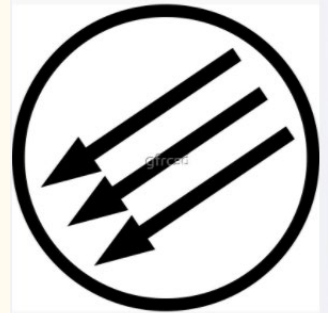


The Conservative Dilemma & The Threat to our Democracy

Florida Veterans for Common Sense

Monday – March 14, 2022

7 pm on Zoom



Dale Anderson



THE WHITE AMERICA DILEMMA

It started for me with this article . . .

Is America Still Safe for Democracy? May / June 2017

“The Trump presidency has punctured many Americans’ beliefs about their country’s exceptionalism. U.S. democracy is not immune to backsliding.

In fact, it now faces a challenge that extends well beyond Trump: sustaining the multi racial democracy that was born half a century ago.



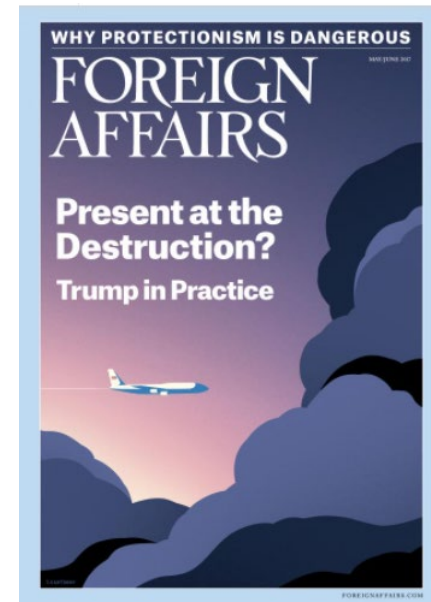
Robert Mickey
U. Michigan



Steve Levitsky
Harvard U.S



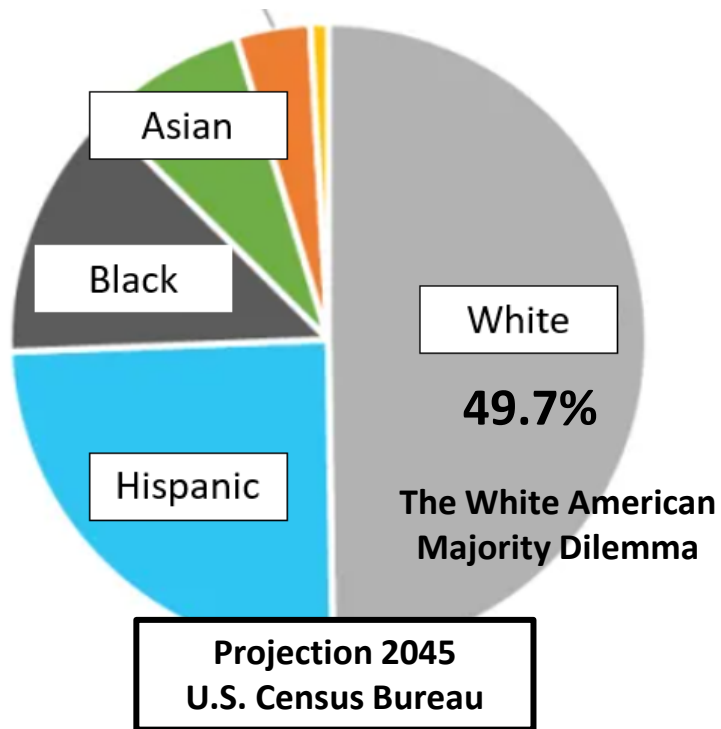
Lucan Way
U. Toronto



Source: **Is America Still Safe for Democracy** –R. Mickey, S. Levitsky & A.L. Way – FOREIGN AFFAIRS, May/June 2017

THE WHITE AMERICA DILEMMA

“Few democracies have survived transitions in which historically dominant ethnic groups lose their majority status. If American democracy manages to do that, it will prove exceptional indeed.”



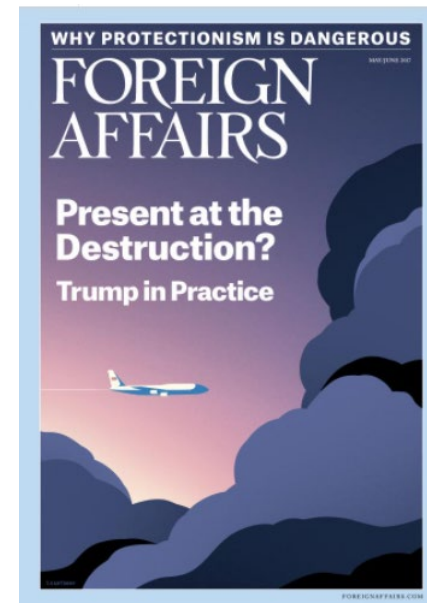
Robert Mickey
U. Michigan



Steve Levitsky
Harvard U.S



Lucan Way
U. Toronto



Source: *Is America Still Safe for Democracy* –R. Mickey, S. Levitsky & A.L. Way – FOREIGN AFFAIRS, May/June 2017

CONSERVATIVE DILEMMA

The “Conservative Dilemma” is the tension the conservative parties face in defending their elite (wealthy) minority when challenged by an increasingly enfranchised citizenry.

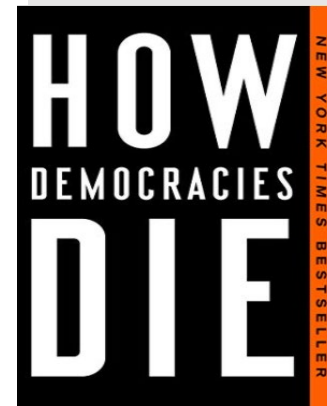
A tension in all democracies



Jacob S. Hacker
Yale University



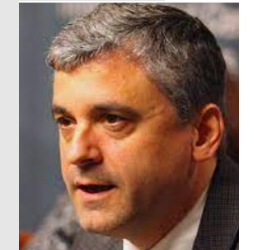
Paul Pierson
U.C. Berkley



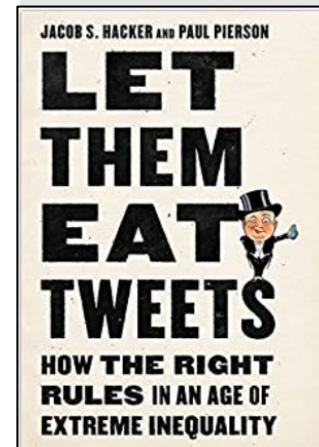
2018



Daniel Ziblatt
Harvard U.



Steve Levitsky
Harvard U.



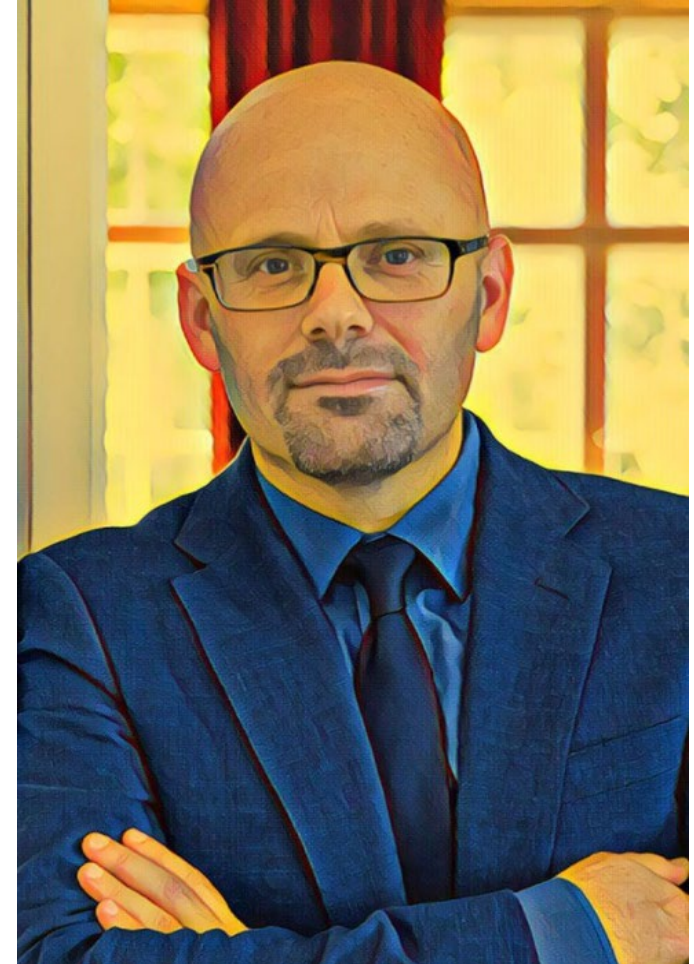
2020

What Conservative Elites Do is Critical

The Fate of Democracies

“In evolving democracies, **conservative politicians** must get and maintain voters’ backing even as their elite allies [donors] “seek to preserve their world, their interests, and their power.”

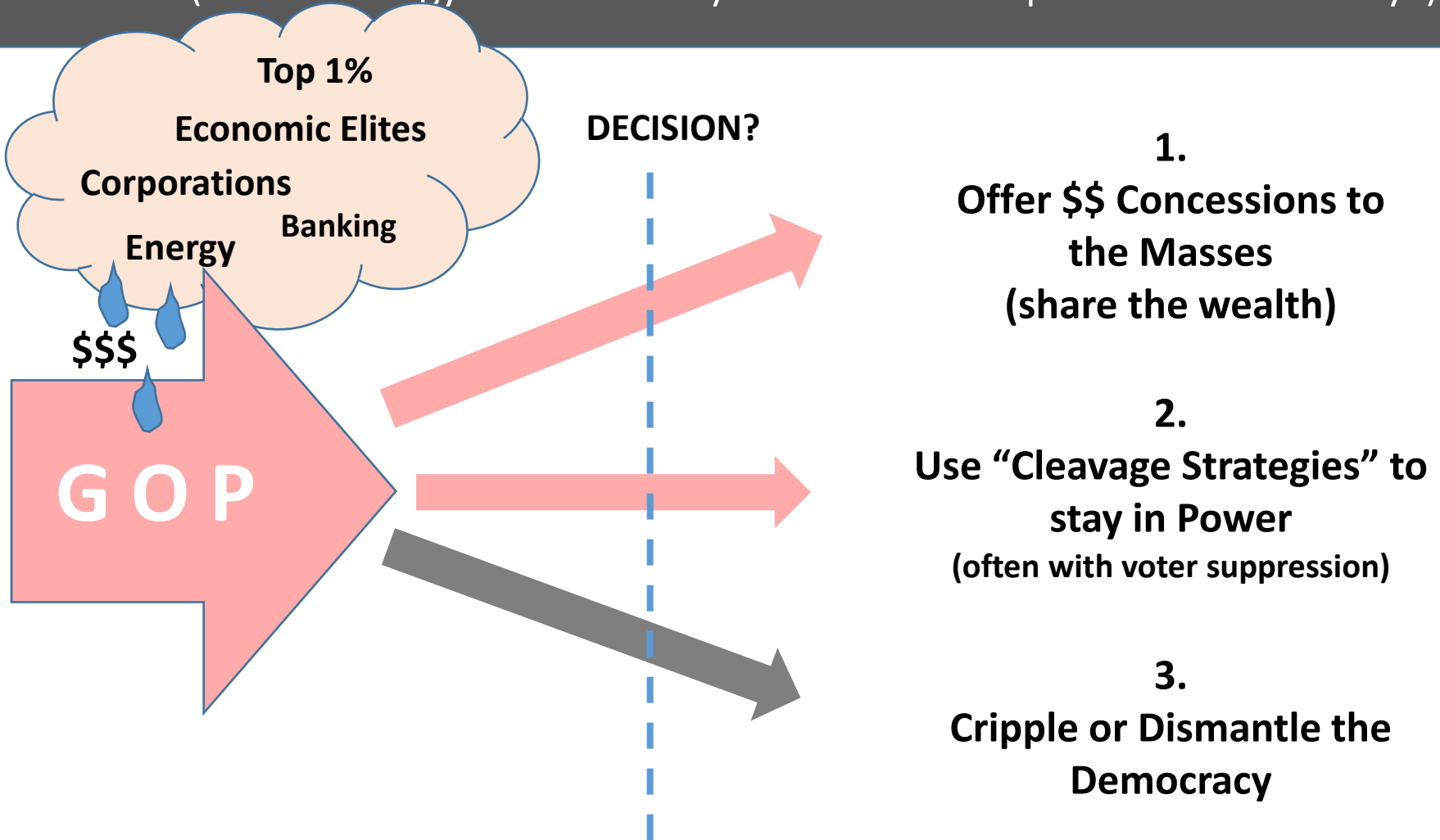
Conservative political elites play a decisive role in determining whether fledgling democracies flourish or die.



Daniel Ziblatt

The CONSERVATIVE DILEMMA

(which strategy to the wealthy few to maintain power over the many?)



A TALE OF TWO DEMOCRACIES

Responding to Demands of the Populace

Emerging Democracies

A century ago, in all countries with expanding voter franchises:

- Conservative parties struggled to maintain their historical defense of elite privilege.
- When suffrage was restricted, conservative parties could ignore the massive gap between the rich and the rest.
- But this became a losing game once the working class gained the vote.

Britain

“In Britain, the conservatives found a way to retain their power.

- They fashioned a robust party organization that could appeal to the poor as well as the rich, and everyone in between. . . .”
- **The Tories managed to do this while making only modest economic concessions.**



A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES

Responding to Demands of the Populace

Germany

“In Germany, unlike Britain, right-wing elites and their political allies failed to manage the **Conservative Dilemma . . .**”

The Weimar Republic was the German state from 1918 to 1933 when it functioned as a federal constitutional republic.



