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President CJ's Letter

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate America's 250th Birthday throughout this year and next, I will be writing about some of the more interesting American stories that brought us to where we are today.

On October 14, 1912, Theodore Roosevelt — former U.S. President and then a third-party candidate for president with the Progressive ("Bull Moose") Party — arrived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to give a campaign speech.

As Roosevelt stepped out of his car in front of the Gilpatrick Hotel, an unemployed saloonkeeper named John Schrank pushed through the crowd. Schrank, who had been stalking Roosevelt for weeks, pulled out a .38 caliber revolver and fired a single shot at point-blank range.

The bullet struck Roosevelt in the chest, but instead of collapsing, he remained standing.

Why?

In his breast pocket, Roosevelt was carrying:

- A 50-page folded speech manuscript, and
- A metal eyeglass case.

The bullet had to pass through both. The thick wad of paper and the metal slowed it down enough that, although it did pierce his chest, it didn't reach his lung or heart.

Roosevelt touched his chest, saw blood, and insisted on going to give his speech anyway, saying to his aides:

"I'm all right. Let me alone. I'll do the talking."

At the Milwaukee Auditorium, he stepped onto the stage, pale but determined.

Before beginning, he calmly told the shocked crowd:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot; but it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose."

He then spoke for about 90 minutes, with the bloodstained speech papers still in his pocket, before agreeing to go to the hospital. Doctors found the bullet lodged in his chest muscle; it was too risky to remove, so it remained in his body for the rest of his life.

Roosevelt's courage and defiance became legendary. He ultimately lost the 1912 election, but the event cemented his image as one of the most rugged and fearless leaders in American history.

C.J. Hatcher, W.A.C. President



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In August, WAC Members Socialized at Trump Winery. In September, We Celebrated Constitution Day and Heard from Conservative Radio Host Joe Thomas and GOP Gubernatorial Candidate Winsome Sears' Husband, Terence Sears

WAC members enjoyed getting together at our “Let’s Get Social” gathering at the Trump Winery in August. The surrounding landscape and mountain views were gorgeous, and the conversation and networking with like-minded conservatives was refreshing and stimulating.

In September, we celebrated the 238th birthday of the U.S. Constitution by joining together for delicious food, patriotic decorations, and an informative speech by conservative radio host and owner of WTON radio station out of Staunton, Virginia Joe Thomas who regaled us with a detailed history lesson on the Constitution’s founding.

We also enjoyed hearing from GOP Gubernatorial Candidate Winsome Sears’ Husband, Terence Sears, at our September luncheon who spoke about Winsome’s background, her campaign priorities, and ways we can all contribute to helping her win in November.







Why Red States Can't Govern

Governors and legislators must cut through the web of managerial guilds.

By Thomas Murray, *The American Mind*, condensed

Conservatives often imagine that winning statewide elections means gaining control over the machinery of government. But this is wrong—and dangerously so. For far too long, red states have confused the two. The assumption that political victory automatically confers political authority is one of the chief falsehoods circulating on the Right. It is the reason Republican states often look like Democratic ones, only with different bumper stickers.

This is an uncomfortable but necessary message for conservatives to hear: red states are facing a major crisis of governance.

The State Leadership Initiative's new Index Report lays out the evidence in extensive detail. By the most basic measures of lean, accountable, and ideologically grounded government, red states are failing. Many of the policies their representatives are voting for and their governors are signing into law are profoundly out of step with the wishes of voters. Bureaucracies are bloated, universities multiply administrators faster than scholars, there are fewer teachers than administrators in schools, New York-style regulations pile up in red states like Texas, and seven of the ten most federally dependent states wear the Republican label.

The key takeaway is not just that red states are doing poorly—it is that red states are almost indistinguishable from blue states on the metrics that matter.

This is not conservative governance. It is branding atop the chassis of managerial progressivism. Governors may cut a ribbon, sign a bill, or post a slogan, but beneath the surface, the operating code of their states are indistinguishable from California's.

How can this be the case?

The deeper reason for this unfortunate reality is explored in SLI's second major publication, the Shadow Government Report. It shows how state bureaucracies have been colonized—quietly, methodically—by a cartel of national associations and professional guilds no voter ever approved. These

groups wield more influence over daily governance than most state legislatures, yet they are invisible to the public, untethered from electoral accountability, and drenched in progressive orthodoxy.

These associations are neither think tanks nor trade associations in the old sense. Yet, they wield massive powers: they write standards, provide training, host conferences, and broker grants. These guilds credential personnel and tell agencies what “best practice” means. Because legislators rarely read the fine print in the legislation they pass, the blueprints crafted by these associations become the law of the land by default. When the public wonders why every state suddenly adopts the same jargon, the same metrics, and the same “toolkits” on climate, equity, and inclusion, the answer is almost always because the same group of associations decided it.

The depth of ideological capture in these associations is astounding. The examples border on parody. The National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) insists that ESG investing is a fiduciary duty and trains treasurers in DEI. The National Association of Medicaid Directors (NAMD) declares equity—not health outcomes—the “foundational principle” of Medicaid reform and pushes race-based service priorities. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) maintains that “structural racism” is a public health emergency and coordinates messaging on abortion, climate, and even online speech with the White House. The National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) encourages states to embed race- and gender-based scoring rubrics into contracting, turning neutral bidding into an ideological loyalty test. The National Governors Association (NGA), which is supposedly a bipartisan forum of executives, functions as a relay for the Left, peddling DEI and ESG toolkits like a traveling salesman. These examples are far from exhaustive.

