

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.

August 2020

Voting Issue

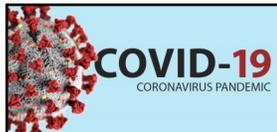
Vol. 15 Issue 8

Environmental Issues Which Party "Gets It"?

By Eric Grimsrud

We have always been confronted with issues concerning our physical environment, but today two stand out above all others: the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus (CV) and our changing planetary conditions caused by global warming (GW). These two issues will have profound and long-lasting effects on all aspects of our future and, if not solved, will render all aspects of life on this planet exceedingly problematic.

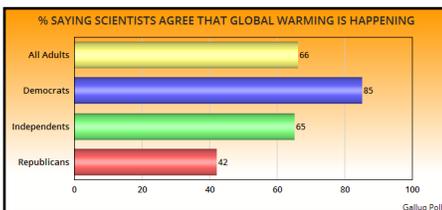
In addressing both of these issues, we have recently seen two very different approaches favored by our two political parties. The Democrats have tended to favor approaches that take into consideration the predictions of modern science, even though they don't always follow those guidelines to their full extent. For example, the Democrats believe that we must drastically reduce our future emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) while also recognizing the financial difficulties associated with doing that. Fossil fuels are both cheap and abundant. The Republicans, on the other hand, deal with this problem by simply denying the validity of our predominant scientific literature. That is, they tend to believe



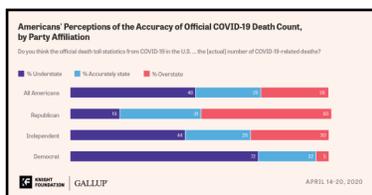
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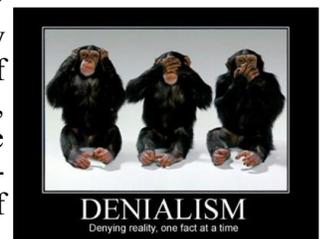
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that that additional CO₂ we are adding to our atmosphere does not have a significant effect on the Earth's temperature, as proclaimed by the preponderance of modern scientific literature.

Similarly, concerning the issue of the CV, the Democrats have tended to follow the advice of our scientific community while the Republicans and Trump, their leading spokesperson, have tended to downplay the predictions of modern science and embrace a view that almost exclusively considers only the effects of any action on our economy.

In assessing which of these distinctly different approaches to our environmental problems is the better one, we now can already clearly see which has been superior in addressing the CV problem. By ignoring the advice of our scientific experts, the policies implemented by the Republicans of the USA have been disastrous—we now have not only a virus pandemic on our hands but also one of the very worst financial depressions in modern history. At the same time, following the advice of the scientific community, many other countries have done much better and have avoided the pandemic we now face.

In answering the question posed in the title of this piece, need I say more? Only the Democratic Party takes the mature field of science seriously and, therefore, is the only one within our two party system that has a chance of addressing our environmental issues effectively.



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In view of the fact that both of the issues highlighted here are currently the most important on the table, it is clear that we really have only one choice. Nothing less than the future of mankind demands that Democrats be brought into positions of leadership in November.

Yes, Things Really Can Get Worse!

By Vicki Andrews

We often hear of the importance of elections, especially Presidential elections. In the past we have even heard people say, “This is the most important election of our lifetime.” I would like to say with all due respect, “No, those were not the most important elections, but this one in 2020 definitely is.”

When Donald Trump won the election in 2016 and became the 45th President, I was disappointed and saddened but not really surprised. I had seen some of his rallies on television and saw the enthusiasm of his many supporters; I had also seen something more troubling: their anger and distaste for those who opposed them.

All over the country the division that had risen during the campaign seems to have grown and deepened during his time in office. We see it on the news, in clashes between groups from New York to California, from

Alabama to Washington. Minnesota has had its share, and our quiet little town of Grand Rapids has had some clashes between the Indivisible/Black Lives Matter supporters and a local ultra-conservative group.

