

USA Democracy: Where Are We Now?

David Marshak

The War Between the States

Clarifying Statements

- Facts...objective reality...evidence
- Opinion...analysis, explanation
- David's bias: progressive
conservative

Reactionary



Three-fifths Clause of US Constitution Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, **three fifths of all other Persons.**





We had a war between the states...


A “war” to try to end legal racism

Another kind of “war” between the states





A “war” about a war...with significant regional conflict




We Have a New
and
Unprecedented
“War”

The end of a white majority population and the beginning of “no majority”

The end of white (Christian) supremacy?

The most dangerous period is when a majority group sees itself losing its control and a new power dynamic is not yet firmly in place. This is where we are in the 2020s.



The future of the US is California

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In 2020 the most prevalent racial or ethnic group for the United States was the White alone non-Hispanic population at 57.8%. This decreased from 63.7% in 2010. In 1990, 80.3% white alone.

The U.S. is now 57.8% white, 18.7% Hispanic, 12.4% Black and 6% Asian, 3% Native American and Alaskan native.

In 2020, 33.8 million people reported being more than one race, more than a threefold increase from 2010, when 9 million people, or 2.9% of the population, identified that way.

States with no majority racial/ethnic group in 2020: Hawaii, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Maryland

States predicted to have no majority group in 2030: Arizona, Texas, New Jersey, Florida, Georgia, Alaska

The new statistics project that the nation will become “minority white” in 2045. During that year, whites will comprise 49.7 percent of the population.

The rise of the unchurched, the decline of Christianity in the US

Americans' membership in houses of worship continued to decline last year, dropping below 50% for the first time in Gallup's eight-decade trend. In 2020, 47% of Americans said they belonged to a church, synagogue or mosque, down from 50% in 2018 and 70% in 1999.

More than 95% of “churched Americans” are Christians

Only a few decades ago, a Christian identity was so common among Americans that it could almost be taken for granted. As recently as the early 1990s, about 90% of U.S. adults identified as Christian.

In GSS surveys conducted in the early 2000s (2000 to 2004), 80% of U.S. adults identified as Christians, including 54% who described themselves as Protestants and 25% who were Catholic.

The U.S.'s Christian majority has been shrinking for decades. A Pew Research Center study shows that as of 2020, about 64% of Americans identify as Christian. (Many self-identified Christians are not churched.)




The Irish Invasion

Census figures show an Irish population of 8.2 million in 1841, 6.6 million a decade later, and only 4.7 million in 1891.

More than 4 million Irish immigrants to the US before 1860, when the total population of the US was 31,443,000. (4 million slaves)





Ignatiev

How the Irish Became White

How the Irish Became White

The Irish came to America in the nineteenth century, fleeing a homeland under foreign occupation and a caste system that regarded them as the lowest form of humanity. In the new country – a land of opportunity – they found a very different form of social hierarchy, one that was based on the color of a person's skin. Noel Ignatiev's 1995 book – the first published work of one of America's leading and most controversial historians – tells the story of how the oppressed became the oppressors; how the new Irish immigrants achieved acceptance among an initially hostile population only by proving that they could be more brutal in their oppression of African Americans than the nativists. This is the story of *How the Irish Became White*.



Italians, Poles, Greeks, and Jews Invade

11.7 MILLION CAME TO THE UNITED STATES BETWEEN 1871 AND 1901. (THE U.S. POPULATION WAS 76.2 MILLION IN 1900.) BETWEEN 1900 AND 1914, 12.9 MILLION MORE NEW IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED. THESE TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY IMMIGRANTS CAME PRIMARILY FROM SOUTHERN AND EASTERN EUROPE, AND WERE LARGELY ITALIANS, JEWS, POLES, AND GREEKS.

YET THESE IMMIGRANTS WERE NEVER THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION EXCEPT IN SOME EASTERN CITIES LIKE NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA.

Catholics as the enemy of America

- Anti-Catholic bias: “The deepest bias in the history of the American people,” according to Arthur Schlesinger. “The most luxuriant, tenacious tradition of paranoiac agitation in American history,” said John Higham. Lurid myths about Catholic sexual slavery and infanticide spread through pamphlets and books such as Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, an 1834 supposed memoir about a Canadian convent.
- Demagogues in the nativist movement incited fury and fear about the huge numbers of impoverished German and Irish Catholic immigrants, many barely speaking English, who spilled off ships.
- Newspapers and Protestant clergymen, including Lyman Beecher, co-founder of the American Temperance Society, swelled the outcry, warning the influx would take jobs, spread disease and crime and plot a coup to install the Pope in power.



Jews as enemies of America

Between 1881 and 1924, the migration shifted from Central Europe eastward, with over two-and-one-half million East European Jews propelled from their native lands by persecution and the lack of economic opportunity. Most of those who arrived as part of this huge influx settled in cities where they clustered in districts close to downtowns, joined the working class...

During the first half of the 20th century, Jews were discriminated against and barred from working in some fields of employment, barred from renting and/or owning certain properties, not accepted as members by social clubs, barred from resort areas and barred from enrolling in colleges by quotas. Antisemitism reached its peak during the interwar period with the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, antisemitic publications in The Dearborn Independent, and incendiary radio speeches by Father Coughlin in the late 1930s.

1924: Radically reducing immigration

- The **Immigration Act of 1924**, or **Johnson–Reed Act**, including the **Asian Exclusion Act** and **National Origins Act** (Pub. L. 68–139, 43 Stat. 153, enacted May 26, 1924), was a United States federal law that prevented immigration from Asia and set quotas on the number of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. It also authorized the creation of the country's first formal border control service, the U.S. Border Patrol, and established a "consular control system" that allowed entry only to those who first obtained a visa from a U.S. consulate abroad.
- Immigrants from Asia were banned. Immigration from eastern and southern Europe was radically restricted as well as immigration from northern and western Europe was promoted.