National associations operate outside democratic oversight while having a greater influence over shaping state policy than most legislatures. They are the Trojan horses of managerial progressivism. While legislators debate property-tax rates or curriculum, these associations push a suite of prepackaged policies—procurement guidelines, Medicaid waivers, regulatory thresholds—that heavily favor the status quo.

Civil service rules protect progressive careerists from political oversight. University boards rubber-stamp DEI because accreditation bodies—another arm of the cartel—say so. Procurement officers copy and paste NASPO templates. Medicaid directors take their orders from NAMD rather than the governor. The bureaucrats

Republican governors inherit have been trained in association doctrine, are credentialed by association certifications, and are acculturated in association conferences. Even the vocabulary their agencies use—“resilience,” “inclusion,” “climate readiness,” “public-private partnership”—is imported from slide decks in Washington, D.C.

You may elect a conservative governor. But if his health agency still sends staff to ASTHO trainings, his Medicaid office still uses NAMD templates, and his treasury department still follows NAST guidelines, the day-to-day governance is leftist by default. Even if personnel are swapped out, the new trainees will be accepting “best practices,” model regulation, and training seminars from supposedly neutral industry experts. But this neutrality is a farce.

The result is a peculiar kind of political theater. Voters think they have chosen a government. Governors think they are in command. But the machinery hums along, indifferent to election returns and guided by national bodies whose values are taken from the faculty lounge and the federal bureaucracy. It is government by autopilot—and the autopilot was programmed by the Left.

The cartel of leftist national associations needs to be dealt with in order for red states to prosper. The remedy is not tinkering around the edges but an aggressive structural overhaul.

- First, states must begin by auditing and restricting association membership. Every agency should disclose its dues, trainings, grant pipelines, and template adoptions. Sunshine is a good disinfectant.
- Second, agencies should be barred from importing association policies without legislative approval. If a procurement office wants to adopt NASPO rubrics, let it defend that choice in front of elected representatives in open hearings.
- Third, association-led DEI trainings should be prohibited outright; they are not professional development but bureaucratic catechism.
- Fourth, rival associations must be built, as the State Financial Officers Foundation has already done, to provide training and credentials aligned with republican self-government.
- Finally, and most importantly, political leadership must penetrate the bureaucracy—more appointed positions, stronger sunset rules, and the

restructuring of state agencies that resist accountability.

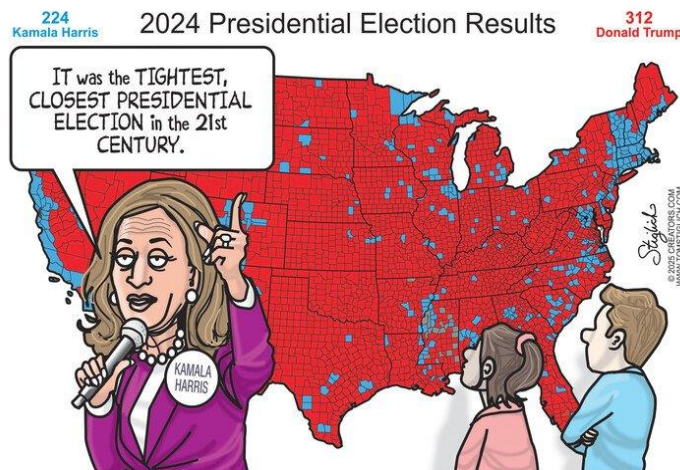
Some will protest that this sounds radical. It is not—it is the work of self-government. The radicalism lies in the present arrangement, in which anonymous guilds in a faraway capital dictate to sovereign states what their procurement contracts should look like or what principles guide their Medicaid systems. The radicalism lies in states whose constitutions enshrine republican rule yet whose daily operations are outsourced to entities their people cannot name.

This reform in red states is not optional if conservatives mean to govern.

The Index reveals the failures; the Shadow Government reveals the cause. Paired together, they teach a crucial lesson: red states have built conservative brands on progressive machinery. They talk like Jefferson but regulate like Albany. They thump their chests about liberty while paying dues to organizations that smuggle equity quotas into their hiring manuals.

To continue on this path is to win hollow victories, mistaking campaign slogans for statecraft. It is to send governors into battle armed with speeches while the other side controls the maps, the supply lines, and the ammunition. The work ahead is not to shout louder but to actually govern—to tear down the scaffolding of association rules and build institutions that are faithful to the people they're supposed to serve. Until that is done, every red state risks being a blue state in disguise.

Governance is not automatic. It is not the inevitable byproduct of winning elections. It is the patient, disciplined, steady construction of institutions aligned with the people's will. Our adversaries have known this for decades. They built the shadow government that now runs the states. The only question left is whether conservatives will summon the courage to challenge it.



What Made the Democratic Party Go Crazy?

The Democrat Party abandoned the middle class for elites and identity politics—trading broad appeal for globalism, DEI dogma, and political self-destruction.

By Victor Davis Hanson, American Greatness

The answer was not Trump alone.

Indeed, irony abounds when Democrats resonate with the claims of the vestigial Never Trumpers that the MAGA movement “hijacked” the Republican Party.

