

## Corruption of the People

These pages have described many “wicked problems”, fundamental brokenness in many institutions and systems in the U.S. It feels bad to recognize how messed up a lot of this stuff is. It can trigger lots of negative emotions, like fear, resentment, anger, frustration, horror, exasperation, anxiety and sadness. Those emotions trigger various reactions, like shock, denial, blame, cognitive dissonance and numbness.

It’s easy to want to blame “somebody else out there for it all,” try to make somebody else responsible. Truthfully, none of these problems would exist without people in the U.S. going along with them, allowing them to happen, contributing to the problems, directly or indirectly, through action or inaction, knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally. We are complicit in most of them somehow. Individually, we’re bigger or lesser parts of each of these wicked problems, major or minor contributors. In some, our actions have larger impacts. In some, minimal impacts. We’re letting it all be like it is.

Altogether, these problems and harms they produce are big and outrageous enough to demand action. We should be marching on Washington, DC with torches and pitchforks, making revolution for change? We aren’t. Why not? Are we too lazy? Do we not care? Are we too busy? Do we believe we cannot? Are we too anesthetized by screens, entertainments and substance abuse? Are we afraid to act?

If we’re not actively rebelling against these wicked problems, demanding they be solved, we’re corrupt?

Let’s review the wicked problems we’ve explored in these pages and some of our various roles in them. The truth is: we are not powerless to change! We each have the ability to change the ways we think, information we get and share, how we behave, what we do, how we live, what we respect and value, how we interact with others, what we do for and with our money, and what we hold true to in life!

Change is inevitable, always. We can be light on our feet and in our lives and dance nimbly with it, proactively and consciously working to create various changes we want to see in the worlds we live in, or we can sit depressed, pretending we’re powerless, doing nothing, distracting ourselves and waiting. Then, we have no influence on change that’s coming, and may very well not like it. Wake up! Change! Be powerful! Be the superheroes we seem to be calling for and save the world! Make it better!

Some of us have resources, roles, abilities and power to affect big change and make things much better. How fortunate! Do it! Let that be your life legacy and work! Take pride in it! Work on it idealistically! Money is not real. Making a positive difference in how life thrives, evolves, feels and grows is real.

All of us have resources, roles and abilities that empower us to affect change and make things better. Little changes and actions can add up to big impacts. Each can change our lives, thoughts, and actions. We can find ways of living our own lives with integrity, knowing we don’t contribute to these problems. Make it so! Publicly refuse to support anything contributing to these problems and their many harms!

## Climate Change

We are doing great harm to our environments, pumping out greenhouse gases and doing other things that are changing Earth’s climate, which will do us and other life on this planet much greater harm, unless we change our lives and behaviors, in big ways, very fast. This is not a matter of opinion. Informed scientists all over the world agree about this problem, and that humans contribute to it. Anywhere we live, we can see climate changing already. It’s going to get much worse, fast.

We're almost all a part of that. Some have big roles, working for government, fossil fuel companies, lobbyists, think tanks and special interests, denying it all, and working to push and expand their use, subsidize them, externalize their costs, drill the arctics, suppress alternatives, etc. Some clear forests. Others use harmful agricultural practices, promote coal extraction and burning, pave our environments. Most of us at least contribute to burning fossil fuels to heat our homes, get electricity and run vehicles.

Knowing what we now know about harms we are doing and risks we are creating, almost every single one of us needs to change in order to fix this wicked problem. This isn't something somebody out there can just fix for us, while we just continue doing what we've been doing, how we have always done it. You will change because of this. Will it be passively letting climate change harm you and end your ways? Or will you proactively change your life and ways so you are not corruptly contributing to these harms? Whatever causes you to not take actions to address this in your own life and society is corrupting you.

Fixing this problem requires change from each of us. If we want this to get better, we can't just keep driving around in combustion engine cars, consuming foods and goods transported from far away, spacing out on our electronic gizmos, consuming dirty energy, earning our livings from things that do environmental harms, blaming others, eating meat most meals, consuming plastics, being afraid...

We can personally do things like: stop contributing to the problem in our work roles, care about it and take personal action to change, stop using internal combustion engines, stop heating and cooking with oils, gas and fires, use only renewable energy, consume local foods, drinks and goods, plant more trees than we fell and preserve old growth forests, restore wildlands, set aside land for ecosystem services, improve education and family planning services, use more natural products, stop using plastics and other synthetics, eat organic plant based foods, and choose sustainable practices in everything.

We do not have to wait for anyone or anything at all to start making these changes in our own lives. Let's each start making those changes ourselves, now! Change! That's common sense, right?<sup>2162</sup>

## Environmental Harms

We are polluting everything, including: our air, lands, waters, soils, forests, electromagnetic spectrum, night skies, space around the planet, and soundscapes. That's doing great harms, to ecosystems, human and other life. It's killing us and making us sick and suffer, and doing the same to most Earth life.

Some of us have big roles in that: working for government, chemical companies, manufacturers, plastics companies, bio-waste producers, nuclear industries, utilities, city planning, drug companies and others, dumping waste in our environments, making, selling and using harmful products, being parts of harmful operations, clearing forests, ruining soil, using harmful agricultural practices. We have harmful products and practices in our lives, supporting these harms. We use petrochemical products, makeup, fertilizers, household chemicals, outdoor lighting, noisy machines, plastics, electricity, and other harmful products.

We are each empowered to change our contributions to these problems. That's on us. Sitting around complaining about what others do helps little. What are you going to do to change how we poison and ruin our environments? Stop doing things causing environmental harms! Stop buying or using harmful products, buying anything anywhere that does environmental harms, and tell them what you're doing! Start doing things that help our environments, like advocating for government change, planting trees, using sustainable practices, buying from others with sustainable practices, and consuming less! Anything that prevents us from doing things like these is corrupting us.<sup>2163</sup> Take back your power!

## Science and Technology

Science has developed extensive knowledge we trust, largely because it has produced technologies, applications that tangibly demonstrate its credibility, because they work. Sometimes, we get it wrong. We produce big problems with science and technology, and there is harm and suffering because of it. Problems often come from inadequate input and feedback, poor wisdom and decisions about when and how to use technologies, before they're well tested or understood, and ignoring negative impacts.

Systems for developing "pure science," scientific knowledge for the benefit of all, freely available for all, via public or academic institutions, are getting decreasing public funding, half as much as in 1964.<sup>2164</sup> Half of that goes to Defense, unavailable to the public, with limited public benefits, using small scientific communities with constrained inputs and review that can lead to "bad" science and widespread harms. 1% is for Natural Resources and Environment, 2% to energy solutions research, 7% to General Science, not enough to address climate change and its huge and growing impacts. Federal R&D is not adequately addressing our many wicked problems. 40% of taxpayer funded R&D goes to private businesses.

Increasingly, U.S. R&D is conducted by businesses, 72% of it and growing. Business R&D produces proprietary scientific knowledge and technologies, to be exploited for profit. Scientific and technical knowledge then become intellectual property (IP), so corporate owners can do what they want with it, and keep others away from it, limiting the spread, development and impact of scientific knowledge, stifling essential scientific feedback and verification, leading to "less good" science and more harms.

Corporate owners of scientific knowledge and technologies prioritize exploiting them as fast as possible. That leads to rapid development and release, rolling out stuff to sell for profit, as fast as possible. Business priorities prevail over social, environmental, ethical, science, or other priorities and values. That rushes science, creating benefits, problems and harms at once. It's risky. Inadequately considered applications can produce harms, sometimes catastrophic, and sometimes deliberately ignored, because external costs aren't born by business, but by the environment and/or public, so they're still profitable.

Often, the scientific research is not completed until long after product launches and disseminations. Scientists study released product impacts as they are creating harms in the world, rather than before. People are then forced to attack and stop "bad" science and harmful technologies via lawsuits in courts, for harms already inflicted, instead of preventing harms by "good" proactive science before releases.

Supposedly, government lets business do science and technology R&D to broaden and speed innovation and benefits, but regulates businesses and verifies the science is right, and products are safe. Agencies tasked with that are to supervise and validate science, technologies and practices, and do independent research to be sure realized or unanticipated outcomes don't harm humans, other life or environments.

These agencies are increasingly attacked by business interests that do not want to be slowed by them. None are adequately doing that today, and we are being harmed because of it: being poisoned; changing our climate, with devastating consequences; mass murdering a million species of life on Earth; creating healthcare crises; losing human rights to technologies; destroying the nature that sustains us.

Government is increasingly allowing businesses to release and sell people almost anything they want to, while destroying abilities of the broad scientific community to inform, guide and help us use science and technologies in ways that are safe, healthy and avoid doing harm. Our protections are being destroyed.

Technologies need to be fully tested and validated, before release, with good quality control, for effects in all possible environments and populations, over enough time to assess cumulative long-term effects. Government needs to provide adequate protections against harmful uses of science and technologies, for society, humans, rights and freedoms, environments and other forms of life, now and in the future. Society needs broad, publicly funded, peer reviewed, well tested and validated science and technology, available widely, for public good, to accelerate science and technology development, and it needs government to fund science for essential problems, like climate change and environmental harms. That's largely not happening now, resulting in great current and future harms. That doesn't make sense.

Some people are more responsible for this: government representatives and employees; lobbyists; think tank intellectuals; military leaders; business owners, management and employees; science and technology R&D staff at private corporations and in military and government. But we are all complicit, by going along with it. Whatever keeps you from doing something about it is corrupting you.

Change! Share information about this issue, so more are aware! Try not to buy or use proprietary stuff! Try to buy only quality things we truly need, that we research to confirm are fully tested and ethical, from quality ethical suppliers! Insist on adequate supervision of business, science and technology!

Vote for representatives supporting good science, technology and government supervision of them! Those doing R&D, maintain scientific integrity and ethics and encourage our organizations to do so! Don't just believe future business technologies will save us from harms we create! Prevent harm! Write to representatives, news agencies and companies, even if you don't think it will do any good.<sup>2165</sup>

## Energy

We're creating brutal harms to the climate, our environments, and the health and well-being of most life on Earth in how we produce and rampantly consume energy from non-sustainable, polluting and otherwise environment damaging sources. Most of us are complicit in that: politicians and others working for government, lobbyists, think tanks, utilities, nuclear power plants, fossil fuel companies, regulatory bodies, gas stations, and other petroleum powered vehicle industries. Anybody who uses combustion engines, travels using transportation powered by fossil fuels, consumes dirty electricity, doesn't turn the lights out when not needed, or runs heat or AC unnecessarily is complicit.