The 2nd Incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan

Klan membership was somewhere between 2.5 and 4 million. Still, that was enough to make the Klan an organization to be feared not only when it physically threatened blacks, Catholics, Jews, bootleggers, or local adulterers but also when it burned fiery crosses on deserted hillsides or on the front lawns of its opponents. During the decade, it exercised great power at the ballot box, helping to elect governors in Alabama, California, Oregon, and Indiana. An estimated 75 House members took their seats with KKK assistance in the 1920s. They included Earl Mayfield, as U.S. senator from Texas in 1922, and future U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black from Alabama in 1926.

<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-ku-klux-klan-in-the-1920s>

Re-opening immigration access to the world

The **Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965** removed *de facto* discrimination against Southern and Eastern Europeans as well as Asians, in addition to other non-Western and Northern European ethnic groups from the immigration policy of the United States.

During the 1960s, at the height of the civil rights movement, the 1924 law increasingly came under attack for being racially discriminatory. **The bill received wide support from both northern Democratic and Republican members of Congress, but strong opposition mostly from Southern Democrats, the latter mostly voting Nay or Not Voting.** The Act significantly altered immigration demographics in the country.

Questions?



The present day: the
war between the
states redux

The most well-known issues

Gerrymandering both state legislative and United States House of representative districts, which the US Supreme Court has ruled is legal.

Wisconsin, North Carolina, Texas, Ohio, Georgia—Republicans

New York Democrats tried to gerrymander—overturned in state court

Voting restrictions in the name of reducing non-existent voter fraud

In 2021 alone 19 states enacted laws to restrict voting access. Since the 2020 election, 26 states have enacted, expanded, or increased the severity of 120 election-related criminal penalties.

Access to abortion

19 states have banned or restricted abortion, as of April 26, 2023:
Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky,
Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota,
Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and
Wyoming.

Guns—no license carry in 26 states (143 million residents)

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The attack on transgendered persons: a politically constructed campaign. Reactionary movements require an enemy.

NY Times April 16, 2023

When the Supreme Court declared a constitutional right to same-sex marriage nearly eight years ago, social conservatives were set adrift.

The ruling stripped them of an issue they had used to galvanize rank-and-file supporters and big donors. And it left them searching for a cause that — like opposing gay marriage — would rally the base and raise the movement’s profile on the national stage.

“We knew we needed to find an issue that the candidates were comfortable talking about,” said Terry Schilling, the president of American Principles Project, a social conservative advocacy group. “And we threw everything at the wall.”

What has stuck, somewhat unexpectedly, is the issue of transgender identity, particularly among young people. Today, the effort to restrict transgender rights has supplanted same-sex marriage as an animating issue for social conservatives at a pace that has stunned political leaders across the spectrum. It has reinvigorated a network of conservative groups, increased fund-raising and set the agenda in school boards and state legislatures.

About 1.3 million adults and 300,000 children in the United States identify as transgender. These efforts have thrust them, at a moment of increased visibility and vulnerability, into the center of the nation’s latest battle over cultural issues.

Centering the attack on trans and expanding it to LGB...Q

So far in 2023, lawmakers in 46 states have introduced more than 650 anti-LGBTQ bills, according to a report by the Movement Advancement Project, or MAP, a think tank that researches LGBTQ issues and laws. USA Today 3/23

In 2019, there were no state laws banning transgender youths from participating in school sports; in 2023 there are bans in 19 states.

In seven states, trans students are not allowed to use bathrooms that match their gender identity.

The MAP report notes that several states are attempting to repeal protections within policies already on the books. For example, The Florida Department of Education sent a letter in July to schools in the state encouraging them to ignore federal non-discrimination protections for LGBTQ students

When a bill makes progress in one state, copycat language and similar bills quickly crop up in other states, the report notes, citing coordinated efforts by far-right lobbyists and extremist groups. **"There are a range of reasons for the rise in these political attacks, including a deliberate misinformation campaign seeking political gain, which exploits the fact that many people are still learning what it means to be transgender..."**

**7.2% OF
AMERICANS
IDENTIFY AS
LGBTQ: Gen Z
is driving force
among adults
identifying as
LGBTQ, poll
shows**

The report notes the increasing use of inflammatory rhetoric around some of these bills, depicting LGBTQ people as "predators" and "groomers," false and troubling narratives, advocates say.

The goal is to "force LGBTQ people out of public life," said Naomi Goldberg, MAP's deputy director. "If LGBTQ youth are unmentionable in school, if government cannot collect survey information about LGBTQ people's lives, and if transgender youth must be called by their old names and pronouns, it will be as if LGBTQ people no longer exist."

Gender-
affirming
healthcare
criminalized



Examples of Legislation Criminalizing Gender- Affirming Care for Youth

IDAHO's GOP Gov. Brad Little approved a bill that criminalizes providing gender-affirming care for youth. The law makes it a felony to provide hormones, puberty blockers or other gender-affirming medical care to minors. Little said in a letter confirming the bill signing that policymakers “should take great caution whenever we consider allowing the government to interfere with loving parents and their decisions about what is best for their children.”

MISSISSIPPI'S law bans any person from knowingly providing or engaging in conduct that aids and abets the performance of gender transition procedures on a minor in the state. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves claimed when he signed the bill into law that “radical activists” are telling children they are “just a surgery away from happiness.”

NORTH DAKOTA Republican Gov. Doug Burgum on April 19 signed a bill into law that criminalizes providing gender-affirming medical care to minors. Burgum recommended in a statement that “thoughtful debate around these complex medical policies should demonstrate compassion and understanding for all North Dakota youth and their families.”

