

# ONE NATION AFTER TRUMP



A Guide for the Perplexed,  
the Disillusioned, the Desperate,  
and the Not-Yet Deported

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## Introduction

### **When a Crisis is an Opportunity The Perils of Trumpism and the Call to Engagement**

American democracy was never supposed to give the nation a president like Donald Trump.

We have had more or less ideological presidents and more or less competent presidents. We have had presidents who divided the country and presidents whose opponents saw them as a grave danger to everything they believed in. But we have never had a president who aroused such grave and widespread doubts about his commitment to the institutions of self-government, to the norms democracy requires, to the legitimacy of opposition in a free republic, and to the need for basic knowledge about major policy questions and about how government works. We have never had a president who daily raises profound questions about his basic competence and his psychological capacity to take on the most powerful and challenging political office in the world. We have never had a president whose reaction to a terrorist attack abroad was to lay into the mayor of the city where it happened and to use the episode to score points in debates at home. We have never had a president whose loyalties to the country are in doubt, who spoke more warmly of foreign dictators than of democratic allies, and whose victory was the purpose of the meddling of a foreign power in our election.

We have, in short, never had a president who, from his first day in office, plainly showed that he had *no business being president*.

Trump arouses anger, yes, but also fear -- fear about whether our institutions can survive a leader who praises strongmen abroad and sees them as a model for bold leadership; fear about the instincts and commitments of a narcissistic politician who assails and insults revered national heroes, from John Lewis to John McCain, simply because they refuse to fall in behind him; fear about the future of a tolerant, multiracial and multiethnic nation under a leader who freely demeans whole groups of Americans; fear about the country's standing in the world, given his cavalier and often hostile attitude toward long-standing alliances and toward many of our closest allies; fear about the future of gender equality under a president who has shamelessly demeaned women and has bragged about assailing them; fear of the likelihood of corruption on the part of a chief executive who refuses to separate himself from his business empire in any meaningful way; and, finally, fear for the future of the United States' great experiment in tolerance, openness, freedom and democracy.

In his duplicitous reaction to Russia's efforts to undermine our democracy, he has shown us how the dysfunction of our politics puts our nation *directly* at risk. It makes us vulnerable to outside efforts to use our internal divisions to sow chaos and weaken our nation. Trump's disgraceful reaction to June's terrorist attack in London further underscored the risks of his presidency. He responded to the death of seven people and the injury of dozens of others "by stoking panic and fear," as *The Washington Post* reported; by attacking the Mayor of London; and by trying to score points in the American debate over gun control. It was an approach that could only undermine the United States in the battle against violent extremism.<sup>1</sup>

Yet precisely because the crisis created by Trump's rise is so profound, we believe that the popular mobilization and national soul-searching he has aroused could be the occasion for an era

of democratic renewal. If Trump is a threat to our democracy and the product of its weaknesses, the citizen activism he has inspired is the antidote, the way to vindicate our long experiment in self-rule. Opposition to Trump is calling millions of Americans to a new sense of citizenship.

We offer *One Nation After Trump* to encourage this new engagement and to insist that the movement against Trumpism needs not only tactics and strategies but also a vision -- a hopeful and unifying alternative to his dark and divisive assessment of our country's prospects. His opponents need to offer a clear, compelling and practical vision that responds to discontents that led many of our fellow citizens to such disgust with the status quo and such anger about their place in it that they were prepared to risk empowering a deeply and obviously flawed demagogue.

We also propose answers to what we see as the questions our country must now ask itself. In some cases, we suggest that the conventional responses to them are wrong or incomplete. In others, we highlight what we feel are the underappreciated insights of historians and political scientists who draw our attention to the long-term nature of the problems we confront. At the same time, we also acknowledge the very good work that journalists and scholars have done in a very short timeframe to help our country understand how we came to this moment.

We thus ask: Where did Trumpism come from? Why were nearly 63 million Americans persuaded to vote for him? What is the nature of Trump's threat to our free, democratic republic and how can those who would protect it take him on? How can we defend those whose rights he undermines? How can we create a politics that is not a zero-sum game pitting Americans against each other along the lines of race, class, gender, region and background? And how can we begin solving the problems and responding to the legitimate grievances that gave rise to Trump in the first place?

If Trump represents a unique hazard, he did not single-handedly create the circumstances that made him president. He did not become the dominant figure in the Republican Party simply because of his mastery of reality television, cable news, tweets, and the power of the oft-repeated lie, as helpful as these were to his unlikely ascent.

Rolling back the Trump threat requires seeing that *he represents an extreme acceleration of a process that was long underway*. It involves the decline of basic norms in politics, governing and the media as well as the decay of institutions that are central to republican government. The radicalization of the Republican Party and its primary electorate began three decades ago. Absent these forces, Trump would still be a loud-mouthed developer and brand-peddler far removed from the levers of power.

Trumpism is best understood as a protest movement among a minority of Americans to long-term changes in the country's social, economic, religious and political life. It is, in the literal sense of the term, reactionary. This separates it not only from progressivism, but also from a traditional conservatism that, in principle at least, always accepted what Edmund Burke, the first conservative, taught: that preserving what is best in a regime and a society means accepting that change and reform are inevitable. Burke recommended "a disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve." Trumpism looks backward, not forward.<sup>2</sup>

Trump took advantage of a trend in American politics toward minority rule, or what might be called "non-majoritarianism." Our system is now biased against the American majority because of partisan redistricting (which distorts the outcome of legislative elections); the nature of representation in the United States Senate (which vastly underrepresents residents of larger states); the growing role of money in politics (which empowers a very small economic elite); the

workings of the Electoral College (which is increasingly out of sync with the distribution of our population) ; and the ability of legislatures to use a variety of measures, from Voter ID laws to the disenfranchisement of former felons, to obstruct the path of millions of Americans to the ballot box. Trump profited from this bias against the majority, becoming president despite his loss of the popular vote by the largest margin ever for an Electoral College winner.

But he also exploited the seething rage created by economic changes that left significant parts of our country devastated and the citizens of these regions angry enough to turn to a charlatan whom they saw as at least articulating their sense of discontent. Trump's opponents will not prevail if they ignore the sources of their unhappiness. The conversion process requires listening as well as preaching. It mandates self-criticism and self-examination if the call on others to think differently is to have any chance of being heard. It's true that some of his enthusiasts have expressed views about African-Americans, women, immigrants and Muslims that demand condemnation. But while denouncing Trump's supporters for "voting against their interests" or for being "backward" or "reactionary" may be emotionally satisfying to his opponents, it will not persuade any of them to reconsider the choice they made. Worse still, some of the hostility that Trump's critics express toward those who voted for him merely mirrors the attitudes encouraged by his own strategists, who would intentionally divide our nation for their own political purposes.

This moment also demands that Republican leaders reflect on their role in enabling Trump's ascendancy. Trump's appeal played well in a party whose supporters had been taught for decades to mistrust Washington and to hate government. This rhetoric turned on its authors. Trump ran against not only Democrats but also Republican leaders of long-standing who thought they could exploit mass movements on the right such as the Tea Party and then safely contain them once

they achieved their electoral goals. But the forces they unleashed devoured their champions in 2016. For the Republican Congressional Establishment, Trump's triumph ratified John F. Kennedy's warning in his Inaugural Address: "Those who foolishly sought power by riding the back of the tiger ended up inside."

The times were well suited to a candidate prepared to combine elements of populism, nationalism, nativism, and protectionism, and to marry these to the promise of strongman leadership ("I alone can fix it"). Paradoxically in light of who Trump is, a man deeply immersed in the world of high-level influence peddling, he cast himself as implacably opposed to the power of big money and as the guardian of working people. That his own party had championed the role of large donations and that a conservative Supreme Court had struck down long-standing limits on their influence did not deter him.<sup>3</sup>

His nationalism and his forays into old-style "America First" isolationism played to a country exhausted by long and unsuccessful wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. His protectionism was welcomed by many voters -- especially in the pivotal states of Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio -- after the disappearance of millions of well-paying manufacturing jobs, many of them to China. His nativism responded to the unease among many native-born Americans about the rise in the proportion of immigrants in our population over the last four decades. And the Republican Party's success in obstructing Barack Obama's agenda contributed -- again paradoxically -- to a popular desire for strong leadership that showed little regard for rules or norms.

Trumpism represents something far more important than the scheming of one man. To see clearly where Trumpism comes from is to understand that this worldview did *not* just suddenly

sweep the country, does *not* command vast support among the American people and does *not* represent an irresistible wave of the future. But for Trump and Trumpism to be defeated, Americans must understand the nature of the threat that he poses, the shortcomings in our society that he exploited, and the dangers of his overt and covert appeals to racism and xenophobia. They must also embrace public engagement – from demonstrating and attending town meetings to organizing a precinct, registering voters, working on campaigns, running for office themselves and, of course, voting. Saving our democracy requires citizens to devote themselves to the messy, sometimes frustrating but ultimately ennobling work of self-government.

Trump poses a challenge for Republicans and Democrats alike. With some courageous early exceptions, Republicans in large numbers were willing to work with Trump and overlook or apologize for even the shabbiest aspects of his presidency in the hope of winning policy victories that have eluded them for more than a decade. Republicans who know better have also been intimidated by the very forces they helped unleash within their own party. They fear primaries and they fear assaults from the conservative media. They worry that the GOP really has become Trump's Party and are thus willing to accommodate him in order to hold onto the power they have.

The Democrats' path has, in one sense, been easier. Opposition to Trump runs so deep among so many Americans that standing up to him has turned out to be the best way to mobilize new forces into politics that could herald a revival of the center-left and the Democratic Party. But Democrats face a complex set of choices, partly because many of their Senators, especially those up for re-election in 2018, come from states where pro-Trump feeling ran strong; partly because they are seeking to win over and work with at least some conservatives who may agree with certain Trump policy initiatives but share the center-left and left's deep concern about his

authoritarianism and unfitness; and partly because defeating Trump will require both a vigorous defense of the rights of racial, ethnic and religious minorities – including American families endangered by Trump’s hostility to immigrants – and an understanding of the legitimate grievances of white working class voters who expressed their frustrations by supporting him. Empathy can be hard in a period of profound political polarization, but it is indispensable. At the same time, warm feelings are not the same as coherent policies, and we hope here to show where they can be found.

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The first part of *One Nation After Trump* analyzes the meaning of Trump’s ascendancy and the dangers it poses. We open by insisting that Trump’s opponents should take heart from the fact that he has never represented an American majority, that a large share of the Trump vote was a negative verdict on the *status quo* (and on his opponents, including Hillary Clinton), and that his election was not a mandate for Trumpism. Understanding what did *not* happen in 2016 is as essential as understanding what did for moving forward.

