

# COMMON SENSE II

Capitalizing on the familiarity and influence of Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" pamphlets that provided American colonists with exposure to the conversation of great thinkers in the pre-Revolutionary period, this paper assumes the name COMMON SENSE II. Similarly, today's series of pamphlets strives to give a direct response to great political events and ideas of our time.

July 2020

Independence Issue

Vol. 15 Issue 7

## Rededication to Democracy

By Bob Passi

The beginnings of our nation are annually celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. It is also a time to revisit, reconsider, and rededicate ourselves to the basic principles and ideas of the Declaration of Independence first publicly read on July 4, 1776.

That Declaration of Independence was the very heart of the American Revolution. It was the basis of the democracy formed to replace English tyranny and its rule by an aristocratic elite.

We have sometimes been less than faithful to some of the principles of that declaration. However, over the last half century, culminating in the excesses of the last four years, we have watched a consistent dismantling of our democracy, our basic governance, our sense of justice, community and any sense of equality. We have witnessed the basic structures built to protect our citizens and our basic democracy abandoned to be replaced by structures built only to keep an economic aristocracy permanently in power.

Let's revisit some of the segments of that declaration:

It first declared that human beings have "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness....That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,...That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient

causes; and accordingly, all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security."

It identified fundamental problems that would require change such as: "abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments..."

It also identified what makes a poor ruler: "A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the

ruler of a free People." It identified a dysfunctional government:

Declaration of Independence: Main Ideas	Jen Paley
• All men are created equal and have natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.	ruler of a free People." It identified a dysfunctional government:
• It is the government's obligation to protect these rights.	
• If a government fails to protect these rights, the people can revolt and set up a new government.	

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"They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity."

Finally, there is the call to action: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

This is a document about making a necessary and fundamental change when conditions become too intolerable and unjust for the human hope for democracy to survive.

To paraphrase another old saying, "Now is the time for all citizens to come to the aid of their country."

The only question is how applicable is all of this to our current situation?

# The Case for Interdependence

By Vicki Andrews

Dependence means relying or depending on someone else. Obviously, young children and pets are dependent on parents or owners to provide food, shelter, and other necessities.

Independence means not relying on or being controlled by anyone else. It means we are individuals and can provide for our own self, take care of our own self, and be responsible for our own self.

Interdependence means that we can care for ourselves, but we are willing to accept assistance when needed and to help others as we can. It implies a connection with others and a responsibility for others, whether family, friends, or strangers.

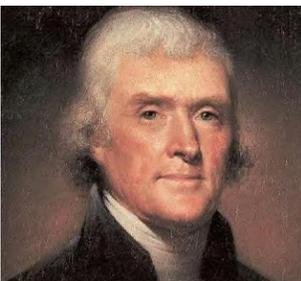


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The Declaration of Independence is a formal statement written by Thomas Jefferson announcing the independence of the thirteen original colonies from England. It was formally adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Its primary goals were to rally the troops, win foreign allies, and to announce the creation of a new country. ([www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov))

Perhaps the most famous statement in the document is “All men are created equal, they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these

are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Over the years we have struggled with the rights of women, the rights of people of color, the rights to those in poverty, the rights of immigrants. Many people have worked tirelessly



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for equal rights and opportunities for all, and we are still struggling with these concepts to this day.

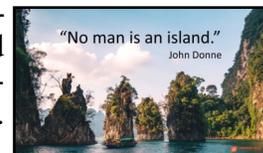
We have reached a time in history where we must also consider if being independent is a worthwhile goal or if we need to also accept the need for interdependence. When I was a child, I couldn't wait to “grow up” and be able to do whatever I wanted. Life would be great when I was truly independent and free. I learned—as

most of us do—that being independent isn't all it seems. We live in a world with many other people, and there are requirements if we want to live together in harmony. We need to pay our bills, to care for our children and others who depend on us, and we need to learn to cooperate both in our personal and our public lives. Along with learning that people are born into different circumstances and are not equal in possessions, abilities, and opportunities comes the realization that we are not as independent as we once thought.

In modern times it has become even more difficult for countries to be independent. We depend on trade with each other for essentials as well as for luxuries. In these days of unimaginably destructive weapons, we need to learn the need to work together for peace. We need to learn to collaborate to control dangerous diseases and viruses that can spread throughout the world, causing illness and death to millions as well as to work together on prevention and cures. We also need to realize that we need to work together and to cooperate to protect our planet and all its inhabitants from the danger of climate change and destruction.