I have seen anger and hostility in our country before, including during the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War protests, and the protests against war with Iraq and Afghanistan. I’ve never seen such deep anger and virulent hostility,



<https://www.pressenza.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/>

with no apparent attempt to bridge the gap and come together. I think this is a least partially due to Trump’s negative attitude toward anyone who disagrees with him as well as his obvious contempt for those on the “other side.” This also is demonstrated in his attitude toward people of other religions such as Muslims and people from other countries such as Mexicans.

The increased anger and hostility is one reason I believe Trump needs to lose this election. Another serious concern is the withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, which includes federal

policies meant to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and lessen the disastrous effects of climate change. His attacks on the Affordable Care Act have led to the loss of healthcare for many throughout the country.

On many issues he seems to believe “It’s my way or the highway” and sets his own agenda without consulting or listening to the experts in the field. This has been obvious in the incredible spread and lethality of COVID-19 in our country; he hasn’t seemed to grasp the seriousness of this terrible situation and has handled it badly from the start.

I imagine that most people reading *Common Sense II* plan on voting for Joe Biden, but I think this is a



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/51/Biden_Harris_logo.svg/1200px-Biden_Harris_logo.svg.png

year when we all have to work a little harder to elect the Biden/Harris ticket as well as Democrats for other offices. Just think what power

Senate Majority Leader McConnell wielded in stopping Obama’s agenda and continues to prevent necessary legislation. Voting is great, but—especially this year—it’s just not enough.

Please stop by your local DFL office and see how you can get involved. Put up yard signs, do some phone banking, or send out postcards. This is an election Democrats simply must win. The consequences of another term for Donald Trump are too frightening—for ourselves, for our country, and for the world.

In the words of Michelle Obama in her speech at the Democratic Convention on August 17, 2020, “If you think things can’t possibly get worse, trust me, they can, and they will if we don’t make a change this election.”



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/>

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A Third Party Spoiler? Maybe, Maybe Not!

By Nancy Rudd

Until August a third party spoiler in the upcoming election seemed ridiculous. Yes, there are all of those other parties that are always on the ballot. Kanye West, who suffers from bipolar disorder, is an Emmy winning rapper, musician, and entrepreneur. He is also a friend of Trump and a non-voter. He decided he was going to run for President on July 4, 2020 and announced it on Twitter. He is running as an independent but calls his party the Birthday Party. His pick for Vice President is Michelle Tidball, a Biblical Life Coach from Wyoming.

In 2016 some of those who liked Bernie Sanders voted for Jill Stein of the Green Party. She received 1.07% of the popular vote even though she



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was not on the ballot in all states. Others voted for the Libertarian Party candidate, Gary Johnson, who was popular with younger white voters; he received 3.27% of

the vote, the largest Libertarian Party vote ever. He pulled votes from both major candidates. These were the two 2016 spoilers, but there really hasn't been another spoiler in the era of social media. By spoiler, I mean a minor party candidate who does well enough to draw enough votes from a major party candidate to perhaps make a difference in the outcome.

As of August, West was on the ballot in three states: Colorado, Oklahoma, and Vermont. Republican operatives are

helping Kanye West get on general election ballots. In Wisconsin on August 4th at nearly the filing deadline, a long-time Republican lawyer



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with ties to the state Republican and the Trump campaign dropped the required number of signatures at Wisconsin's election board. The signatures still need to be verified, which will take about a month, but irregularities have already been found.

Wisconsin has become a battleground state. In 2016, had those who voted for Jill Stein voted instead for Hillary Clinton, Clinton would have won the state with over a 10,000 vote margin. Instead,

Trump won Wisconsin by about the same amount. This year West is working with Republican operatives to be the spoiler. They are trying to get him on the ballot in Arkansas and Ohio.