Coat of arms
(1919–1928)

“Their choices helped unleash forces of extremism that first captured and then fractured their own party.

From this weakened position, they foolishly partnered with a political outsider particularly skilled at stoking racism, tribalism, and fear. In doing so, they opened the door to Nazism and world war.”

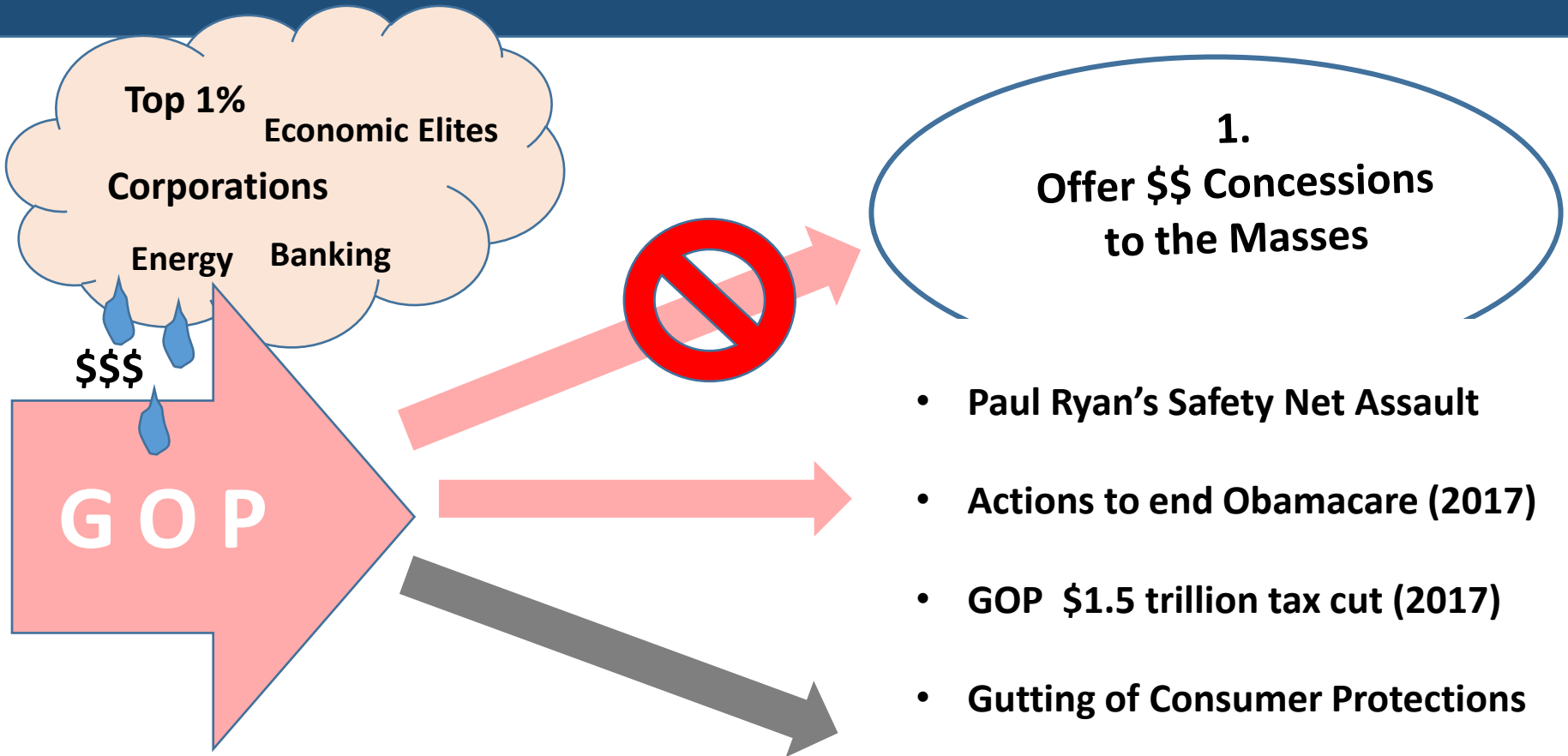


Reichstag Fire – From
Democracy to Dictatorship

Conservative Options

So, How are Conservative Elites in the
United States managing
their “Conservative Dilemma”?

Conservatives Choices - Option #1

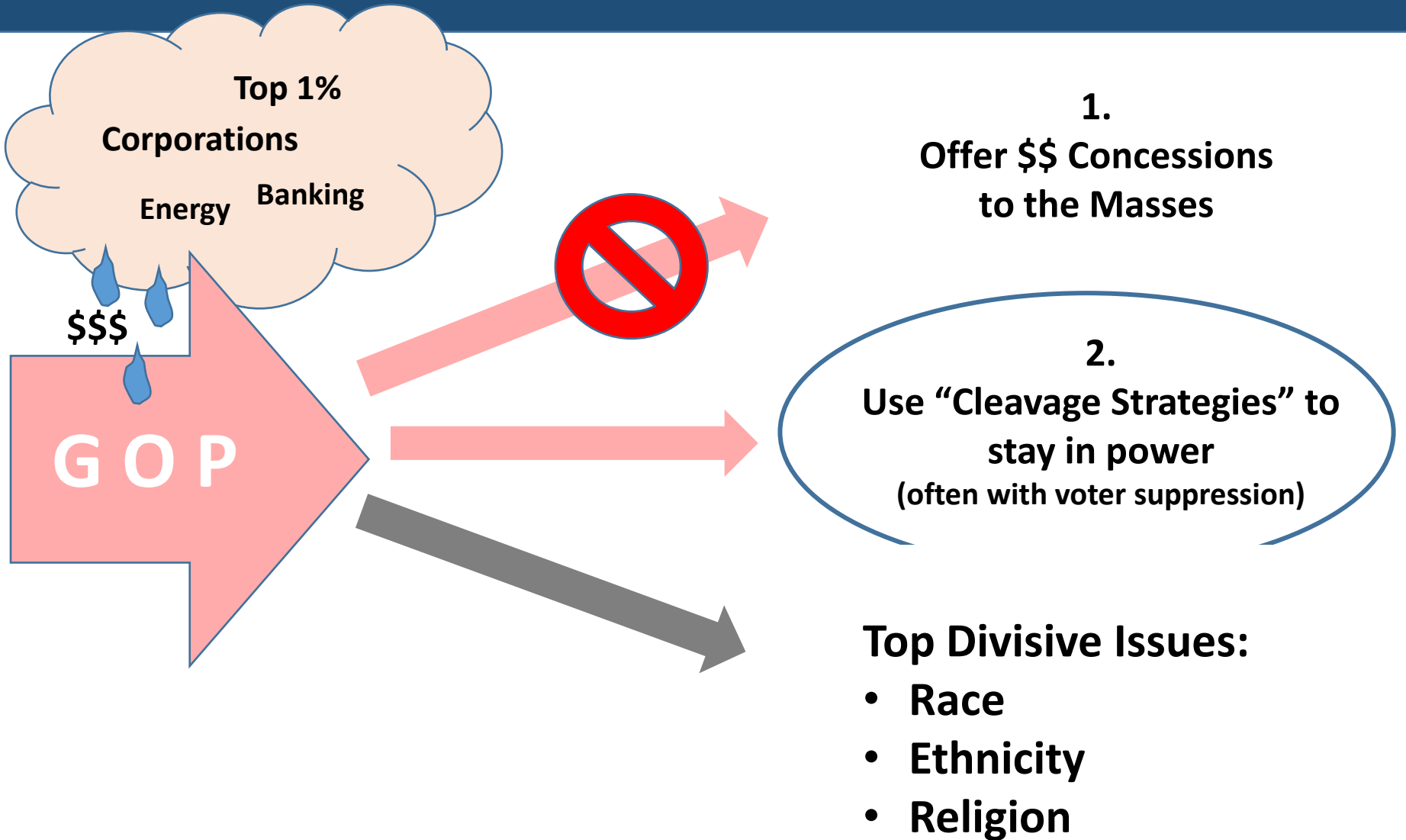


**THE U.S. CONSERVATIVE PARTY
HAS NO INTEREST IN SHARING THE
WEALTH**

Plutocrat: a person whose power derives from their wealth.

- 1. Offer \$\$ Concessions to the Masses**
 - Paul Ryan's Safety Net Assault
 - Actions to end Obamacare (2017)
 - GOP \$1.5 trillion tax cut (2017)
 - Gutting of Consumer Protections
 - Efforts to end the Inheritance Tax
 - Infrastructure and "BBB" plan obstruction (2021)

U.S. GOP – Strategy #2



Conservative “Cleavage Strategies”

Political Cleavage Issues in Modern Society

Target	Issues	Fear-Inducing Messages
1. Racial Divide	Racism	CRT will shame white children
2. Ethnic Divide	Hispanics in School	English only movement
3. Religious Divide	Muslims	Terrorists / Imposition of Sharia Law
4. Immigration	Hispanic Immigrants	Conspiracy to replace us (whites)
5. Gender / Abortion	Sexual Identity	LGBTQ recruitment of children
6. Patriotism	Protesting	“They” don’t love our country
7. Military Adventures	Iran Nuclear Deal	They don’t support Israel . .
8. Personal Liberty	Guns legislation	“They will take away your guns . .”



Conservative “Cleavage Strategies”

“The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.”

H. L. Mencken



The “Invasion” Ads



Beginning January 2019, the Trump campaign has posted over 2,000, now inactive, Facebook ads centered around immigration that featured the word “invasion” as part of the reelection team's vast and high-dollar digital ad strategy, as first reported by [The New York Times](#).

Risks of the Cultural Cleavage Strategy

The conservative party's embrace of strategies of cultural division introduces two great risks:

1.) Risk of Capture

“The conservative party may become vulnerable to capture by outside organizations that specialize in generating outrage.”

2.) Risk of Diminishing Commitment to Democracy

“If the party's appeals to voters is not enough, they may attempt to shift the electoral math more directly by bending or breaking those rules.”

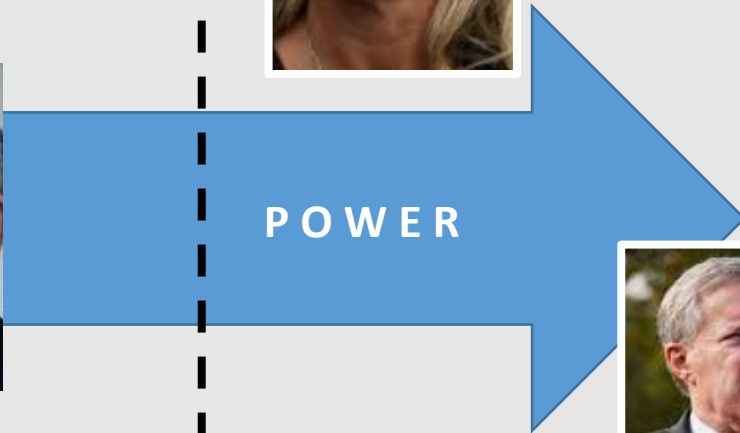
The Risk of "Capture" has Come True



Traditional GOP Party



The Trump Party



The Risk of “Capture” has Come True

Republican Authoritarianism is Here to Stay

Brian Klaas - Washington Post – Opinion (Nov. 22, 2021)

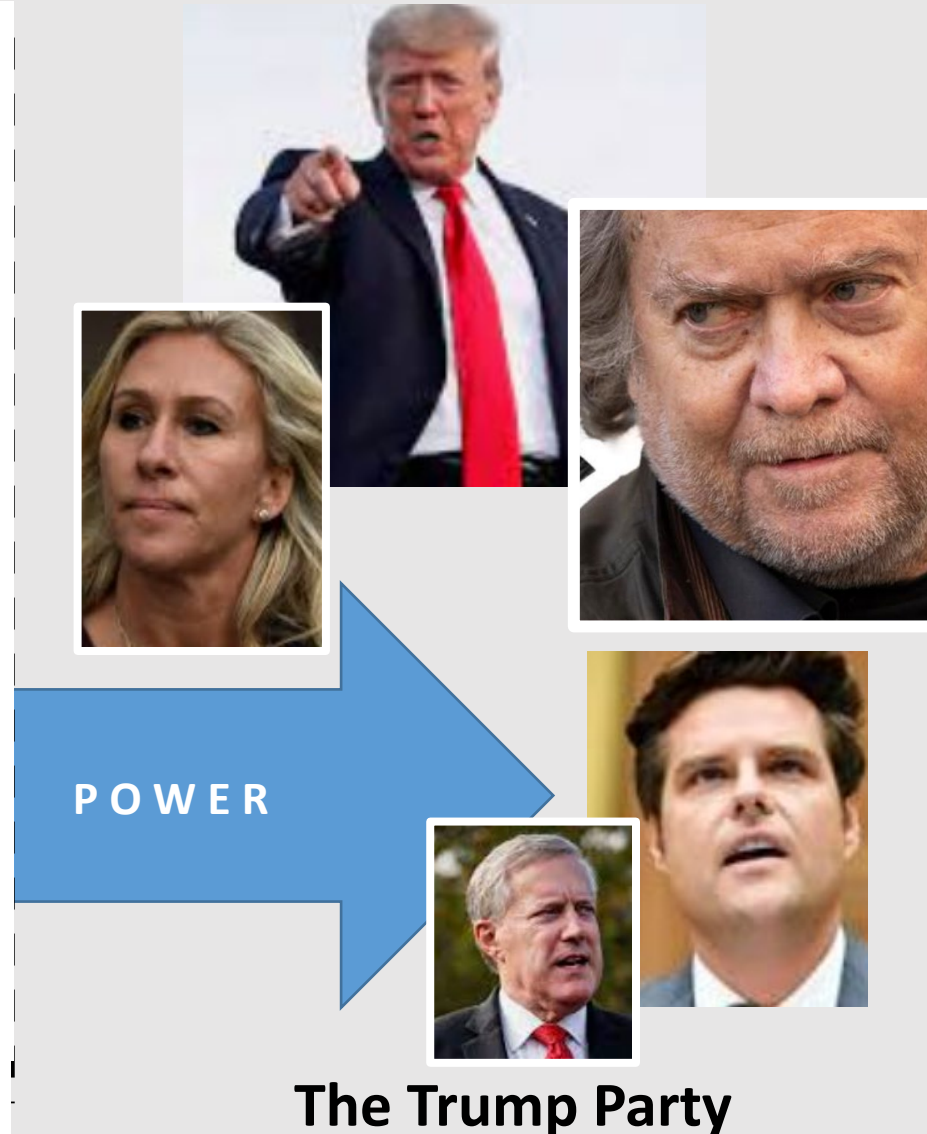
“ What has happened to the United States over the past five years is, in many ways, a **classic of the autocratic genre**. A populist leader:

- rose to power
- attacked the press
- politicized rule of law
- threatened to jail his opponents
- demonized minorities
- praised dictators abroad
- spread conspiracy theories and lies, and then
- sought to seize power despite losing an election.