In characteristic projectionist fashion, the left is simply falsely attributing to their opposition the very hijacking that hit the Democratic Party.

The Republicans are still the party of conservatism and traditionalism. But in the last decade, it adopted an expansionary middle-class agenda that has led to record party registration, its first popular presidential vote victory since 2004, and control of all three branches of government.

The MAGA emphases also have accomplished what prior “moderate” Republican presidents and presidential candidates had sought but largely failed to achieve: making inroads with minorities and youth and substituting class commonalities for racial chauvinism.

Thus, in 2024, 55 percent of Hispanic men and somewhere around 25 percent of black males voted for Trump—along with a +2 advantage for Trump among young men in general (18-29).

In contrast, Joe Biden left office with below 40 percent popularity in many polls. His replacement, 2024 Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, despite a substantial advantage in funding and overwhelmingly biased, favorable media coverage, lost both the popular and Electoral College vote.

Since the election, a variety of data points show a steady erosion in Democrat Party favorability (24 percent positive polling) and voter registration (for the first time in memory, Republicans are out-registering hemorrhaging Democrats in new voter affiliations).

They are also on the losing end of a 40/60 split among voters on most issues—especially the border, energy, crime,

transgenderism, and foreign policy—a truth that even the legacy media cannot disguise.

The Democratic implosion does not necessarily mean they will not win back the House in the next election. Historically, it is difficult for even an unpopular out-party not to pick up lots of House and Senate seats in an administration's first midterm. But if Democrats capture at least the House, the vote will not be for their party's policies or politicians as much as a reflection of their ginned-up opposition to Trump, the messenger of a radical and controversial counterrevolutionary message.

The Democratic project is bleeding out because it either does not address what the middle class is worried about, or it offers no solution to popular anger—namely over inflation, the out-of-control DEI commissariat, illegal immigration, crime, high energy prices and tyrannical Green New Deal policies, steep interest rates, unaffordable housing costs, and anemic foreign policies.

Instead of winning on issues, the left resorts to melodramas that no one believes in anymore: the planet is about to boil, requiring net-zero elimination of affordable fossil fuels!

Institutionalized DEI bias is necessary to make up for past and present “toxic” white supremacy/privilege/rage!

Illegal aliens are the oppressed who have a perfect right to enter and reside in the U.S. without legal permission!

The plight of a large and victimized transgender community is the new civil rights cause célèbre!

“Words matter” correctness seeks to coin strange vocabulary and usage—Latinx, “preferred pronouns,” “undocumented migrant,” “trigger warnings,” “safe spaces”—along with toppled statues, changed names, and a rebranded U.S. founded in 1619.

But while the public knows how the left/Democratic agenda is imploding, they are confused over why the Democratic Party is hellbent on such nihilist missions.

Why did Democrats become unrecognizable to the middle class, and who is responsible for their collective self-destruction?

There are four root causes of the wreckage of the Democrat Party.

Globalization

Globalization asymmetrically enriched the bicoastal, liberal elite—in big tech, international corporations, the media,

academia, law, government, etc.—with new worldwide markets and audiences.

In contrast, muscular labor and resource extraction involved in assembly, manufacturing, farming, construction, mining, timber, oil, etc., were sometimes offshored, outsourced, or ossified due to “free” but not fair trade.

So Democrats went giddy at the millennium when both billionaires and affluent professionals—often from the new trillions of dollars in market capitalization in Silicon Valley and Wall Street—trended left-wing.

Who then needed the middle class when Democrats now had huge financial and political resources in government, foundations, NGOs, the media, and higher education to affect public opinion, change voting laws, and outspend Republicans?

So Democrats became a utopian elite cadre of the very wealthy who would patronize and take care of the subsidized poor, both as psychological penance to assuage their guilt over their own newfound global riches and to solidify poorer voters with expansionary entitlements.

Illegal Immigration

The left knew its issues were not winners, so they began at the millennium redefining “illegal immigration” as “legal immigration” or just “immigration” and even “migrant.” The result was that by 2025, 55 million residents and citizens of various statuses were not American-born—a record 16 percent of the U.S. population.

From 2021 to 2025, 10 to 12 million illegal aliens had been added to the pool of some 20 million existing resident illegal aliens. The left sought to mainstream these immigrants—from mostly poor countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia—into Democratic constituents, either in the first or by the second generation.

The left's appeal was twofold: both generous welfare and support subsidies, and a DEI message that as the supposed “non-white,” new immigrants became “victims” the second they set foot onto U.S. soil.

As the instantaneously oppressed, new immigrants had concocted grievances of “racism” against the majority culture—to be redressed by progressive-provided DEI/affirmative action in appointments, hiring, and admissions.

New mail-in and early ballot Covid-era rules were designed to end the audit and authentication of ballots and tailored to accommodate those who might vote without the bother of citizenship.

The new immigrants understood that Democrats gave them an instant pathway to the middle class through racial and ethnic preferences, after the Obama-era new concepts of “diversity.” It had redefined the old affirmative action black/white binary of 12/88 percentages into a huge, victimized class of 30 percent of the population, who were now portrayed as oppressed by the 70 percent majority and thus deserving of special treatment. Class and wealth no longer mattered and were thus replaced by superficial appearance and race, and gender.