Some think that Kanye West will appeal to Black voters. Flashback to Jesse Ventura in Minnesota when young voters came out in favor of someone they knew and liked. This is what some think West could do in Wisconsin. He won't win, but Democrats need young people from 18-35, women, and people of color to win the Presidency. This is how Democrats have won the Presidency except twice since the election of JFK. Whether West will prove to be a spoiler remains to be seen, the behind the scene support he's receiving from some Republicans shows some think he might.



Trump at 74 years old is visibly failing in his speech and reactions. Yet he is trying to paint Joe Biden as old, decrepit, and feeble. Biden doesn't really make as many gaffes as people think. He has always had a problem with stuttering. He's worked hard to overcome it, but maybe he should talk about this more. Along with the empathy that he shows to people who have lost loved ones in this pandemic ridden time he would appeal to those who have worked hard to overcome such obstacles in their own lives.

The Trump campaign seems to realize intuitively that Biden is the better candidate, which is why they are trying to cheat their way to victory by such tactics as supporting a third party spoiler. Instead of waging a campaign based on what this country needs, they are undermining their opponent.

Contrast this with Biden who at age 77 has picked Kamala Harris, age 55, as his running mate. By picking a woman of color, he has shown that he is a man not afraid of embracing the future instead of lamenting "the good old days that never were." We have yet to learn how this will play out. We do know that the Democratic Party Platform won't be as progressive as many Sanders supporters would like, but we do know it will be more progressive than the Republican Party Platform. Those inclined to vote for a spoiler candidate to express their disappointment in the Democrats' pick need to remind themselves that a Biden Presidency would probably have enough shirttails to help more progressive policies win. With Trump, we know how regressive things will continue to get.

First Things First

By Bob Passi

Democracy is the very heart of this nation. The United States of America was the first modern democracy and a beacon of hope to all oppressed people: the used, abused, and exploited of the world. It is government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The people meaning all the citizens, not an elite few or an aristocracy of wealth.

Our domestic struggle has always been between those who believed in governance by an aristocracy of wealth and power and those who believed in governance by the people—democracy. One side believed that wealth and social status entitled them to be the natural leaders, and others believed that the ordinary people were capable of governing themselves and mapping out their own futures. Although those who believed in a ruling aristocracy often paid lip service to democracy, beneath the surface it was always about accumulating wealth and power for itself by exploiting the ordinary citizens and the natural resources. That goal was, of course, not sustainable, and the Crash of 1929 clearly showed that.

The result was a democratic uprising putting FDR in power and bringing the corrections of the New Deal. The reaction of the economic aristocracy was a desire to undo the New Deal and eventually to take off the gloves and declare war on democracy itself, ensconcing themselves as a ruling class. First, they began by weakening the New Deal in as many ways as they could, but then the democratic impulse began to grow again with the election of JFK.

The 1960's was the end of their patience. Somehow the three leaders of those forces of democracy were assassinated within five years, and by 1968 the cry of "law and order" began to take hold, ending any hope of change. After the confrontations of the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968 and the election of Richard Nixon, the hopes for a



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ing any hope of change. After the confrontations of the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968 and the election of Richard Nixon, the hopes for a

Increases since 1980					
Income level	Top 1%	Between 1% & 10%	Between 10% & 25%	Between 25% & 50%	Bottom 50%
Total tax after credits	991%	699%	344%	270%	189%
Adjusted Gross Income	1,146%	529%	402%	342%	260%
After Tax Income	1,278%	557%	429%	366%	272%

Scott Greenberg, "Summary of the Latest Federal Income Tax Data, 2015 Update" (Tax Foundation, Nov 2015, https://files.taxfoundation.org/legacy/docs/TF_FF491_Summary%20of%20the%20Latest%20Federal%20Income%20Tax%20Data%2C_2015%20Update.pdf)

widening democracy were thwarted, and we began a new ideological direction for this nation. It was the ideology of capitalism, the ideology of an economic aristocracy, but not democracy. It was the alien ideology of wealth having primacy over people.