**CONSERVATIVES HAVE
CHAMPIONED PARENTS'
RIGHTS FOR DECADES.**

**REACTIONARIES ASSERT
THE POWER OF THE STATE
TO CRIMINALIZE PARENTS'
RIGHTS WHEN IT COMES TO
TRANSGENDER ISSUES.**

**SO MUCH FOR
CONSERVATIVE
PRINCIPLES. (THIS IS
DAVID'S OPINION.)**

CRITICAL RACE THEORY: The boogeyman

CRT explores social, political, and legal structures and power distribution as through a "lens" focusing on the concept of race, and experiences of racism. For example, the CRT conceptual framework examines racial bias in laws and legal institutions, such as highly disparate rates of incarceration among racial groups in the United States. A key CRT concept is intersectionality—the way in which different forms of inequality and identity are affected by interconnections of race, class, gender, and disability. Scholars of CRT view race as a social construct with no biological basis. One tenet of CRT is that racism and disparate racial outcomes are the result of complex, changing, and often subtle social and institutional dynamics, rather than explicit and intentional prejudices of individuals. CRT scholars argue that the social and legal construction of race advances the interests of White people at the expense of people of color, and that the liberal notion of U.S. law as "neutral" plays a significant role in maintaining a racially unjust social order, where formally color-blind laws continue to have racially discriminatory outcomes.



The
manufacture
of CRT as
another
reactionary
boogeyman

Christopher Rufo, then a relatively unknown documentary filmmaker, read many CRT academic articles, discovered that some of these academics identified as Marxists, and crafted a propaganda campaign quickly amplified by various reactionary institutions, including the Manhattan Institute (which hired him) and Hillsdale College. Rufo's campaign asserted that CRT was being taught in K-12 public schools all across the nation and that white children were being taught that they were racists. Sean Hannity then whipped this claim into a frenzy on Fox News.

“A year or so ago few people had heard of it, yet [Republicans](#) have whipped up a moral panic that CRT is being rammed down the throats of schoolchildren. They caricature it as teaching Black children to internalize victimhood and white children to self-identify as oppressors.” The Guardian 11/3/21



CRT Teaching Bans

Idaho, Iowa, Arkansas, Tennessee, Oklahoma
Florida—passed

In legislative process: Montana, Utah, Texas,
Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina,
Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, Florida, West
Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri

An astronaut in a white spacesuit stands on a dark, rocky surface, looking out over a vast, golden, hazy landscape. The sky is filled with soft, glowing clouds, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The overall mood is one of exploration and discovery.

DEI: THE NEWEST ENEMY



Diversity, Equity,
and Inclusion: to
transform
society into a
more just place.

- **Diversity:**
- Acknowledges all the ways people differ: race, sex, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, and more.
- **Inclusion:**
- Is about diversity in practice. It's the act of welcoming, supporting, respecting, and valuing *all* individuals and groups.
- **Equity:**
- Is often used interchangeably with equality, but there's a core difference: Where equality is a system in which each individual is offered the same opportunities regardless of circumstance, equity distributes resources based on needs. We live in a disproportionate society, and equity tries to correct its imbalance by creating more opportunities for people who have historically had less access.

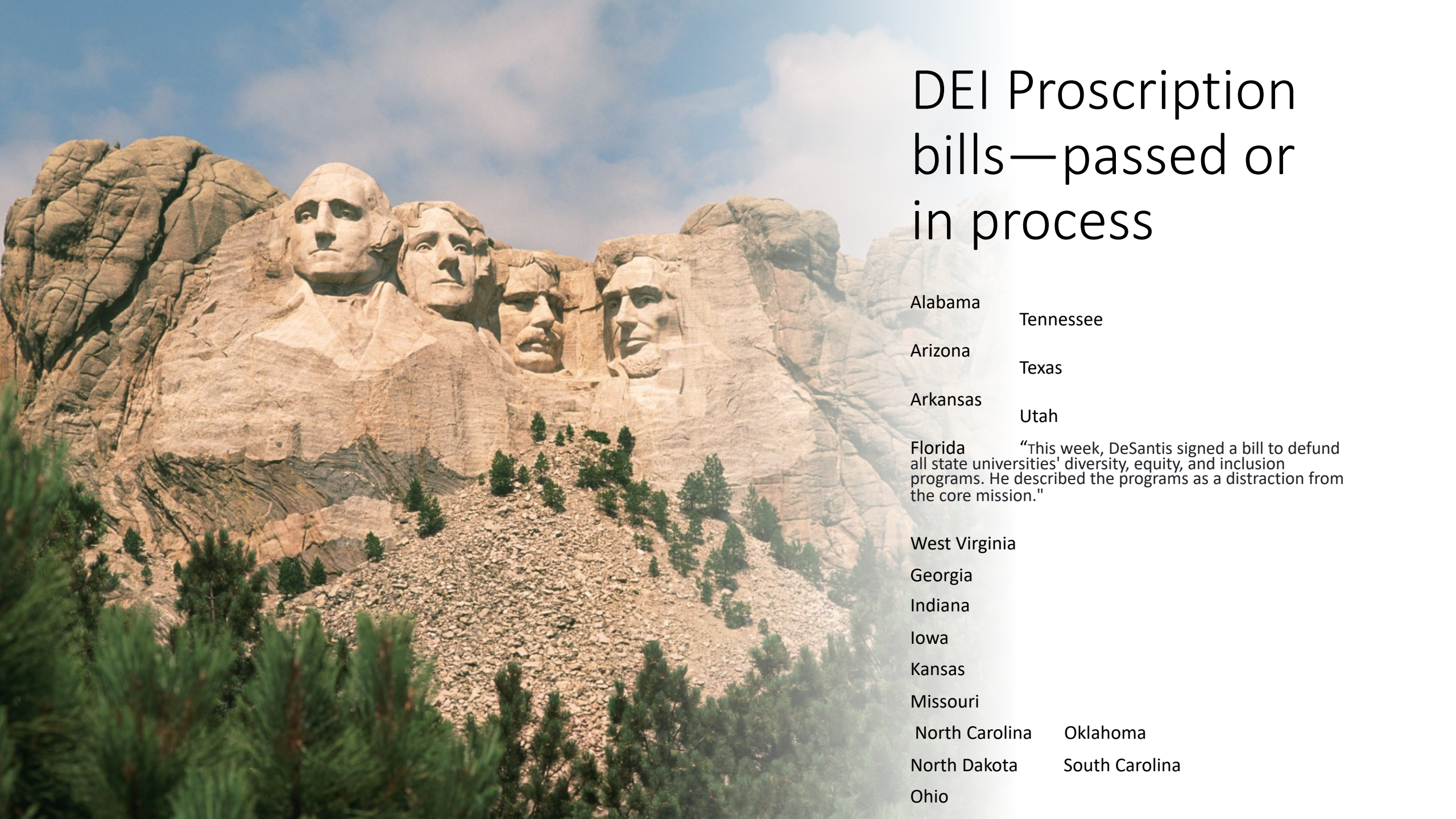
The model bill developed by the Manhattan Institute and Goldwater Institute and introduced in multiple states