Ironically, however, the Frankenstein monster of massive illegal immigration and DEI pandering proved fatal to the old liberal Dr. Frankenstein.

The new radical first and second generations—e.g., an AOC, an Ilhan Omar, a Zohran Mamdani—demanded from the party of their condescending fossilized benefactors (a Nancy Pelosi, a Chuck Schumer, the Clintons, etc.) radical redirections on the issues. Suddenly, there were venomous anti-Israeli and unapologetic pro-Hamas protests on campuses, as over 1 million foreign students swarmed into higher education.

DEI took on an overtly and radically racist tone as evidenced most recently by Joy Reid’s vile pseudo-scientific rants about “mediocre white men,” the sick racist prior mutterings of New Yorker writer Doreen St. Feliz about dirty white and plague-ridden people in history, or the past craziness of Sacramento State President Luke Wood and his half-educated agenda of “eliminating whiteness.”

The Rise of the Guilt-Ridden Professional

Globalization did not just launch the Google creators, Jeff and Mackenzie Bezos, Mike Bloomberg, Reid Hoffman, Lisa Jobs, George Soros, Mark Zuckerberg, and a host of other billionaires, but also a secondary class of millions of wealthy and privileged bicoastal professional underlings. From La Jolla to Seattle and from New England to Washington, DC, these credentialed and titled experts saw themselves at the end of history.

As the new degreed aristocracy, no longer was their time and money needed to address adequate housing, fuel, food prices, transportation, or health care. Instead, they were freed to worry globally, especially about whether red-state hoi polloi’s ignorance might endanger their own beatific lives.

Thus were born radical climate change psychodramas, the transmogrification of civil rights into racial bias and prejudice, and radical cosmopolitanism that saw the EU, the UN, Davos, and all their appendages as enlightened models to nullify the global losers in the interior of America, who

were now dubbed clingers, irredeemables, deplorables, chumps, dregs, and garbage.

Higher Education

Elite universities have become fabulously rich and globalized. The bicoastal elite prized gilded letters after their names—BA, MA, MBA, JD, MA, PhD, MD—from the ‘right’ places: the Ivy League, Stanford, Berkeley, or the tony four-year colleges like Amherst, Brown, Pomona, Williams, etc. Alumni gave liberally to elite campuses and advocated that others, like-minded but even richer, top their donations.

Over a million foreign students flocked to higher education, paying 110 percent tuition, room, and board premiums—without background audits. Student loans surged to \$1.7 trillion, delighting universities that jacked up their charges accordingly. To suggest that even a small percentage of 300,000 Chinese students were actively engaged in espionage, or that 50-60,000 students from illiberal regimes in the Middle East were at the forefront of the new anti-Semitism, was considered “nativist,” “xenophobic,” or “racist.”

Universities with new multibillion-dollar endowments opened global campuses abroad, without worry over the anti-American or anti-liberal values of their overseas partners. They sought billions of dollars in foreign contributions.

Endowments soared to 30, 40, and 50 billion in the Ivy League and elite campuses. Administrators and their staff grew exponentially to rival the number of students, all to handle the new all-purpose university (“Center for...[fill in the blanks of the oppressed or climate change brand]) that was therapeutic, left-wing, and indoctrinating.

The goal was no longer impartial education but overt ideological bias. Unquestioned was the campus orthodoxy that the U.S. was hopelessly traditional and conservative, so left-wing higher education was not so much prejudicial but a needed “balance” to a clueless American public.

No longer were crackpot ideas of the faculty lounge—the world would boil over in a decade, biological men could compete against and dress with women, and the most affluent and privileged nonwhite immigrants were victimized and eligible for DEI preferences—just esoteric. Now they were mainstreamed into the policies of the Democratic Party, as well as the administrative state, from the Department of Education and DOJ to the Pentagon, FBI, and CIA.

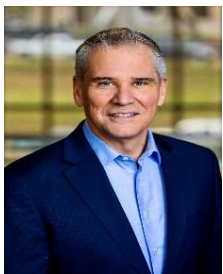
Add it all up, and there is no more Democratic Party as America once knew it.

The Democrats abandoned the middle class because they saw it as a global loser and themselves as worldwide winners. They now had the institutions and the big money, along with the leverage of millions of high-paid coastal professionals in law, the media, the university, and the administrative state to win elections by outspending, out-broadcasting, and out-regulating their clueless opponents.

Only the Neanderthals worried about how to buy a small house. The real winners worried about what the latest fad was in natural kitchen counters, cabinets, and flooring. Only the deplorables fretted about electricity costs and gas prices rather than their far more important carbon footprint. Only the blinkered thought about crime, because they lacked the intelligence or savvy to live safely and securely in the right zip code.

The elite university became the farm team for the new elite. Its position papers, grant-funded “research,” and the latest “studies” would supposedly provide the expertise, the “authorities,” and the “experts” to provide the necessarily “correct” analysis of climate change, race, crime, immigration, and foreign policy.

Bill Clinton and Barack Obama were the last Democrats to go through the motions of appealing to the middle class. But in retirement, they both cashed in, went global, and became multimillionaires by selling their name and brand—and so joined the madness.



