's lives almost everywhere, especially those in the bottom half of the socioeconomic ladder -- like most "essential workers", who are treated as disposable. This is sadly having the effect of diverting attention from the urgency of many crucial issues like climate change that are evaluated in this manifesto. But the long-term implications of the importance of these ideas cannot be diminished. And desperate measures that are being used to cope with pandemic health adversities and highly unequal economic calamities are causing the national debt to explode, having increased by almost \$8 trillion during Donald Trump's time in office. This makes our jerry-rigged house-of-cards economy even more vulnerable to future shocks.

Our political leaders have indulged in the risk-heightening folly of backing us into a tight corner, profligately driving up debt by cutting taxes to mainly benefit the rich, and to stimulate economic growth, facilitate excess profit making, and provide economic relief from the devastating impacts of the global disease. In doing so, they are hindering precautionary preparations for a challenging future, and instead are engaging in an overarching form of malfeasance and myopic irresponsibility. It is notable that the pandemic is not only a terrible public health crisis, but also a serious issue involving widespread economic, social and environmental injustices.

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, political power and influence have been usurped by devious demagogues 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 often siding with corporate exploiters and polluters over working people and the populace as a whole.

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 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 MAGA Republicans in Congress accountable for wrongdoing and negative long-term impacts on our country.

In a funny counterpoint to Mark Twain's sarcastic observation that "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?"

Holy prescient satirical wit! Unscrupulously partisan conservatives on the Supreme Court absurdly 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 and Robert and Rebekah Mercer, and their corruption-loving cronies, have spent billions of dollars to promote a highly inequitable, anti-worker, anti-democratic and anti-environmental agenda. They have been getting away with this by driving culture war wedges between people and indoctrinating them, fooling them, confusing them, intimidating them and betraying them to prevent their voices from being heard and their best interests from being respected. Under the Trump regime, by cultivating discord and resentment, they inimically perpetrated some of the worst and most future-endangering government the USA has ever had.

The Brennan Center for Justice at New York University Law School confirmed this contention, writing that "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 rulings by Supreme Court conservatives that weakened the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to impose restrictive voting laws. These laws are blatantly designed to give conservatives partisan advantages by depriving millions of people of the right to vote -- especially Blacks, Latinos, women, young people, persons with disabilities and the poor. And they have taken this opportunity to further corruptly rig our elections through contorted extreme gerrymandering of congressional districts, using surgical precision to disenfranchise millions of Americans. These shrewd abusers of power pathologically promote a profoundly democracy-undermining agenda, to the sad detriment of the people.

This situation reached a critical impasse after the 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 have been trying desperately, with despotic stubbornness, to overturn the outcome.

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, 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 to assist in the diagnosis. Corporations, he concluded, would be accurately seen as sociopathic psychopaths if they were regarded as people, due to their typical behaviors and inherent tendencies. He cited convincing instances in which many corporations act in ways that are manipulative, socially irresponsible and devoid of empathy -- and they often seem almost incapable of demonstrating genuine remorse, guilt, moral rectitude, or responsibility for the greater good. And they devious engage in greenwashing, and strongly oppose being held accountable for misdeeds or harms caused by their activities.

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 one that says the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees corporate entities the same rights of Due Process and Equal Protection as individuals. Lawyers assemble!

Follow the money! Before the pandemic began, corporate profits were near all-time record highs, and yet corporations paid less than 9% of all federal tax revenue. This fact reveals a measure of the corrupt abuses of power by corporate entities, since there has been a drastic decline from 33% in 1950 of the portion of federal taxes paid by corporations. These entities have in effect managed to get the share of taxes they pay reduced by

over 70%. CEOs and shareholders are thereby getting bigger cuts of profits made by exploiting workers and using up Earth's natural resources and damaging Earth's ecosystems and altering the global climate.

Big businesses have managed to achieve this 'success' by increasing the influence of lobbyists to enable them 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 regulations designed to promote the common good. Now is the time to include fairer amounts of costs in every product sold. After Republicans slashed corporate taxes in December 2017, the amount of federal tax obligations paid by corporations declined to only about 6%. Profiting investors love it; the common good suffers. (In giving consideration to these ideas, don't be distracted by Mark Twain's witticism: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.")

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.

