

THE EPOCH TIMES OUR NATION



Gun Control Battle Deepens as Legislation Advances in Virginia

As 4 bills progress along party lines in Virginia legislature, 2nd Amendment sanctuary movement gains momentum **6**

Second Amendment advocates attend a hearing at the Virginia State Capitol, where four gun control bills were passed by the state's Senate Judiciary Committee, on Jan. 13, 2020.



Demonstrators protest a bill that would end religious exemptions for vaccines stand outside the New Jersey Statehouse in Trenton on Jan. 13, 2020.

New Jersey Bill to Eliminate Religious Exemptions for Vaccines Fails

CELIA FARBER

TRENTON, N.J.—Protesters were jubilant the evening of Jan. 13 as the New Jersey state Senate failed on the last day of the legislative session to bring to a vote a measure that would have eliminated religious exemptions for state-mandated vaccines.

Senate President Steve Sweeney (D-Gloucester), who couldn't muster the votes needed for passage, vowed that the bill would be reintroduced and promised to be "ready to go to war" over the measure.

When the Senate session was gavelled to a close at around 6 p.m., and it was clear the bill—known as S2173—wouldn't come to a vote, cheers and shouts of "Thank You!" broke out inside the Senate chamber, where 100 protesters had waited all day. Outside, thousands of protesters cheered wildly.

According to the New Jersey State Department of Health, 13,987 children in New Jersey are currently protected from mandated vaccinations by a law that assures the parents only need to write a letter stating they object to vaccines on religious grounds.

The protesters say this is a battle over parents' rights to choose and the religious freedom to abstain. The backers of S2173 say this is simply a matter of public health. At bottom, this controversy is over whether vaccines are safe.

While the protesters were primarily from New Jersey, some had come from several other states. The protests had begun a week before, on Jan. 6, with individuals standing in the cold

the entire day, some with their children in tow. Many Orthodox Jews were in attendance, both outside and inside the Statehouse, praying.

On Jan. 13, hot coffee and boxes of pizza were distributed, and the mood was patriotic, with elements of religious faith.

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Chants Were Heard

On this day, the protesters won. The intensity, size, and duration of the protests were said to be a factor in the failure to generate enough support. The crowd was told that their chants of "Kill the Bill!" and "Just Vote No!", and "In God We Trust!" were heard inside the chamber all day as other legislation came up for votes.

An amendment added to S2173 on Jan. 9 complicated efforts to approve the bill. The measure would have eliminated religious exemptions in public schools but allowed private schools to retain their exemptions, with public bulletins announcing the schools' vaccination rates.

The effect of this amendment would be to discriminate against the less privileged, who don't have access to private schools. A number of black politicians, led by Assemblyman Jamel Holley (D-Union), who has already opposed the bill, objected that it was a form of segregation and came out against the legislation.

Going to War

Protesters who congratulated each other and exchanged hugs on Jan. 13 vowed to not let down their guard and were already preparing to return to the Statehouse in Trenton, knowing that their opponents would not back down so easily.

Sweeney said in a statement that the bill would be reintroduced on the first day of the new legislative session.

"We're ready to go to war on this and we will," Sweeney said. "We will pass this bill. It's not an easy one, and a lot of bills we do aren't easy and take time to get through. But this is about public health. It's about protecting people."

Since an outbreak of measles at Disneyland in 2014 that was widely covered by national media, vaccine advocates have pushed for closing off vaccine exemption loopholes—medical, philosophical, and religious. They feel that primarily religious exemptions are "phony," and being exploited.

Dr. Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, warned of the potential for the religious exemption to get around vaccine mandates. "As the anti-vaccine movement grows in strength and power, they could use the religious exemption loophole," he wrote in an April 2019 article in *Americans United for Separation of Church and State's* journal.

But he added, "Right now, I don't see it as significant as an issue."

Heavyweight medical organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the

American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are aligned with Sweeney's advocacy for vaccination.

Channel 24 in New York reported that Sweeney was planning on promising those who voted against S2173 campaign funds through a Super Pac called General Majority to switch their votes.

Protecting Children

Among the protesters were many parents who said their children were injured by vaccines, and they had come to Trenton to try to prevent this from happening to other children.

A man who identified himself as Mr. Jackman spoke to *The Epoch Times* after the protest.

"My son David brought me here. He was injured the day he was vaccinated. He's only called me 'Daddy' once, in 13 years since," he said.

"When he was 2, he called me daddy all the time. He's a gentle, lovely boy, but he's brain-damaged. He was not only allergic to the vaccine, but he was recovering from Lyme disease. I didn't want to do it. It was the worst decision of my life."

He broke down weeping, and a woman held him.