[Personal] Eulogy for Charlie Kirk

By William Cork, billcork.blog

I write these words today not as a politician, not as a pundit, not as a talking head on television

or a professor in some ivory tower. I speak to you as a nearly sixty-year-old American man who has walked through the fire of life: a Marine Corps veteran, a husband of forty-one years, a father of four, and a grandfather of six. I speak to you as someone who has lived long enough to remember an America where debate was fierce but civil, where words mattered but were not policed like contraband, where one's neighbor might be a Democrat, a Republican, or something else entirely, and yet still your neighbor.

And today, I speak in eulogy for Charlie Kirk.

I am not here to canonize him. I believe Charlie himself would bristle at being turned into a saint or martyr. He was a man, with faults and flaws like any of us. He said things that drew anger and criticism, even among his allies. I am not here to defend every word that crossed his lips, because that would miss the point. What mattered about Charlie was not always what he said, but how he said it — how he fought, how he refused to let himself be silenced, and how he forced people, willing or not, to confront ideas in an age where ideas are increasingly treated as threats.

There is a tendency in America today to dismiss people with whom we disagree as unworthy of speech, to cancel, to ostracize, to smear. But Charlie stood in that storm, and he did not bow. That spirit — whether you agreed with him or not — deserves our respect.

His death leaves a hole, not simply in the ranks of conservative activism, but in the broader landscape of public discourse. Because love him or hate him, he was willing to stand up and speak, loudly, clearly, and unapologetically. He embodied something increasingly rare: the courage to engage.

As I reflect on Charlie's life, I cannot help but reflect also on my own journey, and on the journey of America itself over the last thirty years. I remember the early 1990s, when I was a student at the University of Illinois. I served on the Student Faculty Senate in 1992, back when political correctness was still in its infancy. We were told that “speech codes” were necessary, that “offensive” words or phrases had to be eradicated. I fought those codes tooth and nail.

Charlie lived his whole career in that world. And while I do not agree with every phrase he uttered, I do sympathize with the struggle he faced: to speak freely in a society that punishes free speech. That is why we mourn today — not simply the passing of a man, but the ongoing loss of civil discourse in America.

When I enlisted in the Marine Corps, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. That oath did not

expire when I hung up the uniform. It is etched in my heart, as enduring as the marriage vows I made to my wife more than four decades ago.

The Corps taught me discipline, loyalty, sacrifice. It taught me to value the man next to me — his courage, his effort, his willingness to bleed and sweat for something greater than himself. It did not teach me to ask where he was born, what color his skin was, or how he voted. It taught me to recognize him as a fellow Marine, a fellow American.

After my service, I completed university. I built a life. I worked, I raised children, I sent them to schools where I expected them to be taught how to think, not what to think. I raised them to love their country, to argue passionately, to stand up when the anthem played, and to bow their heads when prayers were said.

But somewhere along the way, I watched this country drift. In the early 1990s, I was at the University of Illinois, where the battles of today were already being sketched in miniature. Words were being outlawed, ideas labeled “unsafe.” I remember the smugness of the bureaucrats and professors who insisted that “free speech” was just a cover for bigotry. I fought that, not because I wanted to offend, but because I understood — as every thinking person understands — that when you silence speech, you enslave thought.

And then one day, in a graduate level class on the history of environmentalism (it was all that was available as an elective), I used the word “mankind” in a sentence. The professor stopped me cold. He said it was “sexist” and a form of “misogyny.” I laughed, because I thought he was joking. He wasn’t. He told me to leave the class. I left and never returned.

That moment, burned into my memory, was a harbinger of what was coming: a world where speech codes metastasized into HR departments, where political correctness evolved into DEI, where tolerance was redefined to mean enforced conformity.

Charlie Kirk was born into that very world — around the same time my two sons were born into it — and he made it his mission to push back. His style was not my own, yet I recognized in him the same fire I once carried into the UIUC Auditorium chambers at Illinois, pounding the table and insisting that the right to speak be preserved.

Charlie Kirk was a sharp mind and a compelling orator, but he was not the kind of polished intellectual adorned with a Harvard degree or a Wall Street pedigree. In fact, he sometimes stumbled in the rarified air of debates at places like Oxford. Yet that, paradoxically, was his strength. He was authentic. He was self-taught, an autodidact who never

hid the rough edges. He was a husband, a father, and a kid from Illinois, like me, who rose from the ground up, determined that neither universities, nor corporations, nor bureaucrats would dictate what could be said in America — or who was allowed to say it.

He founded Turning Point USA with little more than grit and determination. He built an organization that gave young conservatives a voice, often in hostile environments. He showed up on campuses where students were shouted down, jeered, sometimes even threatened — and he spoke anyway.

You didn’t have to agree with him to respect that, and many of his opponents did.

Too often in our country, people measure worth by credentials. “Where did you go to school?” “What degrees do you hold?” “What committees did you serve on?” But Charlie measured worth differently: by courage, by persistence, by willingness to debate. He wasn’t always right, but he was always there.

And he was unafraid of confrontation. In an age when people retreat to safe spaces, Charlie ran toward the fight. He wasn’t subtle, and sometimes his words were sharp-edged. But that was the point: he wanted to spark discussion, to jolt people out of their slumber.

In that sense, Charlie was a warrior of speech. I will not elevate him to martyrdom — that belongs to churches and saints — but I will say this: America is poorer without him. For every Charlie Kirk who dares to raise his voice, there are a hundred others who bite their tongues in silence, afraid of the cost of speaking freely. My prayer is that his passing will not be in vain, but that it might shift those odds, giving courage to more voices to rise.

