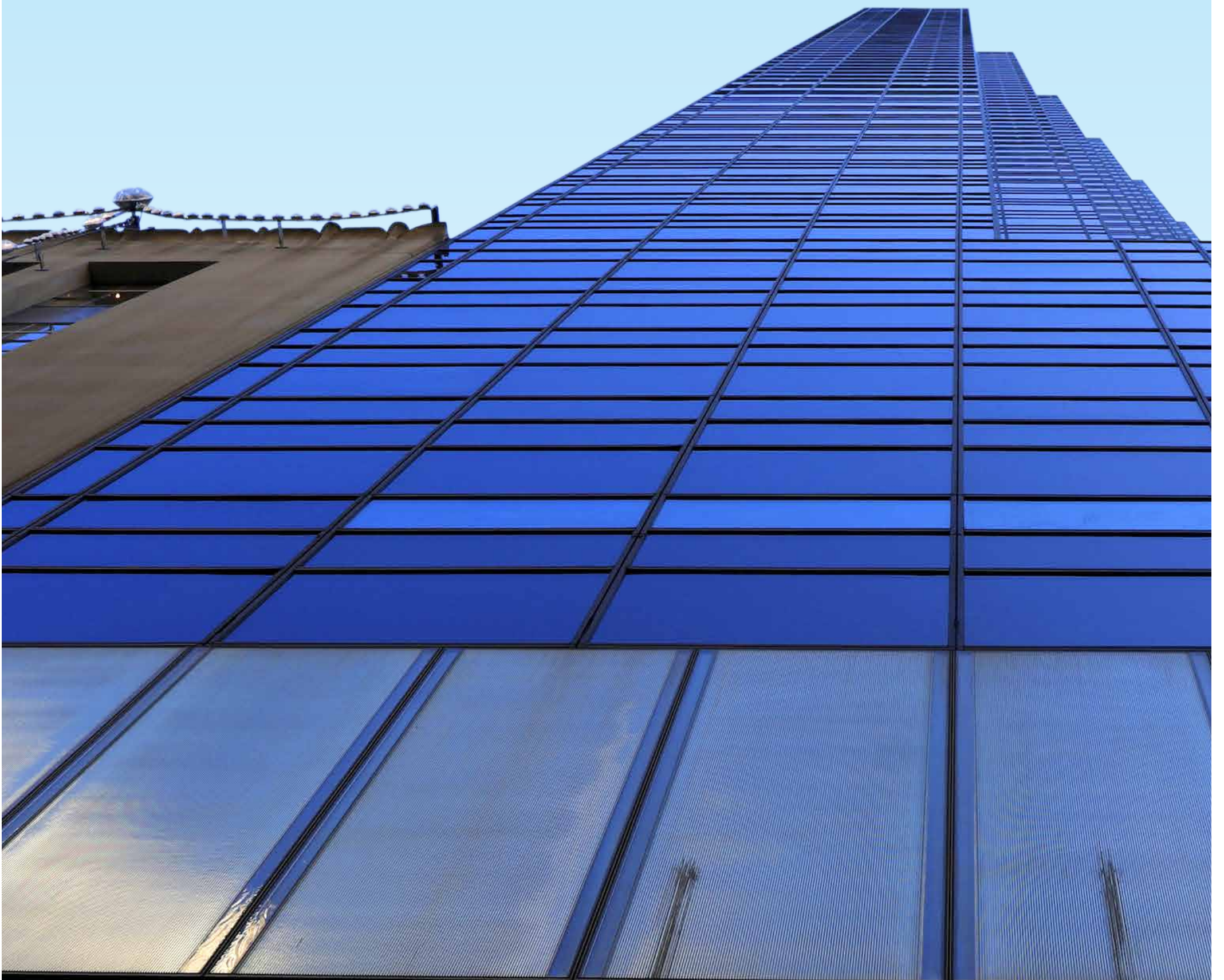


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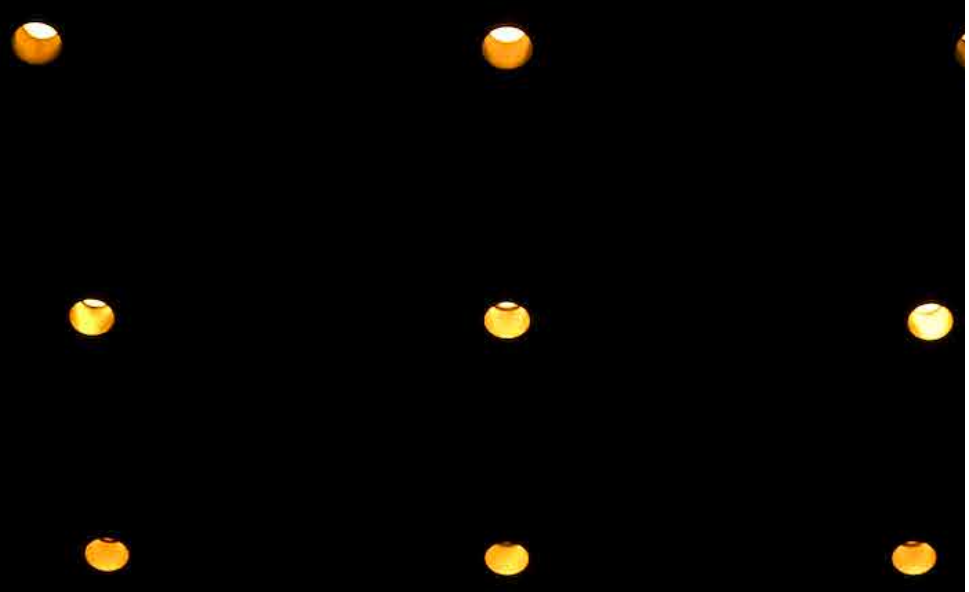
OUR NATION

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Comey's Trump Tower Meeting Was Used for FBI's Counterintelligence Investigation

While the meeting was described by former FBI Director James Comey as a 'defensive briefing,' it was used to gain information from Trump, new IG report reveals **7**





Trump Launches *Space Command*, Vows American Dominance

PETR SVAB

President Donald Trump officially opened the U.S. Space Command, a precursor to the new branch of the military, the Space Force, that Trump announced last year.

"SpaceCom will ensure that American dominance in space is never questioned and never threatened," Trump said on the White House lawn on Aug. 29.

The new unified combatant command will be headed by Air Force Gen. John Raymond, currently the head of Air Force Space Command, a branch of the Air Force responsible for the military's space operations.

Trump called the setting-up of Space Command a "landmark day" that recognizes the "centrality of space to American national security and defense."

"Our adversaries are weaponizing earth's orbits with new technology targeting American satellites that are critical to both battlefield operations and our way of life at home," he said. It will be the aim of the command then to "boldly deter aggression and outpace America's rivals by far."

The system of combatant commands dates to 1946 and serves to control forces from multiple military branches in each command's area of responsibility. The Space Command is the 11th one, and the second established by Trump, after the launch of Cyber Command on May 4 last year.

Space Force

Trump announced on June 18, 2018, that Pentagon space operations will be separated into a new military branch, the U.S. Space Force.

The U.S. Space Command will be responsible for building up the new branch.

Trump ordered the creation of the Space

Our adversaries are weaponizing earth's orbits with new technology targeting American satellites that are critical to both battlefield operations and our way of life at home.

President Donald Trump

Force to strengthen the military's focus on space operations, which include launching satellites, providing communications, intelligence, missile warning, and navigation services, as well as counterspace operations.

The counterspace operations have especially grown in importance in recent years, as China and Russia have been working to extend their military capabilities into space.

Missiles and Lasers

"Chinese and Russian military doctrines indicate that they view space as important to modern warfare and view counterspace capabilities as a means to reduce U.S. and allied military effectiveness," the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) said in a 2019 report.

Both China and Russia reorganized their militaries in 2015 to focus more on space operations.

They have developed "robust and capable space services, including space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance" that allow them to "monitor, track, and target U.S. and allied forces," the report says.

They have built surveillance networks "capable of searching, tracking, and characterizing satellites in all earth orbits."

They've also been developing the means of disabling or destroying satellites, including by hacking, jamming, blinding them with lasers or microwaves, dragging, shooting, or ramming them with other satellites, as well as shooting them down with ground-based missiles.

Many modern military capabilities are enabled or aided by satellites, including missile targeting, communication, tracking troop movements, and detecting ballistic missile launches.

Attacking satellites can also be used to cripple civilian services such as GPS, TV

broadcasts, data transfers, and even credit card transactions and ATM withdrawals.

The Air Force has blamed China for stealing U.S. space technology, saying it allowed China to develop its own systems. One such system mirrors the American GPS with a net of global positioning satellites called BeiDou, which can be used for conventional strike weapons targeting.

The U.S.-China Economic Review Commission warned in 2017 that the completion of China's 35-satellite BeiDou network by 2020 would allow it to strike targets with "position accuracies of under 10 meters."

Arming Space

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty bans weapons of mass destruction and, specifically, nuclear weapons from space. It doesn't address, however, placing conventional weapons in space.

"While China and Russia are developing counterspace weapons systems, they are promoting agreements at the United Nations that limit weaponization of space," the DIA report says. "Their proposals do not address many space warfare capabilities, and they lack verification mechanisms, which provides room for China and Russia to continue to develop counterspace weapons."

Crowded Space

The earth's orbits are becoming increasingly crowded real estate. They're traversed by at least 666 intelligence satellites, 790 communication satellites, 129 navigation satellites, and 303 scientific satellites, William Roper, the assistant Air Force secretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, said in a March 20 speech. The U.S. accounts for nearly half of those satellites.

The space economy has grown to about \$350 billion, he said.

Price Tag

The Air Force requested \$14 billion for space projects in fiscal 2020, up 17 percent from the year earlier, "to develop new defendable space capabilities," Roper said. Of that, \$72 million is for setting up a Space Force headquarters with an initial staff of 160, National Defense reported.