When such despotic figures emerge in democracies, their political party has two options:

1. push back against the would-be despot while reasserting democratic principles or
2. **remake the party in his image.**

Republicans have clearly chosen the latter path.



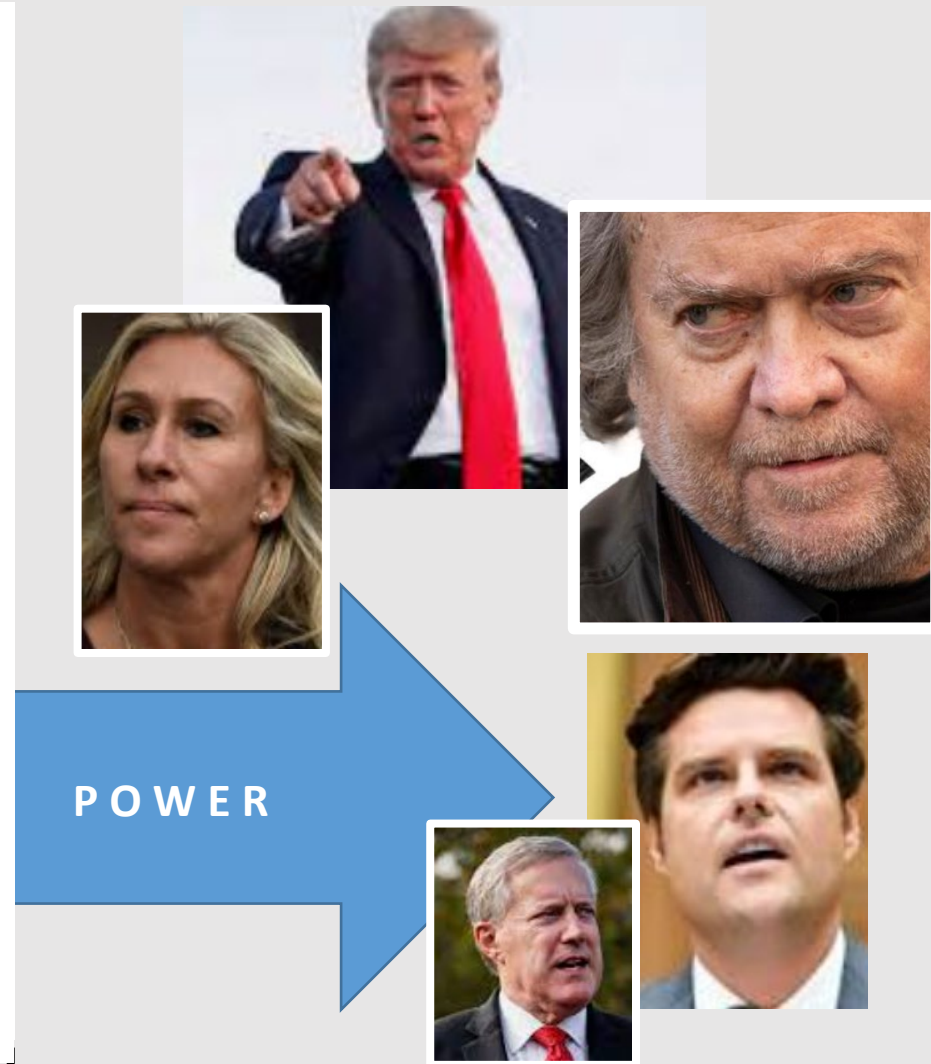
The Risk of “Capture” has Come True

The big question is: Can this be reversed? Can Republicans go back to being a broadly pro-democracy party that operates within democratic constraints and accepts election defeats without inventing false claims?

There are a few ways political parties that drift toward authoritarianism can be brought back from the brink. Sadly, none of them can save the modern GOP.”

Republican Authoritarianism is Here to Stay – Brian Klaas, Washington Post Nov.22, 2021

Traditional GOP Party



The Trump Party

If cleavage strategies fail – risk of more desperate actions

Republicans Panic after Georgia Losses

ELECTION 2020

The 10-year Stacey Abrams project to flip Georgia has come to fruition.



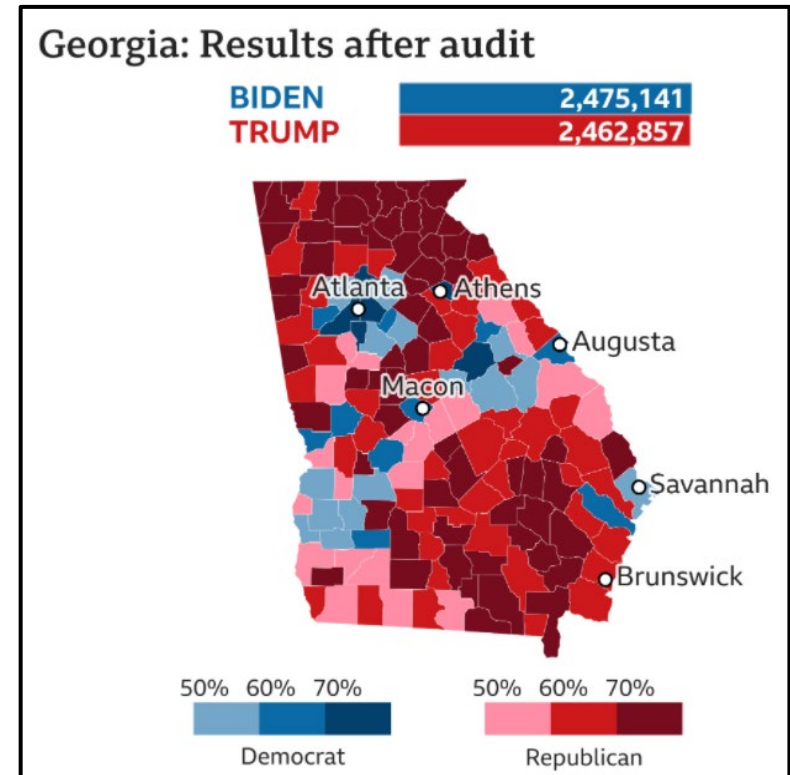
Jan. 6, 2021

By Reid J. Epstein and Astead W. Herndon



The number of Black registered voters in Georgia increased by about 130,000 between Oct. 11, 2016, and Oct. 5, 2020.

Source: Pew Research



If cleavage strategies fail – risk of more desperate actions

Republicans Panic after Georgia Losses

ELECTION 2020

Democrats take control of the Senate
with two Georgia contest wins . . .

First Jewish
Senator from
Georgia



Jon Ossoff

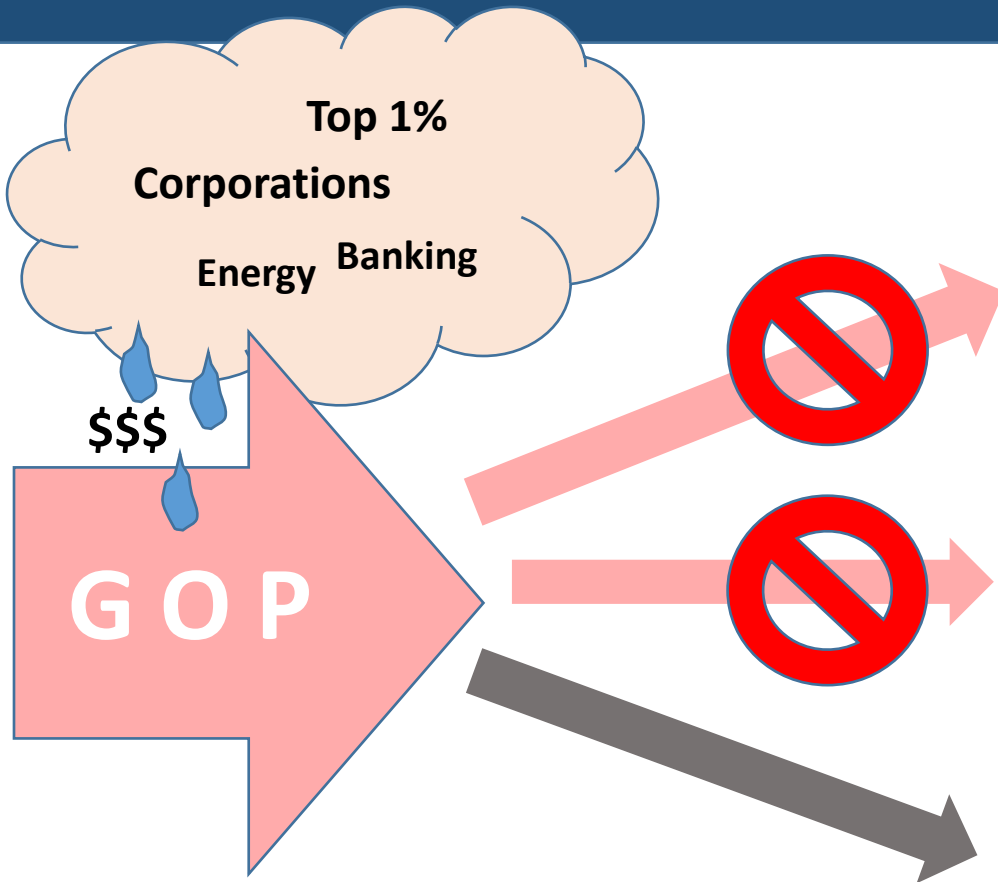
First Black
Senator from
Georgia



Raphael Warnock



Option #3 – a Dark Path



1.
Offer \$\$ Concessions
to the Masses

2.
Maintain GOP Traditional
Strategy
(voter suppression and cultural
cleavage)

3.
Cripple or Dismantle our
Democracy

The Conservative Party has
chosen a path to
Authoritarianism

GOP Rushes to Restrict Voting

Voting Laws Roundup October 2021

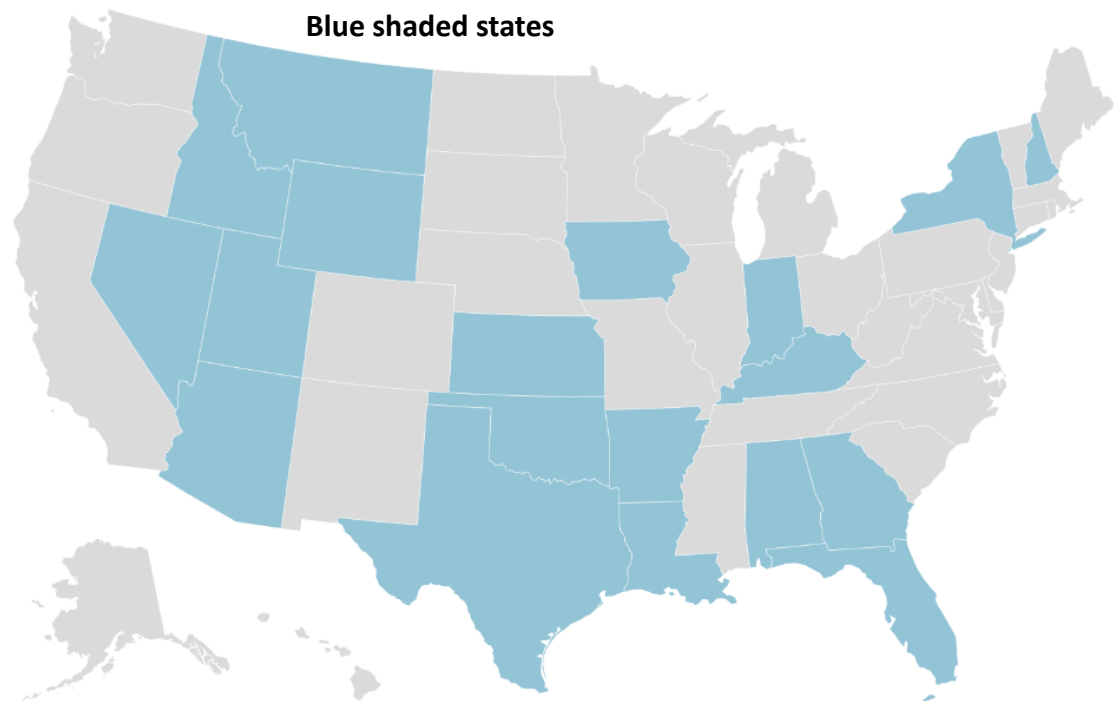
“In an unprecedented year, 19 states have enacted 33 laws that will make it harder for Americans to vote.

More than 425 bills with provisions that restrict voting access have been introduced in 49 states in the 2021 legislative sessions.”