So is an understanding of the complicated role of the media. The paradox is that the media, particularly television, facilitated Trump’s election and yet is now one of the most powerful forces holding him accountable. We vigorously defend the role of a free and independent media while also pointing to the problems in our media system, the failures of journalism during the 2016 campaign and the historical roots of Trump’s attacks on the press’s legitimate and essential role. Truth is the ally of both a free press and our democracy, and it is not well-served by the temptation of false balance, the insistence that both sides are equally at fault even when this is plainly not the case.

We then turn offer three closely related chapters on the decay of the norms essential to democratic government; how this decay can lead to law-breaking and the rise of autocratic government; and how Trump has used populist appeals to gain power, even as his economic policies strongly favored society's most privileged sectors.

Norms, we argue, are often more important than formal rules in ensuring the functioning of a constitutional republic. Trump has violated these basic understandings of how our democracy works in a genuinely unprecedented way. But in briefly revisiting arguments we made in our recent books (*Why the Right Went Wrong* and *It's Even Worse than It Looks*), we trace how these norms have been under a sustained attack for decades by an increasingly radicalized Republican Party and conservative movement. Trump is less of an outsider than he seems, and he was building on rather than resisting recent trends within the GOP. We link this history to the reluctance of so many Republican leaders to call out Trump's excesses now and to acknowledge the risks he poses to the political system. Defeating Trumpism will require reversing longer-term trends in our politics.

This norm-breaking is not simply a matter of political nicety. It is part of Trump's larger assault on our institutions, his tendency to think in autocratic terms, his abusive attitude toward the judicial system, and his disrespect for civil servants and the day-to-day work of government. We show how Trump's words and behavior parallel those of authoritarian leaders of the past and into the present day. We also deal with the curious contradictions of the Trump presidency. In many ways, it embodies weakness, the result of his refusal to engage himself in the details of government and to appoint qualified men and women to the second and third tiers of his administration. Yet it also makes vast claims to power.

Because Trump sometimes resembles the authoritarian populists of other nations and other periods of history, we next discuss the difficulties with populism as a concept, describe the many forms it can take, and examine how it can be overused and misapplied. We conclude that to the extent that Trump is a populist (in many ways an absurd label for a well-born billionaire developer), it is primarily of the sort who define “the people” in an exclusionary way designed to cast minorities and all of their opponents as the people’s enemy. And whether or not Trump can fairly be called a populist, he is clearly a phony friend of the working class.

We close the first part of the book by taking on a debate that is of central importance both to understanding our country and to strategies for effective opposition to Trump: whether support for him depended more on economic discontent or on a backlash rooted in race, culture, religion and nativism. It is a debate that often divides Trump’s opponents. After examining a raft of post-election studies, we conclude that while the cultural backlash thesis explains a very large share of Trump’s support, the economic backdrop of 2016 was critical to his victories in the key rustbelt states. We thus point to the dangers of two forms of denial: the temptation to underplay the large role of race, immigration and cultural conservatism in his campaign, and the danger of overlooking the desire of many of his supporters to strike back against their sense of economic dispossession. Dealing with both sets of concerns is essential to moving beyond Trumpism.

This leads directly to the second part of our narrative. If we hope to encourage successful opposition and resistance to Trump and Trumpism, our purpose here is also forward-looking. We offer a substantive agenda because we agree with those who say that Trump’s opponents have an obligation to offer a coherent alternative vision. At the same time, we would insist that those who oppose Trump do so to *affirm* a series of values about what political leadership demands, how politics should be carried out in a free republic, and how Americans should treat each other

across our many differences. Trump's ascent to power is a warning sign pointing to the need for national renewal. The answer to Trump -- the way both to defeat him and to solve the problems that led to his presidency -- will be found, we believe, in efforts to forge a new economy, a new patriotism, a new sense of community and empathy, and a new democracy.

It should not have taken Donald Trump to remind us of the profound imbalances in our national economy or to demonstrate that many Americans have been left behind over the last 30 years. Trump-style protectionism galvanized many voters because advocates of new trade agreements regularly broke their promises of new paths to prosperity to communities and individuals for whom free trade was more curse than blessing.

Trumpian discontent is typically defined as the product of an angry *white* working class that has suffered as manufacturing jobs have been moved overseas or were supplanted by new technologies. It is, of course, true that Trump's supporters were and remain overwhelmingly white, and that his appeal was inflected with a white ethno-nationalism. But the process of deindustrialization affects Americans across all races – and, it should always be remembered, a large share of the American working class is not white but African-American and Latino. As the sociologist William Julius Wilson noted in his book *When Work Disappears*, the vanishing of blue-collar jobs in a globalized and technologically sophisticated economy began wreaking havoc in our nation's inner cities long ago.<sup>4</sup>

A new economy will rise from an honest reckoning with the growing inequality and despair in many communities across our country, and also from an effort to build on the many economic advantages the United States enjoys. It will deal with the legitimate sources of discontent felt both among Trump's supporters and in the communities most strongly opposed to

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him. We do not pretend to offer a full-fledged economic program in these pages, but we do lay out a framework for dealing with the structural barriers to a more just economy. We propose *a Charter for American Working Families, a G.I. Bill for American Workers, and a Contract for American Social Responsibility* to address the most pressing economic needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And we highlight promising paths to improving incomes and social mobility and to strengthening communities caught on the wrong end of the economic cycle. Responding to the grievances of the working class – white and nonwhite alike – must be part of the response to the economic struggles of all Americans. Our nation’s gifts for innovation and invention should not only help us grow economically but also be brought to bear in solving our social problems and healing our national divisions. And Trump’s opponents cannot engage in a false choice argument about whether to maintain their commitment to the rights of our country’s ethnic minorities or to focus entirely on the white working class. Their task is to find policies that serve the interests of both groups, and of all Americans.

A new patriotism is the alternative to Trump’s nationalism. It is ironic that despite Trump’s calls for “America First,” he has imported into American politics a blood-and-soil nationalism that is far removed from the United States’ pluralistic and constitutional traditions. Despite many bouts of nativism, American patriotism has always returned to a definition of national identity rooted in constitutional republicanism and democratic institutions. We have from the outset welcomed newcomers. A new patriotism would defend our commitment to pluralism while also stressing ideals shared across all of our differences. *E pluribus unum* – out of many, one – is our brilliant national motto that stresses both the “many” and the “one.” Our pluralism must speak to all Americans, upholding both our right to express particular identities and our shared commitment to an equality that Martin Luther King Jr. called “a dream deeply

rooted in the American dream.” A New Patriotism would also reaffirm the United States’ commitment to democratic values and renew our alliances with other democratic nations. A foreign policy that walks away from international structures that are themselves products of creative American statecraft is not a form of “realism.” It is shortsighted and self-defeating.

Recognizing that the economic and social anxieties Trump exploited are fueled by a sense of dislocation and alienation, we also call for a new sense of community and empathy. Trumpism thrives on division and seeks to deepen rather than heal the polarization in our politics. Trump’s approach to politics always requires an enemy. This is true in a personal sense, as was obvious in his, by turns, vitriolic and mocking attacks on President Obama, Hillary Clinton and his Republican primary opponents. He also needs a collective enemy, whether at home (“the dishonest media” and Mexican-Americans as “rapists”) or abroad (ISIS, which truly is an enemy, but also our European allies whom he regularly denigrates).<sup>5</sup>

But many rallied to Trump out of a yearning for forms of community and solidarity that they sense have been lost. Economic change has ravaged not only individual living standards but also cities and towns that once created thriving forms of civil society through churches and labor unions, veterans’ organizations and service clubs, sports leagues and ethnic associations. It is not mere nostalgia to miss the forms of sociability and mutuality that are far more difficult to maintain when communities lose the vitality of a strong economic base. Writers as varied in their views as Robert Putnam, Charles Murray and J. D. Vance have shown that economic decline is often implicated with family breakdown and the decay of the social institutions. Family and community decay, in turn, push many toward alcoholism, opioid abuse and suicide, setting off a vicious generational cycle that is hard to break. The rise of what economists Anne Case and

Angus Deaton have called “deaths of despair” among middle-aged whites is a national tragedy and a national emergency. But so, too, are the deep hurts in African-American and Latino communities. Casting one group’s pain against another’s is a recipe for both division and inaction.<sup>6</sup>

Our country needs to find new ways to rebuild community and must rediscover empathy as the antidote to Trumpian division. Left, right and center have contributions to make in the task of reweaving our nation’s social bonds and in insisting that empathy cannot be selective. The injustices confronting African-Americans in inner cities and rural areas must bring alive our social consciences, and so, too, should the anguish in declining and predominantly white communities in Appalachia and the old factory towns across the Northeast and Midwest.

Finally, a new democracy requires replacing current political dysfunction and the pervasive sense of cynicism about politics it has engendered with reforms aimed at making our system more inclusive and more democratic. As long as so many citizens see the system as rigged (a word Trump used to great effect in his rise to power), they will be reluctant to embrace the work of self-governance. This is why we call for institutional reforms to reduce the power of big money in politics, to roll back barriers to the ballot box such as Voter ID laws, and to protect the voting rights of all Americans.

But all this will only be possible if citizens once again join the democratic fray in large numbers. Trump’s election has already persuaded millions of Americans who oppose him that political engagement is the answer to Trumpism.

Trump’s first months in office called forth an extraordinary mobilization. This work can and should lead to new era of civic commitment, which is necessary to stop Trump and reverse

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the effects of Trumpism. It is also a prerequisite to healing the wounds in our body politic that allowed Trump to reach the presidency.

President Obama would joke that he was sometimes called a “hope monger” by his foes. He was more than occasionally mocked for his declarations that “we are the change that we seek” and “we are the ones we’ve been waiting for.” But if such words strike some as sappy, they are deeply realistic in one very important sense: only citizens who believe in their own capacity to save and transform the country will be up to the tasks we face.<sup>7</sup>

Our title consciously echoes the final words in the Pledge of Allegiance, “one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” We certainly make no claims to speak for the Almighty, but the last seven words of the pledge define our hopes. The battle against Trump is a fight against national division -- for the idea that we still are “one nation” -- and a defense of liberty and justice. And reuniting our country by restoring popular confidence in our capacity to work together to protect liberty and promote justice is also the best way to put Trump and Trumpism behind us.