Misguided Priorities

There are many things government should deal with, and they should be sensibly prioritized. Shamefully, however, the top three Republican priorities in recent years have been: first, to gain power no matter what the means, even without principles or scruples. Second, to give big tax breaks that mostly benefit those who don't need them, irresponsibly financed by borrowing huge amounts of money that will 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 over \$30 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 third top Republican priority has been to eviscerate the Affordable Care Act, even though it would cause 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 burdensome for 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 vicissitudes of fate are fickle, so it is hubristic folly for the fortunate few to foist a Tough Luck economic and political system onto the populace. It is unethical to forsake the vast majority of the people to 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 extreme injustices in health care are shocking and inhumane, it is crazy to coddle profiteers and speculators by playing politics with health insurance, medical care, prescription 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.

Republicans try to manipulate public opinion by calling progressive proposals "socialism." As they aggressively defend their national policies by telling people Democrats want to impose socialism on our country, they try to scare people and 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."

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 increase privatize profits by socializing 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 powerful wealthy people want to be able to run the 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" Tellingly, bailouts for farmers hurt by Trump's trade wars 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 talked 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 wrote 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." This included his use of White House fiat to favor pet industries such as coal and Big Oil, and hitting major trading partners with tariffs to protect the domestic steel industry and others. Hypocrisy and intellectual deceit apparently know no bounds.

When conservatives yell "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 down 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. Trump Republican tax cuts in 2017 were 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. This is assuredly not good!

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 destabilized climate conditions and accompanying worse heat waves, severe winter storms, torrential rain flooding events, harsh droughts, failed crops, terribly destructive wildfires, rising sea levels, heightened vulnerabilities to man-made and natural disasters, the spread of contagious diseases and terrible harms by pandemics, devastating conflicts, widespread refugee crises, overpopulation, inexorably greater demands on the planet's finite resources, compromised ecosystems and diminished biodiversity.

One main cause of these increasing harms 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 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. Even the alkaline balance of oceans and the gaseous composition of the atmosphere are being dangerously altered. And simultaneously, streams, lakes and seas are being polluted, and aquifers, topsoil, minerals and supplies of fossil fuels are being myopically depleted worldwide. These things

are causing an accelerating deterioration of basic life support systems, making it increasingly important for us to begin enacting measures to protect ecosystems, conserve resources, strengthen family planning programs, and educate and empower women to contribute to the greater well-being.

Let's be honest with ourselves, and *See Clearly*. There are now more than 8 billion people on our home planet. All the most consequential challenges we face will be exacerbated by this overwhelming number of human beings. Resources will be more 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, epic rains and destructive wildfires that have been afflicting locales around the globe in recent years. And coastal flooding and storm surge inundations will cause more damages as sea levels inexorably 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, safeguard assets and prevent ecological catastrophe. Abuses of power inherent in inadequately regulated capitalism and domineering rule by hyper-partisan politicians must be constrained.

Humanity is engaged in a vast uncontrolled experiment in casino capitalism and stimulative debt-financed tax cutting, and inequality is being stoked along with an increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of a power-abusing few. The federal government is failing in its critical obligation to address big problems, mainly due to Republican influence and opposition to reforms. By giving unleashed influence to big corporations and power to the executive branch under Trump, "conservatives" abandoned democratically fair governance in favor of the detrimental influence of Big Business over the fates of working people. This helped facilitate bad management of natural resources, and irresponsibly failed to protect people and the biosphere from predations and damages.

Good Government Goals

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 repeatedly claimed that he had 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) 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 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.

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

How are they doing with forming a more perfect union? Lousy! They are using divisive tactics to make it easier to abuse power and further concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few. They are also 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 has been accompanied by a spike in hate crimes.

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

How are they doing about insuring domestic tranquility? Horrible! Twisted Republican spin and strategies are contrary to this desirable goal because they hype up resentments, create heightened anxieties, rile up their narrow political base, misdirect anger, 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 Republicans have done with devious tweets and the violent rhetoric Trump has spouted 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 elitist agenda. *We are seeing the pathological truth in Voltaire's words, written back in 1765, "Truly, whoever can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities."*

How do Republicans do with regard to promoting the general welfare? Miserable! Trump Republicans looted the public treasury by indulging in regressively structured Tax Cut swindles and engaged in excessive amounts of fraud-tinged deficit financing. This added to the heavy tax burden that every taxpayer in every future year will be obligated to help pay. Poorly controlled piling on of national 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 should rightly be offset by balanced budgets or surpluses during boom times and periods of low unemployment.