We'll run out of fossil fuels in the next 50 or so years anyway, and nuclear energy will always produce dangerous waste. Let's quit them now! There's no down side. Sustainable clean solutions exist now, and they'll get cheap fast if more adopt them. It costs no more for clean than dirty energy if we finance it on our properties so that our monthly payments are the same as what we pay for dirty energy now. Plus, we become independent from others for energy! Just do it, or convince your landlord to do it! That's a no-brainer, right? Let's move from centralized to distributed energy systems!

Every one of us is empowered to quit wasting energy. Insulate homes! Only use what you really need! Choose clean and sustainable over dirty energy sources! Advocate for change with government! Boycott companies that waste energy or produce environmental harms via their energy production and consumption behaviors and tell them what you are doing! Protest! Share information about this! Create and share art and music that addresses this problem and encourages us to change!

Anything that prevents you from changing and taking action to support clean energy is corrupting you. Use your power to create and manage your power! Take back your power, and use it to change!<sup>2166</sup>

## Telecommunications and Deregulation

Big telecommunications and energy companies are succeeding in dismantling regulation for their natural monopoly telecommunications and utility services, which allows them to abuse their market power. Some people are very complicit in that: politicians and government employees, regulators, lobbyists, telecom and energy company executives and employees, think tanks and other special interests. We're all complicit if we are letting it happen, not writing letters in protest and boycotting these companies.

Every one of us is empowered to do something about this. Just stop buying telecommunications and energy services from these big companies! Contest what they're doing by writing to representatives, regulators and these various companies themselves! Buy from little guys or build your own solutions, alone or together with others in communities! Fight government's dismantling of network neutrality! Anything that keeps us from doing something to make a difference is corrupting us. Resist those things! Make a difference! Do something to change! We can change! Let's be different and do that!<sup>2167</sup>

## Transportation

Transportation systems are corrupted, forcing us into extremely inefficient solutions of each having to buy and maintain our own expensive motor vehicles, buy fuel for them, operate them on expensive, decaying and poorly maintained roads, bridges and other infrastructure using up to half of cities' lands, with huge wastes of time and energy in ever-increasing, frustrating traffic, causing pollution at all levels, costing us big money, resources and debt, making it miserable to be alive and outside, and harming life. We transport huge volumes of stuff all over the planet, rather than using what we need where we are. It would be hard to conceive of a system more harmful and inefficient than ours? It doesn't make sense.

Some of us are very complicit in that: politicians and government employees, automobile, oil and gas company executives and employees, advertisers, city planners, people working in vehicle parts supply and maintenance industries. Any who owns or uses motor vehicles or buys goods from afar is complicit.

Each of us is empowered to do something about it. Figure out how to live in places and ways that don't require so much driving around! Actively support and use public or shared transportation solutions! Bike! Use electric or hydrogen vehicles! Turn off channels that program us to be a part of this system! Consume locally produced goods! Fly less! Write letters and boycott companies engaged in all of this! Whatever prevents us from doing something to positively change this is corrupting us. Let's change!<sup>2168</sup>

## Physical Infrastructure

Much of the public infrastructure we depend on has not been adequately maintained and is creating harms and risks that impact or threaten us. Schools, levees, dams, roads, bridges, parks, drinking water, waste water, solid waste, hazardous waste and most of our infrastructure elements are impacted. We're \$10 trillion behind in infrastructure maintenance, 9 years of all federal discretionary spending. Safe and functioning shared infrastructure is essential for functioning society. Ours is failing.

Some of us are very complicit in that: private infrastructure owners, government representatives and employees, school boards, lobbyists, telecom companies, utility owners, operators and employees. Each of us is empowered to do something about it. Protest! Write letters to government and others who are responsible for that infrastructure! Inform others of the problems! Move out of cities! Whatever prevents us from doing something about this corrupts us. We can do better! Change!<sup>2169</sup>

## Agriculture and Food

Our agricultural and food systems have devastated smaller farms and rural and small town economies, in favor of big agribusinesses that get big subsidies to limit food supplies and use agricultural practices that destroy soil, water, forest and other environments, and food companies that supply us with largely unhealthy foods, transported too far, with extraordinary waste. All of it is making us and other life sick.

Some of us are very complicit in that: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, and owners, executives and employees in big agribusinesses, petrochemical industries, big food companies and grocery stores. Everyone who buys from them or wastes food is complicit in the problem.

Everyone is empowered to do something about it. Eat less food and be sure food you do eat comes from sustainable farms, food suppliers and stores! Don't buy stuff from those with harmful practices! Don't waste food! Share information about this, write letters, protest, help feed the hungry, change! Whatever prevents us from doing something to make this better corrupts us. We can change!<sup>2170</sup>

## Gun Violence

We have a corrupt and tragic gun violence epidemic in the U.S. that is doing great harm by killing people at by far the highest rates in the developed world, and creating lots of fear and other negative emotions. Some of us are a big part of that problem: government representatives and employees, the N.R.A. and its members, firearm company owners, executives and employees, police, anyone involved in gun sales, criminals, Hollywood, gaming company and other entertainment industry owners, employees and creators that glorify gun violence, lobbyists, and anybody who owns a firearm (without securing it).

We are complicit in this problem if we are not actively trying to do something about it. Any of us living anywhere other than true wilds, if you don't regularly need a gun for hunting, destroy it! There's always another way to resolve problems between people than with gun violence. Advocate for gun laws! Share information on this! Quit consuming entertainments glorifying gun violence! Protest! Boycott! Whatever keeps us from doing something about this is corruption. We can change! Change!<sup>2171</sup>

## Health and Healthcare

The U.S. has by far the most expensive and worst performing healthcare system in the developed world, a system that actually produces healthcare problems, with the #3 cause of death in the U.S. something new we catch in the healthcare system, and high stress trying to afford, or being unable to afford, or going bankrupt trying to afford enormous healthcare costs and wicked healthcare profiteering. Every other developed society has solved this, but we have not, because of corruption. That harms us.

Some of us are a big part of that problem: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, health insurance, hospital, clinic, billing, administration, pharmaceutical, health IT, and other healthcare related business owners, management and employees focused on profits.

We're complicit if we're not actively doing something about it. Inform others! Share other models! Advocate for change! Make good health, rather fear and react to bad health! Exercise, sleep, eat healthy foods, drink healthy water, be out in nature, relax and release stress, avoid poisons, be active, have close loving relationships, turn off electronic devices, be in living community instead of alone! Anything preventing us from doing something to make this better is corrupting us. Let's change!<sup>2172</sup>



## Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Problems

We have epidemic unhealthy relationships with alcohol, tobacco and drugs, which are killing people, making us sick and doing harm to our loved ones. Rather than addressing things that drive us to these unhealthy relationships, such as all the wicked problems we've explored, our government's trillion dollar "War on Drugs" is ruining the lives of millions of suppliers, users and their loved ones and dependents, and doing little to resolve these unhealthy relationships. It is, however, successfully removing drug suppliers and users as political opposition to those creating, enabling and sustaining the wicked problems that create these unhealthy relationships by removing their voting rights. We have a mental health crisis in this country, and many of us are self-medicating, because we don't get better care.

Some of us are a big part of that problem: government representatives and employees, police, judges and others in the criminal justice system, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, and people who despair and fall into unhealthy substance relationships, rather than standing up and combatting wicked problems. We're complicit if we don't understand, have and help others have informed and healthy relationships with substances, whether they do or do not use them, combat the failed War on Drugs and other wicked problems behind unhealthy substance relationships, work for better mental health services and major reform of our healthcare system, or combat criminal justice efforts to go after substance users. Change!

Live in close, caring communities, and love, support and take care of each other, in ways that overcome or compensate for wicked problems! Learn about substances, their positives and negatives, rewards and risks, and how to use them in healthy ways and avoid unhealthy relationships, and teach others! Work to reform our healthcare system and create and maintain adequate mental health services! Inform others of these problems and take political action to change them! Combat the loss of voting rights and other government services for people with criminal histories, especially for drug users! Save substance users from the criminal justice system! What corrupts you from doing something on this?<sup>2173</sup>

## Prisons and Incarceration

The corrupt U.S. police state imprisons 1 in 110 adults, and keeps 1 in 35 in the criminal justice system, by far the world's largest prison population and highest imprisonment rate, 5.4 times the global average, with the world's longest prison sentences, imprisoning a higher percent of blacks than South Africa at the peak of apartheid, and far more and higher percentages of its youth than any other.

This prison industrial complex spends crazy amounts of money, more to send someone to prison in California than to Harvard, with spending growing three times faster than spending on public education. This racist system badly harms tens of millions of lives, of offenders, their loved ones and all of us, and creates a culture of fear, in which we give away power to its abusers, not least by losing voters.

Some of us are more responsible for this than others: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, prison guards and their unions, police, judges, lawyers, prosecutors, other tough on crime advocates, and employers who discriminate against victims of this system.

Others are complicit in this system by sitting by while it happens. Use cameras on police and document what they do! Don't take plea deals; insist on trials by jury! Share information about this unjust system! Be active politically to change it! Serve on juries and refuse to vote guilty unless it's really egregious! Shame prosecutors and prison guards! Help and hire victims of this system and their family members! Whatever causes us to allow this to happen is corrupting us.<sup>2174</sup> Change! It doesn't have to be this way.

## Legal

We have a corrupt system of laws and legal representation, with many book-shelf stacks full of hundreds of books containing many thousands of complex federal, state and local laws, codes and case rulings. Nobody even knows how many there are. Prosecuted for violations, ignorance of law is not accepted as defense, but there is no mechanism to inform people what most laws are. That doesn't make sense.

Participation in this system is corrupt, because the wealthy and powerful influence the creation of our laws and rules, to their advantage, which they can unfairly afford to do, and because they can afford to pay huge attorney fees for advocacy in the system, and others can't, allowing them virtual immunity from the criminal system, and predatory legal abilities in society and marketplaces. Lawyers prey on legal vulnerabilities, creating a complex culture of fear of lawsuits, harmfully constraining human interactions and behaviors. Quite simply, the legal system is unfair, and it harms many people.