Overall, the Pentagon requested \$2 billion over five years for the Space Force, expecting personnel of 15,000, five senior Pentagon officials told Military.com.

The Space Command will start with a staff of about 600 and draw its resources from U.S. Strategic Command, which currently handles space operations, Space News reported.

"With today's action, we open another great chapter in the extraordinary history of the United States military," Trump said. "SpaceCom will ensure that America's dominance in space is never questioned and never threatened, because we know the best way to prevent conflict is to prepare for victory."

(Above) A member of the US military unfurls the new Space Command flag alongside President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper during an event establishing the US Space Command in the Rose Garden of the White House, on Aug. 29, 2019.

(Below) US Air Force Space Command Gen. John 'Jay' Raymond stands next to the flag of the newly established US Space Command, in the Rose Garden of the White House, on Aug. 29, 2019.



Trump Justifies New Tariffs, Saying China Actually Pays for All

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON—President Donald Trump said the trade war with China wouldn't hurt U.S. consumers, after the latest round of tariffs on Chinese imports, which mostly hit consumer goods, went into effect on Sept. 1.

Trump justified tariff hikes by saying that Chinese producers, not American consumers, were bearing the cost of the tariffs. "It was brought out very strongly today by a number of great economists that, because China has devalued their currency so much, that, in fact, they are actually paying for all of the tariffs," Trump told reporters on Sept. 1.

Trump said China's devaluation of its currency offsets price increases in the United States, which ends up helping U.S. consumers.

In the latest escalation of the trade war with China, Washington began imposing 15 percent tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods. The new tariffs target a wide range of goods imported from China, including clothes, boots, shoes, watches, furniture, diapers, milk, and chocolate.

The new tariffs affect 87 percent of all clothes and home textile imports and 52 percent of all footwear imports from China.

In earlier rounds, Washington slapped 25 percent tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods, which mainly focused on industrial equipment and machinery. This time, however, the list mainly includes consumer products.

Americans may start to feel the pinch, according to some studies. J.P. Morgan suggests that the tariffs will cost the typical U.S. household \$1,000 a year. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York in May estimated that U.S. households would face an additional \$831 a year in costs, due to higher prices and reduced economic efficiency caused by the tariff hikes.

Some economists, however, believe the overall impact of tariffs on inflation would remain relatively muted. According to a Wall Street Journal article, these economists claim increased tariffs on Chinese goods amount to a drop in the bucket of the nation's \$21 trillion economy.

Many Americans spend more on services—such as housing, education, and health care—than on goods, hence tariffs on Chi-

A truck passes by shipping containers at the Port of Los Angeles, after new tariffs on Chinese imports were imposed by President Donald Trump, in Long Beach, Calif., on Sept. 1, 2019.



nese products are unlikely to push annual inflation up significantly.

In retaliation, China started to impose additional tariffs of 5 percent and 10 percent on a variety of American goods, including soybeans and crude oil. These extra tariffs were levied on 1,717 items of a total of 5,078 U.S. products. Beijing is expected to impose additional tariffs on the remaining items in December.

Despite tariff hikes, Trump is still optimistic about the ongoing trade talks with Beijing.

"The meeting is still on, as you know, in September. That hasn't changed. They haven't changed and we haven't. We'll see what happens," he said.

"But we can't allow China to rip us off any more as a country."

A lot of companies have left China, and a lot more are leaving. And they are not doing well. They are having the worst year they've had, I understand, in 61 years.

President Donald Trump

Shifting Supply Chains

New U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports might force some companies to find new suppliers. Studies show that U.S. companies have already begun shifting their supply chains away from China to other countries such as Vietnam and Taiwan.

According to a survey released last month

by the U.S.-China Business Council, 17 percent of American companies operating in China said they reduced or stopped planned investment in the country in the past year. And 13 percent of respondents said they moved or planned to move operations out of China in 2019.

Trump said he wasn't surprised to see companies leaving China as they can't compete with the tariffs.

"A lot of companies have left China, and a lot more are leaving. And they are not doing well. They are having the worst year they've had, I understand, in 61 years," he told reporters on Aug. 30.

China's economy has worsened under the weight of the trade war and the country's mounting debt problem. The economic growth in the second quarter slumped to its lowest level in nearly three decades. And the jobless rate in July hit a record high.

The U.S.-China trade war is also taking a toll on the Chinese manufacturing sector. Over the weekend, China's official Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, a gauge of manufacturing activity, declined to 49.5 in August, contracting for its fourth consecutive month.

Colorado Voters May Exit From National Popular Vote Compact

MATTHEW VADUM

Colorado voters will have an opportunity in 2020 to withdraw their state's ratification of a plan that will guarantee that the winner of the national popular vote in future presidential elections becomes president of the United States.

The office of Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold, a Democrat, announced Aug. 29 that opponents of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact filed enough voter signatures to place a referendum on the November 2020 ballot to repeal state legislation implementing the plan. If passed, the measure would reverse the national popular vote enabling legislation that Gov. Jared Polis, a Democrat, signed March 15 after state lawmakers approved it.

Those seeking repeal of the law gathered almost 229,000 signatures to put the issue on next year's ballot, well beyond the minimum of 124,000 signatures required, The Hill reported. The last time Colorado voters faced a referendum to repeal legislation approved by the state legislature was 1932, when voters reversed a tax on oleomargarine, according to Griswold.

Organizers seeking the repeal celebrated.

"We've had so much support and grassroots volunteers, so this is a real victory for us," said Rose Pugliese, a Mesa County commissioner and organizer promoting the repeal effort, according to The Denver Post.

U.S. Rep. Ken Buck, who chairs the Colorado Republican Party, celebrated the successful ballot inclusion.



Jeff Paley (R) of Boulder, Colo., encourages students to vote in the midterm elections, on the University of Colorado campus, on Nov. 6, 2018.

"Today, grassroots Coloradans sent a clear message to overreaching Democrats at the state Capitol," he said. "Colorado's presidential choice should be controlled by Colorado voters, not population centers in New York and California."

Those who support the national popular vote legislation are also getting ready for next year's vote.

"Our focus today is simple—to build the political organization required to win this campaign and bring our country an important step closer to having a popular vote for president," said Patrick Rosenstiel, who heads the pro-national popular vote campaign.

The secretary of state's ruling came after the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals

ruled on Aug. 20 that Electoral College members are free to vote for the presidential candidate they choose and can't be bound by the popular vote in their respective states. The case was brought after several Colorado Electoral College members protested being forced to vote for the candidate they were aligned with.

"I think that this decision only highlights the need to abolish the archaic Electoral College," Polis recently told reporters. "I mean, if voters in our state vote for somebody, and we can't even make sure that's who our electors vote for, it's clearly time to not have this archaic, undemocratic institution of electors and move to direct popular vote for president."

Some states have laws that punish so-called faithless electors for not voting for the candidate to whom they pledged support, but there have long been legal questions about the enforceability of such laws. In May, the Washington state Supreme Court ruled in a separate case that electors could be fined for refusing to cast ballots for the candidate who won the popular vote in that state.

The new 10th Circuit decision appears to call into question the viability of the national popular vote movement, which seeks to mandate the direct election of the president without having to amend the U.S. Constitution, a notoriously difficult task.

According to a tally maintained by National Popular Vote (NPV), a group promoting the policy, enabling legislation has been adopted in 15 states plus the District of Columbia, representing a total of 196 electoral votes.

Those states are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. Not one is a Republican state. Oregon is the most recent state to join the compact. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, signed the legislation on June 12.

The plan, NPV claims, would become effective when enacted by several more states with 74 more electoral votes, taking the total to 270 out of 538, the absolute majority required to win the presidency in the Electoral College.

Ratification will be more difficult if Colorado voters force the state to leave the interstate compact.

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold, a Democrat, announced Aug. 29 that opponents of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact filed enough voter signatures to place a referendum on the November 2020 ballot to repeal state legislation implementing the plan.

US, Poland Sign Joint Agreement on 5G Technology Cooperation

JANEK SKARZYNSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



BOWEN XIAO

The United States and Poland on Sept. 2 signed an agreement to cooperate on new 5G technology, as concerns about Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei continue to grow.

Days before the agreement was signed, a senior Trump administration official told reporters during a briefing that the deal was at “the top” of its list of priorities and noted it was imperative for national security.

“This is an incredibly important

Polish President Andrzej Duda (2nd R) and US Vice President Mike Pence shake hands as their wives look on at the presidential palace in Warsaw on Sept. 2, 2019.

signal of the strength of our cooperation between the United States and Poland against what may be one of the preeminent, I guess I’ll just call it a threat, in the coming years,” the official said on Aug. 31. The official didn’t specifically identify a country or company.

The agreement comes amid worries over supply chain security, as there are “a number of suppliers that have links to hostile governments,” the official told reporters.

“It’s really not possible to contemplate a core network that can be protected, that’s contrary to the nature of the 5G network. And so

having the kind of framework for 5G cooperation ... is going to allow us to address all of those issues,” the official stated.

The agreement was signed by Vice President Mike Pence and Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki in Warsaw. Pence filled in for President Donald Trump,

who canceled his trip due to Hurricane Dorian. The hurricane is tied with the 1935 Labor Day hurricane as the strongest Atlantic storm to make landfall.

Pence also met with Polish President Andrzej Duda on Sept. 2. The vice president wrote on Twitter that

he was honored to be in Poland, but added, “our hearts are home with the families & communities in the path of Hurricane Dorian.”

The agreement endorses the principles developed by cybersecurity officials from dozens of countries at a summit in Prague earlier this year to counter threats and ensure the safety of next-generation mobile networks.

“Protecting these next-generation communications networks from disruption or manipulation and ensuring the privacy and individual liberties of the citizens of the United States, Poland, and other countries is of vital importance,” the agreement states.

Pence said the agreement would “set a vital example for the rest of Europe.”

The United States and Chinese state-controlled Huawei, the world’s largest manufacturer of network infrastructure equipment, are in the midst of a global battle over network security. The United States has been lobbying allies to ban Huawei from 5G networks over fears the Chinese Communist Party could make Huawei give it access to data for cyberespionage. Huawei has previously denied such allegations.