As that ideology became entrenched and a government formed to serve that economic aristocracy, the ideals of democracy began to be ignored and the foundations of democracy itself began to be eroded. The further that process went, the closer the nation came to an authoritarian state. As the levers of governance and communication continued to be co-opted by that wealthy aristocracy and as the public elements were weakened, sold off, or simply destroyed, the handwriting was on the wall for all to see.

The finishing touch, the *coup de grace*, came with the 2016 election when the nation elected its first dictator-in-training.

We are now faced with the resulting destruction of the final few democratic structures and the final loss of any concern for the humanity of the ordinary citizens except as economic units to serve the ends of that economic elite and then to be discarded as useless—the losers.

So, here we are. What will we do?

- ◆ First, recognize the destruction; then stop the destruction.
- ◆ Next, care for the wounded, stop the bleeding, treat the wound, and create a safe environment for healing;
- ◆ Then, rebuild a society to prevent future problems and to help people grow and thrive as human beings.
- ◆ And of course, save the planet to secure a human future.

We are now confronted with a political climate change that has been defined, described, and predicted for decades. That political climate change was about replacing democracy with rule by an economic aristocracy and the devastating results of such a

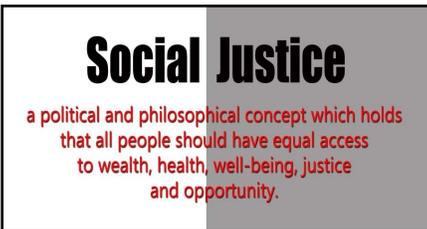
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change for ordinary citizens and even for the very planet on which we depend for our existence.

The disaster is profound and clearly apparent and is continuing apace as we wait for an election to stop the disaster. **We cannot wait!** Things are deteriorating too quickly. We have watched the national government and its agencies turning into mechanisms for the support and feeding of that wealthy aristocracy. That it functions very well in serving that oligarchy is abundantly clear and is the result of allowing that accumulation of power to grow for decades.

We have justified our indifference by settling for meaningless incremental change as any kind of real solution. All of this is while we have chosen the lesser of two evils to avoid confrontation, knowing full well that we are settling for some



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version of an evil solution. That began our descent on a slippery and evil slope which has led to greater and greater versions of evil.

Now, we are confronted with unmitigated evil destroying the last shreds of our democracy and anything we would want to call an American society. We watch as almost daily our social structures, our public services, and our democratic underpinnings are being wiped out.

It will take drastic and immediate unified grassroots social action to stop this destruction. Otherwise, by the time of the election, there will be so little to save that it will not matter. Even if the Democratic Party wins, can you imagine what damage can be done before the new officials take office in 2021? It is likely to be a scorched earth approach leaving nothing of value upon which to rebuild a democratic nation.

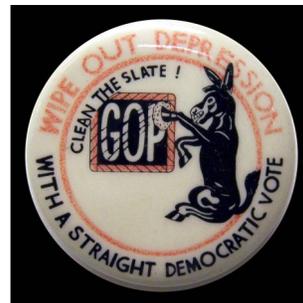
It will be like experiencing a dramatic rise in ocean levels inundating many American cities and not taking any action until we elect the candidates willing to deal with the problem. Too little, too late.

We need to mobilize now and act now, before the election, to stop this destruction. Remember that everything this government does is done in our name and on our dime. We pay for all the people in government, all the buildings, all the policies, and even every step of the dismantling of our dem-

ocratic traditions. We even pay for the subsidies for huge corporations and the tax cuts for the wealthy aristocracy with our increased tax burden. We pay for the dysfunction of our approach to the Coronavirus that is not only killing a huge number of people but is also destroying the lives of many others. We are paying for the national policies that are extending the life of the virus. We are paying for the policies that continue to value money over people.