Some of us are more responsible for this than others: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, attorneys, law school leaders and professors, judges, prosecutors, other tough on crime advocates, and people who take advantage of this system with complex legalities. Whatever makes you contribute to something so out of control and harmful is corrupting you.

Others of us are complicit in this system by sitting by while it happens. Don't do business with anyone you would not trust with a handshake! Refuse to do business with people using complicated contracts! Shame lawyers and judges! Educate others on these problems! Advocate for changes to this system! Write letters to newspapers, courts and law firms expressing your opinions! Whatever prevents us from acting to do something to try to make this better is corrupting us. Try to live well in spite of the system! Don't allow fear of legal predators prevent you from engaging in life and with other people! Change!

## Income and Wealth Inequality

Our extremely and increasingly unfair, unsustainable and harmful distributions of income and wealth harm more than half of the population. A small percentage of people at the top get most of the income, already have most of the wealth, and are rapidly getting more and more, while a growing majority of people are stressed and struggling just to live decent, simple lives, harming health and well-being, families, communities and society. Three-fourths of us are living paycheck to paycheck, with high debt. This is not sustainable. It will inevitably collapse. Why set ourselves up for that? It doesn't make sense.

Some of us are big parts of the problem: those earning huge incomes and owning great wealth, lawyers, government officials, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, business owners, managers and employees seeking ever higher profits, estate planners, tax professionals and those who help the wealthy get more. Whatever makes us contribute to the problem is corruption. Why isn't enough enough? What happens when the musical chairs game ends? We're complicit in this if we're not taking action to solve it.

We are each empowered to consume far less than we do and to spend what we do within sustainable communities that support human beings, rather than channeling our money to the wealthy. Buy local! Don't spend money at big box stores and big online suppliers! Boycott corporations and their products and tell them why! Inform others about this problem! Fight for change in government and laws! Anything that keeps us from doing something about this problem is corrupting us. We can change! Money isn't real. Let's focus on things that are real and make them better! Be part of solutions!<sup>2175</sup>



## Community, Family and Poverty

Most of us suffer financial stress. 12% live in official poverty, a threshold of deep suffering. More than half of us don't have enough money to live securely, with the basic minimums required for decent lives. Three-quarters of us live paycheck to paycheck, 70% are in debt, and half have less than \$500 in savings. Many of our wicked problems contribute to this, but especially extreme wealth and income inequality.

These stresses harm human beings, families, children and communities. It makes us work too much, taking time away from relationships, families and children. It creates shame, resentment, envy, anger, embarrassment and other negative feelings. It's destroying communities and families, harming children and most people. Healthy families, relationships, children and communities are essential to well-being and human evolution. It does not make sense for more than half the population to struggle for survival in the Earth's wealthiest nation. We suffer community and family deficit disorders, missing connection, communication, sharing, support, love, and other benefits. That harms us, makes life harder and worse.

Some are more responsible for this problem than others: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, real estate speculators, wealthy people who keep trying to get more and don't help others, anyone focused on increasing corporate profits. We're all complicit somehow, by going along with it. Anything that prevents us from doing something about it is corrupting us.

Let's stop trying to exist and survive, isolated and on our own! Come together as communities, work together to meet needs, support each other, share, care and be fulfilled via love and real relationships! Stop buying things that aren't necessary! Stop supporting with time, effort and money what contributes to income and wealth inequality! Make time for personal relationships, children and communities! Move out of expensive, busy, polluted metropolitan areas and back into small towns and rural areas, making them work again as communities! Make time to be with children and let them help heal us! Value families! Create and support natural, close, supportive and loving community! Help poor people! Push back on systems, people and organizations creating such unhealthy realities! We can change!<sup>2176</sup>

## Housing and Homelessness

We live isolated in expensive boxes, struggling for money, often not knowing or caring about even our closest neighbors, responsible for everything in our lives, without help if we stumble. Most live paycheck-to-paycheck, poised for ruin if we get sick or hurt, can't work, or any big expense comes up. Many don't feel safe in our own communities. Housing isn't affordable. Speculation's driven prices up to at least twice normal. 2/3 of renters can't buy. More rent than at any point in the last 50 years. Federal minimum wage workers can afford a 1-bedroom rental in 22 of 3,000 counties, cannot afford a 2-bedroom apartment anywhere, and work a week to pay for one average U.S. city hotel room night.

So, the U.S., long Earth's largest and wealthiest economy, has a big homelessness problem. In all cities, people beg, live outdoors, sleep in doorways or cars, unhealthy, often mentally ill. New York City is in its worst homelessness crisis since the Great Depression. 22% of California's people are homeless. 1 in 100 people and 3.3 in 100 children experience homelessness every year in this country, a historic high. Silly.

Some people are more responsible for this problem than others: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, real estate speculators, developers and managers. Anybody who sells or rents for more than they really need, or to anybody for more than they can afford, is part of the problem. We're all complicit in it somehow, by going along with it. It doesn't make sense.

Change! Let's find more efficient ways of living together with shared costs in supportive communities! Let's quit killing ourselves to earn money to live in fancier housing than we need! Help each other! Fight this! Raise awareness of the housing and homelessness crisis in the U.S.! Advocate for change! Let's move back into increasingly abandoned and desolate, but affordable, rural and small-town areas and make our lives work there! Consider quality of life, not just income when deciding where to live! What prevents us from doing something about this problem is corrupting us. We can change!<sup>2177</sup>

## Taxes and Debt

The U.S.' massive taxation system is very complex and corrupt. Its 10 million-word federal rules unfairly create complex ways for high income and wealthy people to keep even more money, creating financial strain contributing to many of our wicked problems. The complexity of our tax system creates stress for three fourths of our citizens, spending \$90 billion and incredible amounts of time just dealing with taxes, as much money as the federal government spends on transportation. Is this what we want to be doing?

Our recent \$1.5 trillion tax cut adds \$2 trillion to our debt, primarily going to the already rich, while our government and most of our citizens are buried in financial debt, with few savings. As a nation we've spent a more than we earn, 45 of last 50 years. U.S. government debt is approaching \$100 trillion, \$800,000 per household, 100% of the net worth of all our households and nonprofit organizations, including all assets in savings, real estate, stocks, private businesses and durable goods, like cars.

Enormous and growing amounts of our taxes, 40% of FADS, go to interest on our debt, increasingly to foreigners, instead of addressing our many wicked problems. What the U.S. government pays in interest plus what it borrows are more than it has discretion how to spend in a year, like you borrowing the amount of money you have left after taxes, spending all you have left after taxes, and all you borrowed, and doing this year after year. Clearly, this is not sustainable. There is no plan to bring it under control.

State Governments owe \$1.2 trillion and Local Governments \$2 trillion in debt, together 264% of FADS, \$25,000 per household. U.S. people have \$13 trillion of combined household debts (1,110% of FADS), for mortgages, student and car loans, credit card and home equity loans. We've failed to save \$4 trillion for retirement (372% of FADS), borrowing from the future at \$35,000 per household, saving on average at half the rates needed to fund our retirements. Most live paycheck to paycheck. Half don't have \$500 saved for emergencies. Total U.S. government and household debt is nearing \$1 million per household. It's out of control and unsustainable, will inevitably collapse, creates bad feelings, and makes no sense.

Some people are more responsible for this problem than others: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, wealthy people and businesses constantly wanting more. Any of us who spend more than we earn is part of the problem. We are all complicit in it in some way, at least by going along with it and letting it happen. Change! Stop going along with and allowing it!

Tell others about these problems and advocate for social change to fix them! Live modestly and well below your means, save as much as possible, and share with others! Pay off debt as quickly as possible, starting with credit card debt! Pay a fair share of taxes, at work and at home, so we can pay for shared infrastructure, systems and services we agree we need for all of us to thrive, like transportation systems, other infrastructure, education, public safety, a healthy population, and help for those who need it! Write letters to governments, news agencies and others about this, even if you think it doesn't matter! Boycott tax dodgers, and write and tell them what you are doing and why! Protest! We can change!<sup>2178</sup>

## Economy, Banking and Finance

The U.S. economy is the largest, at least in terms of GDP, and likely the most influential of any nation. Most think that's a measure of our prosperity. But, the economy and prosperity are seriously skewed, with most benefits accruing to our wealthiest people. It's full of corruption, unfairness and suffering. It's artificial, and most of us, directly or indirectly, are enslaved to our economic and banking systems.

Economics, less a science, more a religion, is an invented domain studying and shaping human behavior, mass psychology accomplished by controlled education, PR messaging and reinforcement. Its measures, like inflation, unemployment and GDP, are flawed, misunderstood and misused. For most of us in cities, inflation is much higher. Unemployment is three times official estimates, with the economy booming. GDP measures economic output, manufacturing production, economic value added, things we pay for. It doesn't include things like: having healthy communities, relationships or children; making things nice, beautiful or fulfilling; using up natural resources; environmental damage creating global climate change, leading to mass destruction and extinctions; poisoning our environments or making life sick; free things, like government services, making art or music; new information and entertainment via the Internet; illicit trade; volunteering; if we're satisfied, fulfilled or happy; or whether we're informed or dumb.

Economics pretends to be a science capably driving our society with these three and other instruments, only none of them provide accurate or even truly valuable real measurements. It's a vehicle for control. Economics has us assume, as blind faith, "more is better". Increasingly, the wealthy get most economic benefits, the poor stay poor, and the middle class is squeezed out. Concentration of wealth, and wealth and income inequality, are huge and growing problems. The haves already have most of it, and increasingly get more and more of it. Have-nots increasingly lose and suffer, causing harm, social unrest and negative emotions and energies. It's not sustainable and will inevitably collapse, with great disruption, destruction, pain and suffering. Meanwhile, we're told the economy and we are all good.

In most industries, power is increasingly concentrated in fewer and bigger corporations. Small farms and businesses are ruthlessly, continuously forced out of business, killing economic multiplier effects, which ease simple exchanges between people, so everyone gets what they need for doing what they do. That drives people to expensive cities, for opportunities to "make money", where the wealthy already own most of it and enslave us, paying ever increasing rents and prices for goods they control, outsourced to big businesses and/or cheap overseas suppliers that destroy U.S. jobs and industries, leading to despair and its repercussions, addiction, suicide, health problems and lower life expectancies.