While the United States has called for an outright ban on Huawei, European allies have balked at the idea. Huawei is being probed by federal U.S. prosecutors investigating alleged cases of technology theft, according to The Wall Street Journal, citing unnamed sources.

The agreement was signed by federal U.S. prosecutors investigating alleged cases of technology theft, according to The Wall Street Journal, citing unnamed sources.

During a visit to Sweden on Aug. 29, Morawiecki said decisions were being taken that would make Swedish networking and telecommunications company Ericsson invest in 5G development in Poland.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Judge Says Opioid Litigation Can Proceed Toward Trial

A U.S. judge on Sept. 3 rejected efforts by drugmakers, distributors, and pharmacies to dismiss claims that they caused the nation’s opioid crisis, clearing the way for a scheduled landmark trial even as he pushes for a nationwide settlement.

U.S. District Judge Dan Polster, who oversees roughly 2,000 opioid lawsuits by state and local governments, said the plaintiffs could try to prove that drugmakers’ deceptive marketing of the painkillers caused a harmful, massive increase in supply that distributors and pharmacies didn’t do enough to stop.

“A factfinder could reasonably infer that these failures were a substantial factor in producing the alleged harm suffered by plaintiffs,” the Cleveland-based judge wrote.

The ruling was among seven decisions and orders totaling 80 pages issued by Polster ahead of a scheduled Oct. 21 trial by two Ohio counties against Purdue Pharma, the OxyContin maker accused of fueling the epidemic, and several other defendants.

Polster also refused to dismiss civil conspiracy claims against the drugmakers, distributors, and pharmacies, and said federal law didn’t preempt a variety of the plaintiffs’ claims.

Opioid addiction claimed roughly 400,000 lives in the United States from 1999 to 2017, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Critics of the industry said opioid makers hid the addiction and abuse risks of prolonged use from consumers.

Defendants in the litigation also include the drugmaker Endo International Plc; pharmacy operators CVS Health Corp., Rite Aid Corp., Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. and Walmart Inc.; and major distributors AmerisourceBergen Corp., Cardinal Health Inc., and McKesson Corp., among others.

Polster also rejected separate dismissal requests by the generic drugmakers Teva

Opioid addiction claimed roughly 400,000 lives in the United States from 1999 to 2017, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. and Allergan Plc.

Lawyers for the respective defendants didn’t immediately respond to requests for comment or declined to comment.

Paul Hanly, a lawyer for the counties, said the plaintiffs were pleased that Polster “almost uniformly” agreed with their positions on the dismissal motions and whether various testimony should be admitted.

Purdue Pharma and its owners, the Sack-

ler family, have been in talks on a possible \$10 billion to \$12 billion nationwide settlement of opioid claims, two people familiar with the matter said last week.

That accord could include a bankruptcy filing for the Stamford, Connecticut-based company. Purdue and the Sacklers have denied the allegations.

By Jonathan Stempel

From Reuters

FRED TANNEAU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Painkillers at a pharmacy in Quimper, western France.

All GOP Senators Rebuke 5 Democrats for Assault on Judicial Independence

MATTHEW VADUM

WASHINGTON—Arguing that “judicial independence is under assault,” all 53 Republican U.S. senators have signed a letter to the Supreme Court criticizing five Democratic senators for, in their view, “openly” threatening the court with “political retribution” if it fails to embrace a restrictive view of Second Amendment rights in an upcoming challenge to a New York City gun law.

Led by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), the five Democratic senators filed a sharply worded friend-of-the-court brief Aug. 12 in New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. City of New York, the court’s first gun-rights case in nine years, which is expected to be heard during the approaching fall term.

Former President Barack Obama, a Democrat, often attacked the Supreme Court. During his 2010 State of the Union address, he lectured the justices sitting in the audience in the Capitol about how, in his view, they decided the famous Citizens United campaign finance case wrongly. He also used his bully pulpit to warn the justices not to overturn the Obamacare law, his signature legislative accomplishment.

In the case at hand, gun owners are suing the Big Apple over a local law that, among other things, prevents lawful gun permit holders from transporting their unloaded, locked-up weapons outside the city limits. The Supreme Court denied a motion April 29 to declare the controversy moot after the city amended the law in question, so the court case continues.

Whitehouse was joined in the brief by Sens. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Richard Durbin of Illinois, and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, who, on Aug. 28, dropped out of the race for her party’s 2020 presidential nomination.

“The Supreme Court is not well,” the Whitehouse brief states. “And the

We therefore ask that the Justices ... rule in this case only as the law dictates, without regard to the identity of the parties or the politics of the moment.

53 Republican senators in a letter to the Supreme Court

people know it. Perhaps the Court can heal itself before the public demands it be ‘restructured in order to reduce the influence of politics.’ Particularly on the urgent issue of gun control, a nation desperately needs it to heal.”

Republicans in the Senate have responded by sending a strongly worded letter to the Clerk of the Supreme Court, Scott S. Harris, protesting the Democrats’ epistolary tactic.

Without taking a position on the merits of the New York gun case itself, the Republicans said the fact that their counterparts filed a brief—a commonplace thing—isn’t the problem, “[but] our colleagues did more than raise legal arguments in favor of mootness. They openly threatened this Court with political retribution if it failed to dismiss the petition as moot.”

The implication from the paragraph about healing and reducing the influence of politics “is plain as day: Dismiss this case, or we’ll pack the Court,” the GOP senators wrote.

“[Judicial] independence is under assault. Democrats in Congress, and on the presidential campaign trail, have peddled plans to pack this Court with more justices in order to further their radical legislative agenda. It’s one thing for politicians to peddle these ideas in tweets or on the stump. But the Democrats’ amicus brief demonstrates that their court-packing plans are more than mere pandering. They are a direct, immediate threat to the independence of the judiciary and the rights of all Americans.”

The letter continues: “We are deeply concerned by” the Democrats’ brief

“and the ideas it promotes ... [but] judicial independence is not negotiable.”

“We therefore ask that the Justices ... rule in this case only as the law dictates, without regard to the identity of the parties or the politics of the moment. They must not be cowed by the threats of opportunistic politicians.”

Whitehouse’s brief, in which he was identified as “counsel of record,” generated controversy. William A. Jacobson, clinical professor of law of Cornell Law School, wrote on the Legal Insurrection website.

In addition, the nonprofit government watchdog Judicial Watch filed a complaint with the Unauthorized Practice of Law Committee of Rhode Island’s Supreme Court, since the senator signed the brief while on “inactive” bar status in that state.



Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.) on Capitol Hill, on June 11, 2019.

US Companies Outperform Global Peers in Valuation

EMEL AKAN

American firms continue to beat their global peers in market capitalization, thanks to the booming U.S. technology sector.

The market valuation of the top 100 companies worldwide nearly tripled in the last decade, and the United States continues to dominate the list with 54 companies, according to the latest Global Top 100 report released by the consulting firm PwC and Bloomberg.

China, the second-largest contributor to the list, had 15 companies. “The US continued to see impressive growth in its share of the largest companies in value terms over the past 10 years,” the report stated.

The Global Top 100 list ranks the largest public companies in the world by their market valuation in U.S. dollars as of March 31. On this year’s list, U.S. companies represented 63 percent of overall value, up from 61 percent in 2018 and 45 percent 10 years ago.

The top five companies in terms of market capitalization include Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Google’s parent Alphabet, and Warren Buffett’s holding company Berkshire Hathaway.

This year, Microsoft has become the most valuable public company in the world for the first time, after a seven-year reign by Apple. The tech giant’s market value surpassed the \$1 trillion mark in April and currently stands at \$1.04 trillion.

Apple became the first U.S. company to hit the mark in 2018, but its current market value is \$926 billion. Amazon also briefly joined the trillion-dollar club in 2018 but now has a value of \$887 billion.

Microsoft’s market capitalization surged 29 percent year-on-year as of

Women use their smartphones in front of an Apple store in Tokyo’s Omotesando district, on June 4, 2019.



With a market value of \$1.04 trillion, Microsoft has become the most valuable public company in the world for the first time, after a seven-year reign by Apple

March 31, “fueled by its transformation into a cloud computing company,” the PwC and Bloomberg report stated. Apple’s market valuation increased by only 5 percent during the same period.

Chinese companies in the Global Top 100 list saw a decrease of \$135 billion or 4 percent in market valuation year-on-year. This was due to increased volatility in both Shanghai and Hang Seng indices amid the growing trade war between the United States and China, the report stated, adding that the conflict took a toll on investor sentiment.

For the third year in a row, the technology sector dominated the global list. In terms of percentage increase, however, the health care, telecommunications, and consumer services sectors outperformed other sectors.

According to the report, Europe’s share in the Global Top 100 market capitalization dropped to 15 percent this year from 27 percent a decade ago, with 11 companies falling from the list over that period.

The report also listed top unicorns, which are privately held startup companies valued at more than \$1 billion.

There were more than 320 unicorns around the world as of March 31, according to the report.

The valuations of unicorns are determined by how much private investors and venture capitalists are willing to pay to acquire shares in these private companies. The largest unicorn, according to the report, was a Chinese internet company, Bytedance, with a valuation of \$75 billion.

Nearly half of the unicorns around the world were from the United States, and 30 percent were from China, the report stated.

Manchin Passes on Run for West Virginia Governor, Says He'll Stay in Senate

ZACHARY STIEBER

Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) said that he won't run for West Virginia governor in 2020, and will opt instead to stay in the Senate.

People have been speculating for months that Manchin, who was the state's governor from 2005 to 2010, would join the race for the state's highest office. Manchin, who won the U.S. Senate seat in a special election following the death of Democrat Sen. Robert Byrd in 2010, was reelected to a six-year term in 2018.

Manchin said in a statement on Sept. 3 that he's officially staying in the seat.