“Across American academia, a discriminatory ideology antithetical to the state’s commitment to nondiscrimination, has grown popular under the guise of “diversity, equity, and inclusion,” or DEI. Although DEI sounds innocuous and even salutary, it’s an Orwellian phrase that in reality prevents intellectual diversity, impedes equal opportunity, and excludes those who don’t conform to progressive orthodoxy.”

Banned—promoting a particular, widely contested opinion regarding unconscious or implicit bias, cultural appropriation, allyship, transgender ideology, microaggressions, group marginalization, antiracism, systemic oppression, social justice, intersectionality, neo-pronouns, heteronormativity, disparate impact, gender theory, racial or sexual privilege, or other closely related concepts.

An institution of higher education may not establish or maintain a diversity, equity, and inclusion office or hire or assign an employee of the institution, or contract with a third party, to perform the duties of a diversity, equity, and inclusion office.

During a recent Missouri House debate, **Republican Rep. Doug Richey put forth a series of budget amendments prohibiting state funding for DEI initiatives in government agencies and higher education. He asserted the offices espouse “racist policies” and “Marxist ideology that is trying to strip away from us the concepts of the nuclear family, of merit, of character and of being judged by what you are capable of.”**



DEI Proscription bills—passed or in process

Alabama

Tennessee

Arizona

Texas

Arkansas

Utah

Florida

“This week, DeSantis signed a bill to defund all state universities' diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. He described the programs as a distraction from the core mission.”

West Virginia

Georgia

Indiana

Iowa

Kansas

Missouri

North Carolina

Oklahoma

North Dakota

South Carolina

Ohio

Example of anti-DEI law

A bill advancing through the Iowa House would effectively require state universities to disband their DEI programs. Specifically, the legislation would prohibit the the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa from spending any state or private money on DEI officers, providing an expansive definition for such work, including “any effort to promote or promulgate trainings, programming, or activities designed or implemented with reference to race, color, ethnicity, gender identity or sexual orientation.”

Americans views on DEI in the workplace

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace

Fifty-six percent of respondents said that focusing on DEI policies at work is a good thing, while 28% said it's neither good nor bad, according to the survey results published Wednesday. Only 16% of respondents said that focusing on such policies is a bad thing.

Though some conservatives claim that workers are being inundated with DEI messaging, 54% percent of survey respondents said their job pays the right amount of attention to DEI. Only 14% said their job gives too much attention to it.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents said DEI meetings and training had a positive impact at work, while 9% said they had a negative impact. Republicans were less likely than Democrats to say that such programs had a positive impact, but there was a notable gender divide — 47% of Republican women said DEI training was helpful, compared to just 28% of Republican men.

Pew Charitable Trust Research Center 5/17/23



Different states, different American history

- **The Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum: American History and Civics Lessons for K-12 Classrooms**
- Trump's "1776 Report" was compiled by an 18-person commission of mostly male conservative educators (no historians), who assembled the document and released it on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In just 40 pages (20 of which are appendices), the report offered a framework for a "patriotic education" to counter "false and fashionable" histories that paint the country's founders as hypocrites who espoused egalitarian principles while protecting the institution of slavery.

Banning student participation in democracy

A 69-year-old former university instructor and longtime conservative commentator, Stanley Kurtz has spearheaded a quiet but influential campaign to cleanse classrooms of what he calls “[woke civics](#)” – **a term that extends to any hands-on civics lessons entailing student contact with elected officials.** ““Any sort of political protest or lobbying done by students is subject to undue pressure from the biases of teachers, peers and non-profits working with schools ...”

Neal McCluskey, director of the libertarian Cato Institute’s Center for Educational Freedom, has documented over [3,400 ideological “battles”](#) in public schooling – over issues like controversial books or sex education – for more than a decade and said he has yet to see “compelling evidence” that liberal bias in civics classes has become a widespread problem.

- Linda Bennett, a recently retired GOP South Carolina state representative, introduced a [2021 bill](#) by the exact same name as Kurtz’s “Partisanship Out of Civics Act”. Bennett insisted that her office had become flooded with young students, coerced by their educators, demanding that she “please support allowing teachers to teach critical race theory”. But she could not name a specific school or teacher that had influenced students to take an activist stance.

Bills to this effect passed in Texas, in play in at least 5 other states.

The war over ESG: Environmental, Social , and Governance

ESG is a framework that helps stakeholders understand how an organization manages risks and opportunities around sustainability issues.

ESG has evolved from other historical movements that focused on health and safety issues, pollution reduction, and corporate philanthropy.

ESG has changed how capital allocation decisions are made by many of the largest financial services firms and asset managers in the world.

An emerging class of ESG specialists is stepping into the industry and supporting both net zero and carbon neutrality goals.

The attack on ESG

More than [\\$18 trillion](#) is held in investment funds that follow the investing principle known as E.S.G. — shorthand for prioritizing environmental, social and governance factors — a strategy that has been adopted by major corporations around the globe. E.S.G. investing has been routine on Wall Street for years. Most major companies issue extensive reports about their efforts to combat climate change and commitment to workplace diversity.

Now, Republicans around the country say Wall Street has taken a sharp left turn, attacking what they term “woke capitalism” and dragging businesses, their onetime allies, into the culture wars. “Disappointing that President Biden is putting E.S.G. and woke policies above hard-working Americans’ retirement accounts!” wrote Mike Pence. “We will keep fighting until we put a stop to E.S.G. once and for all!”