The wealthiest 10% own 90% of all public company stock, and speculate in securities and real estate, which doesn't create real wealth, just moves financial wealth from one to another. Greedy speculation created the Great Recession, which harmed lives all over the planet, and one person went to jail for it. We had to bail out banks, which cut interest rates to near zero, killing safe savings accounts, pushing us into financial and housing gambling they gain from, raising stock and housing prices, and homelessness.

Economics has everyone focused on getting money, pieces of paper and numbers in computers that have zero intrinsic value, and only have any value at all if we agree to believe in them, allowing financial manipulators to take things of real value, like our natural resources, land, homes, time and efforts, health and well-being, communities and ways of life, in exchange for something of fictional value. Huh? We obsessively focus on acquiring Monopoly money, instead of cultivating and enjoying real wealth. That doesn't make sense, and it's a big reason we don't take action to fix our real wicked problems.

U.S. government gave away its right to create and control money to the private Federal Reserve system, which largely appoints its own regulators from its own ranks, and creates all money, as debt. Literally, all money is debt. Banks create it from nothing, when and how they want. As they create more debt and money, they create inflation, by definition, which erodes the value of money, which the banking system has managed so prices today are 2,436% higher than in 1913, when the Fed system was created. This entire system collapses if banks aren't always loaning more money in the future than they do today.

When they don't, which is in their control, we have economic collapses, like the Great Depression. Banks quit loaning money; the money supply dries up; and, suddenly, there is no money to pay people. The whole country, with exactly the same real resources, exactly the same numbers of people, exactly the same capacities and readiness to work, grinds to a halt, because banks stop making loans, or money. Banks have power to do that, and they hold that power over us and our government. Why accept that?

Banks are not satisfied with an ability to earn interest on an almost unlimited supply of money they loan out after creating it from nothing, and they don't stop there. If you can't pay back the loan, they seize real assets pledged as collateral to get fake money loans. Their fake money turns into their real wealth. Banks speculate with money, gambling, betting \$5 trillion a day (25% of GDP) in currency exchanges. They gamble with stocks, bonds and real estate. They create and gamble on more than \$500 trillion in financial derivatives, 25 times U.S. GDP. They buy and sell debt/money they have created, our loans. They create obtuse financial instruments, like the credit default swaps that led to the Great Recession. They do that, fail, then make government take our money and give it to them, so they don't fail, because they are too big to fail. Why not gamble big if you keep the winnings but don't have to bear the losses?

Banks launder money for criminals, helping them convert illicit gains into money for use in legal trade. They manipulate markets for gain, like rigging foreign currency exchanges, or manipulating the LIBOR interest rate used in trillions of dollars of financial contracts around the globe, by just conspiring to make the number whatever they wanted, one of the biggest crimes ever committed in global history. They steal, like the money of people killed by the Nazis, or money in pension funds, by inflating fees.

Bank white collar crimes often end in "settlements," agreements with the government that let criminals not admit guilt, not disclose crimes, and avoid prison, for a portion of the crimes' profits. Meanwhile, we run the world's largest prison system for little crimes by common people. We get 5 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine for copying DVDs, while bankers steal billions, never admit to the crime, and keep most of it, by making deals. Banks scam customers for fees and unwanted services. Banks profiteer from all wars, from all parties. All money for wars comes from banks, like all money for anything at all. They hold power over all governments, because all governments owe banks money. "We the People" owe banks a million dollars per household already, debt and interest that only seem to grow.

Large banks and financial institutions have created enormous artificial consumer credit card systems, which dominate as U.S. consumer spending vehicles, with interest rates averaging 15%+. If consumers don't pay card bills in full each month, we pay enormous returns to banks and financial companies. Usury, lending at interest, is a sin in most world religions; yet, our money and economy are based on it.

Credit card fees are an invisible tax of 3% on most of what we buy in the economy, going to banks for card payments and to merchants for cash or check payments, creating a huge drag on the economy, reducing economic multiplier effects, producing card company receipts of \$1 - \$2 on each \$50 purchase.

These fees are most U.S. merchants' fastest growing expenses, and 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> highest costs, behind payroll and healthcare. Passed on to customers, people in the U.S. pay more for these fees than all people in the rest of the world combined. Europe has limited these unfair fees, but the U.S. does not. Card companies buy complicity through kickback schemes, like loyalty program points, or cash back. They make it illegal to disclose card fees on bills. Instead of limiting card fees, we're trying to kill cash.

Big banks have revolving doors to government finance positions, no matter which party is in power, where they create benefits for banking and financial institutions in law and government practices.

The U.S. economy, banking and financial systems are profoundly and fundamentally corrupt and broken, providing huge systemic advantages to existing wealth and power, and taking advantage of all others. They are not sustainable and must change, because they will inevitably collapse, change affecting all.

Some people are deeply responsible for these problems: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, economists, financial company and bank owners and employees. Anybody who believes in our economic system, has a bank account, uses money, carries debt or uses a credit card is part of the problem. We're all complicit in it, by going along with it and allowing it.

Help raise awareness of these issues and reduce how we participate in and give power to this system! Don't do business with any bank that is too big to fail, or big-box businesses! Learn how economic, financial, money and banking systems function, and how to participate in them with minimal harm! Insist on living wages and living wage increases! Think analytically and critically about the spin!

Stop spending so much money, especially money you don't have, on credit! Pay off credit cards first, then other debt! Support local dealings in local communities creating local economic multiplier effects! Recognize and cultivate real wealth, rather than phantom financial wealth and money! Acquire and work with real property, wealth and services, with like-minded real people in real communities!

Value and insist on fairness! Be interested and learn! Acquire experiences and skills, rather than things! (That doesn't have to be expensive.) Don't patronize businesses that don't take cash and tell them why! Ask for cash discounts! Anybody who isn't doing something about this is corrupted by something.<sup>2179</sup>

## Education

The U.S. has many of the world's best schools, colleges and universities, spends \$1 trillion a year on education, near the most per student and per GDP, and its teachers spend among the most time in class. Yet, its education systems underperform most developed nations. 75% of developed nations do better at early childhood education. Only a third of U.S. K-12 students are proficient at their grade levels, and less than half its high school graduates are college or career ready. 1 of 4 who start high school quit.

There's great disparity in schools, and its poor, black and brown skinned do much worse than average. We pay more for schools in rich than poor areas, and let wealthy use tax money for private schools. Teachers are stressed from having too many students, with too many social problems, without enough resources, complying with rules for what to teach, and proving content knowledge on standard tests.

Students are bored, forced to sit passively and all learn the same stuff at the same time and speeds, which only works for the average. Emphasis is on what to think, rewarding students for regurgitating pre-selected "right" answers, that reflect what others want them to think, rather than how to think, critically, to be able to determine if something is true, real or relevant, or how. Many hate school.

Counseling for students is under-funded and low-priority. Students get little support, career exploration or counseling, perpetuating social disparity. Many schools provide unhealthy food, impairing learning, for at least 1 in 5 students in poverty, and hungry. 1 in 10 in college is hungry, struggling to live. Growing higher education debt (bankruptcy doesn't protect from) is enslaving millions of people.

Few efforts tie what students are being prepared with to knowledge and skills in demand in workplaces, with more than half of employers saying Higher Ed isn't giving students skills needed in the workforce. It's almost impossible to fire teachers for incompetence or poor performance, a corruption of tenure, and most lack current experiences with workplaces they are supposed to be preparing students for. Most students are not taught practical life skills in school, so they have to figure those out on their own.

Public education is so entrenched in established ways, and so embroiled in differing opinions of how it can be fixed without making significant changes, or how it needs to do something to meet the specific and unique needs of narrow interests, or must impart certain content or views, it's very hard to change. So it doesn't, even in the midst of the most rapid changes in the history of humanity. It's badly broken.

As a result of education failures, many citizens are ignorant, unable to think critically or be good citizens. 30% of us are in favor of bombing Agrabah, a fictional country created for the Disney movie *Aladdin*. Big percentages are geographically, financially and scientifically illiterate, contributing to wicked problems. 14% of adults can't read, and 1 in 5 read below 5<sup>th</sup> grade level, harming abilities to contribute.

Some of us contribute to these problems in big ways: government representatives and employees, school board members, educational leaders and teachers, think tank intellectuals and many lobbyists. We all contribute to this wicked problem in some way, by allowing it to continue to be so broken. Whatever is causing us to not contribute to fixing this problem is corrupting us. Change! Be curious! Learn every day! If bored, engage and make it interesting! Read! Learn to evaluate credibility! Care!

Understand why learning, knowledge and being able to think and reason are valuable! Pay attention! Be present! Help others! Share information about our educational system and engage in improving it! Be smart in spending money on education! Use educational technologies! Hold teachers accountable! Thank teachers! Teach! If going to go to college, know why! Understand education debt! Get skills! Get out in real and natural worlds and learn from them, our best classrooms! Learn, grow, evolve!<sup>2180</sup> This problem affects all of our wicked problems, like most of them do. We can change, right?

## Immigration

Despite every single person in the U.S. being an immigrant, or descended from immigrants, the U.S. has a chaotic, mean-spirited treatment of immigrants and asylum seekers now, some of it in clear violation of human rights laws. We're restricting visas and border crossings, spreading hateful, accusing and racist lies about immigrants, using our police state apparatus to attack and deport migrant workers, taking children from asylum seekers, imprisoning them, and allowing them to be sexually assaulted.

We're unfairly blaming "others" for our own problems, scapegoating immigrants, even though we're responsible for our own problems, and, typically, also for many problems in immigrants' countries, which force them into the desperate and courageous acts of attempting to migrate to another country. We just keep on manipulating and interfering with other nations, instead of allowing them to prosper. Wouldn't we be better served helping people thrive in their countries, rather than harming them there, causing suffering and fear there, so they prefer to stay there, rather than moving here? Common sense.



The fear, hate, anger, resentment and abuse we're directing at harmed outsiders is misdirected. Would you try to bring your loved ones to the U.S., or some other place of relative stability, if that was the only thing you could think of that might bring violence and fear to an end and provide hope for a good life? One in every 110 people globally is now either a refugee, an asylum seeker or internally displaced.