"I have always said that 'public service is not self-service.' So, when considering whether to run for governor, I couldn't focus just on which job I enjoyed the most, but on where I could be the most effective for the Mountain State," Manchin said. "Ultimately, I believe my role as U.S. senator allows me to position our state for success for the rest of this century."

Manchin is a centrist Democrat who has shown support for pro-life positions and voted against his party around one-third of the time amid an increasingly partisan Senate.

Manchin was seen standing and applauding President Donald Trump during his State of the Union address when the president condemned Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's call to allow infanticide.

"Late-term abortions are just horrific ... totally just wrong," Manchin said later.

He was the lone Democrat to vote for Trump's second Supreme Court nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, and has regularly voted for other Trump judicial nominees.

Manchin said earlier this year he was considering a run for governor.

"I think about it every minute of every day. Now, thinking about it and doing it are two different things," Manchin told Politico in April. "I'll make a decision this fall sometime. I don't think there's any hurry at all."

He took aim at sitting Gov. Jim Justice, a Republican, saying it's "going to be very difficult for [Justice] no matter who runs against him."

He said over the summer that supporters in his state wanted him to run against Justice.

"I have people back home that want me to come back and run for governor. We're looking at all the different plays. I want to make sure whatever time I have left in public service is productive," he told The Hill in June.



Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) speaks at a roundtable on the opioid epidemic at Cabell-Huntington Health Center in Huntington, W.Va., on July 8, 2019.

Manchin is a centrist Democrat who has shown support for pro-life positions and voted against his party around one-third of the time amid an increasingly partisan Senate.

Responding to a question about how productive he feels in the Senate, Manchin said, "Not at all."

"I haven't been happy since I've been here. I've always thought there was more we can do. It's the greatest body in the world, so much good could be done," he said.

Justice was elected as a Democrat but switched to the Republican Party during a Trump rally in 2017.

A poll released on Aug. 30 showed that Manchin would beat the incumbent if he entered the race.

In the theoretical head-to-head matchup, 49 percent of respondents said they'd vote for Manchin, versus 39 percent who said they would vote for Justice. The remaining were unsure.

"If Senator Manchin were to enter the governor's race and be the Democratic nominee, there's no question he has historically strong

support in the state. And generally, his positions on issues resonate with West Virginia voters," Rex Repass, president of Research America Inc., which conducted the poll for the MetroNews Dominion Post, told the Post.

"However, if he were to decide to run for governor in 2020, he does have some headwinds to overcome."

Before Justice was elected and switched parties, Manchin had endorsed him. In recent months, the pair have traded shots.

The primary election in the state is slated for May 12, 2020, ahead of the November general election.

Stephen Smith, who was executive director of the West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, is the current Democratic challenger. Woody Thrasher, former state commerce secretary and who also switched to Republican from Democrat, is running against Justice in the Republican primary.

Comey's Trump Tower Meeting Was Used for FBI's Counterintelligence Investigation

While the meeting was described by former FBI Director James Comey as a 'defensive briefing,' it was used to gain information from Trump, new IG report reveals

JEFF CARLSON

Former FBI Director James Comey's first meeting with then-President-elect Donald Trump appears to have been part of the agency's counterintelligence investigation into the Trump campaign.

Comey has described the Jan. 6, 2017, briefing at Trump Tower as a defensive briefing intended to inform the president-elect of salacious allegations contained in the so-called "Steele dossier."

He had testified to Congress on June 8, 2017, that he "was briefing [Trump] on it because, because we had been told by the media it was about to launch. We didn't want to be keeping that from him. He needed to know this was being said. I was very keen not to leave him with an impression that the bureau was trying to do something to him."

Comey's testimony to Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael Horowitz, as part of the agency's investigation into Comey, however, paints a different picture.

Comey told Horowitz that the information he obtained from his conversation with Trump "ought to be treated ... [like] FISA derived information or information in a [counterintelligence] investigation." In other words, his meeting with Trump had very direct surveillance overtones and intentions—and directly counters what he had testified to Congress.

According to his congressional testimony, Comey had told Trump at the Jan. 6, 2017, meeting that he wasn't under investigation by the FBI, noting, "sir, we're not personally investigating you."

Prior to the meeting with Trump at Trump Tower, Comey met with FBI officials involved in the "Crossfire Hurricane" investigation into the Trump campaign and how to memorialize it right after the meeting.

Comey told Horowitz that in advance of his meeting with Trump, he "met with senior leaders of the FBI, including his Chief of Staff James Rybicki, then-FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, then-FBI General Counsel James Baker, and the supervisors of the FBI's investigation into Russian interference with the 2016 presidential election."

According to the IG report, multiple FBI witnesses said the meeting was intended, in part, to see how Trump would react to the allegations and whether he would reveal new information useful for their counterintelligence investigation.

"Witnesses interviewed by the OIG also said that they discussed Trump's potential responses to being told about the 'salacious' information, including that Trump might make statements about, or provide information of value to, the pending Russian interference investigation," the report reads.

It was also agreed that Comey should immediately write a memo based on his conversation with the president, in what appears to have been an effort to memorialize any information that might be useful in their investigation.

"Multiple FBI witnesses recalled agreeing ahead of time that Comey should memorialize his meeting with Trump immediately after it occurred," the IG report reads.

Comey told Horowitz that "he had a secure FBI laptop waiting for him in his FBI vehicle and that when he got into the vehicle, he was handed the laptop and 'began typing [Memo 1] as the vehicle moved.'"

[Comey] had a secure FBI laptop waiting for him in his FBI vehicle and that when he got into the vehicle, he was handed the laptop and 'began typing [Memo 1] as the vehicle moved.'



He said he continued working on Memo 1 until he arrived at the FBI's New York field office, where Comey gave a "quick download" of his conversation with Trump to Rybicki, McCabe, Baker, and supervisors of the FBI's Crossfire Hurricane investigative team via secure video teleconference.

Additionally, Horowitz noted in a footnote of the report that during his investigation, he had determined there were actually two versions of Memo 1:

"The first version was dated January 6, 2017, and was drafted by Comey as a document on an FBI classified laptop in the car departing Trump Tower. A member of Comey's protective detail emailed this document to Comey, Rybicki, and McCabe on the evening of January 6, 2017, using the FBI's classified email system. This version was not marked with a classification banner/header, portion markings, or a classification authority block.

"The second version of Memo 1, dated January 7, 2017, at 1:42 p.m., is an email that Comey sent to Rybicki, McCabe, and Baker through the FBI's classified computer system. Comey used the electronic classification marking tool in the FBI's computer system to mark this version of Memo 1 "SECRET//NOFORN/ORCON" before sending it."

Although Horowitz noted that the two memos were substantially similar, it's unclear why Comey felt compelled to have the initial draft emailed to McCabe and Rybicki immediately following his meeting with Trump—and without any classification markings.

Notably, McCabe played a crucial role in the FBI's investigation into the Trump campaign and opened an investigation into Trump in the days following Comey's firing by Trump. Ultimately, the appointment of special counsel Robert Mueller removed the investigations from McCabe's authority.

Details of Comey's Meeting With Trump

Comey's meeting with Trump followed a formal briefing that Comey, CIA Director John Brennan, and National Security Director James Clapper had provided to Obama just hours earlier regarding the Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA) on Russia hacking and election interference.

Comey outlined to the inspector general the details of the meeting that took place between only himself and Trump:

"At the conclusion of our session, the COS [Chief of Staff Reince Priebus] asked whether there is anything we haven't mentioned that they should know or that might come out. I said there was something that Clapper wanted me to speak to the PE [President-Elect] about alone or in a very small group ...

"... I then executed the session exactly as I had planned. I told him [President Trump] that I wanted to meet with him to tell him more about what is in the reports written by [redacted—likely Steele]. I said that the written reports themselves were [redacted] and the content known at IC senior level and

that I didn't want him caught cold by some of the detail ...

"I said the Russians allegedly had tapes involving him and prostitutes at the Presidential Suite at the Ritz Carlton in Moscow from about 2013 ... I said I wasn't saying this was true, only that I wanted him to know both that it had been reported and that the reports were in many hands. I said media like CNN had them and were looking for a news hook. I said it was important that we not give them the excuse to write that the FBI has the material or [redacted] and that we were keeping it very close-held."

Notably, Comey only informed Trump of the "salacious" details contained within the dossier. Comey would later tell CNN's Jake Tapper that he did so because "that was the part that the leaders of the intelligence community agreed he needed to be told about."

MR. TAPPER: "In January 2017 when you met with President Trump and you did that oral presentation of what's in that two-page memo, summarizing the Steele dossier. We know from the book that you talked about these unverified allegations involving him and prostitutes.

Did you brief him about any—any of the other things in the Steele dossier, claims that his associates, Michael Cohen or Paul Manafort, were potentially working with the Russians? Or was it only about the prostitutes?"

MR. COMEY: "It was only about the salacious part of it."

MR. TAPPER: "Why? Why only about that?"

MR. COMEY: "Because that was the part that the leaders of the intelligence community agreed he needed to be told about because we knew it and thought it was about to become public."

Clapper Leaked Details of Meeting to CNN

Comey's interview with Tapper was somewhat farcical as Clapper had personally briefed Tapper about the Comey-Trump meeting almost immediately after it occurred. We know this from findings contained within the House's Final Report on Russian Active Measures:

"It is important to note that Evan Perez, Jim Sciutto, Jake Tapper, and Carl Bernstein of CNN reported on January 12, 2016 [original publication was on January 10, 2017], that

President-elect Trump was briefed on classified information indicating that the Russians have compromising personal or financial information that the Russians could use against President-elect Trump.

The Committee's investigation revealed that President-elect Trump was indeed briefed on the contents of the Steele dossier and when questioned by the Committee, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper admitted that he confirmed the existence of the dossier to the media."

Clapper at first denied leaking the information of the dossier and the Comey-Trump meeting, but ultimately acknowledged having done so:

"When initially asked about leaks related to the ICA in July 2017, former DNI Clapper flatly denied 'discuss[ing] the dossier [compiled by Steele] or any other intelligence related to Russia hacking of the 2016 election with journalists.' Clapper subsequently acknowledged discussing the 'dossier with CNN journalist Jake Tapper,' and admitted that he might have spoken with other journalists about the same topic.