Source: Brennan Center for Justice



States with New Restrictive Laws



Graphic by BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

Source: Brennan Center for Justice

GOP Rushes to Restrict Voting

Voting Laws Roundup October 2021

“In an unprecedented year, 19 states have enacted 33 laws that will make it harder for Americans to vote.

More than 425 bills with provisions that restrict voting access have been introduced in 49 states in the 2021 legislative sessions.”

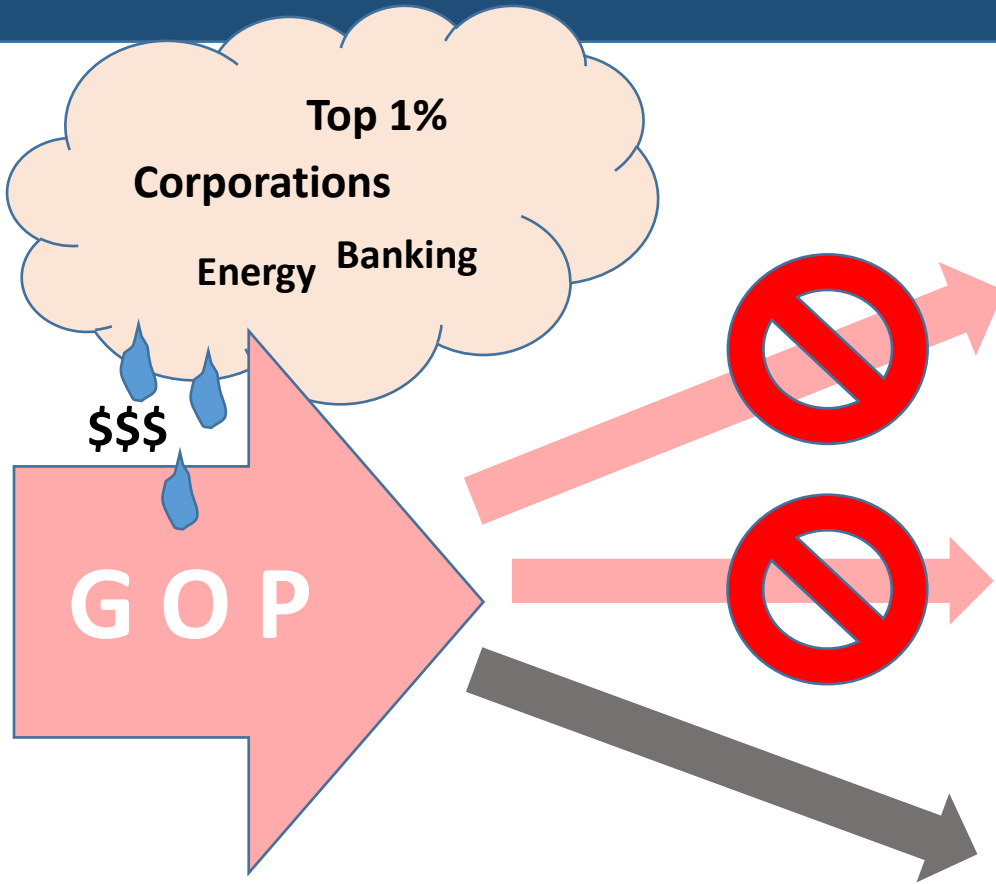
Source: Brennan Center for Justice



- Shorten window to apply for a mail ballot.
- Shorten deadline to deliver mail ballot.
- Make it harder to remain on absentee voting list.
- Prohibit sending ballot applications to all voters.
- Restrict assistance in returning a voter’s mail ballot.
- Limit mail ballot drop boxes.
- Impose stricter signature requirements for ballots.
- Impose harsher voter ID requirements.
- Expand voter purges.
- Increase barriers for voters with disabilities.
- Eliminate Election Day registration.
- Reduce polling place availability (location or hours).
- Limit early voting days or hours.
- Increase number of voters per precinct.

Source: Brennan Center for Justice

Option #3 – Who Decides on the Strategy?



The Conservative Party has chosen a path to Authoritarianism

A L E C

The American Legislative Exchange Council

501(c4)(c3) Estab. 1973

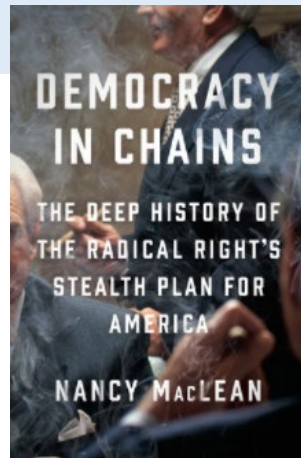
- **Legislative members** are state and federal legislators.
- **Corporate members** are representatives of the major U.S. corporations, conservative think tanks, and industry associations and institutes.
- **Model bills:** Forum allows members to write model bills. Member legislators can then use these model bills as templates for their own bill.
Corporate "Feedback": Meetings are an opportunity for the corporate and non-profit leaders to meet and provide feedback to legislators.

Option #3 – Who’s Decided to End our Democracy?

A L E C - Large, private interests seeking economic liberty . . . for themselves.

Translated as “cordoning off capital and property from the control of everyday Americans, i.e., permanently protecting their wealth and associated power.

Nancy McLean describes it as **“the insulation of private property rights from the reach of government.”**



“Economic Liberty”

- 1. Reduce taxes as low as possible (ideally zero)**
- 2. Minimize regulation**
- 3. Weaken workers’ power**



FLORIDA ALEC STATE CHAIRS

Partisan School District Elections

A joint resolution proposing an amendment for the creation of a new section in Article XII of the State Constitution to require members of a district school board to be elected in a partisan election.

THE FIFTY
Republicans eye new front in education wars: Making school board races partisan

"We're out there trying to elect good conservatives," says one Florida lawmaker.



Spencer Roach (R)
District 79 (Ft. Meyers)



Jason Fischer (R)
District 16 (Jacksonville)

Stand Your Ground Laws

Fischer was the prime co-sponsor of legislation protecting Second Amendment rights that shifted the burden of proof in pretrial hearings to the State in cases involving Stand Your Ground immunity.

ALEC PRIVATE ENTERPRISE BOARD

For Profit and NFP Company Members of ALEC

- Allergan^[23]
- Altria (formerly known as Philip Morris)^[7]
- American Bail Coalition^[7]
- American Bankers Association^[citation needed]
- American Council of Life Insurers^[24]
- American Insurance Association^[24]
- American Legal Financial Association^[25]
- American Petroleum Institute^[26]
- American Tort Reform Association^[25]
- Americans for Tax Reform^[27]
- Amoco^[26]
- Anheuser-Busch^[citation needed]
- Association for Competitive Technology
- AstraZeneca^[23]
- Bayer^{[7][23]}
- Blue Cross Blue Shield^[28]
- BNSF Railway^[25]
- Bristol-Myers Squibb^[23]
- Cato Institute^[27]
- Celgene^[23]
- Center for Competitive Politics^{[29][30]}
- Center for Digital Media Freedom^[27]
- Centerpoint360^[7]

Federalist Society

- Judicial recommendations

- Civil Justice Reform Group^[25]
- Community Financial Services Association
- Con-way^[citation needed]
- ConocoPhillips^[23]
- Corrections Corporation of America^[31]
- Coventry Health Care^[citation needed]

Koch Industries

- Oil and Gas

- Diageo^{[1][29]}
- DirecTV^[27]
- Dow Chemical^[23]
- Duke Energy^[28]
- DuPont^[23]
- Eli Lilly^[23]
- Enterprise Holdings
- Entertainment Software Association^[23]
- Entergy^[25]
- ExxonMobil^{[7][23]}

- Fadem & Associates^[30]
- Federalist Society^[25]
- FedEx^[23]
- Foundation for Excellence in Education^[32]
- Free State Foundation^[27]
- Genentech^[23]
- Geo Group (formerly known as Wackenhut)^[31]
- Georgia Pacific^[25]
- GlaxoSmithKline^{[7][23]}
- Heartland Institute^{[33][34]}
- Higher Education Research/Policy Center
- Correction Corporation of America
 - Private Prisons
 - Stand-Your-Ground Laws
- James Madison Institute
- Justice Fellowship^[30]
- Kansas City Power and Light^[35]
- Koch Industries^{[7][23][25]}
- Lawyers for Civil Justice^[25]
- Macquarie Capital^[citation needed]
- Management and Training Corporation^[31]
- McLeod County Farmers Union^{[30][failed verification]}
- MV VeriSol^[citation needed]

ALEC PRIVATE ENTERPRISE BOARD

- National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies^[25]
- National Beer Wholesalers Association^[29]
- National Cable and Telecommunications Association^[29]
- National Coalition for Safer Roads^{[30][failed]}
- National Federation of Independent Business^[29]
- National Pawnbrokers Association^[29]
- National Popular Vote^[30]
- National Rifle Association^[23]
- NetChoice^[27]
- News Corporation (parent company of Twentieth Century Fox, Wall Street Journal, Fox News)^[25]
- Novartis^[23]
- Oracle^[28]
- Orchid Cellmark^[30]
- Pacific Research Institute^[25]
- Pfizer^{[7][23]}
- PhRMA^[7]
- Pickle Consulting Group^[25]
- Pioneer Institute^[32]
- Progress and Freedom Foundation^[27]
- Property Casualty Insurers^[25]
- Raytheon^[28]
- Reason Foundation^[27]
- Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals^[30]
- Salesforce^[28]
- Sanofi Aventis^[23]
- Satellite Broadcasting and Communications Association^[29]
- Stop Child Predators^[29]
- Taser International^[25]
- Thomson Reuters^[36]
- Time Warner^[36]
- United Health^[32]
- Xcel Energy^{[32][37]}

National Rifle Association

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC) is the largest lobbying group in the United States, representing over three million businesses and organizations.

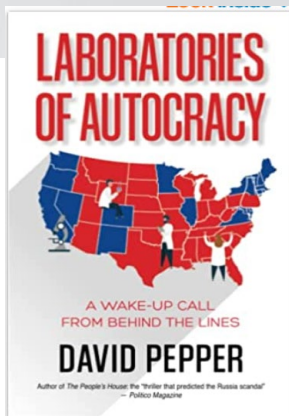
News Corporation

- Twentieth Century Fox
- Wall Street Journal
- Fox News

Statehouses – “Laboratories of Autocracy”

ALEC

CONTROL OF THE STATE HOUSES



David Pepper
Former chair of the
Democratic Party of Ohio

1. CONTROL OF THE ELECTION PROCESS

- Voter suppression
- “Counting” corruption
- Election engineering
- Elector power redefinition

2. OPPORTUNITY TO PASS ANTI-CITIZEN LEGISLATION

- Remove gun regulations
- Appoint partisan court
- Defy citizen referenda
- Pass anti-protest legislation
- Censor history teaching
- Attack minority rights (LGBTQ)
- Degrade local control
- Stoke vigilantism
- Evade court review

A Strategy to Dismantle our Democracy

So, is this where our “conservative party”
(ALEC) is taking the nation?



WARNINGS are EVERYWHERE

Statement of Concern

> 100 Democracy Scholars

June 1, 2021

Re: The Threats to American Democracy and the Need for National Voting and Election Administration Standards

- **GOP-led state legislatures are implementing anti-democratic election procedures. Our entire democracy is now at risk.**

“When democracy breaks down, it typically **takes many years**, often decades, to reverse the downward spiral.

In the process, **violence and corruption** typically flourish, **talent and wealth flee** to more stable countries, undermining national prosperity.”

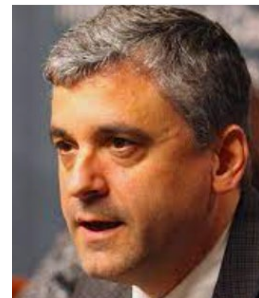
WARNING



Christopher Beem
Dir McCourtney Institute
for Democracy
Penn State



Francis Fukuyama
Freeman Spogli Institute
Stanford



Steve Levitsky
Prof of Government
Harvard

Biden Warns of the Threat

Joe Biden has been president of the United States for 174 days. On at least 21 of those days, about 1 in every 8, he has talked about the threat posed by autocracy.

Washington Post - By Philip Bump - National correspondent
July 13, 2021 at 4:50 p.m. EDT

. . . . a message targeting many in his own party!



Media Warns the Public

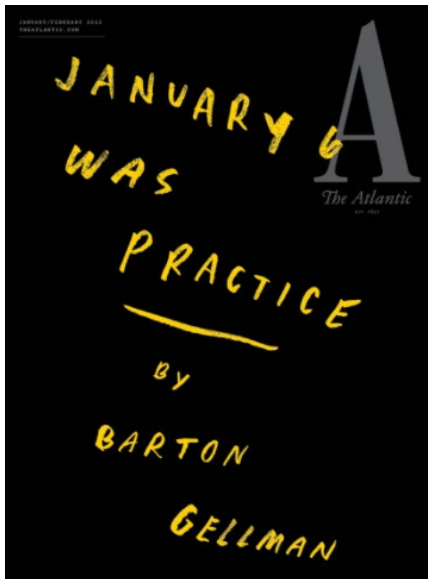
Steven Schmidt warns:

“America is just one election away from permanent autocratic rule.

Those who think Trump being out of the spotlight and off social media has weakened him are fools.”



Former Republican
Steve Schmidt
Co-founder of the
Lincoln Project



Barton Gellman

“Technically, the next attempt to overthrow a national election may not qualify as a coup.

It will rely on subversion more than violence, although each will have its place.”

A Dangerous Moment

So, why is this moment in our history particularly dangerous for our Democracy?

Autocracy in the Americas - 2020

FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2021

FREE

PARTIALLY
FREE

NOT
FREE

Freedom House Freedom Score



Díaz- Canel
Cuba



Nicolas Madura
Venezuela



Daniel Ortega
Nicaragua



Status	Countries	Territories
FREE	82	1
PARTLY FREE	59	4
NOT FREE	54	40
Total	195	45

Freedom in the World 2021
assessed 210 countries and
territories around the globe.