Some of us are more responsible for this problem than others: government representatives and employees, racist groups, think tank intellectuals and lobbyists. We all contribute to the problem in some way, by allowing it to continue to be so broken. We're all empowered to do something about it. Whatever causes us to do nothing about this problem is corrupting us. Be compassionate! Care!

Learn to live with each other and our guests, be responsible for our own problems, which we create, open our hearts and minds, and transform how we think about and deal with immigration and others! Fix the problems, rather than judge and punish others in blame, letting the real problems continue!

Don't be a patsy, and don't allow others to make others patsies! Call out government lies! Resist things like the government's efforts to close all overseas immigration offices! Spread information, and protest! Let's stop interfering with others' worthy attempts to create good lives for themselves where they live, stop harming others elsewhere in our attempts to accrue riches to support our egos where we live, and help others where they live, so they have good lives there and don't feel compelled to move here! Seriously, are we really a people that imprisons and abuses innocent children? We can change!<sup>2181</sup>

### Empire and Its Agents

From a rebellion of 13 east coast British colonies, touting human rights and other Enlightenment ideals, establishing a representative democratic government, by and for its people, the U.S. has expanded and created a vast and growing empire, with the fourth largest land mass, third largest human population, largest economy by GDP, and largest government budget and military. Its empire is largely economic.

It did so by committing genocide on its native populations, declaring war against Great Britain, France, Spain, Mexico, Germany, Austria, Italy and Japan, and through other authorized and unauthorized, military, covert and overt intervention actions in at least 84 countries, which has contributed to killing 200 million human beings, at least, 30 million since World War 2, creating great loss and suffering.

It has 1 in 4 of the world's 10 million prisoners, by far the largest number and percent of prisoners, imprisoning its people at 5.4 times the rate the rest of the world does, imprisoning a higher percentage of its adult black population than South Africa at apartheid's peak. 1 in 35 U.S. adults is in the criminal justice system. Half of (113 million) U.S. adults have had a close family member jailed; 1 in 7 a spouse; 1 in 8 a child, and only 1 in 4 are ever able to visit incarcerated family members. 3 million (1 in 25) U.S. children have a parent in prison. Its prison sentences are the world's longest. At any moment, half a million people are in jail in the U.S. waiting for trial, sometimes years, because they can't afford bail.

The U.S. criminal justice system removes citizens from voting rolls, enough to affect many U.S. elections, a giant corruption of democracy. It creates a culture of fear, fear of our government and its police state, fear that inhibits freedom and forces compliance. It consumes up to \$1 trillion a year for that, including direct system costs, lost productivity, and impacts on families, children and communities (86% of FADS), money unavailable to promote rights, freedom, life, evolution and happiness, or solve wicked problems. Its police are increasingly militarized and using pervasive and invasive methods of surveillance.

It operates global military forces in 163 of 195 countries, is at war in 7, with, by far, the world's largest, most expensive military, costing more than the next 10 militaries, combined, or \$834 billion in 2018. 77% of revenues its Federal Government can decide how to spend without new debt go to its military, leaving 23% for all other discretionary spending, everything else in society, during little military threat. It outspends China 4 times for military, though China has 4 times the U.S. population, Russia by 10 times. If its military was a national government, it would rank 8<sup>th</sup> in the world by total budget.

Its military has 6,000 military bases and/or warehouses in the U.S. and 700-1,000 in 80 other countries, on 30 million acres, with 850,000 buildings, making U.S. military one of the world's largest landowners. It has 10 times the foreign military bases of the rest of the world, combined. Its military has more office space than Manhattan, 250,000 vehicles, 5,300 aircraft and 300 ships. It's the U.S.'s largest employer. And it just announced the world's first separate military branch to operate in space.

Its military operates with little real financial accountability to its people, with \$21 trillion in transactions untraced, undocumented or unexplained, roughly its declared national debt, more than its current GDP, the largest in the world, the amount of money all the governments in the world have to spend in a year. Its military is the world's largest single polluter, consumer of energy, and contributor to global warming. Yet, its military is immune from participation in global climate or environmental agreements.

It created nuclear war, is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons in war, and has conducted more nuclear weapons tests than all other nations combined. It and Russia are the world's greatest nuclear arms holders, with about 6,500 warheads each, compared to 300 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked France, and it has just pulled out of one of the most important nuclear arms treaties in the world, along with Russia, promising to spend \$1 trillion on its nuclear arsenal in the next 30 years, creating great risks for life. Nuclear weapons and technologies kill, mutate and harm for millennia, and we have no plan for waste.

The U.S. is the world's largest military arms dealer, selling 70% of arms in the world, 6 times more weapons than the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest arms dealer, Russia, increasingly without legal constraints, creating military capabilities it says it must police, like allowing guns to its public creates crime it has to police at home. Our military-industrial-complex helps people kill each other all over the world, and its rich get the spoils.

It pays private military contractors 11% more than the combined military spending of China and Russia, 20% more for services alone than it spends on Education, to be mercenaries and operations contractors, largely unaccountable to elected representatives or the public, which it uses to cloak intelligence and military activities to manage public perceptions. The public is mostly ignorant of mercenary companies. One is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest private employer in the world, after Walmart. The U.S. refused to sign the U.N. agreement not to use mercenaries, and it does, a lot; it just doesn't tell its people much about it.

Its CIA director was appointed after overseeing illegal torture of humans and destroying evidence of it. 1947 to 1989, the CIA tried to change other nations' governments at least 72 times, part of by far the world's largest surveillance and spy operations, including at least 1,300 government organizations and 2,000 companies, in 10,000 locations, not counting locations outside the U.S. 850,000 people have its top-secret security clearances (to vast amounts of information it refuses to disclose to its people or most of the lawmakers who are supposed to oversee it). It spends \$1 trillion a year on military, security and intelligence operations, the entire government budget of Great Britain, which controlled a quarter of the Earth's surface before it voluntarily released holds on its empire. It outsources \$50 billion in spy work, per year, 80% to an oligarchy of 5 corporations, considered indispensable, essentially "too big to fail".

Its spies and intelligence workers gather public and private information on people, and its own citizens, all over the world, extraordinary amounts of all kinds of data, including most everything passing through the public Internet, phone calls, emails, social media use, photos, private documents, web browsing, computer and phone locations, interactions with electronic services, financial and library records, hacks of computer microphones and cameras, and many other things, gathering data on not only individuals, but also on their personal contact networks, which they can identify, as far out as they go.

It can and does use that to target people for intelligence, military, police and other purposes, to be able to manipulate, trap and exploit anyone, not only via what they learn about our private lives, but through leverage applied through knowledge of our loved ones. Still Russia changed its election outcomes? Hm.

Its combined military and intelligence operations are functionally impossible to oversee, especially for handfuls of elected officials tasked with that, busy with other things, like voting, getting elected and raising money to get elected. After elections, some jobs change hands. The rest of these organizations and people carry on, with huge resources and continuity. It would take years for representatives to learn what's going on in these operations, which is probably not possible, which they don't before being replaced with the next round of representatives, leaving a "deep state" of continued operations in place.

At its founding, and periodically since, including early phases of the U.N, the U.S. was a champion of human rights. Its record, however, includes genocide against its native population, controlling public information, significant propaganda operations, impeding public information requests, persecuting whistleblowers and leakers trying to provide public information to the public, attacks on the press, classifying extraordinary amounts of information, and kidnapping, murdering and/or holding people without charges or recourse indefinitely. It recently takes children from asylum seekers and imprisons them inhumanely, away from parents. It discriminates against immigration based on race and religion. It defies international human rights agreements, with impunity, including those it agreed to and wrote.

Its citizens live in a culture of fear, though fear has never been a U.S. value. Though most intend to live in a peaceful culture, via its unending War on Terror, against a vague enemy it can never totally identify or defeat, it has established a permanent state of war, in which wartime powers are never suspended.

It said its Afghanistan war was to bring Osama bin Laden to justice, but it killed him in Pakistan in 2011, and still it occupies the country in 2019. Why? The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline will be finished by 2020, creating profits from the world's 4<sup>th</sup> largest gas reserves, supplying people in those countries. The war/occupation costs are public; the profits are private.

Through vehicles like its World Bank and International Monetary Fund, it operates various methods of economic imperialism, loaning nations money and then controlling them through their indebtedness, much like its banking system controls its citizens through education, home, credit card and other debt. They force power, legal and policy changes which give the U.S. and/or its wealthy and powerful people methods to control and profit from resources and economic activities in those countries, and others. Our government openly supports our businesses profiting from harms caused in other nations.

Repercussions of its military, spy and economic interventions and interferences in other countries include instabilities, destruction and dislocations, affecting countries and populations all over the world, resulting in immigration crises all over the world, and ensuing instabilities and harms to host nations.

Common sense says this isn't sustainable or desirable, and contributes to many of our wicked problems. Some people are deeply responsible for these problems: government representatives and employees; lobbyists; think tank intellectuals; military leaders and employees; bank owners, management and employees; political scientists; contractors to government; military and intelligence organizations; people working for suppliers of the military industrial complex; cooperative telecommunications and other technology company management and employees; people doing business with any of them.

Anybody who serves in the military or pays taxes is part of the problem. We are all complicit in it, because we go along with it. Whatever keeps us from doing something about this is corrupting us.

We can change! It will be big and difficult. We may feel small standing up to an empire, but we can! Share information about this problem! Refuse to do business with the military or its contractors! Refuse to serve in the military or work for any of its contractors! Protest! Help those we harm! Resist!

Write letters to government, press and companies doing business with the military or our spy agencies, explaining why you will not spend any money with those companies, even if you think it doesn't matter! It provides integrity and feels good to do something. Have compassion for those we displace and harm!

Refuse fear! Respect and aid native peoples! Advocate for including more of this in public education! Don't be a rube! Resist the next war, invariably coming soon! Insist we revoke permanent war powers! Make the gas companies pay for the war in Afghanistan they are profiting from? Call out the lies!<sup>2182</sup>

## Human Rights and Freedoms

Establishing and protecting universal human rights and freedoms with laws, and providing a structure for government to do so, is the purpose of the U.S. Constitution, and that is the highest law in the U.S. Nothing is superior to that with regard to our government, any of its actions, or laws. Period.