In connection with wrongheaded short term-oriented expedient actions, politicians are treating our home planet like a business in liquidation, depleting resources at an irrationally wasteful rate and woefully ignoring the well-being and security of the vast majority of Americans -- and of everyone in the future. And they are doing this not for the common good, but to give most of the resulting benefits 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 corrupt administration's extremely short-term-oriented schemes. But then the global pandemic caused extreme stock market volatility, and created a need for further desperate debt-financed measures and Fed monetary stimulus to prop up asset values in the face of lockdowns, social distancing and economic malaise. So now the opportunity to take away the proverbial punch bowl of "easy money" has diminished, and much more debt financing has been required. This is a form of 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 relief spending, forgivable loans, 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 due to the terribly misguided failings and tyrannical obstinacy of Republican leaders.

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. Under Trump they formed conspiratorial alliances with repressive authoritarians in many countries, and whittled away at personal freedoms at home, undermining democracy itself, instead of fairly promoting positive, propitious, inclusive and unifying plans that 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.

Clear-Eyed Perspective

This manifesto has materialized in our midst, like Athena, the Greek Goddess of Wisdom who reputedly sprang forth from the head of Zeus. Read all about wise ideas contained in the Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto, and 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 conservatives 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: partisan rulings by a narrow majority of "conservatives" on the Supreme Court are deeply subversive not only of our founding ideals, but also of environmental and social sanity. It is a grave danger to allow our democracy to be subverted from within by authority-abusing judges and politicians intent on maintaining unaccountable power. We citizens must not allow them to continue abusing this usurped authority and running roughshod over the common good, and pushing an unwisely myopic unfair agenda.

Elections can have big 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 citizenry by a scheming and manipulative minority party of deceivers, grifters and corporate abusers of influence who seem hell-bent on using up 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 in the future. At the same time, Republicans consistently try to cut spending on the social safety net to help offset costs of giving huge tax breaks to the richest Americans. They do this despite the fact that their regressive Tax Cut scams are recklessly driving up the national debt by adding trillions of dollars more money borrowed from taxpayers, amongst other fiscally irresponsible and nefariously unfair top priorities.

Trump, his Cabinet members and collaborating partisan Republicans in Congress demonstrated an extreme lack of responsibility by pushing an agenda that gives huge tax giveaways to influence-abusing rich people while compounding this far-reaching folly by wantonly depleting resources, polluting the environment, causing tragedy-of-the-commons harms, failing to take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere that destabilize the climate, 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 helping protect the public health, the environment or our democracy. Corporations are far too narrowly focused on

achieving their two main legal purposes -- maximizing private profits and protecting management and shareholders from legal liabilities. This leaves the responsibility to governments to restructure systems to create truly fairer societies. We need smarter governance and longer 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, in early December 2009, 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 that was just about to begin at that time. 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 to today, and we see the Trump family "found religion" in perniciously assaulting 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 sacrifice 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 own personal power and profit.

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

Millions of Trump supporters in his easily manipulated political base are partially to blame for this outcome, due to their blind support. They should change sides! Trump's rogue action was maliciously antagonistic to people in every other country on Earth, and indulgently myopic. It was 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, respect for peaceable coexistence and sustainable living.

At the bottom of the 2009 open letter about climate action, an African proverb was quoted: "If you want to go quickly go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Donald Trump 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 by 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 was 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 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 did, including Scott Pruitt at the Environmental Protection Agency and then the former coal lobbyist Andrew Wheeler -- and who they were pandering to -- see *The Top Ten Ways Our System Is Rigged*. You will also get an earful about the ruses involved

and the long litany of personal improprieties that were perpetrated, along with the pathetically corrupt consequences of these backward activities.

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 perpetuating mistakes, but it is much worse to deny an error and instead let it impact the public health, security and future well-being.

Trump's decision 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 allowed investors to gain the spoils of this lax policy. And the irresponsible plan was coupled with regressive tax schemes that allow those receiving most of the benefits to pay low capital gains taxes on them -- or NONE, after they die -- further concentrating wealth.

The United Nations warned in May 2019 that one million species of life are in accelerating danger of eternal extinction. At the same time, the Trump administration was striving to gut vital provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Let's honor 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, "conservatives" pander to right-wing extremists and religious fundamentalists that misuse 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, deceitful propaganda and Big Lies about crucial matters like the trickle-down theory that rationalizes radically inequitable outcomes. This enables brazen efforts to artificially pump up private profits by reducing protections of the public health and well-being, and by increasing the damaging exploitation of public lands and resources.