Lawmakers in at least 13 states have introduced bills since the beginning of 2023 that are progressing through the legislative process at different speeds, which are in some cases broader or more prescriptive than initiatives currently in force. The prohibitions generally apply to state pension fiduciaries, proxy advisors and service providers. They essentially prohibit in-scope entities from considering a company’s long-term sustainable growth plan or ESG elements in making, evaluating or managing an investment.

These bills would prohibit fiduciaries from considering the financial impacts of climate change.

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The key anti-ESG issue is pro-fossil fuel politics

In September 2021, Texas implemented a ban on municipalities doing business with financial firms that eschew the fossil fuel and gun industries.

In August 2022, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis approved a resolution that bars his state's pension fund from considering ESG factors in making investment decisions, ordering them to "maximiz[e] financial return over and above other considerations."

Also in 2022, Arizona, Idaho, Kentucky, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Wyoming have all enacted similar legislation.

A study out of the Wharton School, for example, estimates that Texas's anti-ESG laws, which pushed the top five lenders out of the state's municipal bond market, will cost Texas cities an extra \$303 million to \$532 million in interest on bonds.

MAGA at work

Glenn Beck at a forum this past summer called “The Great Reset and ESG,” sponsored by the Utah Eagle Forum, a conservative organization. Beck blamed ESG for the “mob business” that made global companies “stand in line and say no to Russia” after its attack on Ukraine. The big banks, he says, are “all in”—and you can draw a straight line between U.S. funding for Ukraine, “the most corrupt country in world,” with the legalization of gay marriage there. All of it, allegedly, part of a grand conspiracy—the Great Reset—in which a global elite has leveraged the COVID-19 pandemic to dismantle capitalism and force radical social change.



Republican legislatures seizing power from citizen votes/initiatives/constitutional amendments

When given the opportunity, voters have upheld referenda contrary to Republican legislative majorities. These legislators have responded by increasing the percentage of votes needed to pass a referendum.

Ohio Republicans in the state legislature are advancing a ballot amendment of their own that would raise the percentage of votes required to pass future such measures to a 60 percent supermajority.

The **North Dakota** legislature this month approved a bill boosting the signature requirement for proposed constitutional amendments and requiring them to win approval in both primary and general elections.

And in **Arkansas**, after voters last fall soundly rejected a constitutional amendment proposed by the legislature stiffening the requirements to get a measure on the ballot, the legislature simply passed new requirements as state law.

Missouri The measure passed by the state Senate last week would raise the bar for approving a constitutional amendment to 57% of the vote statewide.

In **Idaho**, 60 percent of voters approved an initiative to expand Medicaid to cover low-income residents. Last week, a Republican state senator introduced legislation to increase both the number and geographic spread of signatures required to qualify an initiative.

A few more common state actions

BANNING BOOKS IN PUBLIC AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES

DEFUNDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS VIA UNIVERSAL VOUCHERS: ARIZONA, \$7000; FLORIDA, \$8000; NORTH CAROLINA, UP TO \$7400; INDIANA, RAISING OK FAMILY INCOME FOR VOUCHER TO \$220K; ARKANSAS, SOUTH CAROLINA

CENSORING SCHOOL PLAYS: FOLLOWING A RECORD-SETTING SURGE IN EFFORTS TO CHANGE CURRICULUMS AND BAN BOOKS AT SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE, THE EDUCATION CULTURE WAR HAS NOW REACHED THIS STAGE. THE CONTROVERSY IN CARDINAL (HIGH SCHOOL IN OHIO) IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF RECENT INSTANCES IN WHICH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS HAVE INTERVENED TO NIX OR ALTER SCHOOL THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS DEEMED OBJECTIONABLE – OFTEN BECAUSE THEY FEATURE LGBTQ CHARACTERS OR DEAL WITH ISSUES OF RACE AND RACISM.



Put teens back to work

According to the nonpartisan Economic Policy Institute, legislatures in at least eleven states have set out to weaken federal child labor laws.

The legislation in **Iowa** would [allow children as young as 14 to work](#) in meat coolers and industrial laundries; allow 14- and 15-year-olds to work later on school nights; allow some underage workers to obtain a driver's license to drive to and from a job; and allow 16- and 17-year-olds to take and deliver alcohol orders at restaurants.

In **Ohio**, Republican state senators last month approved a bill that would [allow 14- and 15-year-olds](#) to work until 9 p.m. during the school year.

A new **Arkansas** law removes a requirement that [children under 16 provide proof of parental consent to work](#).

The **Tennessee** law [scraps the prohibition on 16- and 17-year-olds working](#) in restaurants that derive more than a quarter of their revenue from alcohol.