## Chapter Seven

### **With Opportunity and Justice for All: Building a New Economy**

Our account so far has largely focused on the dangers of Trump's rise. But his election ought to jar those who make up our nation's governing class. They now know that Americans in large numbers are so disaffected that they were ready to vote for a candidate whose temperament and behavior are ill-suited for the responsibilities they handed him -- and whom a majority of Americans, including many of his own supporters, saw as unqualified for the White House even before he took office.

Turning back Trumpism requires sustained opposition to his abuses, but also something more: a commitment to addressing the economic, social and cultural challenges we would confront even if Trump had been satisfied remaining a reality television star without the White House as his set.

The social crisis we face – and “crisis” is not too strong a word – should call forth the same spirit of innovation that our country has demonstrated in the technological, cultural and financial spheres. The United States has shown that it knows how to create wealth. By so many measures, we remain the strongest and most prosperous country in the world. The task of the next generation is to show again that we know how to create wealth in ways that allow it to be broadly shared across classes, races and regions. The promise of American life should be available to all Americans. Right now, it is not.

But as we saw in the last chapter, our crisis (and the reasons why Trump won support) extend beyond economics. In the forthcoming pages, we thus also offer proposals for a New Patriotism, a New Civil Society and a New Democracy. Building one nation after Trump requires a vision of patriotism that celebrates our nation’s diversity as a great asset but is also rooted in a set of shared understandings and purposes that bring us together. It also demands a view of America’s role in the world that is at once realistic and committed to democratic ideals. We focus on civil society because the nation’s economic troubles eroded the ties that bind Americans together in local communities. This weakened their ability to act in common while threatening the country’s social cohesion. And a New Democracy is essential not only to respond to the resonance of Trump’s charges that “the system is rigged” but also to battle against efforts to narrow participation, restrict access to the ballot, and flood the political system with campaign money raised from a small and privileged group of Americans. In many ways, the system *is* rigged – although, as we have argued, some of the rigging actually benefitted Trump. A new democracy would draw citizens to the task of self-government and provide them with the tools and opportunities to make their participation effective.

We turn first to the challenge of shared prosperity because creating a just and growing economy is essential to achieving our other national purposes.

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Historically, the United States has been seen as a model for the world in offering upward economic and social mobility, even if we have often fallen short of this ideal. There have been surges in anti-immigrant feeling at many points in our history, and opportunities have not been universal. African-Americans, whose ancestors were brought to our shores in bondage, were oppressed for centuries by a vicious racial caste system whose effects are still felt today. Native Americans have faced extreme mistreatment and isolation throughout our history.

But to the extent that our promises of mobility did, indeed, hold over many decades, they are being broken now. Social mobility in the United States has declined sharply since the 1980s and now ranks significantly lower than in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Canada and France. The economist Alan Krueger coined the “Great Gatsby Curve” to describe a degree of inequality and entrenched economic status that now mirrors that of Jay Gatsby’s era in the 1920s. Voters experiencing a sense of dislocation are not delusional.<sup>8</sup>

Our economic debate is trapped by our inability to accept a truth about American history: that our national dynamism has always entailed vigorous partnerships between the public and the private, between government at various levels and workers and entrepreneurs. There has never been a period of pure *laissez faire* in the United States, even when we thought we had one. We view the Gilded Age, for example, as a time when government stayed out of the way of the robber barons. And in many ways it did. But the enterprises so many of them ran were protected by thick tariff walls. The great railroads were built through government grants – and, sometimes,

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wholesale corruption. Before that, the roads and canals that were the product of Henry Clay's American System allowed the country to grow and industry to thrive. The Homestead Act gave away 10 percent of U.S. land to settlers who, according to the National Park Service, made 4 million claims. Some 93 million Americans descend from Homesteaders.<sup>9</sup>

We think of the period beginning with the Progressive Era and reaching its culmination in the New Deal and Great Society as entailing a highly unusual degree of government involvement in the economy. It's certainly true that the regulatory state took hold in this period, that far-reaching government social insurance programs were established and that the federal government – through the Federal Reserve, budget policy and counter-cyclical programs such as unemployment insurance – took responsibility for easing the cycles of boom and bust.

But the period from 1940 through the early 1970s was also a time of unparalleled private sector economic growth. If some of life's risks were socialized in this period, we had nothing resembling a state socialist economy.

The major change in our national approach involved government tailoring its policies more to the needs of workers and consumers than to those of economic elites. Through the Wagner Act of 1935, which guaranteed the right to organize and bargain collectively, government consciously took the side of workers and encouraged the formation of unions. Through the G.I. Bill, one of the greatest investment projects in American history, millions of veterans were empowered to pursue higher education, start businesses, and buy their own homes. Continuing in this spirit, President Dwight Eisenhower championed two great investment programs, building the Interstate highway system and financing access to higher education through the loans made available by the National Defense Education Act.

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We thus need to recover the very old American idea that government, working in partnership with the private market, can foster both growth and equity. As the political scientists Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson argued persuasively in their book *American Amnesia*, “[i]f advanced democratic capitalism won the twentieth century, the mixed economy deserves to stand atop the podium.” And this shared prosperity was key to the success of our democracy. “[I]f we start using government successfully again to enhance prosperity,” Hacker and Pierson conclude, “we can fix our broken politics.”

There was another difference between the great postwar period of shared prosperity and the current day: American corporations then understood that they had larger purposes and obligations than simply “maximizing shareholder value.” In an important Brookings Institution paper and in other writings, Steven Pearlstein, a professor at George Mason University, a *Washington Post* columnist and a staunch defender of the market system, argued that until the 1970s, corporations understood that a return to shareholders was only one aspect of their purpose. Corporations, he notes “were generally chartered not for private but for public purposes” and “well into the 1960s, corporations were widely viewed as owing something in return to the community that provided them with special legal protections and the economic ecosystem in which they could grow and thrive.”

The rise of the shareholder value standard, Pearlstein wrote, shortened the time horizons of CEOs and Boards of Directors, discouraging long-term investment. Short-termism also loosened the bonds of loyalty between corporations and their employees, their consumers and the communities in which they operated. Investment in training and skill-enhancement of a company’s workers was less rational in a less loyal world. The shift was not just ideological, though Pearlstein is shrewd about how an ideology that served the interests of investors was

bolstered over time by political and legal support. The same forces that have upended so many other aspects of the economy reinforced the shareholder value standard – “globalization, deregulation and rapid technological change.”

What’s been lost, Pearlstein argues, is the understanding that physical capital alone does not make capitalism successful. What is also required is “social capital,” which “provides the necessary grease for the increasingly complex machinery of capitalism, and for the increasingly contentious machinery of democracy. Without it, democratic capitalism cannot survive.”

Thus, the sense that something has gone wrong with the American economic system, reflected on the left as well as among many of the voters who swung to Trump, is not the invention of demagogues but the product of real change. If Trump’s “solutions,” such as they were, were deeply flawed -- and if he had little interest in following through on them anyway -- he was responding to that change with at least a feigned urgency that many voters related to.

It’s certainly true that some of the magic of the American economic system from the late 1940s until the 1970s owed to unparalleled American dominance after World War II, which left the economies of so many of our competitors in shambles. Many aspects of that era simply cannot be recreated. The entry of a billion or more new workers into the global labor market, particularly in China and India, is another brute fact destined to put the least advantaged workers in the richest economies at even greater risk in the international bidding war for wages.<sup>10</sup>

But we have also lost aspects of the American economy and the social system surrounding it that we need to reclaim. The first is the confidence we once had that government can work in partnership with the private market to achieve broadly shared economic growth. The long American tradition of using public action to spur innovation and investment while also

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enhancing the bargaining power, skills, education and wealth of average citizens no longer animates the public imagination. Partly, this is the product of actual government failure, and reforming government to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is an imperative for creating a post-Trump world. But this loss of confidence is also the product of a political and ideological project to demean government's essential role. We need to restore our sense of pragmatism, realism and inventiveness about what government can be asked to achieve.

And we need to restore the social capital Pearlstein describes by taking steps to reduce corporate short-termism and to restore a sense that corporations have responsibilities to the public and to stakeholders, including their employees, as well as to shareholders.

These imperatives -- for a responsive government and responsible corporate behavior -- are an alternative to Trumpist pro-corporate policies with a populist sheen and also a response to the discontent that Trump exploited.

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We organize what needs to be done around the idea of a *Charter for American Working Families*. As part of that framework, we propose a *G.I. Bill for American Workers* and a *Contract for American Social Responsibility* for our companies. The former would focus on providing greater protection for workers, along with robust job training and education. The latter would offer a new set of standards for corporate governance pushing away from short-term profits and encouraging deeper social responsibility.

Those who support an open and pluralistic America must be very clear that they are not content with a country divided between affluent metropolitan enclaves and declining regions, cities, and towns. They must find the ideas, the language and the passion to convey that this is a matter of political urgency. However manipulative and ultimately empty his agenda was, Trump

persuaded voters that he was making them a big offer. His opponents must make a big offer of their own.

There is a desperate desire on the part of most Americans to move past the divisions reflected in the 2016 campaign – both the internecine progressive struggle between supporters of Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primaries, and the sharp racial, ethnic, regional, cultural and class divisions of the general election. The approach we suggest is designed to draw on the insights of different parts of the broad progressive and moderate movement that finds Trumpist politics so offensive, and to persuade those not yet part of it that there are better alternatives.

It is aimed at combining Sanders' strong calls for labor rights and worker empowerment and his critique of corporate excess with Clinton's practical and incremental policy proposals that, had they been enacted together, promised substantial improvements in the lives of struggling Americans. Clinton's failure owed less to the merits (or demerits) of her particular policies than to her campaign's lack of focus on the depth of the economic difficulties so many Americans face. As should be clear from our earlier chapters, we believe that a significant number of white working class Americans who voted for Trump are open to alternatives to his approach – and will be all the more so as his claims to being an economic “populist” prove to be empty.

There is one other key component of the anti-Trump coalition -- the moderate Independents and Republicans, many of them well-off professionals. They share with progressives a desire to defend an open and tolerant society and view capitalism as a dynamic and innovative force even as they also seek more social responsibility from corporations. In an earlier generation, they would likely have been Eisenhower Republicans. The approach the

country needs would, in effect, unite Clinton and Sanders Democrats with the modern-day equivalent of Eisenhower Republicans and Independents, and conservatives who are seeking an alternative to Trump's divisiveness. As we will note later, the anti-Trump conservatives, while largely confined to the ranks of writers and policy specialists, are increasingly unhappy with the path their movement and the Republican Party have taken. Their restiveness could be the harbinger of political realignment.

Our framework is also designed to address two other aspects of coalition building that are essential.