Autocracy in the Americas - 2020

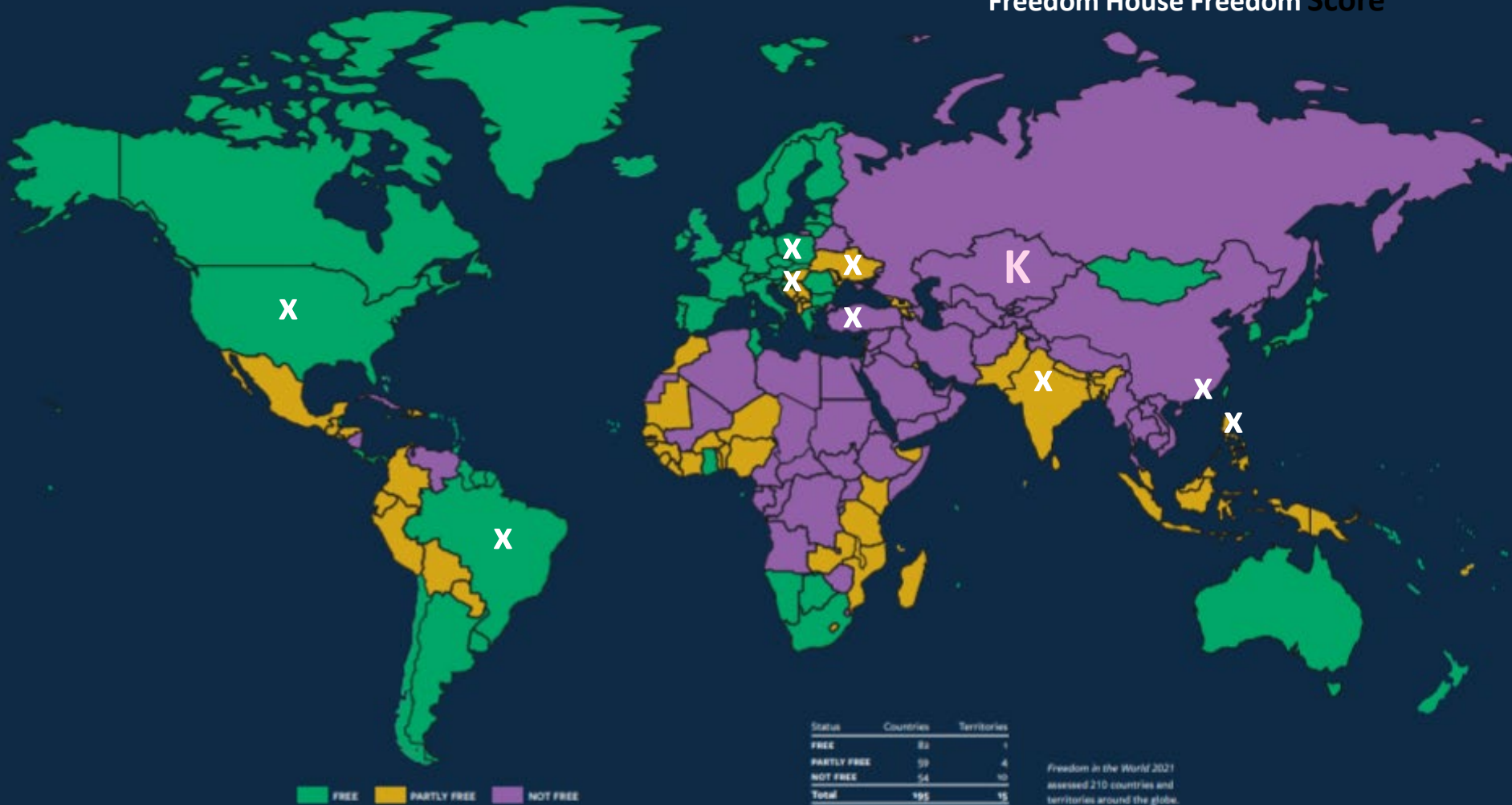
FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2021

FREE

PARTIALLY
FREE

NOT
FREE

Freedom House Freedom Score



In the U.S., Democracy Threats are Aligning

Four Threats

The Recurring Crisis of American Democracy (2020)



Suzanne Mettler
Cornel U.



Robert C. Lieberman
Columbia / Yale

The “Threats”

1. Heightened Polarization
2. Conflict over “Who Belongs”
3. Rising Economic Inequality
4. Presidential Aggrandizement

Major Democracy Threats by Historic Period

US Era	#1 Extreme Polarization	#2 Conflict Over “Who Belongs”	#3 Rising Economic Inequality	#4 Executive Power +++	ISSUES
1790s	☑				Federalists vs. Republicans
1850s	☑	☑	☑		Civil War Know-Nothings
1890s	☑	☑	☑		Robber Barons Labor Union Strikes
1930s				☑	FDR, the New Deal and World War II
1970s				☑	Nixon & Watergate
2010 - 2021	☑	☑	☑	☑	The Trump Presidency

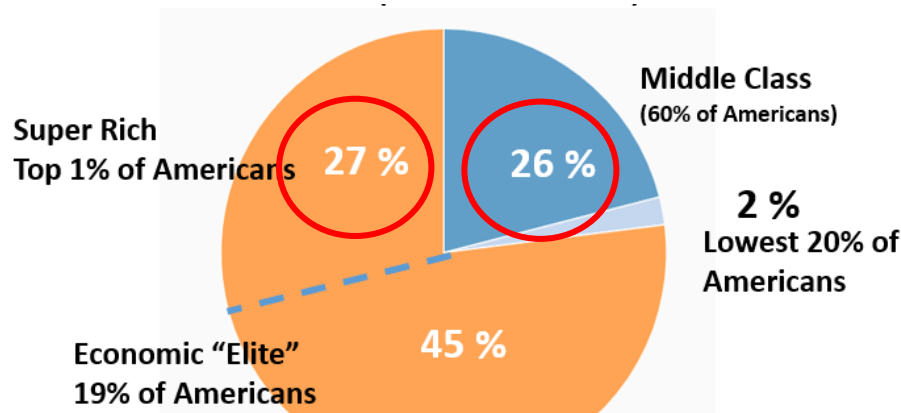
Source: *The Four Threats* – Mettler & Lieberman, 2020

Wealth Inequality in the USA

Top 1% Hold More Wealth Than Entire Middle Class (60% of Americans)

Source: Bloomberg News – October 8, 2021

Distribution of Wealth in America
2016



Economic Class	% Pop	% \$\$
1%	1%	27%
Elite Class	19%	45%
Middle Class	60%	26%
Lowest Class	20%	2%

Extreme Economic Inequality Creates Three Risks for Democracy

1. Unequal Power

- Wealth provides enormous political advantage.
- Skews access to the centers of power and to the law.
- Creates a profound sense of “unfairness”.

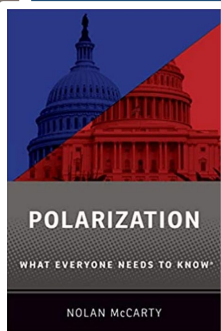
2. Divergent Interests

- Wealth may create less commitment to the nation
- Plutocrats can live anywhere.
- Multi-national companies can locate their operations anywhere.

3. Elite Fear

- Those with great wealth fear the vote and potential actions of those without.

Extreme Political Polarization



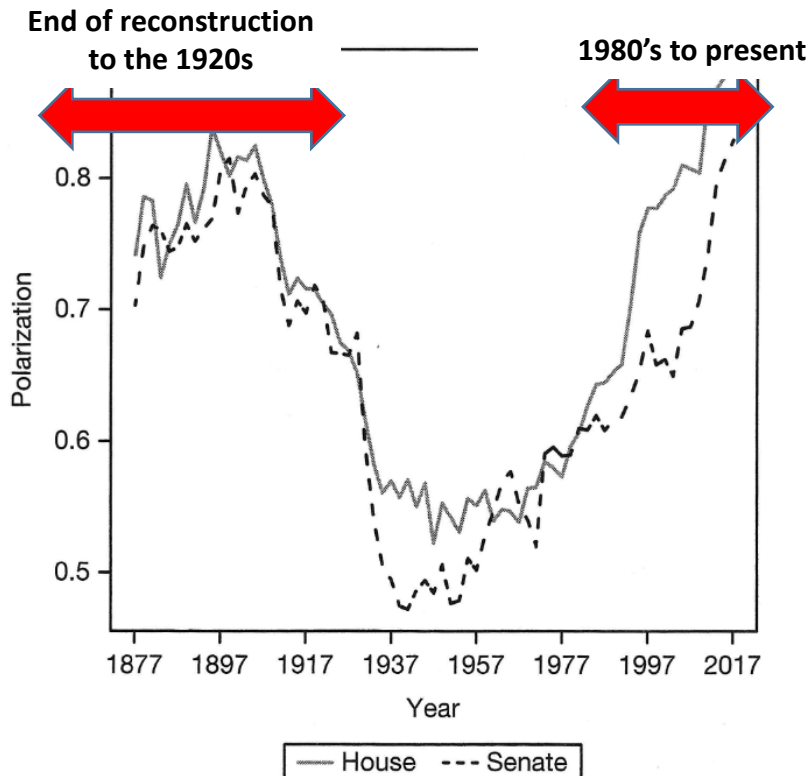
Polarization: What Everyone Needs to Know
Nolan McCarty 2020

VOTER POLARIZATION SORTING

“Today, Americans have sorted themselves into two broad identity groups:

- **Democrats** tend to live in the cities, are more likely minorities, women, and religiously unaffiliated, and are trending liberal.

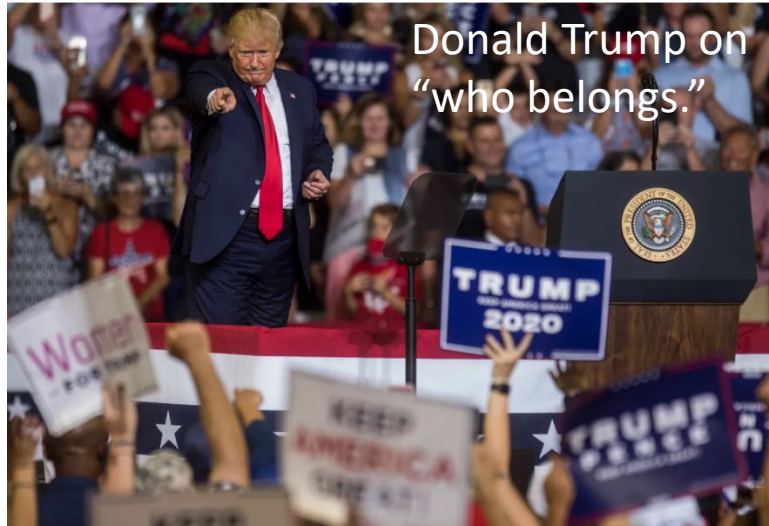
Congressional Polarization



- **Extreme Congressional Polarization creates Gridlock**
- **Extreme Voter Polarization creates Animosity.**

Source: The Rise of Political Violence in the United States: Rachel Kleinfeld, J. of Democracy Oct. 2021

National Conflict over “Who Belongs”



Donald Trump on
“who belongs.”

“Donald Trump used racist language on Sunday to attack four progressive Democratic congresswomen, telling them to:

“go back and help fix the totally broken and crime-infested places from which they came”.

Source: The Guardian –
July 15, 2019



Tlaib



Cortez



Omar



Pressley



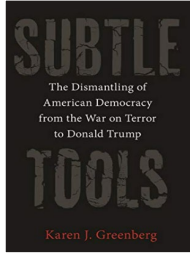
Congresswoman Ilham Omar
Minnesota (D)

Ilham Omar represents everything White Nationalists hate and fear . . and someone who “doesn’t belong.”

- African American (Somalia)
- Foreign-born citizen
- A refugee and an immigrant
- A Woman
- A Muslim
- Educated and articulate
- Powerful – Democrat (in Congress)
- A feminist – rejects patriarchy
- A progressive (threat to plutocrats)

#4 –Threat

Expansion of Executive Power



Karen J. Greenberg



September 11, 2001

SUBTLE TOOLS

The dismantling of American Democracy from the War on Terror to Donald Trump (2021)

Three Acts Transformed the Nation

The government's response to 9/11 opened the door to massive expansion of Executive Power. Within eighteen (18) months, three acts would transform the country and fuel the current threat to our democracy.

Sept. 11, 2001

TWIN TOWERS ATTACK

Sept. 18, 2001

Auth. for Use of Military Force *

Oct. 26, 2001

The Patriot Act *

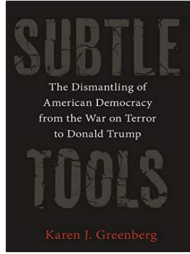
June 6, 2002

Homeland Security Act *

* = Signed by President G.W. Bush

#4 –Threat

Expansion of Executive Power



Karen J. Greenberg



September 11, 2001

Sept. 11, 2001	TWIN TOWERS ATTACK
Sept. 18, 2001	Auth. for Use of Military Force *
Oct. 26, 2001	The Patriot Act *
June 6, 2002	Homeland Security Act *

* = Signed by President G.W. Bush

SUBTLE TOOLS

- #1 Degradation of Language**
(AUMF and Patriotic Act)
Describing Portland protesters as “terrorists”.
- #2 Bureaucratic Porousness**
(Homeland Security Act)
DHS agents arresting protesters in Portland.
- #3 Secrecy / Withholding of Facts**
(Patriot Act)
Torture, domestic surveillance, etc.
- #4 Abandonment of Legal and Procedural Norms**
(Justified by the imperative of protecting the nation)
Strike on Iranian general.