"Clapper's discussion with Tapper took place in early January 2017, around the time IC leaders briefed President Obama and President-elect Trump, on 'the Christopher Steele information,' a two-page summary of which was 'enclosed in' the highly-classified version of the ICA."

Tapper, in a Twitter response to The Epoch Times on Sept. 2, said he hadn't communicated with Clapper prior to his May 2017 interview with him.

"I never spoke to him or communicated with him in any way until I interviewed him on air in May 2017," Tapper wrote.

On Jan. 10, 2017, CNN published the article "Intel Chiefs Presented Trump With Claims of Russian Efforts to Compromise Him." The allegations within the dossier were made public, and with reporting of the briefings by intelligence community leaders, instant credibility was given to the dossier's assertions. Immediately following the CNN story, BuzzFeed published the Steele dossier, and the Trump-Russia conspiracy was pushed into the mainstream.

On the following day, Jan. 11, 2017, in a stunning display of hypocrisy, Clapper issued a formal statement where he noted his "profound dismay at the leaks" and denied that the leaks came from within the intelligence community.



President Donald Trump on the White House South Lawn on Aug. 1, 2019.

[Comey's meeting with Trump had very direct surveillance overtones—and directly counters what he had testified to Congress.]

(Top) A guard stands outside Trump Tower in Manhattan on Aug. 24, 2018.

(Bottom) Former FBI Director James Comey on Capitol Hill on Dec. 7, 2018.

Walmart to Stop Selling Handgun Ammunition

NEW YORK—Walmart says it will discontinue the sale of handgun ammunition and also publicly request that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms in stores even where state laws allow it.

The announcement comes just days after a mass shooting claimed seven lives in Odessa, Texas, and follows two other back-to-back shootings in August, one of them at a Walmart store.

The Bentonville, Arkansas-based discounter said on Sept. 2 it will stop selling short-barrel and handgun ammunition, including .223 caliber and 5.56 caliber after it runs out of its current inventory. It will also discontinue handgun sales in Alaska, marking its complete exit from handguns and allowing it to focus on hunting rifles and related ammunition only.

"We have a long heritage as a company of serving responsible hunters and sportsmen and women, and we're going to continue doing so," according to a memo by Walmart's CEO Doug McMillon that was circulated to employees on Sept. 2.

Walmart is further requesting that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms at its stores unless they are law enforcement officers. In August, a gunman entered a Walmart store in El Paso, Texas, and killed 22 people using an AK-style firearm that Walmart already bans the sale of. Texas became an open carry state in 2016, allowing people to openly carry firearms in public.

Walmart's moves will reduce its market share of ammunition from around 20 percent to a range of about 6 percent to 9 percent, according to the memo. About half of its more than 4,000 U.S. stores sell

firearms.

The nation's largest retailer has been facing increasing pressure to change its gun policies by gun control activists, employees, and politicians after the El Paso shooting and a second unrelated shooting in Dayton, Ohio, that killed nine people. A few days before that, two Walmart workers were killed by another worker at a store in Southaven, Mississippi.

In the aftermath of the El Paso shooting, Walmart ordered workers to remove video game signs and displays that depict violence from stores nationwide.

The retailer has long found itself in an awkward spot with its customers and gun enthusiasts. Many of its stores are located in rural areas where hunters depend on Walmart to get their equipment. Walmart is trying to walk a fine line by trying to embrace its hunting heritage while being a more responsible retailer.

With its new policy on "open carry," McMillon noted in his memo that individuals have tried to make a statement by carrying weapons into its stores just to frighten workers and customers. But there are well-intentioned customers acting lawfully who have also inadvertently caused a store to be evacuated and local law enforcement to be called to respond.

He says Walmart will continue to treat "law-abiding customers with respect" and it will have a "non-confrontational approach."

Walmart says it hopes to use its weight to help other retailers by sharing its best practices like software that it uses for background checks. And the company, which in 2015 stopped selling assault rifles like the AR-rifles used in several mass

shootings, urged more debate on the reauthorization of the assault weapons ban. McMillon says Walmart will send letters to the White House and the congressional leadership that calls for action on these measures.

"In a complex situation lacking a simple solution, we are trying to take constructive steps to reduce the risk that events like these will happen again," McMillon wrote in his memo.

Over the last 15 years, Walmart had expanded beyond its hunting and fishing roots, carrying items like assault rifles in response to increasing demand. But particularly since 2015, often coinciding with major public mass shootings, the company has made moves to curb the sale of ammunition and guns.

Walmart announced in February 2018 that it would no longer sell firearms and ammunition to people younger than 21 and also removed items resembling assault-style rifles from its website. Those moves were prompted by the mass shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, that killed 17 people.

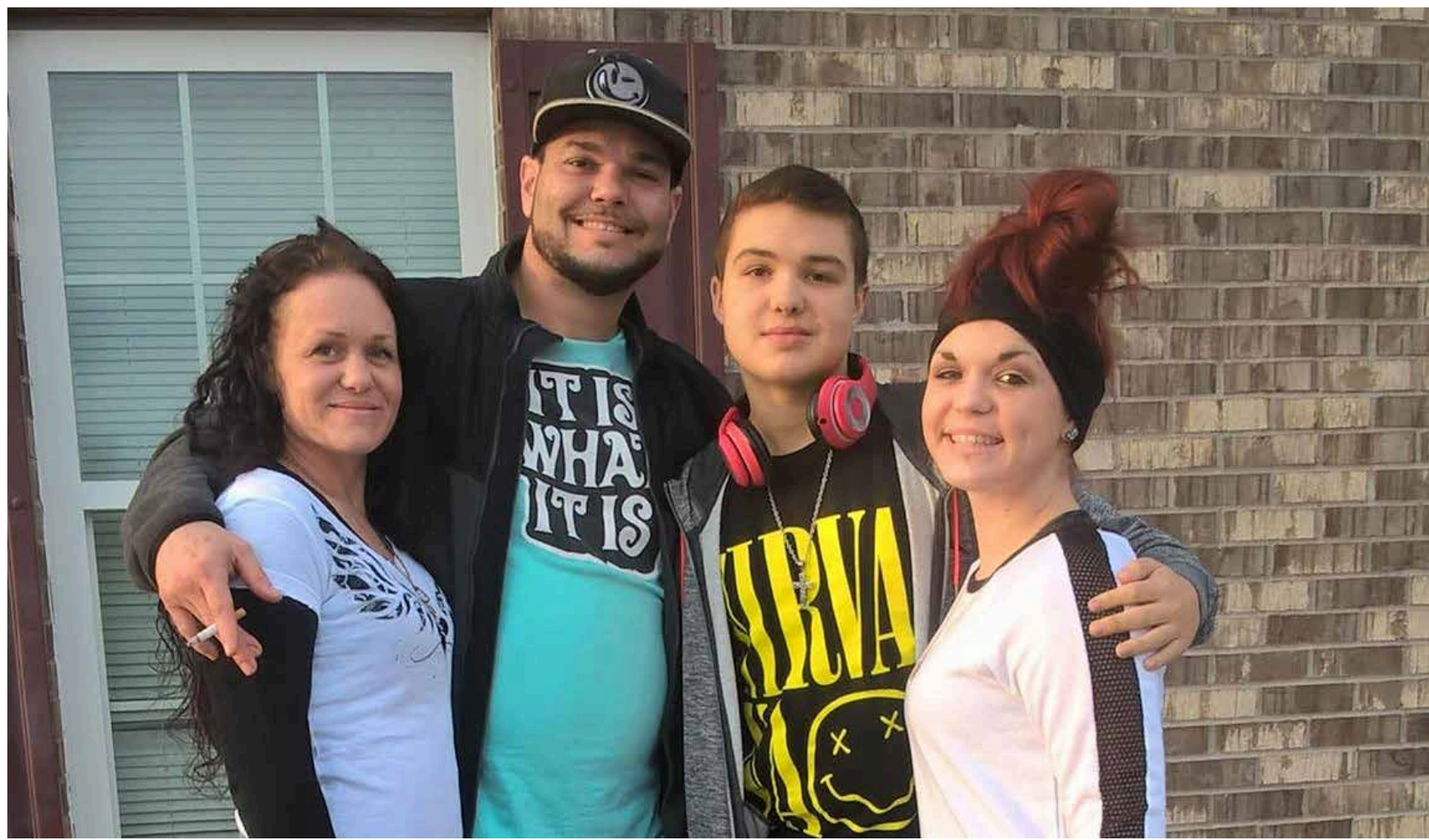
In 2015, Walmart stopped selling semi-automatic weapons like the AR-15 style rifle, the type used in the Dayton shooting. The retailer also doesn't sell large-capacity magazines, handguns (except in Alaska) or bump stocks, nor the AK-style firearm that was used by the El Paso shooter.

In the mid-1990s, Walmart stopped selling handguns with the exception of Alaska.

By Annie D'Innocenzio

From The Associated Press

Teen Trapped for Years in Foster Care: There Was No Need to Take Me Away



(L-R) Janice and Michael Ardt Sr. with their son and daughter in 2015.

PETR SVAB

A young man who recently aged out of foster care described years of ordeals and the pain of separation from his family. He says there was never a need for the government to take him in the first place.

His story underscores decades of pleas for reform of the child welfare system, which seems too often to remove children that likely would have fared better with their families.

Michael Ardt's family had its issues. Like about 2 million other Americans, his parents, Janice and Michael Sr., got hooked on opioid prescription pills. It started with a pain pill prescription for his father's neck injury in 2000; the parents later took the pills to get high and developed a dependency.

Meanwhile, the injury stifled the family income. Before they got their insurance money, their house was foreclosed, Janice told *The Epoch Times*.

That didn't mean, however, that the family couldn't take care of their two children.

"There wasn't a need for the government to get involved. I was never getting abused or hurt in any way," Michael said. "We were taken care of."