"I have had such pain these last 13 years, because I did it to my son. I didn't protect him. I'm sorry I'm losing it."

He put his head into his hands and wept.

Wiping his eyes, he continued. "Anyway, that's why I'm here, for David Jackman. Because he was injured. We're a marginalized group of people. They want to silence us. Our voice was heard today." (To view thousands

of parents' first-person testimonials of vaccine injuries, see "Vaxxed" channels and "Hear This Well" on YouTube.)

While the stories of individuals such as Jackman have often been dismissed by the media, in Trenton, some politicians have begun to go to bat for such parents.

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Del Bigtree, a vaccine safety advocate, documentary filmmaker, and host of a program that focuses on vaccine safety called "The Highwire," said politicians came out and told the crowd at different points that they would fight for them.

They saw the size of the movement, Bigtree said, and wanted to embrace rather than fight their constituents.

Holley was cheered as if he was a rock star when he emerged from the Statehouse, and spoke strongly against S2173.

"When you get into a situation where the government tries to infringe on your freedom of your rights, that's government overreach," Holley told *The Epoch Times* after the protest, as parents clamored to hug, thank, and take selfies with him. "We're in 2020. Those days of segregation are over. And I'll be damned if I'm going to sit by and allow people to separate us. We're going to separate them out."

Professors React to Diversity Statement Requirements

CHRIS KARR

The requirement to submit Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statements in the hiring process at U.S. universities has recently attracted both praise and criticism.

DEI statements are now mandatory at eight University of California campuses, as well as other universities across the country.

To be considered for a faculty position, applicants must submit a statement wherein they profess their commitment to redressing the historic exclusion of underrepresented people. They must outline their past, present, and future contributions to these social goals.

The *Epoch Times* contacted dozens of professors in California for comment and received only two replies. Both were positive toward the DEI statement mandate as a way to create an inclusive academic environment.

Some professors in other regions voiced concerns. Blake Winter, an assistant professor of mathematics at Medaille College in New York state, said DEI statements "serve as a political test."

They tend to be "disqualifying unless they conform to a view of diversity stemming from critical theory," he said.

Critical theory is a Marxist-inspired movement in social philosophy that seeks to understand and overcome "the social structures through which people are dominated and oppressed," according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

"Study after study shows that university faculty are disproportionately left-leaning in their politics, and that far-left thought is vastly over-represented," Winter said.

"Now, mostly in mathematics, political views are irrelevant, because 2+2 is always 4. But in some cases, they can matter."

Scoring System

The UC-Berkeley website outlines the rubric by which its DEI statements are scored.

For example, an applicant who subscribes to "treating all students the same regardless of background" would score poorly, earning 1-2 out of 5 possible points.

In order to achieve a higher score (4-5 points), the applicant would need to present "clear and detailed ideas ... for advancing equity and inclusion." Examples listed in the rubric include making an effort to "hire a diverse group of students to work in their lab" and seeking "to mentor several

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Raquel Aldana, a law professor at UC-Davis, said the rubric represents "a more nuanced understanding of equal protection principles that acknowledges that formal equality—treating everyone the same—is hardly neutral and seldom equal as applied."

Aldana is also the associate vice chancellor for academic diversity at UC-Davis. For her, the DEI statements are part of promoting an inclusive teaching environment. "[That] requires intentionality around such factors as the content of courses, approaches to teaching, and navigating hard conversations with sensibility, empathy, and wisdom," she said.

Abigail Thompson, chair of the Department of Mathematics at UC-Davis, disagrees. She found herself at the center of the DEI controversy last year when she wrote two editorials on the topic.

A 'Politicized Issue'

"To score well, candidates must subscribe to a particular political ideology, one based on treating people not as unique individuals but as representatives of their gender and ethnic identities," she wrote in a Dec. 19, 2019, editorial for the *Wall Street Journal*.

She suggested in an earlier editorial published in the *Notices of the American Mathematical Society* that DEI statements violate the university's Standing Orders of the Regents, which state that "No political test shall ever be considered in the appointment and promotion of any faculty member or employee."

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"The idea of using a political test as a screen for job applicants should send a shiver down our collective spine," she wrote. "Mathematics must be open and welcoming to everyone, to those who have traditionally been excluded, and to those holding unpopular viewpoints. Imposing a political litmus test is not the way to achieve excellence in mathematics or in the university."

The appearance of her essay "provoked an intense controversy—confirming that this has become a dangerously politicized issue," she wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*. Social me-

dia posts used words like "disgusting" to describe her views. Her most ardent critics insisted she should be publicly shamed.

The American Mathematical Society (AMS) was condemned for publishing the editorial. In one of many letters to the editor in response to Thompson's piece, a professor who was "appalled and greatly disappointed" by the essay accused AMS of damaging its credibility and supporting "fear-mongering."