One is between the African-American, Latino and Asian voters who arrayed themselves solidly against Trump and white working class voters who will be more open than ever to alternatives to Trumpism as Trump and his party prove their indifference – and, indeed, hostility – to the pledges they made to working Americans. Our politics has divided groups of Americans who, in economic terms, share common problems with similar causes. As *Washington Post* blogger Greg Sargent wrote in a very perceptive analysis of the 2016 outcome, much of the post-election debate was “framed around a false choice” that pitted “the need to minister to the Obama coalition versus the need for economic appeals to working-class whites.” Sargent was right to observe that many of the problems faced by both groups “are, at bottom, about the need for reforms that make the economy fairer and render prosperity more inclusive.” Writing in *The American Prospect*, Robert Griffin, John Halpin and Ruy Teixeira captured the imperative for the opposition plainly: “Democrats need to be the party of and for working people – of all races.”

The other alliance that must be nurtured is between younger and older voters. The young (who are the most progressive electoral cohort since the New Dealers of the Greatest Generation) seek social justice within a context of economic growth, dynamism and opportunity. Many find

themselves on the left end of politics, frustrated, as Sarah Leonard wrote in *Democracy* journal, with liberals “who are unable to inspire Americans with their vision of the future and are simultaneously strongly resistant to change.” Older voters, in the meantime, are threatened by the decline of economic security over the last three decades. Healing our divisions requires economic policies sensitive to the challenges facing the young and old alike, and also attentive to the cultural rifts we address in the next chapter. But if the broad center-left cannot find ways of addressing economic injustices, it will never get a hearing on other matters.

We stress that we are sketching out broad approaches and calling for a larger vision. This chapter does not pretend to be the final word but is instead an invitation to bold and creative thinking and to restoring economics to its central place in progressive politics. The political scientist Lynn Vavreck found that while only nine percent of Clinton’s television advertisements were about jobs or the economy, more than one-third of Trump’s ads focused on economic issues, including taxes, jobs and trade. As a result, many voters were unaware of what Clinton was offering as an alternative to Trumpism.<sup>11</sup>

We also do not pretend that a brief chapter is sufficient to working out the problems of a complex economy, for we are deeply aware of something that came as a surprise to Trump: public policy is difficult. Unintended consequences of even good ideas are inevitable. Details matter. Expertise is to be celebrated, not denigrated, and many who are belittled as “technocrats” often have the virtue of understanding how complicated systems work. Tradeoffs are the stuff not only of political compromise but also of careful policy analysis.

Finally, we emphasize that we are building on much good work that has been done in this area over the last decade. Before the 2016 election, for example, two detailed economic agendas

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were put forward that included many ideas that would be helpful in advancing broadly shared prosperity. One report, from the Center for American Progress, was offered by a working group (with which one of the authors of this book was involved) headed by former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and the British Labour Party's Ed Balls. The other, from the Roosevelt Institute, was principally authored by the Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz. The ideas in each -- from profit-sharing with employees to new approaches to job training, from reform of the financial system to promote long-term time horizons on investment to more progressive taxes and large-scale infrastructure investment – would help create a more just economy.<sup>12</sup>

Yet neither study got the attention it deserved. More generally, counter-ideas to Trump's demagogic bromides were barely discussed during the general election campaign. There is a lesson here, partly for the media but particularly for Democratic strategists who believed that Trump's manifest shortcomings would be enough to elect Clinton.

If the 2016 campaign teaches nothing else, it is that progressivism without a robust economic agenda will be neither attractive nor credible to a large share of the electorate. It won't convert white working class voters back from their support for Trump and it won't mobilize turnout among African-Americans, Latinos and the young who are already opposed to him. Absent compelling offers for opportunity, mobility and fairness, bold-sounding bad ideas will often triumph over better ideas that seem hedged and timid – or aren't even discussed.

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*A Charter for American Working Families* would respond to the practical struggles faced by all families. It is a statement of rights and principles reflecting how families would answer the

question: what are the basics of a decent life in the United States in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

The outlines of such a charter should be clear enough. Family members have a right to: jobs with decent incomes; health care coverage; education for themselves and their children; working hours that achieve a balance between work, family and community responsibilities; decent housing in thriving neighborhoods with low crime rates; confidence in the fairness and efficiency of local law enforcement; freedom from discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, religion and sexual orientation; access to treatment for addictions and mental health challenges; a chance to better themselves in mid-career and to seize new opportunities; an ability to build up savings and wealth; and retirement security.

This might be seen as a wish list for a decent material life, and that is the point. Far too much in our politics is rooted in abstract argument -- big government versus small government, traditionalism versus modernity, religion versus secularism, state versus market, family values versus, well, whatever those who talk about them see as the dreadful alternative. Far too little in our debate is about how to enable and empower individuals and families to secure the economic stability necessary to achieving their other ends, including those rooted in family, community and both spiritual and moral purposes. Government can do a far better job of creating the circumstances in which family values flourish than it can of providing an exact and enforceable list of how family values should be defined.

What we suggest might fairly be seen as a new form of traditional bread-and-butter politics. It is aimed at encouraging what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. saw as one of the noblest purposes of democratic politics: “the search for remedy.” Politics should be about solving problems and resolving disputes, not aggravating divisions and hoping that disputes between

different groups of Americans can be exploited, election after election, for immediate political gain. Trumpian politics depends upon fanning grievance, not responding to it. A focus on practical responses to particular problems is the antidote to a perpetual politics of resentment.

The policies that could keep these promises vary in complexity. We will touch on several illustratively.

The most basic pledge, heard in every electoral contest, is for “good jobs at good wages,” to use the much maligned but, after the 2016 election, more-relevant-than-ever mantra of former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis. Promises of jobs are used to justify a broad range of policies – usually policies a candidate already favors for other reasons – from tax cuts to major infrastructure investments, and for both more and less regulation.<sup>13</sup>

But at this moment, more than generalized, all-purpose policies are required because of the disappearance of well-paying, often unionized manufacturing work; the potential loss of even more jobs through the decline of retail; the long term decline in the employment rates among prime working-age men; and the spread of robotization and other forms of advanced manufacturing. These are leading to increasingly large gaps between the incomes of the better-educated and better-trained and those of Americans with less formal education and fewer skills.

Free trade advocates need to acknowledge that they oversold the broad benefits of trade deals and underestimated how trade would interact with technological change to produce major job losses – particularly after the accession of China to the World Trade Organization. They regularly failed to deliver the relief promised to those displaced by trade. As Dennis Snower, president of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy noted, the United States spends “a ludicrous 0.1 percent of GDP” on training measures, less than one-sixth of what rich countries

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spend on average for what economists call “active labor market policies.” Is it any wonder that Trump drew such a powerful response when he spoke of the millions of American jobs lost to China – even if he abruptly reversed his China policies after being in office less than 100 days?<sup>14</sup>

Opponents of free trade need to acknowledge, in turn, that technological change is an even greater threat to jobs than trade itself and that radical restrictions on the international trading system are both unlikely and potentially counter-productive. Promises of a return to an earlier era can’t be kept (as Trump himself showed when he broke one trade promise after another). The focus must instead be on trade deals that take far better account of the interests of workers.

What free traders and their critics ought to agree on is that a large share of American workers have ample grounds for feeling that the deal they thought they had been offered – of a decent standard of living in exchange for hard work – has been broken.

The speed of economic change has created new interest in ideas that had long been off the policy agenda. Fears that technology could, over time, wipe out many more jobs as machines and robots do what workers once did has revived interest in a guaranteed national income (now generally referred to as Universal Basic Income or UBI) and also in variations on proposals that would have the government serve as an employer of last resort.

Both ideas take many forms. Progressives such as Andy Stern, former president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), see UBI as a way of strengthening and supplementing existing safety net programs. More conservative versions of the UBI proposal (like the one put forward by Charles Murray from the American Enterprise Institute) see it as replacing a variety of welfare programs.

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Government job guarantees would begin with a robust commitment to rebuilding the nation's infrastructure, which should in any event be a high national priority. Until conservatives extended their attack on government to include opposition to federal investments in what Henry Clay accurately called "internal improvements" -- the roads, bridges, airports and the other basics of a thriving economy -- infrastructure spending won broad bipartisan support. We must renew this shared commitment to the public underpinnings of growth (while remaining deeply wary of Trump's proposals to use tax breaks for the wealthy to encourage privatization of public works). Beyond infrastructure, job guarantees could take the form of updated versions of the New Deal's WPA, subsidies for employers, assistance to localities in creating jobs, or combinations of all of these. A robust national service program, which we discuss later, should also be part of any plan of this sort.

This is a debate the country should welcome. Our own sympathies generally run toward an emphasis on job creation linked with training, apprenticeships and service. As the progressive writer Jeff Spross noted in an essay proposing the job guarantee, "the vast majority of people really do feel better about themselves when they're contributing to the social project in some way" and resonate to the idea that society and employers bear "a moral duty to provide good, dignified work to all."

We are also deeply skeptical that any universal income guarantee could be large enough to replace existing safety net and social insurance programs. Moreover, as *Vox*'s Matthew Yglesias has cautioned, there is a danger in focusing too much on UBI in the current political environment in which the priority must be protecting food stamps, Medicare, Medicaid, and other vital social services from dramatic cuts proposed by the Trump Administration. The jobs guarantee could be combined with aspects of the UBI. The economist Jared Bernstein, for example, has suggested a

child allowance of \$250 a month per child and an expansion of the earned-income tax credit to cover not only the poor, whom it has already immensely helped, but also working class Americans.

A long period of rapid economic change has left large numbers of Americans out of the workforce altogether, underemployed or working for far lower wages. Rising interest in universal programs focusing on either jobs or incomes reflects the fact that we need more adventurous social policy thinking that matches the size of our problems.<sup>15</sup>

Overlapping proposals by three Senators also get at economic reforms that we see as necessary to achieve the principles laid out in the Charter. Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio has put forward “A Plan for Restoring the Value of Work in America.” Its components include a minimum wage increase to \$15 an hour; guaranteed sick leave; stronger rules on overtime pay; cracking down on employers who misclassify workers as independent contractors; a variety of measures to make it easier for workers, including those who are independent contractors, to save and to make retirement and savings plans portable; ending wage theft; expanding collective bargaining rights; and creating what he called a “Corporate Freeloader Fee” that would apply “to all corporations whose pay is so low that taxpayers are forced to subsidize their workers.”