U.S. In High Threat Circumstances

In 2020, we are at maximum threat:

1. Extreme Political and Voter Polarization
2. Intense Conflict on “Who Belongs”
3. Extreme Economic Inequality
4. Expanded Presidential Power

Major Democracy Threats by Historic Period

US Era	#1 Extreme Polarization	#2 Conflict Over “Who Belongs”	#3 Rising Economic Inequality	#4 Executive Power +++	ISSUES
1790s	☑				Federalists vs. Republicans
1850s	☑	☑	☑		Civil War Know-Nothings
1890s	☑	☑	☑		Robber Barons Labor Union Strikes
1930s				☑	FDR, the New Deal and World War II
1970s				☑	Nixon & Watergate
2010 - 2021	☑	☑	☑	☑	The Trump Presidency

Coup Alert Level	Alert Description
Coup “Watch”	Possible coup attempt in the next four years
Coup “Warning”	Possible coup attempt in the next 12 months

Who's Supporting the Threat

So, Who are We Up Against
in this Crisis?

GOP's Powerful Coordinated Assault

The evidence seems clear

All Conservative actors in our political system appear to be on board with a strategy to dismantle our democracy . . . those few Republicans who haven't are being shunned.

**1% and GOP
Donors**

**WHITE
NATIONALISTS**

U.S. Corps
OIL & GAS
INDUSTRY

**CHRISTIAN
EVANGELICALS**

1. **The 1% (Economic Elites) and US Corporations**
2. **Conservative "Think Tanks"**
3. **White Evangelical Christian Leaders**
4. **White Nationalists / Supremacists**
5. **U.S. Supreme Court (conservative majority)**
6. **Trump and his Political Team**
7. **GOP Senators and Congressmen**
8. **GOP State Legislatures and Governors**
9. **Fox News, Newsmax, Breitbart and Conservative Media**
10. **U.S. Police and Military Forces**
 - **White nationalists in the military**
 - **White nationalists in the national guard**
 - **White nationalists in the police force**
11. **Right-wing Militia (Oathkeepers, etc.)**
12. **Foreign Adversaries (Russia, Iran)**

A COORDINATED ASSAULT

The Entire Conservative Political Establishment is Involved



D
E
M
O
C
R
A
C
Y

Attacking at all levels of Government

SUPREME COURT	Citizen's United (2010)	Shelby v Holder (2013)	Rucho v Common Cause (2019)	Brnovich v DNC (2021)
TRUMP	Collusion with Foreign Adversaries	Promotion of Election Fraud (2020)	Bloodless Coup Attempt (2020)	Violent Coup Attempt (2021)
GOP in CONGRESS	Obstruction of Congress	Packing the Court	Protecting Trump	Supporting the Big Lie
GOP STATE CONTROL	Expand Access to Guns	Election Nullification Attempt	Election Worker Intimidation	Election Engineering
RIGHT WING MEDIA	Whitewashing Russia's Role	COVID-19 Denial	Support of the "Big Lie"	Rewriting Jan 6 Assault

An Authoritarian America?

What Would an American
Authoritarian State
Look Like?

Dominant Party Dictatorships

Categories of Authoritarian Regimes

1. **Single / Dominant Party**
2. **Personalist**
3. **Military Dictatorship**
(Myanmar)
4. **Ruling Family (Monarchic)**
(Saudi Arabia)



AUTHORITARIANISM

WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW*

ERICA FRANTZ

Authoritarianism – What Everyone Needs to Know

Erica Franz

Prof Political Science

U. of Michigan

Single-Party States - 2021 (other parties forbidden)

1. **China** (Communist Party)
2. **Cuba** (Communist Party)
3. **Eritrea** (Isaias Afewerki)
4. **Laos** (People's Revolutionary Party)
5. **North Korea** (Workers Party of Korea)
6. **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic***
7. **Vietnam** (Communist Party)

Source: Wikipedia; *Western Sahara

Dominant Party Dictatorships

Categories of Authoritarian Regimes

1. **Single / Dominant Party**



2. **Personalist**

3. **Military Dictatorship** (Myanmar)

4. **Ruling Family (Monarchic)** (Saudi Arabia)



AUTHORITARIANISM

WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW™

ERICA FRANTZ

Authoritarianism – What Everyone Needs to Know

Erica Franz

Prof Political Science

U. of Michigan

Dominant-Party Dictatorship

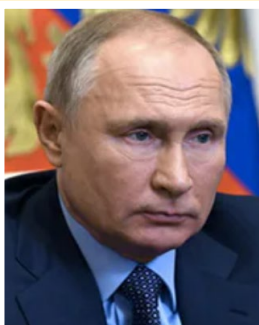
A dominant-party dictatorship is an authoritarian regime in which:

- **A single political party controls leadership selection and policy.**
- Members of the party hold the majority of key political positions.
- Regime elites typically come from the party's ruling body, often referred to as a politburo or central committee.

Personalist “Strongmen” Dictatorships

Categories of Authoritarian Regimes

1. Single / Dominant Party
2. **Personalist**
3. Military Dictatorship
4. Ruling Family (Monarchic)



Recep Erdogan
TURKEY



Personalism

Personalism refers to the domination of the political realm by a **single individual**.

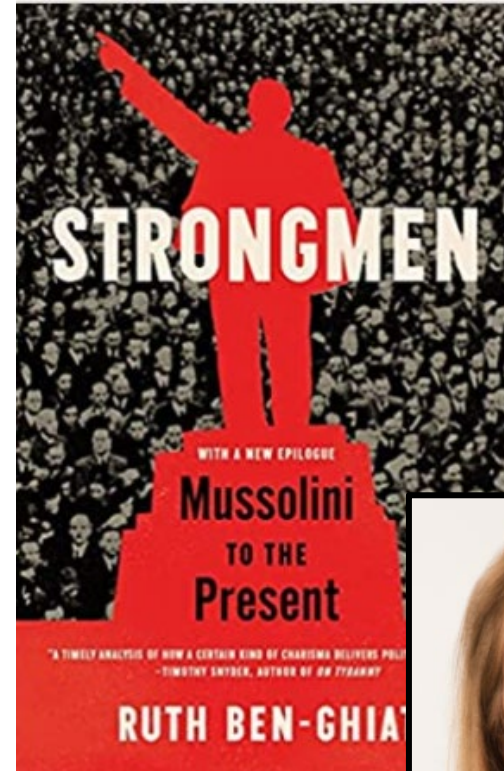
- The leader’s personality has an outsized impact on policies, frequently outstripping institutions and rules.
- The leader governs absent the restraints of other actors.
- Personalist leaders are not a new phenomenon – think ancient Egypt, Roman emperors or Czars of Russia.
- Influence waned in the late 20th century as democracies grew and autocracies became more diversified in their leadership structure

The Danger of Personalism - S T R O N G M E N



“From an early age, the first man to transform a democracy into a dictatorship showed the qualities that have marked strongmen of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries:

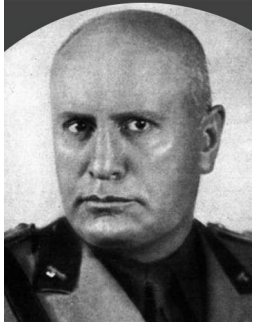
- **A violent temperament**
- **Opportunism**
- **A way with words”**



Ruth Ben-Ghiat
N.Y.U.

Three Eras of Strongmen Dictatorships

1. Fascist Era (1919-1945)



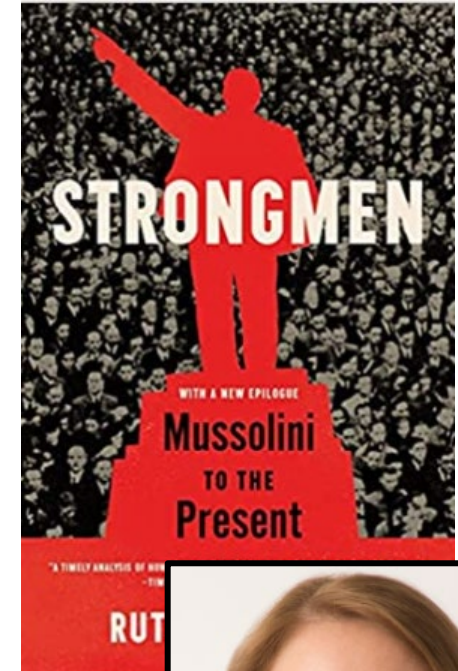
Benito Mussolini
ITALY



Adolf Hitler
GERMANY



Francisco Franco
SPAIN



2. Age of Military Coups (1950-1990)



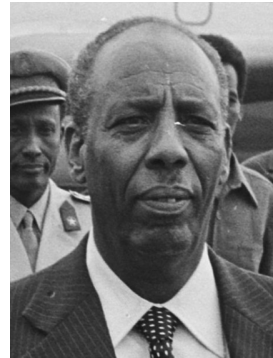
Augusto Pinochet
CHILE



Idi Amin
UGANDA



Muammar Gaddafi
LIBYA



Mohamed Siad Barre
SOMALIA



Ruth Ben-Ghiat
N.Y.U.

Three Eras of Strongmen Dictatorships

3. New Authoritarian Ascents



Silvio Berlusconi
ITALY



Vladimir Putin
RUSSIA



Victor Orban
HUNGARY



Narendra Modi
INDIA



Donald Trump
USA



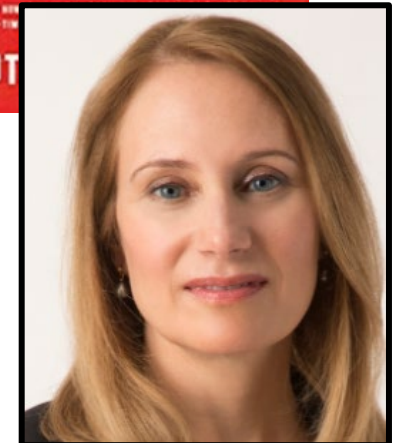
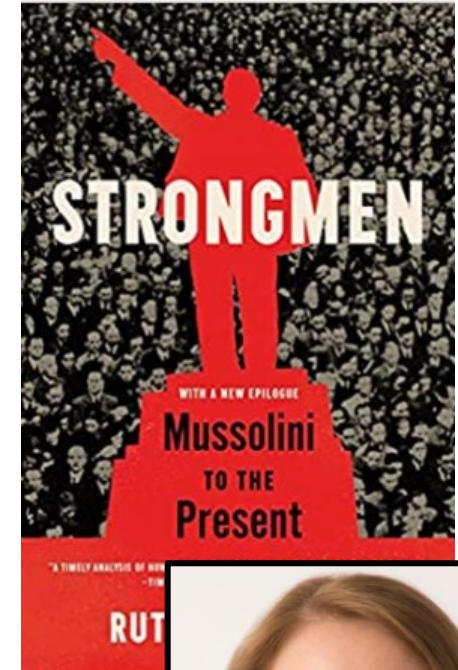
Recep Erdogan
TURKEY



Rodrigo Duterte
PHILIPPINES



Jair Bolsonaro
BRAZIL



Ruth Ben-Ghiat
N.Y.U.

Source: Strongmen, Ruth Ben-Ghiat, 2021

How Authoritarian Regimes Come to Power (since 1990)

1. A Coup (33%)
2. Incumbent Takeover (22%)
(authoritarianization)
3. An Insurgency (20%)
4. Foreign Power Imposition (16%)
5. Popular Uprising (8%)

These “new” authoritarians use a different approach to crippling a democracy.

New Authoritarian Ascents



Silvio Berlusconi
ITALY



Vladimir Putin
RUSSIA



Victor Orbán
HUNGARY



Narendra Modi
INDIA



Donald Trump
USA



Recep Erdoğan
TURKEY



Rodrigo Duterte
PHILIPPINES



Jair Bolsonaro
BRAZIL

1. They campaign using populist / fascist tactics and are legally elected to office.
2. Once in office, they focus on removing institutional and procedural checks on their power.
3. They use co-optation and intimidation to blunt citizen efforts to hold them to account.

The Incremental Nature of Authoritarianization

Authoritarianization

As with democratic backsliding more generally, the gradual nature of authoritarianization can make it difficult to identify.

Doing so requires attention to political developments taking place in many arenas.



Worrisome signs:

- 1. Placement of incumbent loyalists in high positions of power**
- 2. Attempt to take control of the media**
- 3. Manipulating electoral rules to favor the incumbent.**
- 4. Use of lawsuits and legislation to sideline civil society and opponents.**
- 5. Passing constitutional amendments to benefit the incumbent**

The “Populist” Playbook



The Populist aims to divide the nation into the “Real People” and the “enemies responsible for the nation’s ills.”

He claims he and only he can speak for “people” a group that excludes a large number of citizens with different identities.

He and only he can save the nation and restore to its once greatness!

His populist followers are imagined to be the moral soul of the nation, the founders, the “real” and only legitimate tribe. The “Moral Majority” or the “Silent Majority.”



The “Populist” Playbook



Authoritarian leaders can only succeed if they have **authoritarian followers**.

The Authoritarian Personality Trait

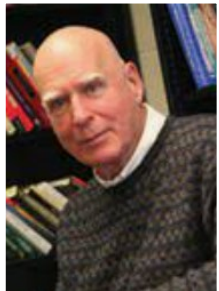
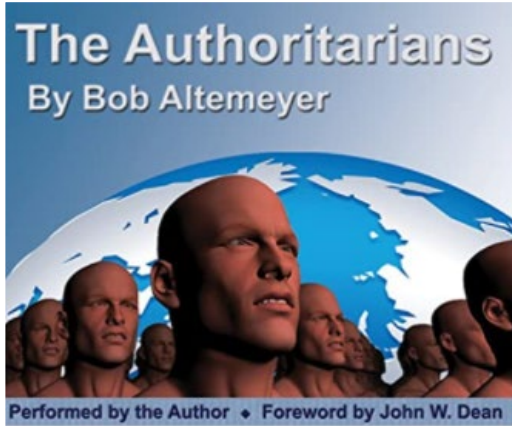
Elements of the Authoritarian Personality:

In [psychology](#), the **right-wing authoritarian (RWA)** is a [personality type](#) that describes somebody who is naturally submissive to their authority figures, acts aggressively in the name of said authorities, and is conformist in thought and behavior.