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 undesirably gives more unaccountable power to the minority party that wields unwarranted influence. Making this folly worse, millions of people wear ideological blinders that have allowed Republicans to despotically abuse 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 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 citizens, "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, humanity is confronted with a calamitous global pandemic, distracting us from the unfolding climate crisis, which the world's leading climate scientists have repeatedly warned about in Climate Reports by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. In November 2019, a 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 confirmed that greenhouse gases emissions are dangerously continuing to rise, and that governments are making insufficient progress in tackling the crisis this is causing. It also stated 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 said that time is very short for us to act to prevent a dangerous degree of global warming that will 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 landmark reports by the IPCC say that urgent changes are needed to prevent and mitigate the severity of these impacts. They also say the changes needed are unprecedented in scope and yet affordable and feasible, and that adverse consequences would be 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 more difficult choices -- and suffer terrible consequences.

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 autocratic governments such as those in Putin's Russia, Xi Jinping's China, Erdogan's Turkey, Mohammad bin Salman's Saudi Arabia, Orban's Hungary and Modi's India. Fascist-like tendencies to rule ruthlessly are being achieved through shrewd strategies that undermine democracy and involve a 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 their citizens 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 attacked reporters, journalists, writers and critics, calling them "enemies of the people". These people in actuality act 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 harmful disparities between the top 1% and everyone else. And they are opposing relentless attempts to take away 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 creating radical gerrymanders of congressional districts to deprive millions of Americans of fairer representation, and they engage in blatant efforts to restrict the vote, especially in states like Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Kansas and Wisconsin.

Election lawyer Marc Elias warns that "we cannot out-organize voter suppression" and that the myth that we can "minimize the real world effects of repeated, targeted suppression laws." This shifts the burden from the suppressors to the voters by suggesting that victims of voter suppression simply need to be better 'organized.' Voter suppression is not "campaign tactics", but "the illegal and immoral deprivation of constitutional rights."

Republicans are using the same litany of flagrantly corrupt and broadly illegitimate means to win elections that they used in 2016 to seize power, as spelled out in deliberative detail in my essay *Demagoguery and the Dangers of the Demise of Democracy*. They rightly should instead seek real legitimacy by cultivating a well-informed consent of the governed, and by promoting an honest agenda consistent with the common good and fair representation. But Republicans have continued to use all their usual dirty electioneering tricks, with emotion-manipulating spin and lies and bullying tactics. They propagate fear by using advertising fueled by *Dark Money* to fool people into supporting candidates who are pushing a corrupt agenda. In addition, they make the dominion-demanding minority out to be victims of a "democratic mob", which actually consists of true American patriots who oppose abuses of power. One

of their nefarious strategies is to use micro-targeted misinformation 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. And right-wing extremists are brandishing weapons and threatening and/or committing violence to get their way.

On top of these illegitimate schemes, Republican politicians have been brazenly sabotaging the greater good ever since the fateful day in January 2017 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.

Good solutions to the biggest challenges facing civilization are needed, like bigger investments in an intelligently designed Green New Deal, and an end to the worst aspects of the highly undemocratic, inequitable and anti-environmental agenda that was imposed by the Trump 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 implement new federal voting rights protections and reject Republican intransigence. 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 assess 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!

Let's breathe deep and let go, and see clearly. Republicans and their cronies 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, it is a real national emergency today that Republicans are striving desperately to regain domineering power by pushing Trump's lies about widespread voter fraud, and if unchecked, our democracy will continue to be converted, insidiously, into a government featuring a more repressive authoritarian hegemony over the people.

It has become critical that we defend our democracy by reducing Republican influence in federal and state governments. 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 racially discriminatory anti-immigrant Republican campaigns. But Trump and his loyalists are doggedly mobilizing 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% approved of Trump's presidency."

True patriots oppose corruption and political malfeasance, and oppose many of the partisan "ideological wish list" measures that were introduced to cope with 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 act treacherously when they support politicians who fail 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, more perverse injustices, worse 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*.

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

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.

Truly,

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain May 12, 2023

/ George W. Bush famously declared that it
 / is necessary to repeat things over and
 / over again in order to "catapult the
 / propaganda."

/ In this consequential matter, let's tune in
 / to the historian and political commentator
 / Doris Kearns Goodwin. She knows how
 / successful the repetitious repeating of

/ falsehoods and telling distorted versions
 / of the truth can be in getting people to
 / believe in things manifestly untrue, so she
 / gives us wise advice. Let's repeat the
 / the truth over and over and over again!

/ Let's honestly and honorably propagate
 / versions of the truth that are accurate,
 / fair and responsible, and consistent
 / with the greater good.

/ Here's one truth: It is ultimately
 / disreputable to succeed by propagating
 / big lies and postulating preposterous
 / conspiracies, and to so succeed by using

/ coercive emotional suasion and the slippery
 / slope lubrication of activated fears and
 / scapegoating and other demagogic ruses.