Regardless of the words used, any of their faults or limitations, or how they can be manipulated or read, conceptually, that is what the U.S. was created to do and be. That concept is who and what we are as a nation and a people, and we have championed that globally, inspiring many others all over the world. That's our main source of legitimacy, pride, honor, identity, integrity, respect, decency and appreciation, as a nation and as a people, for and by human beings everywhere. Feel the energy and power of that!

Initial expressions of those rights, in our Declaration of Independence, Constitution and its amendments, have been expanded and improved by many international U.N. human rights declarations and treaties. The U.S. is a party to most, and played key roles in developing many. These are beautiful documents!

The point of these various verbal expressions of universal human rights and freedoms is not to get all lawyered up and interpret them in attempts to confine and limit them, but to recognize and support their great pervasiveness and expansiveness. We have the right to be free to be and do as we want to, as long as that does not infringe on others' rights and freedoms, or cause significant harm to others, directly, or indirectly by causing harms to any life forms or environments that affect us.

Many of us are not aware of these rights and freedoms, or of this higher-level concept. We need to be. We need to share and teach human rights to all, everywhere. We need to insist that governments, businesses, organizations and humans everywhere understand their spirit, words and intentions, and adhere to them. We need to exercise our human right to rebellion in order to make it so?!

Direct and indirect violations of universal human rights and freedoms are all around us. Some are conducted by government, some by businesses, some by other organizations, some by other people. Dozens have been revealed in these wicked problem explorations.<sup>2183</sup> These are but a sliver of U.S. human rights violations, violations of rights and freedoms that are greater than any of us individually. Insisting on adherence to these rights, universally, is probably the most powerful thing any of us can do to improve the qualities and circumstances for our own lives, for the lives of our loved ones, and for all.

The U.S. was an early champion of human rights and democracy. Now, its record is at least very cloudy. That doesn't make sense. Some of us are more responsible for that: government representatives and employees; lobbyists; think tank intellectuals; military and business leaders, employees, suppliers and contractors; complicit telecommunications and other technology company managers and employees, people doing business with them and buying into it. But we are all complicit in it, by going along with it. Whatever keeps us from doing something about it is corrupting us. We can change!

Stand up, get out there and fight for universal human rights and freedoms! Do whatever you can! Educate others about our many human rights and advocate for comprehensive human rights education! Write letters to representatives, news agencies and others, even if it seems that it will not matter! Support human rights organizations and information! Support refugees fleeing human rights violations! Stand up for your own human rights, even in the face of police, employer or government intimidation!

Publish and share human rights with others, in public and private! Find ways to live free with integrity! Be aware and take care that none of your own actions and behaviors violate the rights of any other! Isn't it arrogant and insensitive to think other forms of life don't have fundamental rights and freedoms? Support efforts to create, disseminate and enforce human rights, and rights for other life!<sup>2184</sup>

### Marketing, Advertising, Selling and PR

Historically, people decided when we wanted to go to a market to trade for what we needed or desired. We went to the market, found what we wanted, decided if what we found was right and traded for it. We dealt with all that when we chose to deal with that, and were free of it when we didn't want it. Today, the markets come to us. Even when we most want to be free of them, they intrude in our lives. The U.S. is now inundated by invasive marketing and advertisement, relentless commercial attacks.

By age 65, we see 2 million TV commercials. We're exposed to 5,000 ads a day now, 2 million a year. 45% of phone calls are spam. Annually, we each get 41 pounds of junk mail, 149 billion pieces together, 6 million tons going into landfills. We spend 8 months of our lives sorting it. Globally, 85% of all email, 204 billion emails a day, are spam, 75 trillion per year, 10,000 for every man, woman and child on Earth. The U.S. is the worst spam enabling country. Advertisements cost us hundreds of billions annually, for: lost time and productivity; network and computer capacity; trying to avoid it; fraud and identity theft; stress; health problems; addictions; and people tuning out communications, because it's overwhelming.

Our government and its spy agencies and contractors are collecting, for persecution and manipulation, astounding amounts of data on us, in violation of our privacy and human rights. U.S. businesses do too. Anyone can legally and cheaply buy mind-boggling amounts of information on anyone in the U.S. Businesses collect, buy and sell our information, make money and have market capitalizations of billions of dollars from it. Government does little to hypocritically protect us, our information or our rights.

Entertainments attract and hold our attention while commercial programming takes place, like geeks writing software to get computers to do what they want, conditioning us to think and behave as desired. Advertisements blare, attack, bore and weasel their intrusive ways into our heads from all directions: radio, TV, websites, applications, billboards, store signs, people waving signs, mail, print ads, robocalls... It's a wearying battleground of incursion into attention, into conscious and unconscious awareness. They attack like diseases trying to overcome our natural defenses, pouncing on us if we're vulnerable.

Much of advertising is designed to mislead us into less informed decision-making, with false reasoning. Armies of people work on these manipulations, studying behaviors, creating, selling and buying ads, testing success and "hit rates," organizing "campaigns", "targeting" people, "hitting people" with ads, collecting, buying, analyzing and selling our private personal data, consuming incredible resources. We're spending trillions of dollars on ads, enough to solve many of our many wicked problems.

It's exhausting and stressful to maintain defenses against these relentless attacks. It feels bad, because ads can ruin what they intrude into, like a noxious pollution? They create social and personal problems. We go through life with shields up against selling assaults, but the shields separate us from each other. We hide, avert our eyes and try not to open to these attacks, which could come anywhere, or any time. They often provide us disservices, confusing us with noise, so we make impetuous and uninformed, rather than sound decisions? That harms us and makes us feel bad. It doesn't make sense.

We need comprehensible, easily accessible, reliable, trustworthy and comparable information about organizations and their offerings. Do we really need advertisement, or is advertisement a pollution? Like companies selling gasoline and other toxins, it only works if they can push their external costs off on an unsuspecting or unresisting public. If advertisers had to pay for the time and negative impacts on people whose heads they invade and pollute, advertisement would be cost-prohibitive?

Some are more responsible for these problems: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, regulatory body employees, business owners, management and employees, people who work for ad agencies, marketing functions, or media companies. We're all complicit in it, though, by going along with it. Whatever keeps us from doing something about it is corrupting us.

Change! Turn it all off! Get on Do Not Call/Mail lists! Share this information! Tell companies you don't want ads and won't buy from them if they do it, and don't! Turn off media that includes advertisement! Pay for services that do not include ads to encourage those models, rather than ad business models! Just say no to ads and marketing! Open up to other humans anyway! Take back your own head!<sup>2185</sup>

### News, Information, Entertainment and Distraction

People have rights and responsibilities, including the right to rebellion, to hold government accountable to our laws, principles and human rights. To do so, we need a system of fair and honest reporting of news and information, so we understand what is happening in the country, government and world.

Only a fifth of us trust news we get, and many of us aren't showing up for news and information at all. U.S. news and information reporting is corrupted by concentration of media ownership. 6 companies control 90% of our media. 15 billionaires control most, letting them influence what we know and think, turning news into for profit propaganda channels, more sophisticated, better funded than most of us.



The U.S. press ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in world press freedom, just after Romania, with Independent journalists' abilities to report increasingly undermined by attacks, arrests, border stops, device searches, whistleblower prosecutions and limits on public information. Journalists are arrested doing their jobs.

Our President limits White House press briefings, and attacks news agencies. Distrust of news is sewn by "Fake News" allegations, maybe true or false. They confuse us and make it harder to know facts, making it easier to manipulate us with PR, marketing and propaganda. Much of that originates in fake or biased propaganda proliferated as "news" via social media, lessening credibility of all news.

Federal Government shares little information other than to get tax returns, payments, and Census data, or provide notices of postal rate changes. It overwhelms with big volumes of stuff on its many websites, so it's hard to know what it actually does. It doesn't tell us how it spends money, as required, or about laws and systems, so we understand them. Huge and increasing amounts of its information is classified, unavailable to the press or public. How should we know how society works, what's legal or not?

Globally, in a year, we produce enough information for a string of standard text that would go around the Earth at the equator 3.2 trillion times. A small fraction of it is educational. A massive proliferation of media choices dilutes public attention across all media, decreasing chances we use the same media, communication channels, or information. We pretend we are better able to communicate than ever, but we're increasingly separated on different communication channels, communicating poorly.

Media create incredible noise levels in our lives, harming many of us, via problems with media addiction, abilities to pay attention, think clearly and critically, be present with life, family and friends, do work, organize our lives, participate in society, and be healthy and happy. Attentions increasingly flit from one thing to another, interrupted often. We think or pretend we are more efficient, as we "multi-task," or try to do many things at once. We're not. We're increasingly distracted beings, unable to pay attention, even when we try to. Media addictions and attention problems are epidemic, and rewiring our brains.

We increasingly seek and find distraction through media, spending 11 hours per day on it, compulsively. We're not there in our lives, relationships, families or heads, because our attentions are too distracted. Look around you, almost anywhere, any time, and notice how we are lost in our devices, not present! That's not healthy. It makes big problems in our lives, families, communities, workplaces, and society, because we are too sidetracked and media drugged to participate in them fully.

We're not getting information we need to accurately understand and manage the worlds we live in, from media or government. We're overwhelmed with our lives as we're set up to live them, and with all kinds of media, lost in entertainments and distractions, spread across so many we don't connect and communicate well with each other. We're harmed by media, addicted and unable to pay attention well enough to understand or do what we need to do to fix things, like our many wicked problems. Unable to focus attention and concentrate, we lose the ability to be intellectual, analytical, critical, thoughtful, and participate as informed and thinking members of a representative democracy, failing as citizens.

Some are more responsible for these problems: government representatives and employees; lobbyists; think tank intellectuals; business owners, managers, reporters and employees at media companies, news organizations, ad agencies, and technology companies. However, we're all complicit in it, because we're going along with it. Whatever keeps us from doing something about it is corrupting us. Change!

Learn to seek facts and information, not opinions, and be able to analyze and evaluate them critically!  
Turn off commercial televisions and radios! Seek out information you are interested in proactively!  
Support high quality independent journalism! Share good information with and from others you trust!  
Be skeptical! Try to understand the big picture! Read! Understand that social media and other “free” services get rich selling your personal information, and get off of them if you don’t agree with that!  
Write letters to tech companies and don’t do business with them if you don’t like what they’re doing!