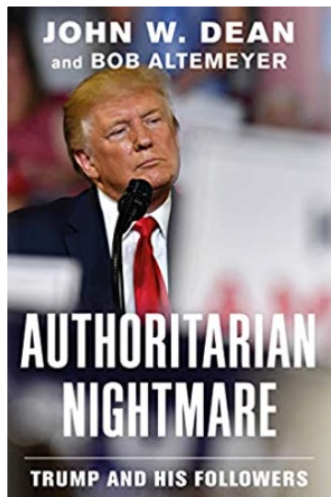
1. **Authoritarian Submission**
2. **Authoritarian Aggression**
3. **Conventionalism**



The Authoritarian Personality



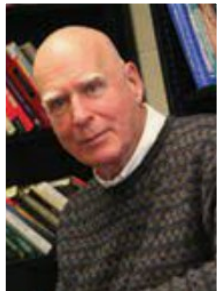
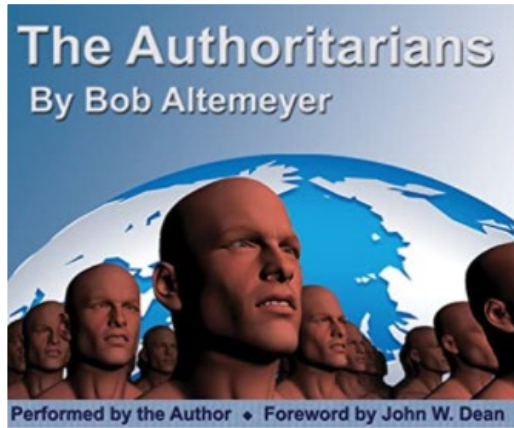
Bob Altemeyer
Book 2007



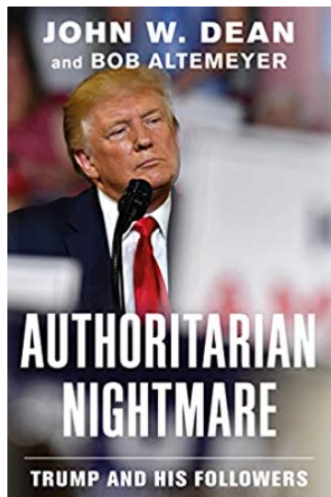
FINDINGS ABOUT RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISTS

1. Highly likely to be authoritarian followers.
2. Highly submissive to established authority.
3. Aggressive in the name of their authority.
4. Fearful and Self-righteous.
5. Conventional to the point of insisting that everyone else should behave as their authorities decide.
6. Have a lot of hostility in them that they readily direct towards various out-groups.
7. Easily incited and easily read.
8. Uninclined to think for themselves.
9. Largely impervious to facts and reason.
10. Rely on social support to maintain their beliefs.

The Authoritarian Personality



Bob Altemeyer
Book 2007



FINDINGS ABOUT RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISTS

11. Bring strong loyalty to their in-groups.
12. Use a lot of double-standards in their judgments.
13. Surprisingly unprincipled at times.
14. Have thick-walled compartmental minds
15. They are as close-minded as they are narrow-minded.
16. Surprisingly uninformed.
17. Teflon-coated when it comes to guilt.
18. Blind to themselves, ethnocentric and prejudiced.
19. Often uninformed about the things they believe in.
20. Deep down inside many have deep doubts about their core beliefs.
21. They are very happy, quite giving and zealous.

The “Populist” Playbook



Authoritarian Lawmakers and Freedom

You hear authoritarian leaders talk all the time about defending freedom . . .

But their vision of America seems quite different from that of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and most of the other framers of the Constitution.

Despite their pronouncements about freedom, high RWA lawmakers would like to pass laws that restrict freedom of the press, the right to protest, the right to privacy, the right to belong to political organizations of one’s choice, reproductive rights and certainly, freedom of religion.



Once in PowerAuthoritarian Playbook

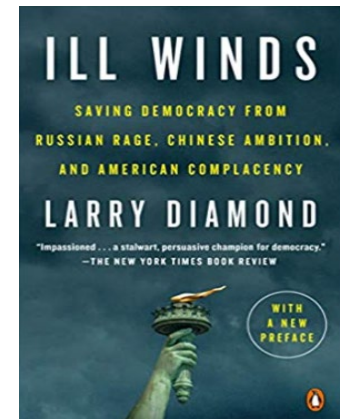
(“autocrats’ 12-step program”)

The Modern Method of Destroying a Democracy

1. *Demonize the opposition as illegitimate and unpatriotic.*
2. *Undermine the independence of the courts*
3. *Attack the media (“fake news”, enemy of the people).*
4. *Control public broadcasting (state propaganda network).*
5. *Impose stricter controls on the internet.*
6. *Subdue other elements of civil society (civic orgs, universities, and especially anticorruption and human rights groups).*
7. *Intimidate the business community.*
8. *Enrich a new class of crony capitalists (contracts, credit, etc.).*
9. *Assert control over civil service and security apparatus.*
10. *Gerrymander districts and rig electoral rules.*
11. *Gain control over the body that runs the elections.*
12. *Repeat steps 1 to 11, even more vigorously silencing resistance.*



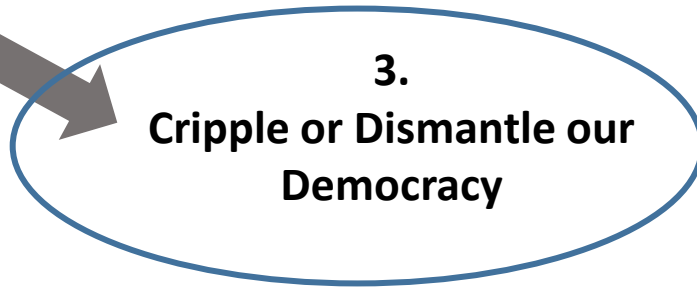
Larry Diamond
Stanford U.



2020

The GOP Chooses Authoritarianism

G O P



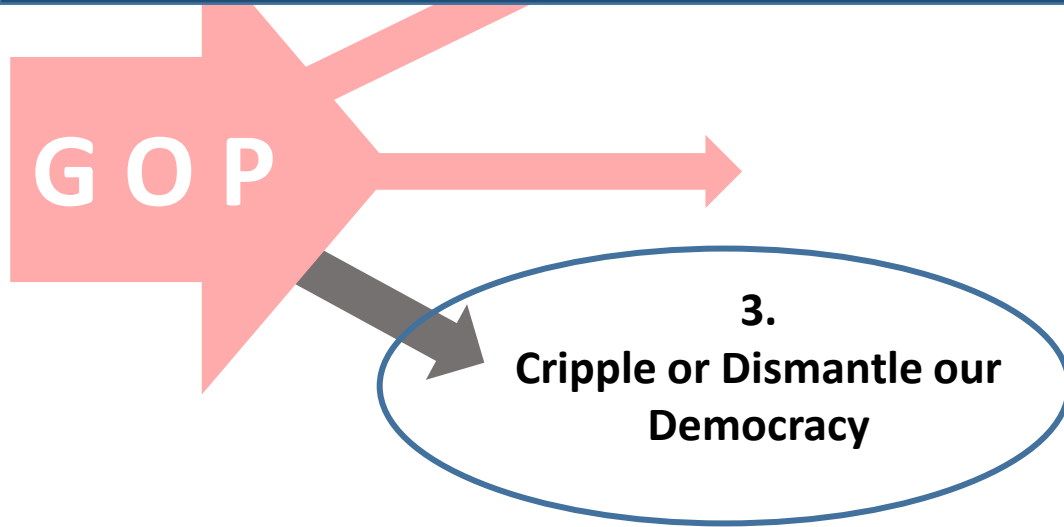
United Russia



Where Does this Strategy Take Us?

1. "Illiberal" Democracy *Think Hungary*
2. A "Personalist" Autocracy (built around Trump) *Think Putin / Russia*
3. Fascist State *Think Nazi Germany*

The GOP Chooses Authoritarianism



Where Does this Strategy Take Us?

1. “Illiberal” Democracy **Think Hungary**
2. A “Personalist” Autocracy (built around Trump) **Think Putin / Russia**
3. Fascist State **Think Nazi Germany**

“I mean, this is what authoritarian political movements do. I don't want to go rushing to the comparison to Italian fascism or German Nazis, but this is the kind of stuff that fascist parties did.

They glorified, defended, promoted violence. And violence is the path to power, so they became OK with it from top to bottom, from grassroots activists to voters to leaders. They became OK with violent seizures of power.

How else do you read Jan. 6 and the reaction, and now the glorification of Jan. 6, other than these guys are going to be OK with a violent seizure of power?”

Salon interview with Steve Levitsky – Oct 21, 2021

The GOP's Internal Fight for Defining the Authoritarian Model

Which authoritarian model will prevail?

G O P

1. Single / Dominant Party
2. Personalist
3. Military Dictatorship
4. Ruling Family (Monarchic)

Goal: Dominant Party Autocracy



Liz Cheney

- Is silent as states pass laws to corrupt elections
- Voted “no” on the John Lewis voting rights act
- Voted against HR-1, the “For the People Act”
- Voted with Trump 93% of the time during his presidency

Goal: Personalist Dictatorship



Trump

- Trump's obvious love for strongmen authoritarians
- Stated interest in “lifetime appointment”
- Trump's loyalty tests for his appointees
- Participation in corrupt schemes for personal enrichment.

A Road to Political Violence?

Political Violence

Harm or intimidation that effects who benefits from or can participate fully in political, economic or sociocultural life.

Risk Factors for Election Violence

1. A highly competitive election that could shift the balance of power
2. Partisan division based on identity
3. Electoral rules that enable winning by exploiting identity cleavage
4. Weak institutional restraints on violence (perpetrators not held accountable).

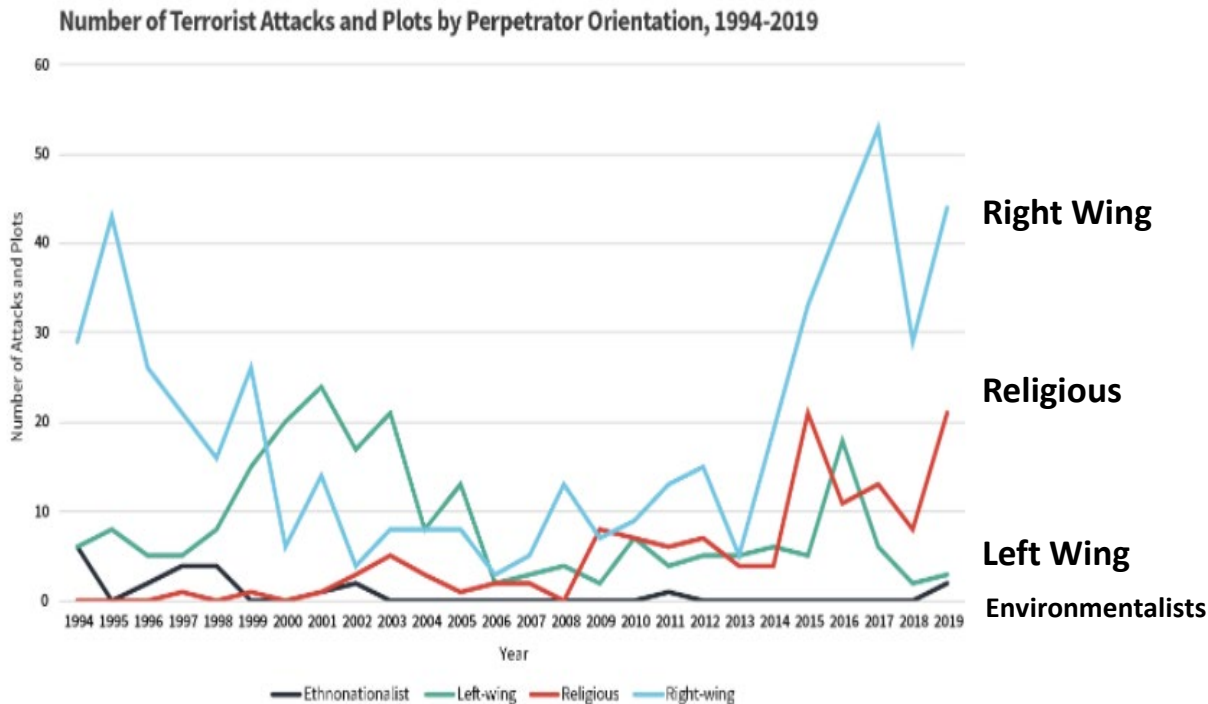


Rachel Kleinfeld
Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace

Source: *The Rise of Political Violence in the United States*; Rachel Kleinfeld - J. of Democracy, Oct. 2021

A Road to Political Violence?

Political Violence Risk Factors for Election Violence



Source: Data compiled by CSIS Transnational Threats Project.

Note: Attacks and plots perpetrated by individuals with other motives have been excluded from this figure for simplicity. There were six such events in the data set: one in 1994, three in 2003, one in 2005, and one in 2018. Data from 2020 is excluded from this figure because not enough time has elapsed to draw conclusions about annual trends.

CSIS | TRANSNATIONAL THREATS PROJECT



Rachel Kleinfeld
Carnegie Endowment for
International Peace

Source: *The Rise of Political Violence in the United States*; Rachel Kleinfeld - J. of Democracy, Oct. 2021

INTIMIDATION

State Capitol – Lansing Michigan April 30, 2020



**OPEN CARRY IS
POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

“Within metropolitan areas, there is no reason—zero—that a weapon should ever be carried openly. The purpose is always to intimidate—to frighten others away from their lawful rights, not only free speech and lawful assembly, but voting as well.”