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand of New York introduced a package of benefits she called the “American Opportunity Agenda.” Her proposals included paid family leave, a minimum wage increase, affordable childcare, universal pre-kindergarten, and equal pay for equal work. Her leave program, cosponsored with Representative Rosa DeLauro, a Connecticut Democrat, would provide 12 weeks leave at partial pay for new parents, financed as an insurance program paid for through income-based premiums ranging from about \$75 to \$225 annually.

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And responding to one of the most radical sets of changes in the organization of work, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts advanced a policy agenda that focused on the “gig economy” – encompassing those workers who fall somewhere between the traditional “employee” classification and the formal “independent contractor” status, like Uber drivers or people providing at-home services. Some of her proposals were highly specific, such as guaranteeing that gig workers could pay into Social Security so they could draw on its benefits, including disability insurance; catastrophic insurance for all workers, even those who had not been able to build up credits for traditional disability and worker’s compensation plans; and ways of covering sick leave and paid medical leave even for workers who have multiple employers.

Warren also called for building on the Affordable Care Act to enhance its portability (an idea that, in principle at least, conservatives also support); new ways of helping gig workers save for retirement; and streamlining labor laws to make them more applicable to an economy in which the boundaries between regular employees, contract workers and gig workers are not always clear. Like Brown, she called for guaranteeing the right of workers to organize, and she argued for ways to cut student college debt and guarantee access to “affordable lifelong learning and retooling for future jobs.”<sup>16</sup>

With somewhat different starting points, Brown, Gillibrand and Warren reached broad common ground on the problems that need solving and the steps that should be taken to ease the discontents of work – and, for many Americans, the lack thereof. All three Democrats provide what might be seen as useful opening bids for a comprehensive program that reaches across many of our social, racial and ethnic divides.

Importantly, conservative intellectuals such as Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute have proposed constructive ideas for promoting a more innovative, equitable economy. These include relocation vouchers for unemployed people who might find better opportunities in another city or state but cannot afford to move or pay a deposit to rent an apartment or home. And job sharing plans have been effective in Germany in keeping workers from being laid off during recessions. Also promising was a 2015 consensus report from the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute, *Opportunity, Responsibility and Security*, focusing on education, work, training and family policies that could reduce poverty. It may be too much to hope for in the short term, but the nexus of liberal and conservative economic proposals might over the long run provide a bipartisan basis for action.

Other pledges in the Charter also involve direct policy choices. The most obvious: Does the country build on the achievements of Obamacare by fixing its flaws and extending insurance to the roughly 28 million Americans still not covered? Achieving universal coverage will almost certainly require the inclusion of some sort of public option -- a government-administered plan available for purchase on the insurance exchanges -- as well as an ability for those between 55 and 65 who cannot get insurance to buy into Medicare. Many progressives favor a single payer system, where the government pays citizens' medical bills as Medicare currently does for seniors. Our view is that defending one of the central achievements of the last decade and then building on it should take priority. A debate about next steps -- including single payer and other alternatives -- can take place after everyone is covered. Walking away from the coverage problem, which is what repealing Obamacare entails, should not be an option.

We would also point to the link the Charter makes between the right to live in low crime neighborhoods and the right to fair treatment from the police. Trump and Attorney General Jeff

Sessions regularly cast these goals as contradictory. They argue that “supporting the police” is antithetical to responding to the concerns of Black Lives Matter and others groups about the killing of young, unarmed African-Americans and over-incarceration. On the contrary, fighting crime, supporting the police, respecting the rights of the people the police serve and criminal justice reform should be seen as overlapping and reinforcing goals. We are not naïve and know that the politics of these issues are difficult. But we would insist that a new politics of rights and a new politics of crime prevention must go together. It goes back to the idea of remedy: We need leaders who see crime as a problem to be solved, not as a political wedge issue to be manipulated. And ending the NRA’s veto power over our gun laws would make both our communities and our police officers safer.

Finally, individual and families live in places, in communities. The economic deterioration of many parts of our country has created grave problems for family life and undercut the vibrancy of neighborhoods and civil society, as we explore in Chapter Nine. There, we make a case for place-based economic strategies designed not only to improve the material circumstances of our fellow citizens but also to reweave the country’s social fabric.<sup>17</sup>

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The *G.I. Bill for American Workers* would be a comprehensive effort to reinforce the Charter for American Working Families. In calling for a new G.I. Bill, we look back consciously to one of the most successful pieces of social legislation in American history. The extraordinary investment in people that the G.I. Bill represented is often overlooked as a major source of growth in the post-World War II era. More than that, as Suzanne Mettler argued in *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation*, it created the civic generation

that built not only our nation's economy but also a more vibrant public life. Mettler, a professor of government at Cornell University, found that veterans who used G.I. Bill benefits became more active citizens than those who did not.

The G.I. Bill's scope was staggering by the standards of today's more cramped social vision. As Mettler notes, among men born in the United States in the 1920s, "fully 80 percent were military veterans." This was an inclusive program – for men. A champion of the G.I. Bill, Mettler is nonetheless alive to the problem of gender exclusion, since women constituted only two percent of the armed forces in World War II. Ironically, she notes, the G.I. Bill thus "widened the gender divide in educational attainment." But for those whom the G.I. Bill did serve, it decidedly equalized both economic and civic opportunity:

Prior to the war, advanced education had been restricted predominantly to the privileged, especially to white, native-born, elite Protestants. The social rights offered by the G.I. Bill broadened educational opportunity to veterans who were Jewish or Catholic, African American, and immigrants as well as to those whose families had struggled in the American working class for generations. Once G.I. Bill beneficiaries became active citizens, they altered the civic landscape of the United States, helping to make the political system yet more inclusive and egalitarian during the middle decades of the twentieth century.

By 1947, veterans accounted for 49 percent of students enrolled in American colleges. Ten years after World War II, Mettler writes, 2.2 million veterans had attended college under the G.I. Bill and 5.6 million more were able to "acquire training below the college level." In addition, 4.3 million purchased homes at low interest rates, and 200,000 purchased farms or businesses.<sup>18</sup>

The particular moment that gave rise to the G.I. Bill -- the mass mobilization for World War II, which followed a New Deal era when confidence in government was especially high -- cannot be replicated. And the sense of indebtedness the country felt toward those who had served in the armed forces made the G.I. Bill's generosity possible. It was the quintessential "earned

benefit.” Nonetheless, the crisis of mobility, income and opportunity the country is experiencing now demands social inventiveness on the same scale. If no one, as the cliché goes, is entitled to a living, citizens of the world’s wealthiest country are certainly entitled to the chance to *earn* one.

A G.I. Bill for American Workers would focus on opportunities for education, training, and advancement; a degree of income security; opportunities to save and build wealth; and paths to finding balance among work, family and community obligations. Components could include wage insurance; profit sharing; additional federal support for retirement accounts; a training insurance plan alongside unemployment insurance, which would be reformed and linked to wage insurance; universal access to post-secondary education, including not only four-year college but also one or two years of training; and a large-scale expansion of apprenticeships linked to the availability of good jobs. The great mismatch between skills and opportunities is harmful to individuals, to businesses, and to the economy as a whole.

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Finally, achieving economic security for all American families will require reforming corporate practice and culture. *A Contract for American Social Responsibility* would respond to Pearlstein’s important critique of the modern corporation and its embrace of the shareholder value standard. Its purpose would be to create new rules and incentives for corporations to emphasize a longer view over short-termism, and to embrace responsibilities that encompass more than attentiveness to fluctuating share prices.

His suggestions include recalibrating the capital gains tax “so that short-term trading profits are taxed the same as wages and salary, while gains from investments held for long periods are taxed more lightly than they are now or not at all.” A small transactions tax, he argues, could “dampen enthusiasm for short-term trading.”

The Securities and Exchange Commission, Pearlstein says, could “adopt rules that discourage corporations from giving quarterly earnings projections or guidance, while accounting regulators could insist that corporate financial reports better reflect long-term costs and benefits and measure long-term value creation.”

Additionally, states “could make it easier for corporations to adopt governance rules that give long-term shareholders more power in selecting directors, approving mergers and takeovers and setting executive compensation.”

The need to promote a long-term perspective in the corporate world was also a central theme of a 2015 Brookings Institution paper, “More Builders, Fewer Traders: A Growth Strategy for the American Economy,” by Elaine Kamarck and William Galston. “We need... more Warren Buffetts and fewer Carl Icahns,” they wrote. “To get them, we cannot rely on cultural change or the collective conversion of CEOs and hedge fund leaders on the road to Damascus. Instead, we must change the laws and rules that shape corporate and investor behavior.”

Their proposals paralleled Pearlstein’s: limits on company stock buybacks, capital gains tax reform that encourages long-term holdings, reporting rules that focus on a company’s “sustainability” and not just financial information, and executive compensation rules that encourage a commitment to a company’s long-term success.<sup>19</sup>

What Pearlstein, Kamarck and Galston all encourage is a view of corporate behavior that accepts what capitalism can accomplish but acknowledges the holes in our system that have aroused legitimate populist backlash on both the left and the right. At times of crisis, often pushed by popular movements, business leaders accepted that reform was the only way to restore confidence in the system’s workings. As we have argued, Trump’s populism is a cover for an

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approach that would, if anything, deepen the problems our current brand of capitalism already creates. His opponents must expose the phoniness of his approach, but they must also offer practical proposals for change that would make the system advance the interests of the many and not just the few.

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There is one obvious political objection to the agenda we have outlined here: Hillary Clinton's program in 2016 included a plethora of specific and detailed ideas that in many cases parallel those we have outlined. She was often criticized for having a "laundry list" without a "vision" or a "message." How is what we are suggesting any different?<sup>20</sup>

In the first instance, it should be acknowledged that, in some cases pushed by Bernie Sanders, Clinton had a far more progressive program than she was credited with offering. It is worth reexamining because she did put forward an array of constructive ideas that got little attention.

But this also underscores the problem she had. The Clinton campaign, as we have seen, was persuaded that Trump's personal shortcomings were so extreme that focusing on them would secure her election. This approach was enough for her to win a solid popular vote victory, but not enough to withstand James Comey's intervention at the end of the campaign, and not enough for her to prevail in three heavily blue-collar states in the Electoral College. Shortchanging economics is a mistake Trump's opponents should never make again.