Taken

When the family moved to Kentucky around 2007, the local sheriff tried to make them leave the neighborhood, threatening that their children would be taken away otherwise, Janice said.

"They didn't believe that could happen, but indeed, within two weeks, the police came and arrested Janice and her husband for public intoxication and driving under the influence.

Six years old at the time, Michael and his older sister were taken away and quickly placed with a foster family.

"We had no idea what was going on and I was too young to comprehend the situation," Michael said. "They never to this day have told us what happened or why they took us."

The foster family simply told him that he was going to stay there for a while. After about a month, his sister explained to him that it may take some time for him to see his parents again.

"I just felt sad. I didn't cry, but I did feel really sad," he said. "It hurt me as a kid just [because] I didn't understand enough why this would happen."

Separation from family was pushing him into depression.

"It made me feel alone and unacceptable as a person," he said. "I had trust issues with anyone. It was hard to meet new people."

The foster family wasn't abusive. "They treated me nice," he said. "But my real family made me feel more accepted as a part of a family."

His parents managed to get him back after 18 months, after the governor intervened, Janice said.

Again and Again

A few years later, Michael was taken

We had no idea what was going on and I was too young to comprehend the situation.

Michael Ardt

I felt unaccepted anywhere I went and that I could never find what I was going to do in life.

Michael Ardt

again—because he missed six days of school, Janice said. It took the parents four months to get their son back. She said the alleged unexcused school absence turned out not to be unexcused to begin with.

Michael was taken for a third time a few years after that, after Janice and Michael Sr. failed a voluntary drug test.

At the time, Michael was 14 and staying with his sister, who was an adult by then. In retrospect, he thought he was mature enough to have a say in whether he wanted to stay with his family or not; he had no say whatsoever.

"I felt loneliness, pure loneliness. I felt unaccepted anywhere I went and that I could never find what I was going to do in life," he said. "So I became unhappy to the point where I wanted to give up."

Disobeying the family court, Janice secretly stayed in contact with her son, desperately trying to raise his morale and dissuade him from taking his life. He made it through.

"I overcame it in sophomore year of high school. I met new friends and it made me have hope again and made me focus more on making my life better," he said. "But ever since seventh grade, I was miserable in life away from my family."

Why Is This Happening?

Janice has raised claims of corruption at the sheriff's office, the local child welfare agency, and the family court. The sheriff's office and the state family services agency didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment; family courts don't normally comment on individual cases.

Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies have systematic issues. Operating on a mixture of state and federal dollars, they are under pressure to detect and prevent child abuse. But the funding is set up in a way that encourages the agencies to remove children for small issues, out of precaution—breaking up families rather than rehabilitating them.

More than 440,000 children were in the social services system as of September 2017. Only in a minority of cases were physical abuse (12 percent) or parent incarceration (7 percent) the reasons for removing the children. The most common reasons were neglect (62 percent) and drug abuse by one or both parents (36 percent).

Research has consistently shown that children coming out of the foster care system have substantially worse life outcomes than children in general. Moreover, children with a history in the CPS system are most at risk of falling victim to sex trafficking. They are systematically targeted for grooming by traffickers. In addition, some end up being abused by their foster parents or government workers.

In fact, in marginal cases of neglect and abuse, in which keeping the family together and removing the child were both plausible options, the children who stayed with their parents did better than those who were removed, according to a 2007 study that mainly pertained to children aged 10 to 15.

"Foster care is an extremely toxic intervention that should be used sparingly and in small doses," said Richard Wexler, executive director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform (NCCPR). "Instead, America has prescribed mega-doses of foster care."

The financial incentives in the CPS system are about to change in October, when the Family First Prevention Services Act takes effect. Republicans in the House of Representatives added the measure to the 2018 budget bill. It allows CPS agencies to use federal funding on certain services that help prevent a child's removal from its family and helps families stay together.

Back Together

In August, the Ardt family was reunited for the first time in five years, after Michael turned 18.

"It's so amazing to be able to talk everyday all day," Janice said.

He was just accepted to college, too. "We couldn't be more proud of his accomplishments," she said.



Michael Ardt (2nd R) with his mother, Janice (2nd L), and his grandparents during his high school graduation ceremony.

Thoughts About Generations and Generation Gaps

MARK HENDRICKSON



Commentary

The last week of August was different for me this year. The college students are back in class, but I've stayed home. I retired from teaching in May. As I look back fondly on the years when I had the privilege of working with our country's youth, I'd like to share a few observations and reflections.

Do I feel like there's a generation gap between my generation—the baby boomers—and today's college students (currently, but hopefully not permanently dubbed Generation Z)? There are so many nuances to that question, but painting with the broadest of brush strokes, let me say, "Differences, yes; a gap, I think not."

From my perspective as a classroom teacher, I've noticed two trends that concern me. The first trend has been apparent for a number of decades now—the decline in writing skills. The traditional three R's—reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic—are of just as much fundamental importance as they always have been. Sadly, though, millions of Americans have been passing through our educational system with those basic skills remaining underdeveloped.

Writing, in my humble opinion, is the supreme intellectual skill. Good writing is evidence that a person has the ability to develop, organize, and clarify thoughts. Mature writing equals mature thinking. And the only way to achieve such competence is to practice, practice, practice. Today's primary and especially secondary school pupils don't get enough practice for a variety of reasons:

1) Too many educators aren't willing to spend many after-school hours each week grading writing assignments, and so their pupils don't get enough practice writing.

2) Many teachers are more concerned about the self-esteem of pupils (the "participation trophy" syndrome) than about the mastery of key intellectual skills.

3) Many teachers use time that should be devoted to developing basic intellectual skills preaching and indoctrinating young people into various progressive causes. The most egregious example of this is the insidious, invidious propaganda that fossil fuels are a sinful indulgence dooming us to planetary climatic disaster—an abuse of children that I have written about before.

The long-term consequences of neglecting to develop the writing skill in our schools are of existential magnitude. God help us if future generations of Americans lose the capacity to express or comprehend well-organized, clear, coherent thoughts. Can a people remain free if their discussion of vital issues is confined to sound bites and emotional tweets?

The long-term consequences of neglecting to develop the writing skill in our schools are of existential magnitude.

The other trend that I've noticed is more recent. The listening skill is decaying—not in all students, but in a sizable minority. Lessons that I used to be able to impart in a lecture a decade ago have proved more elusive in the last couple years. Students would respectfully listen to me, but my explanations didn't stick.

The problem is that many of today's young people have become so habituated to digital



Students emerge from a building at UCLA in Los Angeles on June 1, 2016.

devices that they are forgetting how to listen to a speaker and process thoughts about what they hear. In my classroom, I compensated for my students' poor listening skills by resorting to a practice that I thought I would never employ in a classroom: using PowerPoint presentations.

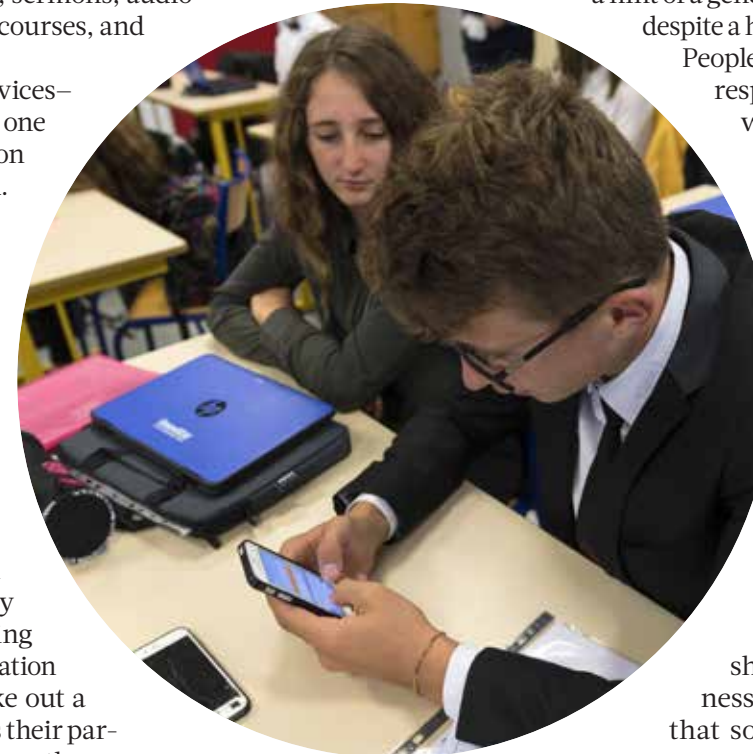
My recommendation for parents? No, don't ban devices! We live in an increasingly digital world, and leaving children less than adept in their usage isn't an option. Besides that, many parents are going to need their kids' help figuring out how to work a multitude of digital gizmos. But parents can help develop the listening faculty by having their children listen to lectures, sermons, audio versions of books, college courses, and so on.

Balance in the use of devices—not total absorption on the one hand nor total abstinence on the other—is what is needed.

Spiritual Gap

In terms of an actual generation gap, that seems like an overstatement to me. Although I'm no sociologist, I suspect that the notion of a "generation gap" is a product of modernity. Up until the last few centuries, social structures in the Old World were largely stagnant. Born into grinding poverty, the younger generation had little choice but to eke out a subsistence living much as their parents did. But in the past two or three centuries, especially here in the United States, unprecedented liberty, combined with rapid technological and economic progress, have triggered all sorts of social upheavals.

I first became aware of the concept of a "generation gap" during the Vietnam War. The counterculture movement within the baby boomer generation radically rejected the norms that our parents' generation held dear. In discussions with fellow boomers, we all agree that we were amazingly lucky or blessed to be born when we were. Our parents had gone through severely trying times—first, the Great Depression, and then



High school students use smartphones and tablet computers at a vocational school in Bischwiller, France, on Sept. 26, 2017.

the massive conflict of World War II.

We, by contrast, grew up taking peace and prosperity for granted.