Put limits on electronic communications and entertainments! Do only one thing at a time and do it well!  
Get out in nature and the real world with real people in living communities! Turn electronic devices on only when you really need them, with a clear purpose, and keep them off otherwise! Wake up!<sup>2186</sup>

## Government Corruption

The U.S. was founded on inspiring ideas, ideals, principles and values, including human rights for all, and the same fair laws applying equally to all, which we determine through representative democracy, balanced to prevent aggregation and abuse of power. It holds this up as a model for best government and has actively worked to replicate it in other countries. Much of the world has been receptive to that, and the U.S. derives much of its influence from global perceptions, beliefs and respect that these ideals and this system are noble, just and worthy of emulation. Unfortunately, after more than 200 years of efforts, this system has been fundamentally corrupted. The emperor has no clothes, and the empire is crumbling.

Our elections are corrupted via an obsolete and heavily gamed electoral college voting system for President and VP; a corrupt two political party duopoly, abusing power to shut out alternative voices; unfair (s)elections, management and money corruption within those two parties; a corrupt press which plays along with orchestrated election propaganda; extremely corrupt campaign finance laws and rules; very long election cycles in which lots of money for PR and advertisement has far too important a role; low voter turnouts by alienated voters; electronic voting machine manipulations; social media abuse; and gerrymandering, corrupt redrawing of election maps to bias and predetermine election outcomes.

Elections are also badly corrupted by various voter suppression and manipulation efforts, that include: tactical polling place restrictions, like limited hours and making it hard for the poor to get to the polls; registration restrictions, like Voter ID laws; not letting U.S. territory residents vote; disallowing many of the 1 in 35 victims of the criminal justice system to vote; and making it hard to vote for people with illnesses or disabilities, which affects many unable to afford corrupt health insurance or healthcare.

Government is deeply corrupted by money in politics, with donors and lobbyists demanding and getting preferential treatment from officials they buy into power. Government offices are besieged by special interests seeking privilege and approval for what they want, including a huge political lobbying industry, professional, paid and often for-profit efforts to influence representatives on behalf of special interests. They get more money to influence Congress than we pay for Congress itself. It works. It wouldn’t exist if it didn’t. There are 23 federal lobbyists per U.S. congressperson, similar ratios in state governments.

Government lobbying and other donor efforts buy votes and make politicians dependent on them, literally writing laws government passes, and bribing politicians and their staffs with lucrative job offers. That is tremendously prejudiced toward the already rich and powerful, especially corporate interests. For each \$1 labor and public interest groups spend lobbying, businesses and their associations use \$34.

Of the 100 organizations spending the most on U.S. lobbying, 95 represent businesses, very consistently. This corruption creates or contributes to all of our wicked problems.

Think tanks and other institutes, non-profits or groups organized to study and advocate for particular agendas deeply corrupt government, providing intellectual cover for getting what their sponsors want. Some, like the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Goldman Sachs routinely place people in powerful government appointed positions, where they affect what government does in their favor, and report back unfairly to their true stakeholders, giving them advantages and accomplishing their objectives. They have “revolving doors” between government offices and their outside bosses and benefactors, back doors between government cabinet and other executive positions and corporate boardrooms.

The U.S. Congress has been deeply corrupted, with debilitated autonomous research resources, preventing it from having independent and unbiased data and information on which to base decisions; disabled committee and subcommittee systems that no longer perform their functions of creating law by study, negotiation and consensus, or oversight; abdications of many of its responsibilities, like approving international agreements, declaring war, checking executive powers, defending human rights, and providing oversight on almost anything it legalizes with its actions; allowing executive power to grow without restraint, to the point we may not be able to stop a rogue President, even if we wanted to.

Government is increasingly corrupted into not following basic principles of good governance, so it is not being accountable, effective and efficient, fair, honest, law and rule abiding, open and transparent, representative, responsive or unconflicted. Abuses and profiteering in government are prevalent, and there are few rules or laws that prevent elected politicians from being corrupt.

The Federal Government overreaches and interferes with state and local governments, using threats like cutting off federal funding unless they comply with federal government demands, which is corrupt. Government hides and obfuscates its corruption behind bewildering complexity of information, laws, policies, rules and systems, which are too much for most individual citizens or poorly funded public interest groups to grasp and interact with, because we’re busy trying to make our individual lives work, with stagnant real wages and increasing real costs and worries, and we can’t or don’t pay for help.

The U.S government increasingly ignores, defies and breaks international laws and agreements, including human rights’, with impunity, because it has aggregated far too much power and influence, even for the combined international community to defy it and hold it accountable.

Its “independent” judicial system is increasingly corrupted through judges, appointed on the basis of political views and other ideology, so they will enforce and uphold what the powerful want.

Government increasingly cracks down on “leakers” and whistleblowers to protect its corruptions, preventing the press and public from knowing what it is really doing.

Our private Federal Reserve banking system, to which we corruptly gave control of our economic and money systems, is deeply corrupt, creating and controlling all money, which is literally debt to them, and appointing its own regulators from its own ranks. It holds over us the power of crashing the economy, mountains of legal debt obligations from most people, organizations and governments, and being the only source of money if we need it for emergencies. Its people run our government finance systems.

The very important, less formal, 4<sup>th</sup> branch of U.S. government, a system of fair and honest reporting of news and information, so citizens understand what is happening in the country, government and world, so we can knowledgeably and responsibly participate in public conversations about what is happening, and decide what to do about it, if anything, is corrupted by a media ownership oligopoly. 6 companies and 15 billionaires control 90% of U.S. media, which they can and do influence as propaganda vehicles, which is a huge threat to and corruption of functional democracy and government in the U.S., because people don't get fair and factual information on which to base thoughts and government interactions.

State and local governments are also corrupt, in many of the same ways.

U.S. people know our governments are corrupt and that causes us to live in despair and fear. In 2018, various polls consistently found U.S. voters have lost confidence in the U.S. political system. 75% of U.S. people think "the laws enacted by our national government these days mostly reflect what powerful special interests and their lobbyists want." 77% of us think "corruption in Washington" is either the "most important" or a "very important" issue for candidates to address. We understand when politics are corrupt, what's important to us is less important than the priorities of the privileged few. In 2018, voters said government corruption was the most important 2018 topic. Majorities in both parties agree.

In 2018, for the 4<sup>th</sup> year in a row, a survey of what people are afraid of in the U.S. found nothing scares us more than corrupt government officials. 74% of us say we're "afraid" or "very afraid" of government corruption, far more than for any other fear. The U.S. people are 3 times more afraid of our own politicians than we are of all reptiles (snakes, lizards, alligators, crocodiles and the like).

The conception of U.S. government was that it would be conducted by qualified, caring and thoughtful human beings elected by and responsible to the human beings they represent. Its primary purpose is to protect human rights, carefully balancing power to prevent abuses and corruption. Now, government mostly works for wealthy people, lobbyists, corporations and special interests that reward politicians, have access to government representatives and staffs, and write and promote laws, rules and policies they demand in return for their money and influence to put and keep their representatives in power.

Special interests, like the CFR, "military industrial complex," "Oil and Gas," "Big Pharma," "Wall Street" and other industry and influence groups are so powerful and dominant that there is, practically, little elected government officials or the public can feasibly do to oppose them, short of active rebellion.

The U.S. public is disappointed, jaded and disengaged by this corruption. We perceive correctly that we have little power and influence as the game is now set up, and special interests will have their way with government, no matter how we vote, so many don't bother. We're afraid of our own government, and we're too busy and worried with our personal lives, struggling to be OK in decaying conditions, and media-and-substance-anesthetized, to do anything about it. We may be incapable of rebellion now.

Government in the U.S. is extremely and sadly broken and corrupt. We know it, consciously or unconsciously, as human beings using common sense, and we are frustrated, saddened, afraid of, embarrassed by and angered by it, and/or determined to profit from it, get ours and get out of it all.

Yet, the U.S. still continues to promote and market itself through propaganda as idealistic, fair and good, to its public and the rest of the world. And many of its people and much of the world still believes it. Until and unless our governments are fixed, they are incapable of fixing our "wicked problems".

Some are more responsible for these problems: government representatives and employees, lobbyists, think tank intellectuals, corporations, media and news organizations, big political donors. We're all complicit by going along with it. Whatever keeps us from doing something about it is corrupting us.

Become an informed citizen, understand what's going on, and share that! Write news agencies and government representatives expressing informed opinions and concerns, even if you don't think it makes a difference! At least you're doing something to live with integrity and engage the problems.

Protest! Organize and participate in grass roots efforts to effect real change! Don't buy from or give any money to any organization that is part of the corruption, and write and tell them what you are doing!

Be an informed voter and vote! Government works for you. You're the boss. Be a good boss, hire good people and insist on good performance, or fire them! Corrupt political party affiliation is not what's most important. Support individuals in government who have integrity, ability and good values!

Support political and campaign finance reform! Our wicked problems will not be fixed until that is. Don't wait for government to solve our wicked problems, because it may not, since it is so very broken; take actions now in your life to change your relationships with them and make a difference in them!

Perhaps we will not affect our government, but we can affect our lives, loved ones, communities, environments and how things work within them. Focus where you can act and make a difference!

If our government is corrupt, and we have a representative democratic government, we are corrupt. Don't be corrupt. Do something about it! Wake up, get up, go do something to make it better!<sup>2187</sup>

### [Need for Change to Address Corruption of People in the U.S.](#)

We have at least 25 areas of wicked problems in the U.S., which are unsustainable and getting worse. The people in the U.S. are complicit in those problems, at least by complying with and allowing them. What's wrong with us? Why do we accept this in the world's richest and most powerful nation?

Something is corrupting us, causing us to permit these many problems and the great harms they are doing to us, to people all over the world, to our environments, and to diverse life all over the planet. What is that? What has happened to us? Why in the world are we going along with all of this?

Whatever it is, it has caused us to give away our great power to centralized systems and businesses. Nobody or nothing has power unless others give it to them. Why are we giving away our power?

The good news is: no matter what it is that is corrupting us, we can change! All we have to do to take power away from those abusing and misusing it is to stop giving it to them. Stop giving away power!

Most of us have to learn how to take back our power. Start by doing anything you can do to change! Take any action suggested, or any action you can think of, to make a difference addressing any of these wicked problems! Even the tiniest baby step change teaches us we can do something. We can change.