Source: The Chilling Effect of Openly Displayed Firearms. – David Frum 2017

INTIMIDATION

State Capitol – Lansing Michigan April 30, 2020



**OPEN CARRY IS
POLITICAL VIOLENCE**

#6 – Beware of Paramilitaries

When the men with guns who have always claimed they are against the system start wearing uniforms and start marching with torches and pictures of the leader, the end is nigh . . .

When pro-leader paramilitary and the official police and military start to intermingle, the end has come.

Source: On Tyranny – Timothy Snyder, 2018

GOP Glorifying Violence



Ashli Babbitt
A Martyr?

Increasing the Risk of Violence

Permit-less Handgun Carry Bill Passed in Texas (2021)



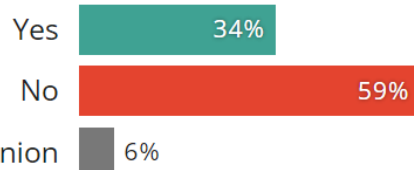
Gov Greg Abbott

60 % of Texans Oppose the Law

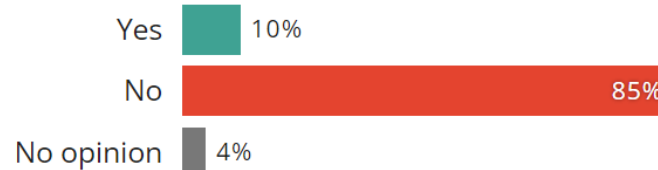
UT/TT POLL

Should adults be allowed to carry handguns in public without licenses or permits?

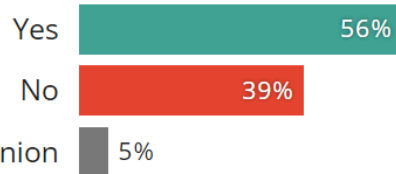
All



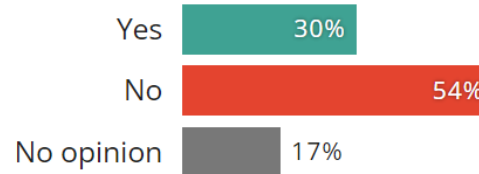
Democrats



Republicans



Independents



Young White Violent Men

October 26, 2021 - Newsweek

Charlie Kirk, Turning Point USA, taking questions at Nampa Civic Center in Idaho

Two Paths to Autocracy

1. Legislatively



2. Violently



Young White Violent Men

October 26, 2021 - Newsweek

“This is fascism . . . this is [medical] tyranny

When do we get to use the guns?”

No, that’s not a joke. Literally, where’s the line? How many elections are they going to steal before we kill these people?

Charlie Kirk, Turning Point USA, taking questions at Nampa Civic Center in Idaho

DO THEY UNDERSTAND CIVIL WAR?

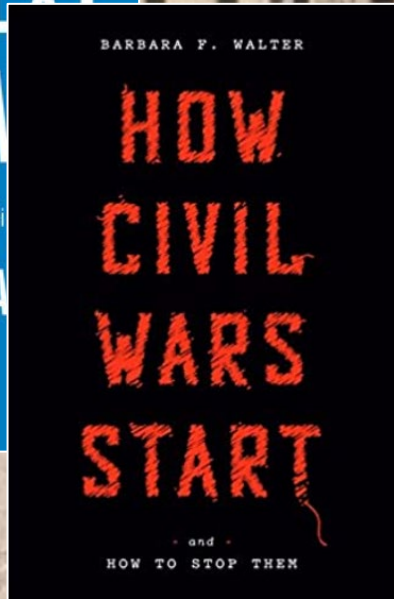
Civil War Definition

The technical definition of a civil war, according to the Center for the Study of Civil War at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo:

Civil strife: 25 deaths* / year
Civil war: 1,000 death / year

*= Politically Motivated

Source: The Next Civil War – Stephen Marche



Before
and
After

In Summary

The Republican Party has chosen its pathway for resolving the “Conservative Dilemma” in the United States . . . It has chosen to dismantle our democracy.

- 1. The GOP has decided it cannot compete in free-and-fair elections**
- 2. The Party has been captured by anti-democratic extremists.**
- 3. The GOP, its leaders and its appointees are coordinating and participating in the dismantling of our democracy.**
- 4. This “Trump” Party is determined to return Trump to power and establish a “Personalist Autocracy” even if violence is required.**
- 5. Powerful groups, including the 1%, corporations, banking, oil and gas industry, white nationalists and white evangelicals whose power in our society is threatened by growing democratic political activism is funding the autocratic movement.**

Citizen Voting Threatens Power Structure

So, What Can We
Do?

The Threat of Complacency

“ events at home and abroad have been a warning against **progressivist complacency**. History does not have an end; nor does it arc toward justice. Liberal democracy is not self-sustaining. It is a human achievement, not a historical inevitability.

Like every human creation, it can be weakened from within when those who support it do not rally to its cause.”



Source: *Anti-pluralism* – William Gaston, 2018

The Threat of Complacency

#13 - Practice Corporeal Politics

Power wants your body softening in your chair and your emotions dissipating on the screen.

- *“Protest can be organized through social media, but nothing is real that does not end on the streets.”*
- *“If tyrants feel no consequences for their actions in the three-dimensional world, nothing will change.”*



Timothy Snyder

ON TYRANNY

Twenty Lessons from
the 20th Century
(2017)

Are traditional political responses enough?

We certainly need to:

- **Double** our political donations this election cycle
- Continue to write letters to politicians and newspapers
- Demand suspension of the filibuster and passage of:
 - Freedom to Vote Act
 - John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act
 - Election Counting Act 1887 – Revision
- Attend and support political rallies for Democratic candidates

Republican Vulnerable

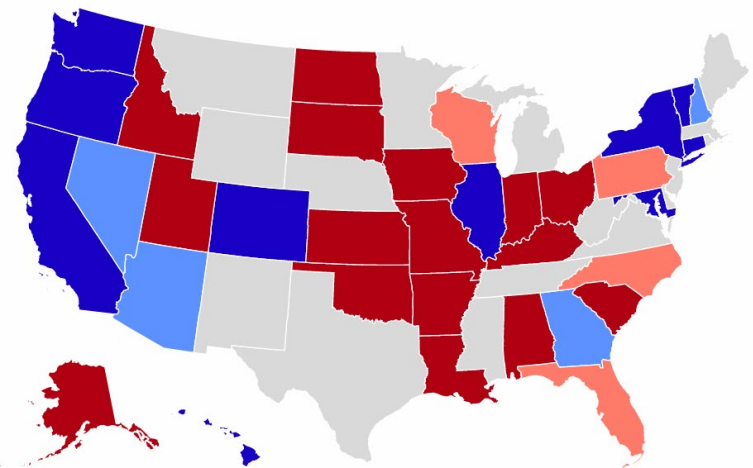
- Michigan
- Pennsylvania
- North Carolina
- Florida



Demings

Democrat Vulnerable

- Nevada
- Arizona
- Georgia
- New Hampshire



Note: Last updated November 11, 2021

Senate Races 2022

Source: Inside Elections with Nathan L. Gonzales
Graphic: Christopher Hickey, CNN

But We Need More Look Around Sarasota

Despite this clear and present danger to our democracy, if you walk or drive around . . .

1. There is no Street Level indication of this Crisis . . .
2. No Street Level show of support for Democracy
3. No Demand of our local GOP leaders and neighbors to commit to our Democracy



Approaching the
end of our
Democracy?

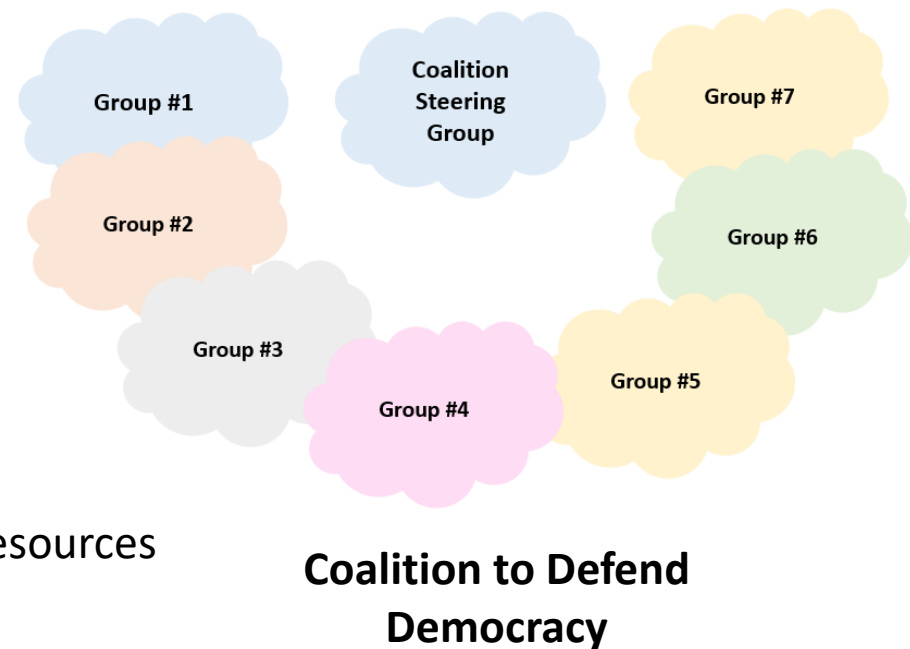


What's Missing in our Community is:

A Highly Visible Public Awareness Campaign in Support of Democracy

Democracy advocacy campaign using:

- Bumper stickers and pins
- Posters
- Print ads
- Print letters and articles
- Public rallies
- Speakers' bureau
- Citizen pledge
- Business pledge
- Public servant pledge
- Democracy & Human Rights document resources
- Autocracy learning resources
- Social Media connection / postings



What's Missing in our Community is:

A Highly Visible Public Awareness Campaign in Support of Democracy



Flood the Message: EVERYWHERE!

What's Missing in our Communities is:

A Florida Pledge to Defend Our Democracy



EXAMPLE



American
Friends
Service
Committee

Quaker Action for a Just World

I believe that everyone should have safe access to vote and that everyone's vote must be counted, without interference or intimidation. This is an essential human right and a core commitment of any healthy democracy.

- I **pledge to vote** if I am eligible to do so, and to stand against voter suppression in all its forms.
- I **pledge to nonviolently protest** to protect our democracy if election results are declared before all votes are counted.
- I **pledge to nonviolently protest** to protect our democracy if a duly elected official is denied a peaceful transfer of power.
- I **pledge to work nonviolently** to protect those in my community under threat from election related or white supremacist motivated violence.

Flood the Message

The Democracy Pledge For Companies

1. We affirm that the election of Joseph R. Biden and Kamala Harris was free, fair and legitimate.
2. We believe in valuing, affirming and supporting democracy, and are committed to doing so.
3. We recognize that the bedrock of any democracy is the people's right to choose their elected leaders. We will not support or endorse any legislation which makes it more difficult for people to exercise their constitutional right to vote.
4. We will not support, donate to or endorse politicians, political campaigns or political action committees that promoted false conspiracy theories surrounding the 2020 presidential elections (or otherwise acted in ways detrimental to our democracy).



Glenn Kirschner



EXAMPLE

Engage Independents & Republicans

We must engage our Republican neighbors, co-workers, relatives and friends . . .

Are they really ready to give up our democracy?



Engage these guys



Not these guys . . .

Engage Independents & Republicans

We must engage our Republican neighbors, co-workers, relatives and friends . . .

Are they really ready to give up our democracy?



STARTERS ?

1. "I am very worried about the future of our democracy . . ."
2. "Aren't you deeply worried that once lost, it will be very difficult to regain our democracy?"
3. "Autocratic governments, like that in Russia, are incredibly corrupt and frequently violent . . . why would we want to go there?"
4. "We need a sane Republican Party dedicated to democracy and willing to participate in policy debates. Is the GOP forever lost to extremists?"
5. "Do you agree we must stop the autocratic arm of the GOP from taking power? They appear intent on violently destroying our democracy."

What Will You Do to Defend Democracy?



UKRANIAN SOLDIER

Start by Identifying Yourself as a Pro-Democracy (non-violent) Warrior

1. Wear a Pro-Democracy Pin
2. Put a Pro-Democracy Sticker on your Car
3. Sign the Pro-Democracy Pledge
4. Put a Pro-Democracy Poster in your place of Business
5. Show Up at Pro-Democracy Rallies

Bumper stickers and pins won't change many minds of the opposition . . . But asking people to display them is an "activation" step needed to get them to **leave the safety of the sidelines.** Get them to take a public stand on protecting democracy.

A Challenge

We need 40 donors to each contribute \$5,000 towards a plan to create a “Democracy Protection Coalition” and begin by flooding Sarasota County with pro-democracy messaging (posters, bumper stickers, buttons and newspaper ads)

Message

- **Defend Our Democracy**
- **Warn of Autocracy**
- **Individual Pledge to Defend Our Democracy**
- **Business Pledge to Defend Our Democracy**
- **Confront our Republican colleagues and Political Leaders**



Democracy Protection Coalition (Draft Concept)

Purpose (DRAFT)

- Coordinate pro-democracy public messaging
- Provide public education on democracy and authoritarianism
- Provide resources for a pro-democracy campaign
- Support pro-democracy candidates
- Expose anti-democratic leaders and candidates
- Prepare for non-violent resistance / protests (coup response plan)

ition
ering
oup

Group #7

Group #6

Group #5

4

DISCUSSION

dale.p.anderson@gmail.com