During the Vietnam War, many boomers reacted like spoiled children to the prospect of letting go of their comfortable, relatively easy lifestyles. "Hell, no, we won't go" and "Make love, not war" became signature slogans for many boomers. However, I wouldn't call that a generation gap, because huge numbers of boomers didn't join the counterculture or reject our parents' values. The gap was not between ages, but between conflicting values and ideologies.

I see the same dynamic today. I never felt a hint of a generation gap with my students, despite a half-century difference in age.

People are people. Treat others with respect and kindness, and they will treat you the same. But there is a noticeable difference today compared to 50 years ago—again, not age-based, but value-based. Today's society seems darker.

Exhibit A: The all-too-common phenomenon of spiritually starved mass murderers going on random rampages. While this scourge isn't anywhere near the scale of deaths from suicide, automobile accidents, medical errors, and so forth, the sheer nihilism and pointlessness of mass murders indicates that something fundamental has gone severely awry.

What any society needs is to find ways for the different generations to accommodate each other and build upon the strengths of each. Asian cultures are known for the respect and deference customarily paid to elders, whose wisdom and experience are highly valued. In the United States, where we have exalted the trope of rebellious youth, it would be helpful for youth to recognize that they could learn valuable lessons and avoid painful pitfalls if they availed themselves of their elders' wisdom. And the older generations should welcome youth's energy, creativity, and willingness to experiment.

Just as balance proves helpful in our individual lives (see above: addiction to devices) so it is for society at large. Maintaining the tried and true while remaining open to the fresh and new can produce a powerful fusion of the best of young and old. Blending tradition with innovation can be a trans-generational formula for a vibrant yet stable society.

Every human generation will be confronted by challenges, but by working together, we can look forward with optimism to meaningful progress for all generations.

Mark Hendrickson, an economist, recently retired from the faculty of Grove City College, where he remains a fellow for economic and social policy at the Institute for Faith & Freedom.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Epoch Times*.



U.S. assault troops land on Omaha Beach during the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.

A Kind of Suicide



SPENCER PLATT/GETTY IMAGES

PAUL ADAMS



Commentary

Jonathan Swift wrote in “Gulliver’s Travels,” “And he gave it for his opinion, that whoever could make two ears of corn, or two blades of grass, to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.”

When I taught masters-level social work students, they tended, when discussing a social problem, to exclaim, “There ought to be a law!” We saw that same tendency in the crowd gathered for a candlelight vigil in Dayton, Ohio, just hours after a young man had shot and killed nine people, including his sister. The crowd chanted at Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, “Do something!” The same sense of urgency beset politicians in Washington.

But what to do and who should do it? The approaches to these questions have been mainly political. The assumption is that politicians can do something that will make a difference—stricter gun control, impeach the president—and that it should be done at the federal level. It’s at this level that the most superficial and partisan point-scoring occurs, and the least serious engagement is found with the phenomenon of mass murders like those in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton.

The most interesting discussions of the recent mass shootings, on the other hand, have one thing in common. They all discuss the work of the great social scientist Emile Durkheim, whose pathbreaking 1897 study described suicide as a social, and not only a psychological, phenomenon.

Suicide rates vary in different times and places. They reflect rapid social change, the decay of institutions of family, faith, and nation that give meaning, place, and purpose to life. Suicide can be one expression of the weakening of moral norms that constrain and regulate social life.

Where young men once followed a life script that gave meaning, purpose, and direction to their lives, they now may find that script inaccessible.

The well-trodden path—to work, engagement, marriage, children, in that order—was reinforced by earnings, responsibility, and honor that increased along with commitment to marriage and family. Departure from the path could result in social sanctions for irresponsibility and caddishness, even the social pressure of a (more or less metaphorical) “shotgun wedding.”

Suddenly, men may find the institutions of family, faith, and community and life script that their fathers followed harder to follow or less compelling. Even their masculinity is called into question as unnecessary, if not toxic. All this in addition to economic changes—effects of technological change and globalization—resulting in loss of jobs their fathers had held for a lifetime and that supported their families and community.

Writing in PJ Media, David Goldman, for example, draws on Durkheim in his own account of mass shootings as a special form of suicide. The shooter doesn’t expect to survive, but resolves to take as many people with him as he can. Durkheim’s 1897 analy-

sis “describes the Columbine perpetrators as well as the 2016 San Bernardino attack by Muslim fanatics, the ‘right-wing’ shooter in El Paso and the ‘left-wing’ shooter in Dayton. They are individuals cut off from society, destabilized by change, and despairing of their own place in the world. Such monsters always have been among us. But now we are cultivating such monsters by destroying the ties that bind us to each other, to our past and to our future.”

Where young men once followed a life script that gave meaning, purpose, and direction to their lives, they now may find that script inaccessible.

Where young men once followed a life script that gave meaning, purpose, and direction to their lives, they now may find that script inaccessible.

We all used to matter, Goldman argues, because all of us were “radically unique” as children and then parents, and members of a congregation standing before God, a community, a nation. Now, the liberal consensus tells us, we are free to invent our own identities, even our own “genders.” We are autonomous individuals unencumbered by ties to divinity or community.

Others, like Thane Bellamo, writing in the *Federalist*, make a similar point, arguing that “we killed, God, family, and community”—and now the results are killing us. “We have created a society that now offers almost none of the things that make people truly happy. Family, community, spiritual belonging—these are the foundational and primal building blocks of human happiness, and they are rapidly disappearing.”

We are, as associate professor of psychiatry Anton Kheriaty put it, “dying of despair.” We have lost the narratives of our lives, lost meaning and hope and purpose. Suicide rates are rising across income groups, especially among adolescents, but among men and women in every age bracket up to age 75.

High suicide rates in broken cultures are common, Goldman says. Neolithic peoples such as the Guarani tribe in Brazil suffer extreme anomie and have a suicide rate 34 times the national average. “The crisis of Muslim cultures has produced a fearfully large number of individuals willing to kill

themselves in order to kill civilians of another Muslim sect, not to mention Americans or Israelis,” Goldman writes. Our own “cultural revolution,” with its repudiation of divinity and community, of family, faith, and nation has the same effect.

“We have hollowed out the sense of purpose in life that formerly sustained us and reduced large parts of our population to atomized lost souls. It’s not surprising that individuals with severe psychological problems lose all restraint and turn into killers,” says Goldman.

A Religious Problem

So why do we yell at politicians to “do something”? What are they to do, except undo much of their legislative work of recent decades? Our legislators, judges, and cultural elites have undermined—sometimes intentionally and sometimes carelessly—marriage and family, faith communities and institutions, a sense of pride in our nation, its history, and a shared sense of gratitude for all those who gave their lives for the country and society we have inherited.

These precious cultural and spiritual resources, which give our lives meaning and purpose, are built up from below, not imposed from above by bureaucrats and professionals. The harm will not be undone by giving the bureaucratic-professional state even more power over our lives and over what our children are taught.

If anything can help, it will be cultural and religious rather than political—a religious revival, large-scale conversion, or great awakening, for example. Canadian clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson argues that the phenomenon of mass shootings is a religious problem. It has a religious depth to it, an expression of rage and revenge against God, against reality itself. (See Rule 6 of his “12 Rules for Life,” which chapter he reads in a video on his YouTube channel in the aftermath of the Parkland shooting.)

Peterson has had an extraordinary impact on young men in particular, in giving them a sense of responsibility, hope, and purpose in place of their anger, depression, nihilism, and sense of worthlessness, all of which the liberal media and education systems reinforce on a daily basis.

In this context, there may be no one alive more deserving than Peterson of Swift’s accolade, from the opening quote, about growing two ears of corn or two blades of grass rather than burying oneself in partisan conflicts: He “[deserves] better of mankind, and [does] more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.”

Paul Adams is a professor emeritus of social work at the University of Hawaii and was a professor and associate dean of academic affairs at Case Western Reserve University. He is the co-author of “Social Justice Isn’t What You Think It Is” and has written extensively on social welfare policy and professional and virtue ethics.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.



DUSTIN FRANZ/AP/GETTY IMAGES

The 1619 Project and the Fight for the Minds and Hearts of American Children

RAMIN TALAEI/GETTY IMAGES



CLIFFORD HUMPHREY



Commentary

Nikole Hannah-Jones recently changed her Twitter background to a picture of the date July 4, 1776, crossed out and replaced with Aug. 20, 1619. She would like your kids to do the same.

Hannah-Jones wrote the flagship essay for the 1619 Project, which is a deliberate effort by The New York Times to displace the moral authority of the signing of the Declaration of Independence as the heart of America’s founding. The project’s supporters want Americans in the future to consider the advent of slavery in America as “our true founding.”

As an attack on the Founding Fathers generally, the 1619 Project is neither new nor unique. What is novel about the 1619 Project, however, is the cultural scope that its social justice purveyors are attempting to reach.

The 1619 Project has its own essay series, website, podcast, and theatrical exposé. And now, thanks to the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, the 1619 Project has its own curriculum and lesson plans prepackaged for teachers to take into their classrooms to give to your children.

We should see the 1619 Project for what it is: part of a comprehensive attempt at political revolution. It seeks to transform the American republican regime, which is based on equal rights for individuals, into one defined by identity politics and the unequal treatment of identity groups.

The 1776 founding contains the moral justification for the former, while the 1619 Project contains that of the latter. Before a new regime can be set up, the moral legitimacy of the old must be torn down.

The Real American Revolution

John Adams once asked a friend, “[What] do we mean by the American Revolution? Do we mean the American war? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people. A change in the religious sentiments of their duties and obligations. ... This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affection of the people, was the real American Revolution.”

This quotation from Adams contains the key to understanding the 1619 Project.

If there had been no transformation in “the minds and hearts of the people” before political tensions with England erupted into a physical revolution, the American colonists likely would have replaced the British regime with one exactly like it in the United States. In their “minds and hearts,” they would have remained subjects of a monarch.

As Adams explained, the “minds and hearts” of the colonists changed when their sentiments in regard to their “duties and obligations”

changed. Previously, they had felt a duty to obey the British king, who claimed a right to rule them as their superior. Gradually, the colonists came to understand that no one—not even a king—has a right to rule them without their consent.