As we do that, we begin to be and feel empowered to change. We know we can because we did. Do! As we do, it ripples out into the world. Others witness our change, and that motivates change in others. The most powerful thing we can do is whatever we are empowered to do in our own lives and networks. If it was how you wish it was, how would you live your life? Live that way now! Soon, it will be that way. Resist corruption! Wake up! Get informed! Rise! Be, behave and do what feels right! We can change!

## Endnotes

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<sup>2162</sup> See the chapter on Climate Change and Environmental Harms

<sup>2163</sup> See the chapter on Climate Change and Environmental Harms

<sup>2164</sup> As a percentage of GDP

<sup>2165</sup> See the chapter on Science and Technology

<sup>2166</sup> See the chapter on Energy

<sup>2167</sup> See the chapter on Telecommunications and Deregulation

<sup>2168</sup> See the chapter on Transportation

<sup>2169</sup> See the chapter on Other Physical Infrastructure

<sup>2170</sup> See the chapter on Agriculture

<sup>2171</sup> See the chapter on Gun Violence

<sup>2172</sup> See the chapter on Healthcare

<sup>2173</sup> See the chapter on Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Problems

<sup>2174</sup> See the chapter on Prisons and Incarceration

<sup>2175</sup> See the chapter on Income and Wealth Inequality

<sup>2176</sup> See the chapter on Community, Family, Children and Poverty

<sup>2177</sup> See the chapter on Housing and Homelessness

<sup>2178</sup> See the chapter on Taxes and Debt

<sup>2179</sup> See the chapter on Economy, Banking and Finance

<sup>2180</sup> See the chapter on Education

<sup>2181</sup> See the chapter on Immigration

<sup>2182</sup> See the chapter on Empire and Its Agents

<sup>2183</sup> Including:

- The President launching tariffs and trade wars producing record trade deficits that hurt U.S. and foreign producers, workers and consumers, though that is Congress' power, and making deals with other nations without a 2/3 Senate approval, in violation of the Constitution.
- The U.S. giving away our right to create and control money to a private banking system.
- The U.S. conducting hundreds of wars and/or interventions killing 200 million people, without Congress declaring war, which only it has power to do in the Constitution.
- Jailing us without charges up to 40 days, punishing us without trials in 95% of criminal cases ended with plea bargains, mostly because we can't afford bail or adequate defense.
- Governments passing (Bill of Attainder) laws to punish or take things from specific people or groups in "Civil Asset Forfeiture", stealing property suspected of connection to criminal activity, even if criminal charges are never filed against property owners 80% of the time, and stealing millions' voting rights in a War on Drugs, because drug use correlates with political opposition.
- Not publicly accounting for money government gets and spends, like DoD not accounting for \$21 trillion, hiding its spending as classified, and shifting moneys around in hidden and illegal ways, or \$80 billion in classified intelligence budgets and spending not publicly accounted for.
- The U.S. President profiting from foreign and other payments to his businesses, violating laws to stop public officials taking things of value from foreign powers without Congress' approval.
- Government restricting free speech rights by not allowing employees to say what's going on in (especially classified) operations, because of various legal and employee related restrictions, leakers and whistleblowers being punished and/or prosecuted, the President abusing athletes for kneeling during the national anthem, and free speech rights not applying in workplaces.
- Government interfering with an independent press freely gathering and sharing information, so we have information we need to evaluate government and hold it accountable, by classifying huge and increasing amounts of information, millions of documents experts deem safe to release, the President limiting White House press briefings, and attacking news agencies, and the U.S. letting 6 media companies control 90% of news media, allowing undue influence on the press, like forcing TV stations to present the same biased "must run" news stories.



- Government stifling Freedom to Assemble and Petition and violating indigenous sovereign rights at Standing Rock, ending peaceful protests of oil pipelines with private contractors as in war, arresting, beating, tasing and macing Occupy Wall Street protestors, arresting hundreds, including observing journalists, at peaceful Black Lives Matter protests of police violence and justice system racism, or arresting people at a peaceful women's protest of our government taking 2,000 children from their parents and imprisoning them in inhumane conditions.
- Police using physical force to arrest anyone at any time, and all we can do about it is sue them afterwards to try to prove they did not have adequate cause, or they used excessive violence, only if we have the resources to do that, which more than half of people in the U.S. do not.
- Police systematically arresting people and seizing property and information illegally based on racial profiling or bias, leading to far more black and brown skinned people in the criminal justice system, with far longer sentences, than whites.
- Government killing people without Grand Jury indictments, citing undeclared war powers.
- Violating 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment Privacy and Freedom from Search and Seizure Rights with spy agencies and contractors taking private electronic information, they can use, proactively or retroactively, to persecute or manipulate anyone, in or out of the U.S., via satellites, drones, camera networks, GPS and IP address tracking, email intercepts, Internet browsing surveillance, phone taps, hacking, social media monitoring, microphone and camera hacking, accessing financial records, monitoring library checkouts, hacking vehicle computer systems, and many other things, most without warrants, or with warrants approved retroactively, if they find something.
- Violating double-jeopardy rights, retrying criminal cases 6 times if they are overturned, and trying someone acquitted of a state law charge for the same federal law charge, or vice versa.<sup>2183</sup>
- Forcing us to provide data, fingerprints and other biological information used against us, using tactics to get us to confess and testify against ourselves, and convincing 95% of criminal defendants to take plea bargains and be punished without full legal process (often because of inability to pay for bail or criminal defense) in violation of the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- Holding thousands in jails awaiting trials that are supposed to be speedy, some longer than we'd be jailed if convicted of low-level crimes, long enough to lose jobs, homes and relationships, often because we can't afford bail or defense, and people without resources, about half of us who can't afford paid legal counsel, being provided inadequate legal counsel, because public defenders nationwide are overburdened and underfunded, in violation of the 6<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- Letting agreement forced arbitration and class action waiver clauses eliminate rights to jury trials in civil matters and collaborations to be able to afford civil action big enough to get attention, incenting corporate abuse, because small losses for scattered arbitration settlements from those who bother with them will be more than paid for by overall profits from the abuses, keeping at least 60 million U.S. employees from joining to combat employer abuses, because we're forced into arbitrations that are insignificant individually, in violation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- Charging excessive bails and fines, and inflicting cruel and unusual punishments, in violation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment, like half a million people in jail every day, many unable to afford bail; any fine too much for many, with 78% of people living paycheck to paycheck, 70% in debt and half without \$500 saved; and cruel and unusual punishments like denying reformed offenders ability to vote, work, or support a family, or holding anybody in solitary confinement 43 years.
- Allowing involuntary service, in violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment, by making 40 million students work many years to pay back \$1.4 trillion in student loans, and pay \$1 trillion in credit card debt (with extreme interest), because lenders seduce people never taught financial literacy.
- Violating the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments against racism by letting our systematically racially biased criminal justice system imprison blacks at rates higher than South Africa at apartheid's height, higher rates and durations than whites, taking their voting rights in higher proportion than whites, killing or harming them at higher rates without due process via police violence, and a biased education system, giving more resources to white than non-white schools.
- Organizing, conducting and supporting coups and violence that kill and harm innocent people all over the world, including killing 1.3–2 million citizens of other countries, in other countries, with or without permission of their governments, including innocent women and children, via secret rules giving rights to kill, imprison, torture, or spy on anyone, a permanent war bureaucracy, invisible beyond the executive branch in our vague War on Terror.
- Government taking citizens' voting rights for tax evasion, in violation of the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment.
- Violating rights to equal treatment and nondiscrimination before the law, like a rich and powerful connected white man released 5 months early from a 13 month jail sentence for luring scores of underage girls, as young as 13, into repeated sexual abuses by him and powerful friends, with no charges for accomplices, in a plea deal by a prosecutor who's now U.S. Labor Secretary; versus a black father of 7 serving 13 years for 2 marijuana joints, or only 1 person prosecuted, getting 30

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months in jail, in widespread financial abuses that created the global Great Recession, harming billions of people while 1,700 people a day are arrested for pot possession.

- Government taking and holding 779 men in the Guantánamo Bay, torturing many, using U.S. Indefinite Detention policies, in which it can hold people without charges until death.
- Mass illegal rejections of asylum-seekers at borders; increasingly arbitrary and indefinite asylum-seeker detentions, and thousands of illegal separations and imprisonments of immigrant and asylum-seeking children, constituting cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Imprisoning people with religious beliefs motivating them to use psychedelic plant medicines, which do not harm them, and provide important perspectives, insights and growth if done well.
- Suppressing voters with restricted early voting, voter ID laws, purged voter rolls, corruptible and not auditable electronic voting machines, suppressing native American voting, restricted poll numbers and hours, gerrymandering, false information sharing, intimidation, and absentee and overseas voting restrictions.
- The world's richest country being the world's only developed country that does not provide universal healthcare coverage, which is now a de facto global human right.
- Not setting a legal maximum length of the work week, while 134 countries have, and letting 86% of males and 67% of females work more than 40 hours per week, the world's only developed nation with no legally mandated annual leave, the only country in the Americas without national paid parental leave, the only industrialized nation without a mandatory parental leave option, violating international human rights law that everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
- Violating international human rights to adequate standard of living for the 78% of the population living paycheck to paycheck in the world's wealthiest nation, the one million (3% of) U.S. K-12 students who are homeless, the 45,000 people a year who die from lack of healthcare, the 114 million without dental insurance, the 25% of senior citizens who declare bankruptcy and 40% who mortgage or sell homes due to medical expenses, the 1 in 5 adults with problems paying medical bills, the 24 million (10% of) adults who carry previous year medical debt, or U.S. families between 56 and 61 with median retirement savings of \$17,000.
- Violating international equal rights to basic education for 60% of students not proficient in math and 64% not proficient in reading at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade levels, or 67% of students not proficient in math and 66% not proficient in reading at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels, to equitable higher education access based on merit for the vast majority of students who pay for higher education, while the top 10% of its population gets as much total income as the bottom 90% and have 75% of the wealth.

<sup>2184</sup> See the chapter on Human Rights and Freedoms

<sup>2185</sup> See the chapter on Marketing, Advertising, Selling and PR

<sup>2186</sup> See the chapter on News, Information, Entertainment and Distraction

<sup>2187</sup> See the chapter on Government Corruption