When I was young, America was a place where neighbors argued across the fence. They argued about taxes, about civil rights, about foreign wars, about unions, about religion. But they also shared beers after work, mowed each other’s lawns when one was sick, watched each other’s kids play outside when one parent couldn’t and came together on the Fourth of July to watch fireworks. Debate was not war; it was part of citizenship.

But something has changed. Over the last thirty years, the very fabric of civil discourse has unraveled. Political correctness, once a punchline, has become doctrine. DEI has institutionalized division, teaching people to view each other not as individuals but as categories: oppressed or oppressor, privileged or marginalized. Multiculturalism, once sold as a celebration of diversity, has devolved into the rejection of a shared national identity.

I have lived long enough to see conversations shrink, not expand. Today, people are afraid to speak at work, afraid to

post online, afraid even to talk at the dinner table. Words that once sparked debate now end careers. Humor is censored, curiosity punished, dissent demonized.

I know this not only from observation but from bitter experience. In 2021, while serving at the Mississippi Development Authority, I wrote a simple Facebook post criticizing a Biden Administration proposed policy on childcare subsidies. My argument was plain: government preference for subsidizing institutional childcare might benefit businesses, but it distorted the market for families who chose to raise their children at home. I wrote that the traditional, two-parent, biological, conflict free family ought to be recognized as the best environment to raise children — not dismissed or penalized in favor of arrangements that placed career or lifestyle above parenting.

That single post was treated as a crime. My colleagues filed complaints. I was directed to take the post down. The State Personnel Board launched an investigation. I had done nothing illegal, but to keep my job, I was compelled to sit through twelve hours of “sensitivity training.” I agreed, not out of contrition or because I was worried about losing my job, but because I wanted to see firsthand what the one-on-one counseling would say and what they were putting other people through. What I discovered was exactly what I expected: a pile of jargon, ideological dogma dressed up as sensitivity, and no serious engagement with the substance of my original point.

This, I say plainly, is un-American. Because America was built not on conformity but on conflict — the healthy conflict of ideas, the robust clash of opinions, the marketplace of thought. To shut that down is not to progress; it is to regress into tyranny.

Charlie fought against that. Again, I do not claim his every word was perfect. Just as I’m sure not every word I have said or will say is perfect. But I sympathize with his battle, because it is my battle too.

To be an American is not to be perfect. It is not to be free from sin or error. To be an American is to live in a country where you are allowed to stumble, to fall, to speak, to argue, to rise again. It is to live in a nation forged by liberty and bound together by shared principles, not by tribal bloodlines.

Being American means believing in the right of the individual — to speak his mind, to worship his God, to defend his family, to pursue his dreams. It means respecting the Constitution, not as an old piece of paper, but as a living covenant with those who came before us and those who will come after us.

Being American means standing for the flag, not because your country is flawless, but because it is yours. It means loving your neighbor, even if he votes differently. It means understanding that freedom comes with responsibility, and that liberty requires courage.

To be un-American is the opposite. It is to demand conformity and to silence dissent, to divide people into categories and identities rather than recognize them as individuals. It is to desecrate the flag, to mock the very idea of nationhood, and to brand free speech itself as dangerous. It is to erode the foundations of self-government by surrendering authority to bureaucrats, to ideologues, or to foreign interests — whether they come from Ukraine, Israel, Russia, or any other land that is not our own

I have stood against un-American forces all my life — on foreign soil as a Marine, and on our own soil as a citizen. Charlie Kirk stood against them as well, in his own way. For that, I honor him.

So where do we go from here? How do we restore civil discourse in America?

First, we must reclaim education. Schools must teach history honestly, literature broadly, and debate openly. They must stop policing words and start training minds. If a student uses the word “mankind,” the response should be a discussion, not an expulsion.

Second, we must model courage. Children learn not from slogans but from example. If we hide our opinions, they will learn to hide theirs. If we speak respectfully but firmly, they will learn to do the same.

Third, we must reject the false idols of DEI and multiculturalism. Diversity has value only when it is rooted in unity. Without a shared American identity, diversity becomes division. We must return to the idea that we are Americans first — from many backgrounds, yes, but united under one flag.

Fourth, we must cultivate humility. Debate is not about destroying your opponent but sharpening your own understanding. Too many today treat politics as war, not conversation. We must relearn the art of listening, of admitting when we are wrong, of finding common ground.

Fifth, we must defend free speech relentlessly. This means standing up in workplaces, in schools, in communities, and refusing to be silenced. It means protecting even speech we dislike, because the alternative is no speech at all.

If we do these things, we can honor Charlie Kirk not by idolizing him, but by carrying forward the spirit of his fight.

Charlie Kirk is gone. A voice, sometimes sharp, sometimes brash, always bold, has been silenced by an assassin's bullet. But in his life, he reminded us of something too easily forgotten; that speech matters, that debate matters, that courage matters.

I write these words as a Marine, a father, a husband, a grandfather, and I mourn his passing. But I also mourn what America has lost over these past three decades: the ability to argue without hatred, to disagree without destruction, to be citizens together in the great experiment of liberty.

Let us not waste this moment. Let us not reduce Charlie to a slogan or a symbol. Let us instead take from his life a challenge: to speak honestly, to listen openly, to live boldly as Americans.