It's also true that Democrats throughout President Obama's two terms had difficulty in addressing economic issues, and ended up with a muddled message. On the one hand, many (particularly in his administration) wanted to hail Obama's success in pulling the nation out of

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the worst economic collapse since the Great Depression and establishing an enviable record of job growth. On the other hand, 30 years of rising inequality and then the crash of 2008 deepened the economic problems in the heartland and left many Americans behind. In the end, Democrats had the worst of both worlds: they neither defended Obama's achievements adequately (because they feared looking out of touch with those still suffering) nor did they convey sufficient urgency about the situation of those left behind. This was a Clinton problem, to be sure, but also a problem for the Democratic Party as a whole. It should not have been as hard as it proved to be to defend Obama's achievement while also acknowledging the work that still needed to be done. And Democrats, including the president, would have done well to try to use their majorities during the first two Obama years to move more boldly on behalf of those, in inner cities as well as the old factory towns, who faced long-term economic dislocation.

Trump's victory solves part of this problem, if only because those out of power no longer have to defend an incumbent's record. And Trump has made such sweeping promises to working class voters that his failure to live up to them will be especially obvious -- as were clear within his first 100 days in office.

But Trump's foes must use the freedom that opposition affords to make clear what Clinton did not, and perhaps could not. Obama's record shows that progressives can manage the economy effectively. Pushing the nation's unemployment rate to below five percent after it had gone above 10 percent at the bottom of the Great Recession is an enormous achievement in which all progressives should take pride. But if growth has been restored, genuinely equitable growth still eludes us. Obama faced the problem of reviving a collapsed economy with determination and pragmatism. The country now needs to bring the same virtues to the task of lifting up those left out of the nation's prosperity. Economic growth is essential to solving other

problems. But only widely shared economic growth will begin to heal our social divisions. We offer an economic charter, a G.I. bill for workers and a contract for corporate social responsibility as one approach to underscoring the urgency of the progressive commitment to economic change.

It is often said that the key debate in the western democracies is no longer between “left” and “right” but between those who favor a more “open” society and those who support a more “closed” national community. To the extent that this is true (and like many sweeping claims, it is partly but not wholly true), political leaders who favor an open society will be at a disadvantage if they become the champions only of those whose interests are obviously well served by current economic arrangements.<sup>21</sup>

They will also face defeat if they do not accept that the loyalty many citizens feel toward their country is rooted in an honest patriotism and should not be written off as the equivalent of an extreme, dangerous and backward-looking nationalism. If only the nationalists appeal to these loyalties, the nationalists will win. What is required is a defense of a thoughtful and robust patriotism as the alternative to nationalism.

## Chapter Nine

### **Our Little Platoons: The Urgency of a New Civil Society**

Writing about the devastation of a seemingly indestructible mountain culture in a West Virginia community devastated by flood in 1972, the sociologist Kai Erikson described the human role of community as clearly as anyone has. “It is the *community* that cushions pain, the *community* that provides a context for intimacy, the *community* that represents morality and serves as the repository for old traditions.” His classic *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood*, underscored how fragile community can be.

How does a society find ways to bind itself together? How do we come to accept, across all of our divides, that there is still such a thing as a “common good?” The Latin root of “common,” *communis*, is the same as the root of “community.” It evokes “shared,” “ordinary,” and “public” all at the same time. In civic terms, the common good is the shared welfare of all citizens who have responsibilities to the community, and who in turn look to the community to protect, defend and uplift them.

What supports the communal exchange of responsibility and cooperation are our civic institutions – the fabric of governance but also the less informal but vital organizations of civil society. And the informal institutions matter enormously. “What is written in a constitution can take a nation only so far unless society is willing to act to protect it,” wrote Daron Acemoglu, a Turkish-born economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who has watched his native

country move toward authoritarianism. “Every constitutional design has its loopholes, and every age brings its new challenges, which even farsighted constitutional designers cannot anticipate.” When our institutions are in danger, civil society must step in.<sup>22</sup>

Civil society is an idea so wholesome that it is often not taken seriously. It refers to all the non-governmental institutions we take for granted, from Little Leagues and service clubs to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, churches, synagogues and Mosques, NAACP chapters, local Chambers of Commerce and unions, service clubs, Shriners and Elks. Yet it is precious and complicated and essential. The decline of civil society helped create the circumstances for Donald Trump’s rise, and civil society has been essential to the resistance to Trump since his election. Rebuilding community and civil society across America is vital to dealing with the social and economic problems that Trump exploited and that our nation must begin to solve.

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Since the 1970s, the United States has witnessed a steep decline in confidence in American institutions, a collapse in institutional trust, and a decay of American civil society. These problems were aggravated by the financial crisis of 2008-2009, rising income inequality, and a deepening pessimism about the future of the country.

The numbers are staggering: 65 percent of Americans had confidence in organized religion in 1979, compared to 57 percent in 1996, 52 percent following the financial crisis in 2009, and 41 percent in 2016. Banks were at 60 percent in 1979. Not surprisingly, that number fell to 22 percent in 2009, and was back to only 27 percent in 2016. Trust in public schools has fallen from 53 percent in 1979 to 30 percent in 2016; in newspapers from 51 percent to 20

percent; organized labor from 36 percent to 23 percent; and big business from 32 percent to 18 percent. Only small business, police and the military have stayed over 50 percent in public confidence.

A decline of trust in institutions has been matched by a decline in confidence in elites, the result of a widespread sense that elite groups are profiting from economic circumstances and a distribution of power that is damaging the rest of the country. The paradox is that the citizens of democratic societies have an instinctive mistrust of elites, yet also count on elites to defend the institutions they value. As Rob Goodman, a former Capitol Hill speechwriter put it, “It will be nearly impossible to rebuild democratic norms as long as elites are so distrusted, and they’re likely to remain distrusted as long as they’re capturing such a massive share of economic growth.”

This was a distinct worry of the Framers, as Ganesh Sitaraman argued in his powerful 2017 book *The Crisis of the Middle Class Constitution*. Sitaraman, a law professor at Vanderbilt, argued persuasively that in the founding period, “there was a robust and strong belief that a truly republican form of government was only possible in a society with relative economic equality.” The founding generation, he wrote, “understood that the balance of political power had to mirror the balance of economic power in society.” Here again the paradox: elites are trusted most in societies where they do not exercise undue control to advance their own interests.

But most devastating of all is the fact that Americans increasingly lack trust in each other. The University of Chicago’s General Social Survey found that while 46 percent of Americans agreed in 1972 that “most people can be trusted,” only 32 percent felt this way in 2012.<sup>23</sup>

A steep drop in civic participation has accompanied our declining faith in each other and in institutions. Robert Putnam's seminal 2001 book, *Bowling Alone*, marshalled a broad array of empirical data to show an erosion in community and social capital in America. Measuring such things as the decline in bowling leagues, PTA participation, and Sunday picnics, Putnam demonstrated a dramatic civic collapse from the 1970s to the 1990s across many fields -- civic participation, informal interactions, religious participation, philanthropy, political activity, workplace interactions -- in sharp contrast to the extraordinary civic creativity and growth fostered by the generation that came out of the Depression and the Second World War.

*Bowling Alone* received wide attention at the time, and the full costs of what Putnam described continue to emerge. But they were predictable. The conservative sociologist Robert Nisbet observed decades earlier, at the beginning of the 1960s, that "[b]ehind the spreading sense of insecurity and alienation in Western society" was "a growing realization that the traditional primary relationships of men have become, in certain areas, functionally irrelevant to the larger institutions of society, and sometimes meaningless to the moral aspirations of individuals." He added an observation with deep resonance today:

A great deal of the character of contemporary social action has come from the efforts of men to find in large scale organizations, especially political ones, those values of status and intellectual security which were formally acquired in church, family and neighborhood. How else can we explain the success of such movements in the modern world as Communism and Nazism except as mass movements designed to confer on the individual some sense of that community which has been lost under the impact of modern social changes. The horror and tragedy are that such political movements have been based upon, and dedicated to, force and terror.

Similarly, in his path-breaking 1959 work *The Politics of Mass Society*, William Kornhauser noted a relationship between "the atomization of social relations" among ordinary citizens and

the success of mass (and often totalitarian) political movements. Social exclusion drives radical politics.<sup>24</sup>

Without assuming that a Trump presidency will lead to the same catastrophes described by Nisbet, Trump's campaign can fairly be seen as a movement motivated by the sense of alienation that both Nisbet and Kornhauser observed and is rooted in the forces Putnam described. Writing during the Republican primaries, Yoni Appelbaum, an historian and editor at *The Atlantic*, drew directly on Putnam's insights to argue that Trump supporters were "voting alone," citing the findings of a PRRI/*Atlantic* survey in late March and early April of 2016. Among all Republican leaning voters at the time, according to the survey, 37 percent supported Trump while 31 percent favored Senator Ted Cruz. But among civically disengaged Republicans, 50 percent supported Trump, as compared to just 24 percent for Cruz.

No doubt this result owed in part to Cruz's strength among church-going Republicans: regular churchgoers, the survey found, were more likely to support Cruz, while Republicans who seldom or never attended church tended to favor Trump. But Appelbaum was right to notice that the Trump-Cruz split was about more than relative religious commitment. Trump's style of campaigning – his willingness to break with the norms of "political correctness," the energy and sense of shared purpose that characterized his mass rallies – brought out Americans who felt disconnected from the political system and from their communities. Appelbaum wrote: "The modal event for the Trump campaign is a mass rally in a stadium – thousands of voters file in, take their seats, cheer their candidate, jeer at demonstrators and then depart. But they don't

interact all that much with each other; it's politics as spectator sport." Nisbet, whose sociological imagination was shaped by the events of the 1930s, would recognize what Appelbaum described.

The polarization of our politics is both a product and a cause of a decay in civil society and a decline in mutual trust. In his 2008 book *The Big Sort*, the journalist Bill Bishop argued that as the old ties of community and faith eroded in the 1960s, new bonds based on lifestyle and political preference supplanted them. Americans congregated in areas where they were surrounded by like-minded people, creating not just red states and blue states, but red communities and blue communities. Democrats and liberals tended to live in and around big cities; Republicans and conservatives preferred suburban, exurban and rural areas. The country, he suggested more than a decade ago, was balkanizing into a nation of echo chambers, heterogeneity replaced by reinforcing homogeneity.

When he examined 2016 voting data, the *Cook Political Report's* David Wasserman confirmed that Purple America was disappearing. More and more counties, large and small, had become bright red and bright blue. Between 1992 and 2016, Wasserman wrote, "the share of voters living in extreme landslide counties quintupled from 4 percent to 21 percent." And in the 2016 election, 60 percent of voters lived in counties where either Clinton or Trump received at least 60 percent of the major-party vote.