We are hopefully beginning to realize that the people and the countries of our world are all interconnected and interdependent; we need to accept this and learn to work together to resolve the problems facing us in order to have a safe and livable planet for us, for all creatures, for all the world. If we can't accept this and work together, we—and our children and grandchildren—will face a dire and disastrous future.

John Donne said, “No man is an island, entire of himself.” We now need to realize that no country is an island in this day and age, even a country that is surrounded by water. Interdependence is an essential fact of modern life that we must learn to live with and honor.



<https://leadershipfreak.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/no-man-is-an-island.jpg?w=620&h=363>



<https://loristillman.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/pebble-in-pond.jpg>

People say, what is the sense of our small effort? They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. A pebble cast in a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words, and deeds is like that. No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do.

Dorothy Day

## Wouldn't It Be Great!

By Jack Pick

I've had it. I'm ready for the end of division in our country and for getting back to Washington doing its job of working for the benefit of people—all the people.

As a starter:

### Caring

- ♦ Wouldn't it be wonderful if a great many folks including our elected representatives could become more caring for others, regardless of their current political persuasion?

### Healthcare

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if we could all be guaranteed all the healthcare we need and at a lower cost than we currently pay, leaving more money for other things we may want or need?

### Education

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if quality, affordable, debt-free education were available to all who choose it?

### Safety

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if we could always feel safe and secure from gun violence?

### Infrastructure

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if infrastructure progress in all its forms was currently underway, providing the associated benefits and job creation?

### Environment

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if our local and global environment were receiving the attention needed to curb the warming of our planet for ourselves and future generations?

### Global Cooperation

- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if our elected representatives were working toward global cooperation and shared objectives to create a better nation and world?

### Equal Voting Rights

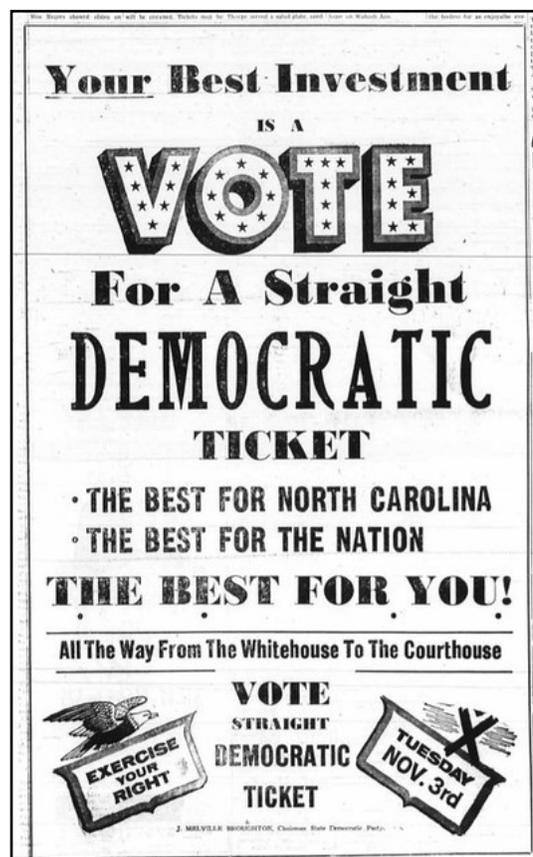
- ♦ Wouldn't it be great if all could vote with equal opportunity?

For progress to be made in any and all these areas our nation needs to shift a little more toward the left in its politics. The current reality of one political party blindly signing on to a Washington extreme right ideology is destroying our country morally and is isolating our country from the world.

If I may be a little partisan here, to even begin to

realize progress in the areas listed above, regardless of our current political leanings or tradition, we need to vote "D." Opportunities abound in both our state senate districts and our federal Congressional District 8. I leave it up to the reader to become familiar with the candidates who seek these positions. They are all profoundly qualified.

Do become a knowledgeable voter, and do vote. Your vote is the most important vote there is because it belongs to you alone. We are each uniquely responsible for our choices.



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*COMMON SENSE II* is published by the Itasca Progressive Caucus in Grand Rapids, Minnesota

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## We Need Each Other Quite Desperately

By Bob Passi

*"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive." Dalai Lama*

On *CBS Sunday Morning* July 19<sup>th</sup>, there was a segment about the career of Louis Gossett, Jr., a veteran black actor. At the end of the interview, when commenting about the current situation in the US, he said, "We need each other quite desperately, for our mutual salvation."