The colonists realized they only owed “duties and obligations” to a government that provided protection for their rights. When that protection ceased, so also did their consent. And the Revolution came. Adams prophesied after that first Independence Day in 1776 that its annual return “will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival.” “It ought to be commemorated,” he said, “as the Day of Deliverance.”

To that end, towns all over America had “early instituted an annual Oration on the fourth of July, in commemoration of the Principles and Feelings which contributed to produce the Revolution.” Adams knew that the continuation of the republican regime in America would only be as sure as the preservation of those same “principles, opinions, sentiments, and affection” within the people themselves.

Winning the “Minds and Hearts” of Children

Similarly, the purveyors of the 1619 Project are trying to effect a revolution in the “minds and hearts” of American children today through an education curriculum tailored to its narrative.

The Pulitzer Center has created lesson plans, worksheets, reading lists, interpretive reading guides, and lists of classroom activities and historical terms and events to bolster the 1619 Project. These resources are also available for homeschoolers.

For children, there are poems and pictures; for adults, there are podcasts and dramatic performances. And for all, a spoonful of outrage is meant to help the narrative go down and the right sentiments sink in.

The New York Times Magazine includes partnering with the Pulitzer Center’s “network of schools all around the country” in order “to get this stuff taught in schools.”

“We will be sending some of our writers on multi-city tours to talk to students,” representatives said, “and we will be sending copies of the magazine to high schools and colleges.”

The 1619 Project follows Adams’s prescription for how to effect a revolution in “minds and hearts.” It seeks first to change Americans’ sentiments about “duties and obligations,” or justice, specifically in regard to the past evil of slavery.

Once the change in sentiments is accomplished, the transformation of opinions and affections can soon follow. At that point, the revolution is all but complete.

Before a new regime can be set up, the moral legitimacy of the old must be torn down.

ments were just as true then as ever. She meant that the authors were hypocrites, that their own words condemned their actions.

As Abraham Lincoln explained, though, “they did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality ... They meant simply to declare the right, so that the enforcement of it might follow as fast as circumstances should permit.”

The 1619 Project would have school children think there is nothing to celebrate about the men of 1776. That is a dangerous deception. Lincoln went on to explain exactly why all Americans should admire and celebrate what those imperfect men in 1776 found the wisdom to discern and the virtue to declare.

They “set up a standard maxim for free society, which should be familiar to all, and revered by all; constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people of all colors everywhere.”

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Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

A woman walks by The New York Times headquarters in New York on April 21, 2011.

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An engraving shows the arrival of a Dutch slave ship with a group of African slaves for sale in Jamestown, Va., in 1619.



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Obamas Partner With DSA Marxist to Distribute Netflix Socialist Propaganda Documentary ‘American Factory’

TREVOR LOUDON



Commentary

Former U.S. President Barack Obama and former First Lady Michelle Obama have teamed up with a lifelong Marxist propagandist to distribute a major new documentary for Netflix.

“American Factory” tells the story of a “worker revolt” against Chinese company Fuyao Glass America’s factory in the Dayton, Ohio, suburb of Moraine.

The film premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and has earned very good reviews, with review website Rotten Tomatoes giving it a 96 percent “fresh” certification.

According to the Los Angeles Review of Books:

“The tale is rife with paradoxes: the communists are the capitalists; and the workers from the land of Reagan and Trump channel socialist solidarity as they move to form a union against the wishes of the folks from the People’s Republic.”

The first film distributed by the Obamas’ production company, Higher Ground Productions, “American Factory” has already won the Best Documentary Feature Award at the RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

All the rave reviews fail to mention that the Obamas’ partners, the duo who actually produced and directed the film—Ohioans Steve Bogner and Julia Reichert—are longtime leftist “propagandists.”

Reichert, in particular, is a lifelong Marxist who, according to the “Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film,” “focuses on various social issues, like gender and working-class issues, from a socialist perspective.”

The film itself is pro-union and anti-free market. The protagonist is a Chinese billionaire who allegedly treated his American and imported Chinese employees like serfs. He is portrayed as an example of rapacious and heartless “capitalism,” rather than a representative of Chinese communism, which is much closer to the truth.

The Dayton/Miami Valley chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which claims Reichert as a member, warns its comrades on Facebook that the film contains “revelations of extreme alienation and is an indictment of neoliberalism and the late stage capitalism that defines the American Empire.”

Reichert served on the DSA’s Feminist Commission in 1985. Before that, she was a leader of a DSA predecessor group the New American Movement (NAM), an explicitly Marxist group formed out of Students for a Democratic Society and some dissident members of the Communist Party USA. NAM was a Maoist-leaning organization, with a strong emphasis on changing culture through propaganda.

NAM also advocated for the ideas of late Italian Communist Party theoretician Antonio Gramsci—a believer in revolution through cultural change. According to Gramsci, the people would only be ready for socialism when their consciousness had been

It’s no surprise that the Obamas would partner with a DSA comrade on such an obviously socialist propaganda project.

(Top) Directors Steven Bogner and Julia Reichert attend Netflix’s “American Factory” Premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival at SVA Theater on April 26, 2019 in New York City.

(Middle) Former President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery in Washington on Feb. 12, 2018.

(Bottom) Directors Steven Bogner and Julia Reichert participate in the Q&A following Netflix’s “American Factory” Premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival at SVA Theater on April 26, 2019, in New York.



sufficiently changed through socialist infiltration of religion, media, and culture.

Reichert and her partner and NAM comrade Jim Klein produced several documentaries in the 1970s and ‘80s that would have made Mao and Gramsci proud.

In 1971, Reichert co-founded New Days Films, a film distribution company created to “help the women’s movement grow,” according to Reichert. New Day Films markets its members’ films directly to “educators, community groups, government agencies, public libraries, and businesses.”

Reichert received her first Academy Award nomination in 1978 with Klein and another NAM comrade Miles Mogulescu for “Union Maids,” a film about three far-left women union organizers in Chicago in the 1930s and ‘40s.

A “lifelong progressive,” Mogulescu went on to become an entertainment attorney and a senior vice president at MGM. He continued to do his bit for the “culture wars” as a contributor to the Huffington Post.

Reichert also was nominated, again

MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES



ASTRID STAWIARZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR NETFLIX



with Klein, in 1984 for the best documentary Oscar for “Seeing Red,” which profiled several former Communist Party members, including NAM comrade and onetime leader of the California Communist Party Dorothy Healey.

In 2010, Reichert and Bogner were nominated for an Academy Award for Best Short Documentary for the film “The Last Truck: Closing of a GM Plant.”

Obama Support

It’s no surprise that the Obamas would partner with a DSA comrade on such an obviously socialist propaganda project. Barack Obama, in particular, has worked closely with DSA-aligned socialists since his days at Occidental College in the late 1970s. In fact, it would be difficult to find a period in his adult life when he wasn’t tripping over DSA Marxists at every turn.

Writing in the radical Chicago magazine *In These Times* in March 2008, editor and DSA supporter Joel Bleifuss asserted: “In particular, Obama can be linked to the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the Democratic Party-oriented organization that is a member of the Socialist International.”

The young Obama attended DSA’s annual Socialist Scholars Conference while attending Columbia University in New York.

In Chicago, Obama mixed closely with well-known DSA comrades Timuel Black, Saul Mendelson, and Lou Pardo. His Hyde Park neighbor was DSA Religious Commission member Rabbi Arnold Jacob Wolf. His family physician, Quentin Young, who was first a communist, then a NAM comrade, then a DSAer, claimed credit for igniting Obama’s crusade for socialized health care.

In 1995, the Chicago DSA endorsed Obama in the Illinois state Senate primary. In January 1996, Obama addressed a DSA-organized forum at Chicago University alongside DSA members William Julius Wilson and Joseph Schwartz.

Most DSA members actively supported Obama in the November 2008 presidential election.

According to the summer 2008 issue of the DSA publication *Democratic Left*: “DSA believes that the possible election of Senator Obama to the presidency in November represents a potential opening for social and labor movements to generate the critical political momentum necessary to implement a progressive political agenda. ...

“An Obama presidency will not on its own force legislation facilitating single-payer health care (at least

the federal level) or truly progressive taxation and major cuts in wasteful and unneeded defense spending. But if DSA and other democratic forces can work in the fall elections to increase the ranks of the Congressional Progressive and Black and Latino caucuses, progressive legislation (backed by strong social movement mobilization) might well pass the next Congress.”

DSA comrade Jose LaLuz served as president of Latinos for Obama. DSA and NAM leader Harry Boyte was co-chair of the Civic Engagement Group of Obama’s first presidential campaign. DSAer Cornel West Served on Obama’s National Black Advisory Council. Another comrade Eliseo Medina served on Obama’s Latino Advisory Council and went on to advise Obama informally on immigration issues through both terms of his presidency.

Obama went on to appoint one-time DSA comrade Ron Bloom as his “Car Czar.” Former congressman and DSAer David Bonior became a member of the Obama Economic Transition Team and was delegated by the president to negotiate the unification of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and Change to Win labor federations. Rosa Brooks, daughter of senior DSA comrade Barbara Ehrenreich, was appointed senior adviser to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Michele Flournoy.

During his two terms of office, Obama awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to at least three DSA comrades: Farmworkers Union leader Dolores Huerta, AFL-CIO boss John Sweeney, and feminist Gloria Steinem.

Given his clear affinity for the United States’ largest Marxist organization, it’s no surprise that Obama would now partner with another DSA comrade to churn out socialist propaganda for the apparently left-leaning Netflix.

As the late conservative journalist Andrew Breitbart used to say, “Politics is downstream from culture.”

No doubt “American Factory” will get lots of play and publicity between now and the 2020 election.

Trevor Loudon is an author, filmmaker, and public speaker from New Zealand. For more than 30 years, he has researched radical left, Marxist, and terrorist movements and their covert influence on mainstream politics.

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