These trends have been particularly damaging in areas defined by traditional values about family, work and community. These were areas where Trump did particularly well in the 2016 election. The conservative writer J.D. Vance made this point eloquently in his best-selling *Hillbilly Elogy*. Vance, who grew up in rural Kentucky and working-class Middletown, Ohio, described the high costs of weakening community bonds -- poverty, opioid addiction, alcoholism, violence, a diminished sense of self-worth and responsibility, and social insularity.

He noted that the legitimate grievances of the people living in these communities created fertile ground for a backlash against government, which had been unable to address their needs. It made them natural constituents for Donald Trump.<sup>25</sup>

The crumbling of civic culture, the decline in social participation and the decay of mutual trust thus began long before Trump's rise. But all contributed mightily to his success. And far from healing the breach, Trump's divisive approach to politics only widened it.

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If Trumpism can in part be explained in part by a weakening of civil society, a vibrant civil society will be required to check Trump and his autocratic impulses – and ultimately, to re-stitch the very social bonds that led to his rise.

The early response to Trump from an array of civil society groups suggested that Burke's description of "the little platoon we belong to in society" was by no means a thing of the past – even if the mobilization also served to underscore how politicized civil society had become.

Religious leaders, for example, were at the forefront in battling Trump's immigration policies. This work was not new for many churches, synagogues and mosques. In the 1970s and 1980s, religious congregations offered shelter to refugees fleeing violent civil wars in Central America as part of the Sanctuary Movement. When Trump's incendiary rhetoric and his early immigration orders spawned fear of mass deportations, houses of worship moved quickly to reassert themselves as sanctuaries for immigrants. Longstanding federal policy has been to consider churches and temples as "sensitive locations" off-limits for arresting, detaining, searching or interviewing people. The Arch Street United Methodist Church of Philadelphia

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sheltered Javier Flores, an undocumented Mexican immigrant who feared being deported. Flores, a father of three with no criminal record, wanted to stay in the U.S. for his children. “Today and every day, if Javier and his family choose to stay with us, they will have a home with us,” said the Rev. Robin Hynicka, the senior pastor at the church.<sup>26</sup>

Even religious institutions that were reluctant to provide sanctuary spoke up boldly for immigrants, particularly since Latinos now form such a large segment of both the Catholic and evangelical communities. Christian and Jewish activists have grounded their work to protect immigrants and refugees from harsh Trump policies in a prophetic tradition of caring for the vulnerable and the stranger. As Rabbi Jonathan Roos of Temple Sinai in Washington, D.C., put it in an op-ed in *The Washington Post*, “The teaching from scripture is clear: ‘When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’.” Speaking in the spirit of Pope Francis, members of the Catholic hierarchy, including Cardinal Archbishop Blase Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Archbishop Joseph Tobin of Newark, and Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego, were forceful in their criticisms of Trump’s policies. On immigration especially, they were joined by many of their more conservative brethren.<sup>27</sup>

Religious leaders spoke on many other issues as well. The deans of 25 Catholic law schools wrote a public letter to Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney objecting to the proposed elimination of the Legal Services Corporation, a publicly funded non-profit organization that provides legal assistance to low-income people. A wide range of progressive

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Christian leaders – The Rev. Jim Wallis, the president of Sojourners; The Rev. Gabe Salguero of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition; and Sister Simone Campbell of the organizing group NETWORK -- are part of a broad movement organized around Jesus’ words in Matthew 25 on the urgency of protecting “the least of these.” The long-standing “Circle of Protection” coalition, which includes Catholic bishops and other religious leaders, has rededicated itself to opposing Trump’s budget cuts that affect programs for low-income Americans, including food stamps, the earned income tax credit and Supplemental Security Income.

And few American religious leaders have had a greater impact than The Rev. William Barber, whose Moral Mondays protests in North Carolina revolutionized state politics and galvanized social action around the country. The witness of Barber, the former president of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP and the founder of Repairs of the Breach, brings home the importance of the religious voice in American reform movements, and in particular of the power of the African-American church in our history. His recovery and adaptation of the language of civil rights Christianity for the 21<sup>st</sup> century raises up ideas quite antithetical to the spirit of the Trump era: that there is such a thing as a common good, that the rights of all are secure only when the rights of the oppressed are restored, and that it is still possible to imagine society as a beloved community.<sup>28</sup>

A variety of American Muslim organizations like the Islamic Society of North America and Muslim Advocates as well as a wide range of Jewish organizations, including HIAS (the Jewish refugee resettlement agency), the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and Bend the Arc Jewish Action, also played critical roles in the near-instantaneous response to Trump’s travel

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ban. One heartening sign in the early months of the Trump presidency: the willingness of American Jews and American Muslims to join together to condemn the rise of both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiment, and to support each other in local communities when Jewish cemeteries were desecrated or when Muslims faced intimidation. Here again was evidence of the power of the little platoons. At a time of polarization and divisiveness, Muslims and Jews stood up for each other as friends, neighbors and fellow citizens.

Our listing here by no means does justice to the full range of religious participation in the pushback to Trump's policies. But the role of religious groups should prompt more secular progressives to a greater appreciation for the importance of people of faith to movements for equality and justice. Hillary Clinton's campaign was widely critiqued among religious progressives for its failure to organize among religious voters (in contrast to both her own and Barack Obama's 2008 campaigns) and for failing to lift up one of the most authentic and important aspects of Clinton's own persona: her deep religious faith and its role in motivating her progressivism. If religious congregations are essential to the reconstruction of civil society, religious voices are indispensable to the progressive movement. Issues such as gay marriage and abortion have driven wedges between more religious and more secular Americans. But social action on behalf of the marginalized, as the cross-ideological acclaim for Pope Francis has shown, has the potential to ease longstanding rifts.

Professional groups have also been particularly effective in checking Trump's agenda. During the first Muslim ban, armies of attorneys mobilized to provide legal assistance to the embattled travelers denied entry. As Marcia Tavares Maack, director of pro bono activities at the large Chicago firm Mayer Brown, noted, they used the tools of their profession as instruments of protection. "Law firms, she noted, "obtained temporary restraining orders against the ban, filed

habeas petitions on behalf of individuals who were being held at airports by Customs & Border Protection, and represented legal permanent residents and visa holders who were trapped overseas.” Other lawyers and nonprofit legal organizations like the Northwest Immigrant Rights Project volunteered to help when ICE agents illegally or wrongly detained or arrested individuals and charged them with immigration violations.

Many law firms and associations also stepped up pro bono efforts to challenge the Trump administration in other areas. For example, former presidential ethics advisors Richard Painter, who worked for George W. Bush, and Norm Eisen, who served in Barack Obama’s administration, have led an impressive coalition to challenge Trump’s violations of the Constitution’s two emoluments clauses and to call out other ethical violations in public and in legal proceedings.<sup>29</sup> Lawyers have also taken advantage of the Internet to provide analysis and insights to a wide audience. These efforts include Lawfare, a blog on national security issues run by Brookings Institution scholar Benjamin Wittes and bolstered by insights from Bush administration legal advisor Jack Goldsmith and Susan Hennessey, a former NSA attorney, as well as the newer Take Care, a forum for writings about the Trump administration from lawyers and legal scholars.

Political scientists and other academicians have joined in the efforts to call out Trumpian actions that stray from democratic values and behavior. Four astute scholars—John Carey and Brendan Nyhan of Dartmouth College, Gretchen Helmke of the University of Rochester and Susan Stokes from Yale University – have created Bright Line Watch, using their expertise to monitor administration practices. Their first project was a survey of political science experts to

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create a robust set of benchmarks for measuring the vibrancy of democracy in the United States and other countries over time. The benchmarks are constructed around 29 democratic principles, including the absence of pervasive election fraud or voter manipulation, equal voting rights for all adult citizens, a free press, and a functioning system of checks and balances between branches of government. When there are signs of slippage, the benchmarks will become a valuable tool for assessing the danger.

The nature of Trump's Electoral College victory, the role of dark money in funding campaigns and the challenges to voting rights have also invigorated many public interest groups, some long active and some new, such as Let America Vote, an organization founded by former Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander that is working to combat voting restriction efforts. The Campaign Legal Center has been one of the premier forces litigating against voter suppression laws and felon disenfranchisement, redistricting and campaign law. Bruce Freed's Center for Political Accountability has focused on persuading public corporations to disclose their political activities and expenditures in order to monitor the sources of election funds.

Other groups, including the Center for Responsive Politics, the Project on Government Oversight (POGO), Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW), Democracy 21, Public Citizen, Common Cause, Issue One, Represent US, Run for America, and the American Constitution Society, have also focused on ethics issues and the role of political money. They have sought to protect the independence of the Offices of Congressional Ethics and Government Ethics, even as POGO has begun to train federal employees across the country about their rights to resist political pressure and intimidation.

And as the Trump Administration has advanced regressive policies on issues related to civil and voting rights, climate change, women's reproductive health, racial justice, and LGBT

equality, many organizations have stepped into the fray to mobilize rallies, raise funds and lobby government officials. These include the American Civil Liberties Union, 350.org, the Sierra Club, Planned Parenthood, NARAL, the Advancement Project, Color of Change, the NAACP, the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, and the Human Rights Campaign.

We have already discussed the importance of independent media, but civil society has been important in promoting new forms of journalism aimed at vigorous watchdog reporting at all levels of government. Groups such as ProPublica and the Center for Public Integrity have played a central role in insuring accountability in the early months of Trump's presidency. David Cay Johnston, a longtime financial reporter who has tracked and analyzed Donald Trump and his business dealings for decades, has established a blog called DCReport.org to focus on Trump -- who, of course, has attacked him on Twitter. State and local not-for-profit journalistic outlets, among them MinnPost in Minnesota, the Texas Tribune, and WyoFile in Wyoming, have stepped in where financial challenges have reduced the capacity of local media to offer intensive coverage of various levels of government.

The initiatives we have described here speak to the importance of organizations not directly linked to party politics or government in resisting government abuses and engaging more Americans in public work. (We will have more to say about party politics in the next chapter.) We have offered a partial accounting of their efforts here both to emphasize the vibrancy of civil society's response to Trump and to show how the health of our democracy depends upon the independent sector.

But the problems that gave rise to Trumpism can only be countered in the long-term through innovative strategies to revitalize American communities and rebuild trust, particularly parts of the country where deindustrialization and economic decline has especially damaged

social ties. These include new approaches to policymaking and new forms of intervention from outside government that would rekindle the spirit of mutuality and a shared sense of belonging.