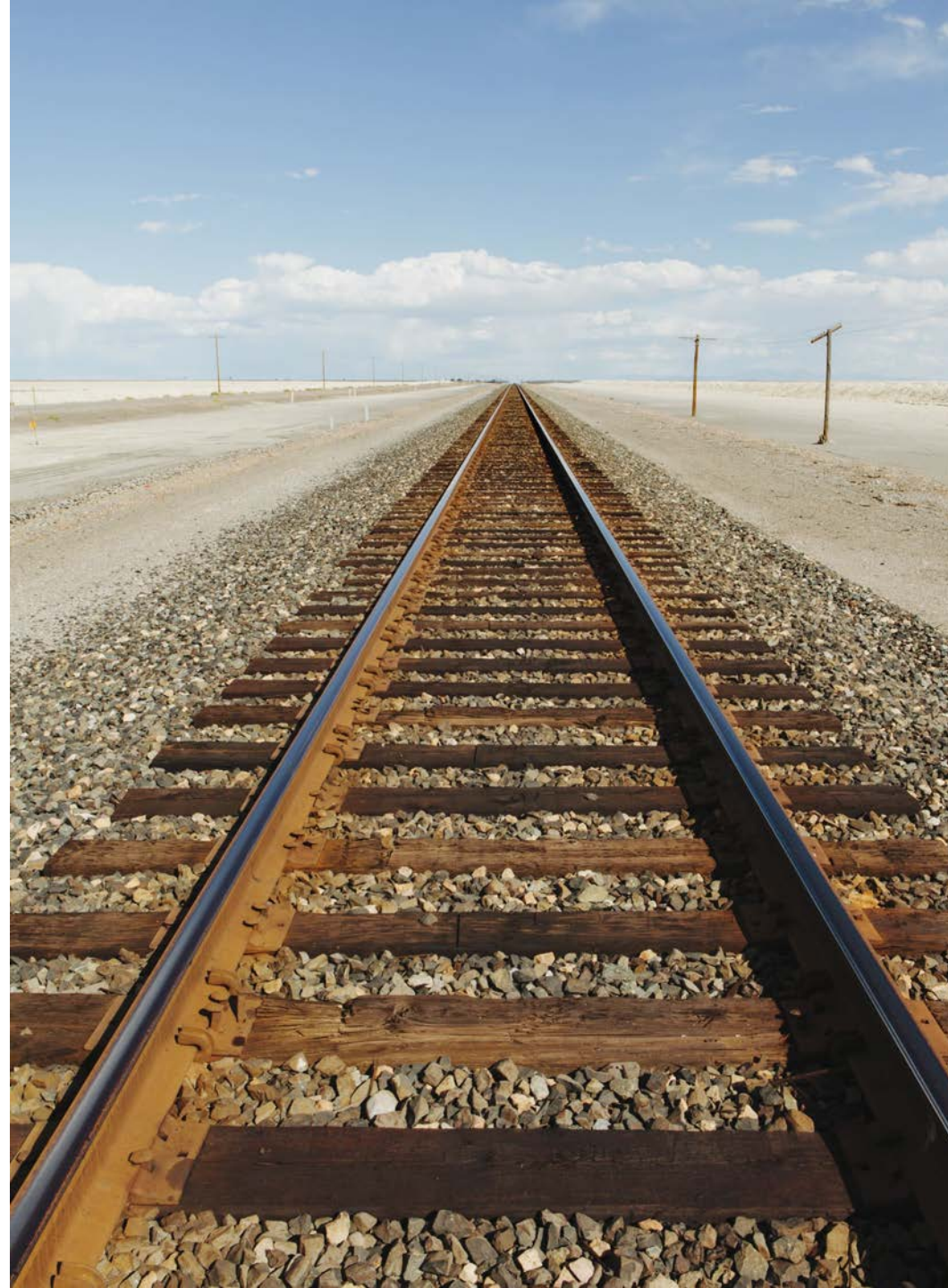
Immigration

Solely a federal domain legally

Florida and Texas governors send undocumented immigrants to Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York, and Martha's Vineyard.

Texas governor sends national guard to the border

Florida governor said he's sending 800 soldiers, 200 Florida Department of Law Enforcement officers, 101 state troopers and 20 wildlife officers to Texas border. Florida will also send five planes, 17 drones, two command vehicles and 10 boats.



Some Democratic counter-initiatives, although Democratic-governed states mostly play defense.

Abortion access rights

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (D) signed three bills into law Thursday that make his state a Midwestern sanctuary state for gender-affirming health care and abortion, meaning people who travel to Minnesota for that care are safe from repercussions from other states attempting to prevent the care.

California voted last year to amend its constitution to guarantee abortion as a right. The New York legislature just voted to put a similar constitutional amendment on the ballot next year, and Maryland is working on doing the same.

Guns and Diversity

Colorado's governor signed four gun control bills Friday, a significant move in a state with a long history of mass gun violence, including a shooting last fall at an LGBTQ+ nightclub that left five people dead. 4/27/23

Washington became the 10th state to prohibit sales of AR-15s and dozens of other semi-automatic rifles Tuesday, as Gov. Jay Inslee signed the ban into law, effective immediately. 4/25/23 Along with the assault weapons ban, Washington's legislature also passed a prohibition on magazines that hold more than 10 bullets.

In Massachusetts, [S.1973](#) would require every state and quasi-state agency — including the state's 29 public colleges — to establish a senior-level position that has the title of director of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In New Jersey, [A3944](#) would require the state's 33 public colleges to develop a faculty and student diversity plan. Each campus plan would have to establish diversity goals for increasing the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff who represent diverse backgrounds; identify steps and metrics to monitor those goals; and create programming aimed at improving the campus climate for diversity. The bill would also require that an annual diversity report that includes enrollment, retention, and graduation rates be submitted to the state's secretary of higher education.

In New York, [Senate Bill 1452](#) would require all 89 campuses in the State University of New York and City University of New York systems to establish courses in ethnic studies, women's studies, and social justice. The legislation would also require students to complete at least one three-credit course in one of those disciplines to graduate.

Democratic AGs are using the courts to win on abortion, gun control

Bob Ferguson from Washington State is one of [several Democratic attorneys general moving aggressively](#) on key social policy issues to blunt Republican initiatives across the country designed to loosen gun restrictions, outlaw [abortion](#) and curtail the rights of transgender residents. The Democratic effort is creating what amounts to a series of state sanctuaries for those threatened by Republican laws.

Democratic attorneys general [sued](#) their own party's administration in an effort to make the abortion pill more accessible, and banded together to defend citizens' right to travel to states where abortion is legal.



QUESTIONS?

Brilliant use of new media



The social destruction from social media

"Meticulously reported and grippingly told ... An essential book for our times." —Ezra Klein

THE CHAOS MACHINE



THE INSIDE STORY OF HOW
SOCIAL MEDIA REWIRED
OUR MINDS AND OUR WORLD

MAX FISHER

PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST

Social media is designed to promote division

Facebook researchers: **"Our algorithms exploit the human brain's attraction to divisiveness."**

Sean Parker, creator of Napster and first President of Facebook: **"The thought process that went into building these applications was all about 'How do we consume as much of your time and conscious attention as possible?' We need to give you a little dopamine hit every once in a while, because someone liked or commented on your photo or post or whatever. And that's going to get you more likes and comments...(this) is exactly the kind of thing a hacker like myself would come up with, because you're exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology."** He said that he and Zuckerberg understood this from the beginning.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SITES LIKE YOUTUBE USE AI RUN ALGORITHMS TO MAXIMIZE THE TIME USERS SPEND ON THE SITE. WHAT MAXIMIZES THIS TIME BEST IS OUTRAGE.