For in the end, that is what matters. Not whether you agreed with Charlie Kirk, but whether you will carry forward the fight for freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and the right of a free people to govern themselves.

That is what it means to be American. That is what Charlie, in his own imperfect way, stood for. And that is what we must continue to defend — for our children, for our grandchildren, and for the generations yet unborn.

Rest in peace, Charlie.



The Left Has Never Been Held Accountable for Political Violence — And That Must Change

By Mark Hemingway, The Federalist,
condensed

Violence has long been woven into the fabric of the American left, and until we honestly reckon with that, a bleak political future awaits.

[Recently], I was writing a piece on the tragic killing of Iryna Zarutskya down in Charlotte that has captured national attention. Before I could finish, news came down the beloved conservative activist Charlie Kirk had been shot at a university in Utah. I've been covering politics for a long time, and I can't say I've ever had a story about politically charged violence pre-empted by even more political violence. Nor do I ever want this to happen again.

But I was doing my best to Kubler-Ross my way through this — I've met Kirk and generally thought highly of him — but I didn't really snap until I saw Obama put out a statement:

We don't yet know what motivated the person who shot and killed Charlie Kirk, but this kind of despicable violence has no place in our democracy. Michelle and I will be praying for Charlie's family tonight, especially his wife Erika and their two young children.

"We don't yet know what motivated..." Yeah, I'm sorry, but we certainly know what the results of left-wing rhetoric are. And Barack Obama is living proof of that.

Plug into the matrix with me for a moment. As I was writing the aforementioned aborted story about the problems of law and order in America, I was reminded that, as part of a national political project to elect progressive district attorneys led by billionaire and Democrat megadonor George Soros, in 2020 San Francisco elected Chesa Boudin as its district attorney. Boudin was such a soft-on-crime disaster as D.A. — indeed, his entire campaign for the office was dedicated to issues such as bail "reform" and reducing incarceration — he was recalled by voters before he could finish his term.

But it's remarkable he was ever elected in the first place, when you consider Boudin's history. Boudin is the son of Weather Underground members Kathy Boudin and David Gilbert. They both ended up in jail after participating in a 1981 Brinks truck robbery with the Black Liberation Army that resulted in the deaths of two cops and a security guard (Chesa was just 14 months old at the time of the robbery).

Aside from the Brinks robbery, the Weather Underground was best known as one of many left-wing groups that committed a series of terrorist attacks throughout the 70s. “During an eighteen-month period in 1971 and 1972, the FBI reported more than 2,500 bombings on U.S. soil, nearly 5 a day,” observes Bryan Burrough, author of the indispensable book on post-sixties left-wing violence, *Days of Rage*. Blessedly, almost all of those bombings did not result in death, but far too many did.

Normally, I don’t bother foisting the sins of the parents on the child. Except in this case, years before he ever contemplated running for public office, back when Chesa Boudin was merely red-diaper royalty fresh off of being a Rhodes Scholar, he wrote an insufferably indulgent memoir that I was, thankfully, paid to read. But despite being totally unimpressed with his writing, I’m sure he earned that Rhodes Scholarship, because when has academia ever rewarded violent left-wing radicals for no defensible reason? Oh right, they’re still doing it even now.

Anyway, if you read Boudin’s book, you’ll find that he accepts the notion that his parents were “political prisoners” and he is of the opinion “certainly violence is illegitimate when it targets civilians or intends to cause generalized or widespread fear, but my parents never did either of those.” As far as Boudin was concerned, it’s OK to kill cops because they’re not civilians, they’re part of the racist, capitalist system or something. (Where the poor security guard who Boudin’s parents had a hand in murdering sits in the hierarchy of oppression is beyond me.)

If you’re wondering how Boudin came to think like this, well, his parents aren’t entirely to blame. Kathy Boudin wasn’t paroled until her son was out of college, and his dad wasn’t let out of jail until then-New York Governor Andrew Cuomo gave him clemency in 2021. Because his parents were in jail, Chesa Boudin was adopted and raised by his parents’ friends and fellow Weather Underground terrorists Bill Ayers and Bernardine Dohrn.

Now Dohrn was famous for being especially radical; aside from her violent and traitorous deeds, she’s perhaps best known for a speech she gave at a radical event known as the Flint War Council, where she defended the Manson Family. “Dig it!” she famously said. “First they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them. They even shoved a fork into the victim’s stomach! Wild!” Burrough goes on to note that most of the crowd “responded by raising their hands in four-finger salutes, signifying the fork shoved into the pregnant Sharon Tate’s belly.”

Now there’s much that could be said about Ayers’ own violent and traitorous deeds with the Weather Underground, but at this point he’s best known for launching the political career of ... Barack Obama. In fact, Chesa Boudin would

have been 14 or 15 when his adoptive parents held an event at their house to help launch his political career. The two men had a close working relationship centered around the community at the University of Chicago, and shared much the same worldview, despite the fact the Obama campaign lied about the nature of their relationship. In fact, books have been willing about how Obama lied and obscured his past radicalism, and the media were enthusiastically complicit in helping him.