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Ask the typical economist about place-based (as opposed to individually-based) policies, and the answer will usually focus on the inefficiency of remedies aimed at redeveloping or renewing local and regional economies. It makes more economic sense, they argue, to give individuals financial help to move to where the jobs are than to try to move jobs to languishing areas. The gains made in areas helped by place-based policies, they say, are often offset by negative effects in other places. And revitalizing particular places can often end up helping the more privileged members of these local communities rather than those most in need of assistance.

These are all reasonable objections, and the shortcomings of policies aimed at reviving areas on a downward trajectory have played out in the disappointments of a variety of federal efforts to help regions grow. But these should be taken as a sign that place-based policy-making is hard, not that it is impossible. Large-scale infrastructure measures -- the Tennessee Valley Authority and rural electrification in the New Deal years are good examples -- have often created new opportunities in places once mistakenly deemed hopelessly “backward” by outsiders. Investments in educational institutions have not only helped individuals rise but also reinvigorated whole states and regions. The Research Triangle in North Carolina is the product of both private endeavor and the large investments in education, particularly higher education, undertaken by visionary Governors, notable the late Terry Sanford.<sup>30</sup>

And as we have seen throughout our account, large regional disparities (including disparities within states) in economic performance have had devastating effects not only on individuals but also on communities and civil society. They have had the same impact as the flood at the heart of Kai Erikson's work: they devoured everything in their path, creating the social alienation and atomization that contributed to Trump's victory.

At the very least, the federal government should undertake a national effort to help local communities identify those assets that they can build on. In some cases, it is solid – if old – infrastructure; in others, ample supplies of clean water; and in still others, a stock of decent but often abandoned housing. Small amounts of both federal and philanthropic money can strengthen local institutions to undertake the work of revival. And both state and federal encouragement of a pooling of resources among neighboring ailing communities can have a multiplier effect on what those communities can do to help themselves.

The Obama administration experimented with place-based approaches to federal poverty and education policy. It identified particular towns or neighborhoods that could especially benefit from support and then worked closely with local administrators and community organizations to target grants and technical assistance. The three initial programs – Promise Neighborhoods, Choice Neighborhoods, and Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation – directed resources at, respectively, strengthening educational opportunities, improving affordable housing, and addressing violent crime through community engagement. By the end of Obama's first term, the federal government had invested more than \$365 million in these projects. In 2014, the administration announced the launch of the Promise Zones initiative, which worked with target communities to create jobs, bolster economic security, and increase access to education and housing.

Revisiting how these programs worked and considering how they might be usefully expanded should be part of a community rebuilding agenda. The evidence thus far suggests that these programs, modest in scope, did make substantive improvements to the communities where they operated. San Francisco's Mission Promise Neighborhood, for example, saw high school graduation rates rise by 10 percent and significant decreases in absenteeism and school expulsions. In Indianapolis, designated a Promise Zone in April 2015, millions of public dollars were invested in local businesses and nonprofit organizations to create jobs in areas of high unemployment and to train young people in career skills.<sup>31</sup>

But if there is any single national program that is aimed directly at strengthening civil society, it is the collection of voluntary initiatives supported by the Corporation for National Service, including AmeriCorps. These programs support volunteers – in the case of younger Americans, with small stipends or college scholarships – who work in the heart of civil society through local voluntary groups, including religious institutions. Many Republican Governors and conservative policy intellectuals and entrepreneurs (such as John Bridgeland, who directed George W. Bush's Domestic Policy Council, and Leslie Lenkowsky, now a professor at Indiana University) have argued that if there is any federal program that conservatives should embrace, it is national service.

The abolition of the military draft brought many advantages, but it also ended an institution that was effective at breaking down the divides of region, race and class. Service programs reinforce the idea of a mutual obligation that overrides our differences.

Still, limited funding means that only a small proportion of Americans participate in national service each year. Service Year Alliance, a coalition chaired by retired U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal, has put forward a compelling proposal to expand opportunities for young people to complete one paid year of national service. The coalition's hope is that a year of service, either in the military or through community organizations, would become an expectation of all Americans. The goal, through not only enhanced federal funding but also substantial private and philanthropic support, should be to create 500,000 to one million service slots. Economists have also begun to think about service programs as an opportunity to reduce unemployment and to bring those who have dropped out of the labor force back into participation. Service programs have a record of providing forms of training that benefit both participants and employers over time. "We've a remarkable opportunity now," McChrystal said in 2013, "to move with the American people away from an easy citizenship that does not ask something from every American yet asks a lot from a tiny few."

The slashing or outright elimination of such programs in Trump's budget proposal was a singularly destructive attack on the nation's social infrastructure. In the short run, preserving existing service programs should be a priority, and states should be ready to step in to fill the gaps. But in the long run, an ambitious expansion of service should be a national objective – and it is a goal that should draw support across our partisan and ideological divides.

It is often forgotten how important the labor movement has been to strengthening civil society in the United States. The economic function of unions is widely recognized, and their decline is an important cause of rising income inequality. The collapse of union membership, driven by federal and state laws that have made it harder for workers to organize and also by the sharp decline in the traditionally unionized manufacturing and extractive industries, has been

dramatic. In 1979, 34 percent of male private-sector employees and 16 percent of female workers were union members. By 2013, the shares had fallen to 10 percent and 6 percent, respectively. According to a 2016 report by the Economic Policy Institute, nonunion workers would have been making 5 percent more on average in 2013 had union membership remained at 1979 levels.<sup>32</sup>

But beyond economics, unions were also once a primary vehicle of social cohesion and civic engagement, especially in industrial and manufacturing towns. Membership in a union brought with it a shared identity and sense of commitment. Unions provided not only economic benefits, but forms of social organization, education and leisure-time sociability. Defending unions and battling efforts to destroy them (including so-called right-to-work laws in states) should remain a progressive priority. It also requires developing new models of union organizing and other forms of elevating worker voice in an era of “gig” jobs like driving for Uber or Lyft.

Local governments also have a role to play in reviving their own communities. One promising strategy, rooted in the concept of “community schools,” is to leverage local schools to help build social bonds and address neighborhood problems. Reuben Jacobson of the Institute for Educational Leadership defines them as “hubs of the community where educators, families, nonprofits, community members, and others unite to create conditions where all children learn and thrive.” Community schools, which now number nearly 5,000 across the United States, are intended not only to educate youth during the school day, but also to serve as places of activity and learning for the wider community on evenings, weekends, and over the summer. In some cases, a full-time coordinator and a site-based leadership team work to identify student and community needs and then address them by collaborating with families, local businesses,

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nonprofit organizations, and religious congregations. When successful, Jacobson writes, community schools “engage families and communities as assets in the lives of their children and youth.” In so doing, they strengthen social bonds and invest in the future vitality of their communities.

Community and technical colleges are also hubs of local engagement. In his travels across the country, *Atlantic* writer James Fallows found that the presence of well-functioning community colleges tended to be associated with stronger, more vibrant cities. In 2010, between 60 and 70 percent of community colleges offered some form of community engagement or service learning to their students. And community colleges often form partnerships with local businesses and organizations, or open their doors to members of the community for public events, low-priced classes and health screenings. At Montgomery College in Maryland, for example, the Office of Community Engagement offers classes on basic computer skills and career guidance for local residents. Many of the services it provides are available in Spanish, Amharic, French, and Swahili – in addition to English – ensuring that immigrant populations in the area are able to enjoy the benefits.

Community colleges also train students in technical skills that they can then use to contribute back to the local economy. This is especially important in rural and suburban areas, where technological change and globalization have reduced the number of unskilled jobs available. The American Association of Community Colleges estimates that former community college students contributed \$806.4 billion in added income to the U.S. economy in 2012. Harry Holzer, an economist at Georgetown’s McCourt School of Public Policy, has been among those calling on community colleges to build even stronger ties with local businesses. Holzer argues that community colleges need to direct more of their resources to offering programs aimed at

training students – especially those who will not go on to four-year colleges – for better-paying jobs in the new economy. Rebuilding civil society thus becomes part of a strategy to rebuild local economies. Community-centered education systems can simultaneously act as local conveners and as partners in apprenticeship and other programs aimed at enhancing individual skills.<sup>33</sup>

Not-for-profit organizations themselves will also have to change. Theda Skocpol, a Harvard University sociologist and political scientist, has spent decades studying civic participation. She has shown that the decline in civic participation is in large part driven by the increasing professionalization of civil society. Member-led community groups have lost ground to staff-run advocacy organizations, which tend to be based in Washington, state capitals and other sites of political power. As a result, public engagement often devolves into mailing a check. Existing national membership organizations need to examine their operating practices and find innovative ways to connect their grassroots constituents with work in their own communities. The ACLU, for example, has launched People Power, an online platform for grassroots mobilization of its members. More work needs to be done to build the capacity of people to act locally.

Some of the gap created by the centralized mass membership organizations is being filled by community organizing – again, often in partnership with faith communities. For example, the PICO National Network is a federation of state and local groups that organize religious congregations to drive change in their neighborhoods on issues of economic, racial and immigrant justice. PICO staff train and develop volunteers, who then take on leadership roles in

shaping PICO's campaigns. Congregations work in coalition across lines of racial, socioeconomic and religious difference to build power collectively and influence local decision makers. The result is bottom-up, broad-based community action.

The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the community-organizing group founded in 1940 by the legendary organizer Saul Alinsky, is engaged in work similar to PICO's. Their Do Not Stand Idly By campaign is a national effort to reduce gun violence by mobilizing people of faith to pressure local and state officials as well as members of the firearms industry into adopting safer standards for gun manufacturing and sale.

These efforts are effective because they engage ordinary Americans in the work of strengthening their own communities. And one of the most successful organizing efforts of the last decade has been around undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. United We Dream has mobilized over 100,000 Dreamers and allies in their communities, and is now comprised of 55 affiliate organizations across dozens of states. Activists lobby local, state and federal officials to adopt more humane immigration laws and to provide protections and social services for undocumented immigrants. United We Dream and the Dreamers movement were influential in pressing for President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, announced in June 2012. DACA granted relief from deportation to hundreds of thousands of Dreamers. The influence of the Dreamers and the moral story they tell are such that even Trump has shown some reluctance to directly take them on.<sup>34</sup>

The focus of this book is on the need to turn back Trumpism, so we have necessarily devoted considerable attention to progressive civil society initiatives. But the urgency of

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rebuilding civil society, of re-engaging and re-empowering citizens, transcends particular policy or political goals. Community work, in fact, can make its largest contribution by building bridges across partisan divides as citizens come together to solve shared problems and rebuild towns, cities and regions to which they are devoted. By reviving a sense of shared identity based in mutual interest, communities can begin to counteract the mistrust and sense of hopelessness that helped fuel Trump's rise.