"Moral outrage is our species adaptation to...the shared code of behavior of an identity group."

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"Outrage is anger plus disgust...Moral outrage is a social control instinct."

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"Social networks bypass law and invoke outrage...Moral outrage self-rewards the outraged person with a dopamine hit...The internet removes personal responsibility for the expression of outrage."

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"Tweets with moral-emotional words traveled 20% further for each moral-emotional word."

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"Tweets disparaging out-groups receive much more engagement."

"Social media outrage...a feedback loop not unlike the apparatus used in a lab to train rats to push levers to get cocaine."

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"Social media elevated anti-establishment politicians conversant in exaggerated moral-emotional language."


Social media promotes hatred and violence

Social media activates members of groups that have been dominant and fear losing power. Social media makes you feel like you are doing something about this. Social media introduction caused communal riots and mass murders in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria. Social media were employed to create the fury of hatred that resulted in thousands of Rohingya murdered and more than 700,000 driven out of the country in Myanmar.

- **Social media creates a lynch mob effect because there is no personal responsibility—disindividuation**

- Superposters: dogmatic, narcissistic, predisposed to hostility, enjoy inflicting pain. In 2015 Reddit kicked off 15,000 superposters; hate posts reduced by 80%.

- In Germany, internet service is localized; when internet is out, attacks on immigrants reduced by 35%



Algorithms
are designed
to take
people into
delusional
rabbit holes

The highest value of social media—keep people online as long as possible

What does this best? Anger and outrage

Down the rabbit hole is the intensification of outrage

Both Facebook and Youtube act in this way—

On Youtube, the algorithm will take you from Jordan Peterson, the Canadian “conservative” academic to explicit Nazi sites in 7-9 recommendations. Just as Al Qaeda recruited online, so have fascist neo-Nazi groups.

“The Youtube algorithm is single most powerful route to Nazism, white nationalism—step by step into the abyss because the algorithm is designed to keep you on screen and intensify your moral outrage...Radical right-wing sites are clustered on Youtube so you are led from one to another.”

Facebook groups are the womb and the shotgun of conspiracies

Facebook groups are the perfect medium for giving birth to conspiracies and then promoting them to large numbers of people whose participation in the group promotes moral outrage, invites bonding over this outrage, and then promotes hatred and contempt for the “other.”

Facebook groups promoted Obama birther conspiracies

FB groups promoted vaccine conspiracies before Covid

FB groups promoted QAnon

FB groups promoted Covid 19 conspiracies

FB groups promoted Stop the Steal

FB promote “the Great Replacement” conspiracy

Facebook groups are “a self-reinforcing echo chamber of extremism.”

The self-serving
claims of social
media founders
and CEOs



**Our algorithms just give
people what they want.**

**We are not responsible for any
of this.**

**Thanks to the US Congress:
Section 230 of the 1996
Communications
Decency Act, states that
“no provider or user of
an interactive computer
service shall be treated
as the publisher or
speaker of any
information provided by
another information
content provider.”**

- QUESTIONS?



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

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Thomas Edsall, NY Times

Republican leaders are now adopting increasingly autocratic measures, using the police powers of government to impose moralized regulations, turning private citizens into enforcement officers and expelling defiant elected Democrats just as county Republican parties, particularly in Western states, are electing militia members, Christian nationalists and QAnon believers to key posts. April; 12. 2023

Democrats are not driving today's political violence...but they are at least partly responsible for driving many people into the arms of the far right. Fear is a major cause of violence. As America undergoes immense change, from a fourth industrial revolution to remaking the concept of gender, many Americans are struggling to understand why they feel unmoored, anxious and behind.

Pippa Norris, professor at Harvard's Kennedy School

- Contemporary cultural conservatism depends on support from declining constituencies — non-college-educated white people (as pollsters put it), evangelical Christians and other ideologues on the right — which places these groups in an increasingly threatened position, especially in the American two-party system.
- “At a certain point, the arc of history, which bends toward liberalism, means that traditional values among social conservatives lose their hegemonic status,” Norris wrote, which “is eventually reflected in progressive changes in the public policy agenda evident in many postindustrial societies during the late 20th century, from the spread of reproductive rights, equal pay for women and men, anti-sex-discrimination laws, passage of same-sex marriage laws, support for the international rules-based world order based on liberal democracy, free trade and human rights and concern about protection against environmental and climate change.”
- A consequence of this long-term cultural development for the losers, Norris continued, is a buildup of “resentment at the loss of the hegemony of traditional values and identities.” The problem for the Republican Party, she observed, lies in the fact that “by appealing to their shrinking socially conservative base, the Republican Party has been unable to gain a majority of the popular vote in their bid for the White House in eight of the last nine presidential elections.”

Steven R. Levitsky, a Harvard University government professor and the author with Daniel Ziblatt of the book “How Democracies Die,” said one-party rule in Democratic states like Illinois has typically led to corruption and abuses of power.

But states controlled by Democrats, he said, have not tried to limit voting, restrict civil liberties or push back on democratic norms the way Republican-controlled states have in recent years.

“Only one party, I think, is flirting with authoritarianism right now,” Professor Levitsky said.

Americans' Views on Christian Nationalism

- The U.S. government should declare America a Christian nation. **27% completely or mostly agree**
- U.S. laws should be based on Christian values. **40% complete or mostly agree**
- If the U.S. moves away from our Christian foundations, we will not have a country anymore. **38%**
- Being Christian is an important part of being truly American. **30%**
- God has called Christians to exercise dominion over all areas of American society. **20%**

- White evangelical Protestants are more supportive of Christian nationalism than any other group surveyed. Nearly two-thirds of white evangelical Protestants qualify as either Christian nationalism sympathizers (35%) or adherents (29%).