Which all brings me back to Obama’s disingenuous statement that “We don’t yet know what motivated the person who shot and killed Charlie Kirk.” At this point what does it matter? Obama did not think consorting with violent, unrepentant terrorists was disqualifying. Obama certainly knew what “motivated” Ayers and Dohrn, and it did not trouble him. Nor is Ayers the only left-wing terrorist Obama has excused. But now, when the cold-blooded assassination of a leader on the right threatens to be an impediment to implementing the progressive political program that Obama and Ayers largely share, Obama is confused about what may have motivated this and wants you to know that violence is bad.

Anyway, I am DONE. If you have ever excused or condoned violence or knowingly consorted with those who have, and I don’t care one whit if you’re someone as lofty as Barack Obama, you need to be driven from polite society. I will happily engage in the ritual malediction of saying that the call to ostracize obviously extends to forces on the political right. Except I do so knowing that no matter how much corrupt Democrat leaders cook the stats to pretend right-wing violence is a serious threat, nothing the right has ever done comes close to setting off five bombs a day for 18 months straight, proceeding to terrorize the country for more than a decade, and then electing new generations of politicians that knowingly excused this insane level of violence.

After January 6, Democrats and their allies did everything from raiding the former president’s home on dubious pretexts to algorithmically shutting off the ad revenue of any right-of-center publications they perceived as enabling Trump to kicking thousands of ordinary citizens off of social media. They corrupted the judicial system to the max to deal with rioters at the Capitol — many J6 defendants were given harsher sentences for nonviolent crimes than the prosecution asked for. And this came after Democrats not only refused to prosecute violent rioters following the mass destruction in the summer of 2020, they gave out \$80 million settlements to rioters who encountered police as a way of rewarding the left-wing agitators they viewed as useful in undermining Trump’s reelection chances. It’s hard to escape the fact that encouraging violence, unequal justice, and repression is just another tool in the left’s political toolbox.

Well, it has led to this. A good man, a father, a patriot has been killed. He did what you're supposed to do in America if you want to create political change — go out and earnestly debate people, don't hide your beliefs, be as honest and public about your attempts to persuade people as you can. That is the essence of democracy, is it not? And Kirk, who did not hold office and had no power beyond what's given to him as a citizen, was so good at exercising his democratic rights that they had to stop him not with a ballot, but a bullet.

It's hard to imagine where the future of political debate goes from here. The constant and disingenuous refrains about "incipient fascism" from the left are hard to swallow as legitimate complaints. Instead, they sound a lot like justifications for the force they planned on using against their perceived enemies all along. Nor can the denunciations of violence from the left's elder statesmen such as Obama be regarded as sincere.

Before Kirk, Democrats in power enabled assassination attempts on Supreme Court justices by deliberately refusing to enforce the law to protect their homes. It was unsurprising that enabling the same evil forces resulted in two attempts at assassinating Donald Trump. (They succeeded in killing an American hero, Corey Comperatore.) And at no point has there been a responsible reconsideration of tactics and rhetoric among the media or Democrat officeholders; the left wants to regain power and will use the nearest weapon at hand — literally.

I do not want to live in a society where half the country simply uses whatever power is available to them to go after the other half. I do not believe the average Democrat voter believes that successfully engaging in good-faith debates on college campuses warrants death. But, and I am hardly alone here, I am increasingly concerned that there are forces on the left that cannot be debated, they must be made to feel pain until they stop. I pray that this can be done within the bounds of the law and the Constitution, not that the left has much cared about those restraints.

If that seems like a bleak future for American politics, well, that's because watching one of America's most promising young leaders die in front of our eyes is pretty damn bleak. We survived a civil war, and I pray for everyone involved in American politics that understanding and forgiveness will once again be this country's guiding lights. But I am also reminded that there are times when vengeance is necessary and just, and millions of Americans will not stand for Kirk's death to be in vain.



Points of Interest

- On September 23, 2025, President Trump addressed the United Nations where he gave a speech championing sovereignty and rejecting globalism. Highlights from his speech can be found here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/09/at-un-president-trump-champions-sovereignty-rejects-globalism/>
- On September 30, 2025, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth called our military leaders together at the Pentagon to discuss President Trump's and his plans to reshape the culture of the military. A full transcript of his address to military leaders can be found here: <https://www.war.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/4318689/secretary-of-war-pete-hegseth-addresses-general-and-flag-officers-at-quantico-v/>
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DEBUNKING LIES ABOUT THE DEMOCRAT SHUTDOWN

DEMOCRAT LIES

Republicans control all 3 branches of government and don't need Democrats to end the shutdown

The shutdown isn't over "illegal aliens getting healthcare"

Republicans refuse to reopen the government and pay our troops

House Republicans aren't showing up to work

THE TRUTH

The Senate has a 60 vote threshold and Republicans control just 53 seats. Democrats have voted AGAINST reopening the government 10 times

According to Section 2141 of the Democrats' counterproposal to fund the government, they are demanding a provision that would give illegal aliens access to free healthcare

President Trump took unilateral action to pay our military men and women while Democrats hold the government hostage

House Republicans voted to fund the government weeks ago and are now in their districts helping constituents who are impacted by the Schumer Shutdown

RSC

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Upcoming Events

October Speakers Forum and Luncheon – Thursday, October 23 – Greencroft Club, Registration begins at 11:30am, Speaker: Meg Scalia Bryce, Topic: Education

November Speakers Forum and Luncheon -- Thursday November 20 at the Greencroft Club, Registration begins at 11:30am, Speaker Rusty McGuire, Louisa County Commonwealth's Attorney





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