I thought that comment cut through all the rhetoric and the political spin of the present moment to go to the very heart of our apparent dilemma. I say "apparent dilemma" because it is so easy to see a solution once you step outside the limiting boxes of ideology, economics, and politics. Once we get out of the fog of the current environment of political partisanship and economic tussling, we can see that we are confronted with a universal challenge to the human race: a pandemic that is very devastating and deadly to human beings. A reasonable response would be to join together to deal with the common challenge and pool our resources, our intelligence, our science, and our human energy to find workable universal solutions.

The pandemic has erased all our pretensions about the significance of artificial distinctions of age, gender, race, nationality, party affiliation, lifestyle, economic or political status, ideology or religion. It has made it abundantly clear that we, as human beings, are in this together and will find solutions faster and more effectively if we work together.

As we have experienced the nation coming to nearly a complete stop, we watched the understandable but heartwarming sight of people coming out to help each other, not only just their own kind, but all who needed it. Despite all the recent propaganda about everyone being individually responsible for what happens to them and being expected to make it on their own, the default human position is for hearts to go out to suffering human beings and to respond with whatever is available. The human spirit rose, phoenix-like from the ashes of the failures of our economic system, our lack of much of a national public health response, and even a lack of leadership on the national level. Compassion and helpfulness simply took over.



<https://static.miniheze.org/allthetropes/wiki/sc/Phoenix.jpg>

Then George Floyd was killed while in police custody in Minneapolis, bringing our national issues of entrenched racial injustice to the forefront

again; this was on top of the problems of those citizens on the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder who were receiving little help or support dealing with the disruptions of COVID-19. All this was within an environment of growing income inequality and the tax changes relieving corporations and the wealthiest individuals of the tax burden necessary to deal with such social disruption. This was further evidence of a system failing the society it was supposed to be serving.

The trends are continuing ever downward as we stay the course with this neoliberal economic engine. This economic engine is dependent on monetizing the resources of the planet without regard for consequences and without consideration of sustainability or renewal. The result is that life forms and the planet itself are fed into this economic juggernaut to fuel it. It turns those resources into wealth that goes to those who control that machine.

To serve that machine, everything and everyone in an attempt to survive in that world is chained to that economic machine, continuing to feed it and trying to satisfy its ravenous appetites. The planet is being sacrificed. The life forms on the planet are being sacrificed. Democratic societies are being sacrificed. Human beings are being sacrificed while the wealth that is produced goes to a smaller and smaller elite on the top.

What has been created is a system of mass destruction of resources, mass production of products from that destruction and then mass consumption to create a need for more resources in a vicious circle. It is held in place by the mass illusions continually presented by the propaganda of a carefully controlled mass communication network. We live in a world of mass surveillance, under threat for a resistance under a government controlled by that small economic elite with its access to the courts, the police and the military, not to mention the secretive governmental agencies.



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All of this becomes clearer and clearer as we experience the world created by that system which leaves ordinary people without support in a crisis like the pandemic. Of course, there is the looming new realities we must face to meet the challenges of global climate change.

When the pandemic stopped that neoliberal economic engine in its tracks, all of its shortcomings and weaknesses were fully exposed. People were left with only each other to rely on in the final analysis.

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

Now, while the system has stopped, when all of its failings are exposed, **“We need each other quite desperately, for our mutual salvation.”** We cannot allow an old and dysfunctional system to restart and continue to chain us back to that same economic machine and to a short dystopian future—to a system that is willing to sacrifice all of life to fuel its dark intensions.

We must remember our human underpinnings of community and compassion. We must break away from that old system and reestablish a humane, sustainable democracy if we are to create a path to our own salvation.

It is our future, and we need to unite to create a viable alternative to an old and destructive, dying system, replacing it with a new system to provide a humane, viable, and hopeful future.



## Real Economics

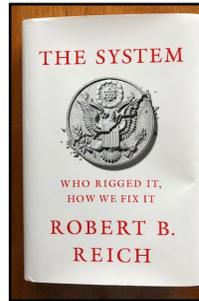
By Valerie Conner

Frequent readers of these pages are familiar with Bob Passi’s comments on neoliberal economics and the emerging oligarchy in this country. Robert B. Reich addresses that very topic in *The System: Who Rigged It, How We Fix It*. My recollection of the 1980s is that suddenly the theory was that anybody with an MBA could run any business without knowing anything about that particular industry. It was all about satisfying the shareholders at the end of the quarter. Long range planning and good corporate citizenship no longer mattered.