- Findings from the 2023 PRRI/Brookings Christian Nationalism Survey
- **A majority of White Christian Nationalists sincerely believe that Whites and Christians are the most persecuted groups in America.**

Spring 2023 OLLI Class

Christian Nationalism in U.S. Politics

**Kathleen Lee, BSN, MA,
& Rev. Michael Keys, MTS, MDiv**

Learn about how the religious goals of some denominations of American Christianity came to merge with governmental political goals. Delve into a segment of the Christian Nationalism movement, how it emerged and has influenced elections and policy, and why some Christians are pushing back on the movement and warning of its dangers.

Two Christians' Views

Pastor Mark Robinson

The battle between good versus evil, freedom versus oppression, the individual versus tyranny of the collective, and, arguably, this war is far more important than any cultural war or political conflict as the salvation of mankind is at stake. And as those with faith are ridiculed and forced to be private about their beliefs, the secular left is doing everything to whether down the Judeo-Christian values of this country. And what better place for them to radically transform the nation, obviously, than to start with your children?

David French

I felt comfortable in my Christian conservatism. My conservatism reflected my best effort to discern the policies that would contribute to justice and human flourishing, while my Christianity hovered over everything, hopefully (though not always, I must confess) infusing my public engagement with humility and kindness.

The more the Christian right latches on to cruel men, the more difficult it becomes to argue that the cruelty is a bug, not a feature.

The great tragedy is that a moment of dangerous national polarization is exactly when a truly Christian message that combines the pursuit of justice [with kindness and humility](#) would be a balm to the national soul. A time of [extraordinary social isolation](#), where people report less companionship, less time with friends, and less time with family, is exactly the time when a healthy church community can be a beacon of inclusion and hope.

But not when the right-wing pursuit of its version of justice overwhelms its commitment to kindness, much less any shred of humility. This is how the religious right becomes post-Christian. Its “secular prophets” become even more influential than its Christian leaders, and it actively discards clear biblical commands for what it perceives to be the greater good.

That’s not Christianity. It’s a primitive form of [consequentialism](#), the idea that the morality of an action is to be judged solely by its consequences. Many Christians fear that kindness doesn’t “work,” so they discard it. This is how even decency itself becomes a “[secondary value](#).” Aggression, not virtue, becomes the touchstone of political engagement, and anything other than aggression is seen as a sign of weakness.



Alex Jones

- *You see a top Democrat politician, they're having sex with children, bare minimum.*
- *That's why Hunter Biden, Biden, Biden's daughter, 'my dad had sex with me in the shower.'*
- *That's why Biden's wife runs around getting off Air Force One dressed in stripper outfits and fishnet stockings.*
- *They have sex with anything that can walk or crawl.*
- *And they're maniacs.*
- *They're complete, absolute sex cult maniacs.*
- *And they're now externalizing their hierarchy, their cult, onto us on a mass scale.*

Francis Fukuyama, fellow at the Hoover Institution

“American conservatives are now talking more like older European ones,” older ones “like Spain’s Francisco Franco or Portugal’s Antonio Salazar, who were happy to see democracy abolished in their countries altogether.”

“There is plenty to criticize on the woke left, but this new type of conservative is not talking about rolling back particular policies; they are challenging the very premises of the liberal state and toying with outright authoritarianism. They are not simply deluded by lies about the 2020 election, but willing to accept nondemocratic outcomes to get their way.”

Ron DeSantis

"You have people that are teaching — and actually his running mate has said this in the past — that teaching the United States was built on stolen land," DeSantis said Oct. 24. "That is inappropriate for our schools; it's not true."

Moms for Liberty Colorado Chapter Chair Darcy Schoening

CNN Interviewer: So what I feel like you're strongly implying, and I would like to get your take on because I don't want to attribute something that you don't think, but to me it sounds like you're saying there's some kind of high level coordinated effort to make more children trans and gay.

Darcy Schoening: *Gay, yeah.*

CNN: Well who's directing that?

Schoening: Teachers unions and our president and a lot of funding sources and teachers unions are also heavily backing the curriculum that we're bringing into schools.

CNN: Why would they want more kids to be gay and trans?

Schoening: Because it breaks down the family unit, which breaks down traditional conservative values.

It's not a conspiracy theory that the state, whether you're talking about Colorado or the federal government, is taking a stronger and stronger hand in public education, in raising our kids.

So do I think that for some reason people want everyone to be gay? That's a mischaracterization of what I think. I think that people will use, you know, the people that want to erode away at parental rights, the left, the teachers' unions, they'll use LGBTQ or whatever may be the case at the time. Those are just tools to erode away at parental rights.

Peniel Joseph professor at UT Austin: *The Third Reconstruction*

“The First Reconstruction era, 1865 to 1898, was followed by decades of Jim Crow, with its mendacious principle of ‘separate but equal.’”

“The Second Reconstruction spanned the heroic period of the civil rights era— from the 1954, Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s April 4, 1968, assassination.”

“In our time we have come to the Third Reconstruction, the period from the election of Barack Obama as president in 2008 through the recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests and all that they have entailed...**America’s Third Reconstruction offers the opportunity for democratic renewal** that centers racial justice as the beating heart of a new civic nationalism capable of restoring our national honor.”

- Reconstructionists seek to build an inclusive democracy: multiracial, multiethnic, multigender.
- Redemptionists seek to maintain the historic power structure of white supremacy and restore its vigor from a previous era.

Abraham Lincoln



"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all of one thing or all of the other."

David's opinion

The next six years will be the most dangerous for democracy, and the continuation of democratic governance will depend mostly on the outcome of the Presidential elections and, to a lesser extent, the Congressional elections. If democracy survives through 2029, the inevitable demographic changes will begin to alter the balance of power in the states away from autocracy. The future of democracy depends completely on how citizens choose to act during these years.