In this nation we have lost far more citizens to our mishandled Coronavirus approach than we lost in all of our wars since WWII. This nation has a quarter of all the deaths world-wide while having less than 5% of the world's population. How much clearer do we need to make this mismanagement by the federal leadership? It cannot continue.

First things first, we must act now to stop the bleeding before the election in order to prevent more destruction after the election.



https://www.docstoc.com/images/documents/133197883529/orig_133197883529_244160.jpg?v=zMKyPeTzP

Next we must replace the current President with an alternative if we are to have any hope of restoring democracy. That means electing Joe Biden and gaining control of both houses of Congress.

But that is only the first of many critical steps in the restoration process. The really crucial work begins after that. It will require rapid and effective action on public health. We must provide social and economic support for all citizens who need help. We must provide stability for our citizens and then reorder our economic system to support both a democratic society and the humane needs for a sustainable future. We must act quickly to confront the challenges of global warming.

This will require governmental intervention on a scale that makes the New Deal look small, but this is what will be necessary to provide a sustainable future for us and for the planet. This is a time for unified and focused action instead of endless bickering. It is a time for quick and unified action. We are at war with an outmoded ideology and an arrogant and powerful aristocracy.

It is like having been occupied by an enemy of democracy who has, like an army of occupation, replaced our traditions with those of that occupying army, serving their ends. We must flush out all remnants of that alien ideology and replace them with structures from our democratic heritage.

But, first things first; we must begin now!

I Like My Daily Mail

By Deanna Ensley

Like 91% of my fellow Americans, I am a strong supporter of the United States Postal Service (USPS). In addition to shopping and bill paying, I enjoy sending and receiving notes, cards, and letters. My life would not be complete without the USPS. Besides the pleasure it brings, people rely on the USPS for their medications, bills, and tax returns, especially if they, as a number of older people, do not have a computer. Deployed military and shut-ins have long relied on the USPS to allow them to vote by mail.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/4/43/United_States_Postal_Service_%28Emblem%29.png

This year more than ever the USPS has an important role to play in the election. Over the years people could vote absentee one of two ways: go to the courthouse and vote in person or request a ballot be mailed to them. Over the years, more and more states have established precincts that only vote by mail. Indeed some states conduct their elections solely by mail. I come from Washington State which has voted entirely by mail since 2011. Minnesota has some precincts that only vote by mail; for example, a majority of Itasca County's 77 precincts are vote by mail only. The advantages are many:

- ◆ It's cheaper. The county doesn't have to buy so many machines or hire poll workers.
- ◆ It produces a paper ballot, which can be used in case of disputes.
- ◆ People have an opportunity to study some ballot items they may have forgotten about such as down-ballot candidates.
- ◆ People can vote at their leisure instead of within a 12-15 hour period on one day.
- ◆ It is secure.

Now voting by mail has become endangered as the Trump Administration tries to reduce the post

the USPS is another way our outrageous President approaches something he does not approve of, care about, or personally does not need. Ironically, he, his wife, and many of his staff vote absentee by mail.

He tries to split hairs by saying that absentee voting especially in Florida is fine. It's general voting by mail that is insecure and corrupted. That is nonsense. Unlike what he describes, millions of ballots aren't mailed out willy-nilly to everybody indiscriminately. Only registered voters get ballots. When the ballots arrive to be counted, the signatures are compared to those on the registration forms to avoid fraud.



<https://bendphillips.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/absentee20vote.jpg?w=470>



This year the option to vote by mail is especially important because, as the Wisconsin primary showed, voting in person can be hazardous to our health. U.S. Representative Suzan DelBene of Washington is a co-sponsor of a bill that would effectively turn federal elections in all states into vote-by-mail opportunities in cases of quarantines or natural disasters. The bill would provide an additional \$500 million in grants to states to make the switch

possible and help stabilize the nation's election system in the time of coronavirus.

Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman has said, "In Washington, every signature is checked against the voter's signature card, and ballots are pulled out of the stream and voters contacted if the signatures don't match. Voters can track the path of their ballot and contact elections officials if they see something wrong. Washington follows multiple layers of security and would be happy to share those processes with other states."

Saving the USPS is not just a convenience measure; it is only reasonable. It was created by the Constitution, because the founding fathers recognized its role in unifying this country. That purpose remains today, especially in these critical times of pandemic and other natural disasters.

VOTE VOTE VOTE



https://access.tarrantcounty.com/content/dam/main/elections/EV/Vote_By_Mail_white-cork-board.jpg

office's funding and reputation. This is a deliberate effort to sow doubt in the minds of the public if he loses. The idea of cutting off funding to

ITASCA DFL



**Every Wednesday & Friday
September & October**

Time: 3:45 – 5:15 pm (or later)

**Place: Central School Grounds
Grand Rapids, Minnesota**

“It is what we make it”

**Making friends • Sharing opinions
Voting assistance • Finding resources
• Meeting candidates •**



Voting 201

By Valerie Conner

By now you've heard that this is election is the most important of our lifetimes regardless of your age. While unlike every other election when we've heard that, this time it really is. There are other differences this year.

The hype and Trump's attempt to discredit the election's legitimacy is an added concern. The timing is good, because it gives us time to counter his devious plans. This is the first time I've heard the promotion of "planning your vote." Let's examine that.

First of all, this year we do not have the luxury of making a point by voting for a third party candidate. It is critical that Democrats win in both federal and state elections. Biden's winning isn't enough. We must give him both houses of Congress. We've seen what McConnell can do to prevent progress starting with his refusal to bring Merrick Garland's Supreme Court appointment up for consideration. He has continued to refuse to bring up for votes House-passed bills that would help the country. We've seen the same thing in Minnesota with the Republican Senate stonewalling Democratic proposals. We need to vote a straight Democratic ticket. That not only lets you be represented by someone whose views coincide with yours, it strengthens the caucus' power in the legislature/Congress. A majority position determines the control of committees and bill scheduling. Voting for third party candidates is the same as voting for Trump, Inc.

How and when you actually vote is a consideration



<http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-90kx2skVw/TSHVjdxlmbI/AAAAAAAAAFTU/WgFtQkNkY/s320>

that is different this year. I live in a mail-in vote precinct. That means that every registered voter—not everyone and his dog as Trump asserts—in the precinct will be mailed a ballot by October 1st (so if you are in a Minnesota mail-in precinct and you don't get your ballot by, say, October 10th, call the county auditor). Voting by mail gives me time to check out the down-ballot issues and candidates also on the ballot, to vote, and to make sure my ballot gets to the courthouse on time. I, personally, plan to do that by hand delivering my ballot. Someone not able to deliver the ballot personally should vote early enough to give the hampered post office (thank you, General DeJoy) time to deliver the ballot or have a reliable person hand deliver the ballot.

People who normally vote in person can still do so. If they feel uncomfortable with lines or COVID-19 threats, absentee voting may be the way to go. People in Minnesota can get their absentee ballot starting September 18th. If you don't get your ballot within a reasonable time, call the courthouse.

You can apply for an absentee ballot on-line at www.mnvotes.org or in Itasca County call 218-327-2827 or email election@co.itasca.mn.us. Other counties and other states have similar procedures. Call your county election official or go to the secretary of state website, www.sos.state.mn.us. You can also track your ballot there. Other states have similar websites. You may also just show up at the courthouse and apply for an absentee ballot and vote in person.

Whatever the method, it is critical that you vote, and vote Democratic for all federal and state candidates. The future of our nation and way of life depends on it.



http://www.plannedparenthoodillinoisaction.org/blog/uploaded_images/vote-smart-736462.jpg

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: GET INVOLVED AND GET IT DONE!

Event	Date /Time	Location
DFL Headquarters Open (326-6296)	Tues, Wed, Thurs 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>	September 11, 2020	conray@arvig.net