Reich’s analysis fits in with this recollection. He explains that concern for stakeholders morphed into concern only for the shareholders. He defines stakeholders in a company to include all the workers, not just those with keys to the executive washrooms, the communities in which the companies operate—often at the largesse of local tax breaks—and even the customers.

He says that it’s no longer a matter of Right vs. Left but of Haves and Have-nots. Corporate welfare advantages the Haves while the rest of us endure harsh capitalism. When the playing field is no longer even remotely level, democracy doesn’t stand much of a chance.

Reich acknowledges that major CEOs such as Jaimie Dimon, whose phone call to Reich started this response, have legitimate responsibilities to their shareholders and can be threatened by corporate raiders. But he doesn’t think that it’s too late. Democracy can make a comeback if the people, including the Jamie Dimons of this economy, insist upon it. The question remains, how late is too late?



<https://www.onecommunityglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/love-and-connection-header.jpg>

## Name Is Empathy

By Nancy Rudd

I have loved you with all my heart, Grieved for you with all my soul. What name is given to me? My name is empathy.	My name is empathy. It is said that God is love. What a good world This would be If you lived in me. My name is empathy.
Don't shoot. I can't breathe! Most of us are immigrants. Because I have darker skin, You have forgotten me. My name is empathy.	I have loved you with all my heart, Grieved for you with all my soul. What name is given to me? My name is empathy.
Walk my talk. Live my ideals. Work with me. My name is empathy.	We can't live with inequality. It is strangling so many. Let us change our country. My name is empathy.
Even the homeless Have their story. Listen!	

## My Pledge

By Deanna Ensley

Long ago I amended the Pledge of Allegiance to what I believe to be true by modifying the ending to “one nation under God, indivisible,” deleting “with liberty and justice for all.” My experience as a leader in the Boy Scout organization showed me that there is no “liberty and justice for all.” It was about that time many years ago that I felt my first real sense of patriotism. It may have been about the same time when I actually realized my white privilege. Up until then I just knew I did not have to be concerned about unfair treatment in general. Being of the age to have watched the Viet Nam War on TV night after night plus having a high school classmate killed in that war, I knew I did not support war. I have always considered myself a team player concerned about the good of the order and done a lot of volunteer work. That is my definition of Socialism.

I also call myself a civil servant. I worked 34 years for the State of Washington. I often explain my overly exuberant volunteering is the result of being a natural born civil servant and furthermore it's my purpose for being on Earth. I call my civil service my patriotism. I have not been a red, white, and blue promoter; I have not promoted the military in general. I used to think the military was a decent start for young people who may need some discipline to get motivated, but I changed my mind as it seems military service just means the finest young people have been sent to senseless wars only to be returned maimed or dead. This for the benefit of the defense contractors.

In my retirement I returned to a low wage job taking care of disabled people. It was not my career, but it offers reasonably priced health insurance and gives me the satisfaction of being an essential worker. For the protection of the people I serve as well as for myself, I have to wear a mask. I find that reasonable and don't really consider it particularly “patriotic.” When I heard Trump comment that wearing a mask was his patriotism, I found that pathetically humorous. Patriotism is a devotion to and the vigorous support for one's country. He thinks that his patriotism is showing a minimal concern for other citizens' lives at long last—not for non-citizens, that would be pushing his humanity.

He's not the only one who seems to have a



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

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skewed concept of patriotism. Along with Trump, whose actions in Portland indicate, other people also state that peaceful protesting is unpatriotic. Peaceful protesting is what our nation was built on and is how people who **are not being heard** can express their concerns. When people express their concerns for the country with peaceful protesting, they show a patriotic concern for the people who are not being heard by all. One of the finest Americans of recent times, John Lewis, died recently. Lewis as a civil rights leader protested from the time he was a young man until very recently as an aged US Congressman. He was called the conscience of the Congress. Conscience is the inner self acting as a guide to the rightness or wrongness of one's behavior. Peaceful protest is what people like John Lewis as an African American have had to do to express the wrongness of how many underrepresented people are treated by some “patriotic” Americans. John Lewis, who for decades stood up for what he believed, was a true patriot.

Right now, what our country is lacking is many recognizable examples of patriots. Certainly there are some such as John Lewis and many in the armed services, but most are not high profile enough to be made national examples. The people in the military must deal with the horrible example of their Commander-in-Chief. Trump is so dedicated to self he can rarely express dedication or devotion to little else and then without credibility. He is out for himself. His dedication to our country is only for what good it provides for himself and his family. Any time it appears he may have changed his focus and is thinking of the good of his fellow citizens, it is only because someone finally impressed upon him that is the way he may win votes; it is never out of any concern for any of us. Patriots are dedicated to the good of the country not solely to what is good for them personally.

Patriots can see and consider greater good. Patriotism is not just operating for cause or belief. Patriotism can show devotion to support for their that country represent President Joe



<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-9zZ5174Uc2E/TBhmEDZGL0I/AAAAAAAAABWY/>

Biden recently noted about Trump, “For all his bluster about his expertise on the economy, he's unable to explain how he'll actually help working families hit the hardest [by the pandemic]. You know, he's quit on you, and he's quit on this country, but this election is not just about him. It's about you. It's about what we'll do, what a President's supposed to do.” Especially, if he or she were a patriot, I might add.

# Reflections on Our Holiday

By Valerie Conner

This month, as does every July, started off with the joy of The Fourth. Our forefathers were farsighted when they signed the Declaration of Independence in the middle of summer so we could usually be assured of good weather for celebrating.

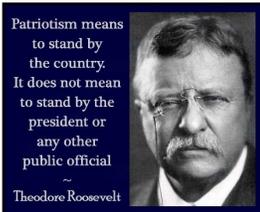
This has been a tough year with little relief in sight. It was good to have a day to reflect on where we've come from as a nation. Unfortunately we also could reflect on the possibility that it may have been the last true Independence Day. Let us hope that both reflections encourage us to treasure our freedoms and aspirations and determine to keep and improve them.

In these politically divisive times, we can't even seem to agree upon what constitutes patriotism. Patriotism is usually understood to be love of country. That love is exhibited by adhering to the social contract, supporting the country's principles, fighting in her wars if necessary, obeying laws, and not undermining her in favor of another country.

Chauvinism is patriotism taken to such an extreme that it is no longer patriotism. The best description of chauvinism is the attitude of "my country, right or wrong, my country." This blind-eye-to-her-faults approach hinders us in becoming a better nation. If we don't see what needs to be improved, we can't work on improving. This summer's pro-



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<http://www.unwclcomeguests.net/images/1/11/111.jpg>

tests make a good illustration. Some people think protesting is wrong and unpatriotic; others know that in this country protesting has a long and honorable history. Dissent is not an expression of disloyalty but rather an expression of a desire for improvement. If we cannot criticize, we cannot with a clear eye see where we fall short of our nation's aspirations.

Trump's reaction to the protests and demonstrations shows him to purport to be a patriot but really is closer to being a chauvinist—except that would mean he really believes in this country. Demonstrations and peaceful protests are part of our First Amendment rights of assembly and free speech. Often, however, those protests get out of hand. Sometimes that happens when outside agitators show up with their own agenda to cause or solicit violence. The next step is rioting.

Notice I said violence can be either caused or solicited. Trump's walk in Lafayette Park on June 1<sup>st</sup> and the federal troops in Portland are cases of law "enforcement" starting the fight, soliciting the violence. Trump as an outside agitator wants the violence so he can be the Big Man and control the situation with a heavy hand. Instead he comes off as a would-be autocrat who has no understanding of the right of freedom of expression. He is making things worse for the situation, for the demonstrators, for the future respect for law enforcement, and for himself.

With a clear-eyed understanding of where we risk going in this country, we can rescue our country from impending tyranny in the voting booth this fall so we can have another celebration next Fourth of July.



[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fb/President\\_Trump\\_Visits\\_St.\\_John%27s\\_Church.jpg/300px-President\\_Trump\\_Visits\\_St.\\_John%27s\\_Church.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fb/President_Trump_Visits_St._John%27s_Church.jpg/300px-President_Trump_Visits_St._John%27s_Church.jpg)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Tuesdays 2:00-5:00	DFL Headquarters
Itasca Progressive Caucus (259-4490)	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
DFL Central Committee Meets	4th Monday	DFL Headquarters
DFL Social Club & Lunch	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
DFL Pot Luck (Open to the Public)	Suspended	DFL Headquarters
Working Families Alliance	Suspended	Dutchroom
Earth Circle	Suspended	GR Public Library
Circles of Support	Suspended	811 NE 4th St. GR
Haven: A Place for All	Suspended	Kiesler Center
Deadline for <i>Common Sense II</i>	August 11, 2020	conray@arvig.net