Other letters to the editor, including one by the former AMS President George E. Andrews, expressed agreement with her. Erica Flapan, the editor in chief of the AMS journal, declined to comment for this article, but directed *The Epoch Times* to a statement she posted acknowledging the controversy. "We encourage diverse viewpoints," the statement said. "As always we require civility and accuracy in the content that we publish."

Herbert Lee, vice provost for Academic Affairs and Campus Diversity at UC-Santa Cruz, told *The Epoch Times* he disagreed with Thompson's characterization of the DEI statements. She had compared it to the loyalty oath of the 1950s, in which university applicants had to state whether or not they supported the Communist Party.

"There are many very different ways to write a strong 'contributions to' diversity, equity, and inclusion statement, there isn't just one right answer," he said.

"Because of the well-documented structures that have historically discriminated against certain under-represented groups, it is important that all university community members become more aware of these structural issues and work to change behaviors and practices that have unfairly disadvantaged certain groups."

"Faculty who are best able to teach to their whole class are those who understand the systemic barriers faced by under-represented groups."

Abhishek Saha, a number theorist at Queen Mary University of London, said he would refuse to apply for a position in a mathematics department that required DEI statements because he views them as compelled political speech.

"Someone—say a classical liberal—who believes in promoting individuals regardless of background would score lowly on the rubric," he said via email.

"These mandatory diversity statements reduce viewpoint diversity by pushing out applicants with certain viewpoints, and ultimately lead to ideological conformity at universities. This is bad for mathematicians, bad for mathematics, and bad for society."

The Royce Hall at the University of California-Los Angeles. Eight University of California campuses now require applicants for faculty positions to submit diversity statements.



VIA PIXABAY

Gun Control Battle Deepens as Legislation Advances in Virginia

As 4 bills progress along party lines in Virginia legislature, 2nd Amendment sanctuary movement gains momentum

BOWEN XIAO

RICHMOND, Va.—Hundreds of Second Amendment advocates converged on Virginia's state capital on Jan. 13 to oppose a slew of tighter gun control proposals being voted on by newly elected state lawmakers.

The long line of Virginia residents—many wearing bright “Guns Save Lives” stickers—showed up before 8 a.m. in a show of support for their constitutional rights that they say are being infringed upon. Some gun control advocates attended as well, holding signs with slogans such as “sensible gun laws equal less gun violence.”

The rallying crowds did little to stop four gun control measures from advancing in the state's Democratic-led General Assembly after approval by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The committee passed legislation for universal background checks, a measure allowing localities to ban weapons from some events and government buildings, a “red flag” bill allowing authorities to temporarily confiscate guns from certain individuals deemed a risk, and a law that limits the purchase of handguns to only one per month.

In interviews with The Epoch Times, Second Amendment advocates, including local residents, county sheriffs, gun store owners, and Virginia's NRA leader, argued that the proposed gun control measures were an overreach that violated residents' constitutional rights. They said stricter legislation will do nothing to stop criminals from committing crimes and said the focus should be more on mental health.

The four bills now advance to the Virginia Senate for further discussion. They would need to be passed by the Senate and the House of Delegates, and be signed by Gov. Ralph Northam (D) to become law.

Democrats won control of both chambers of the state legislature in the November 2019 elections and have vowed to enact stronger

gun control policies. They believe stricter legislation will help reduce shootings and deaths and would “break the cycle” of gun violence.

The committee ended up largely voting along party lines, but not every piece of legislation was approved. One proposed measure (SB-16) that sparked the most controversy—banning the sale and possession of so-called assault weapons—was taken off the table. According to The Associated Press, an estimated 8 million AR-style guns have been sold since their introduction to the public in the 1960s.

Matthew Thwing, a 41-year-old small-business owner in Virginia, said he attended the hearing to have his voice heard and to show that he and the other “nearly 1,000” Second Amendment advocates weren't going to stand for the new agenda pushed by state lawmakers. An additional overflow room had to be opened during the hearing because of the large numbers.

“I think that if there's a mandate in Virginia, it's that they don't want gun control. We don't want gun control,” he told The Epoch Times. “These numbers are tremendous, and you really don't see that kind of turnout for any kind of political event whatsoever.”

“It's woken a sleeping giant, if you will,” Thwing added. Some of the Second Amendment supporters took the day off work to attend, while others drove from hours away.

The number of Second Amendment supporters who showed up wasn't surprising, Matt Rogers, chief of staff to Sen. David W. Marsden (D-Fairfax), said before the hearing. Marsden represents the 37th District in the state Senate.

“There are people here on this side, and on that side,” Rogers told The Epoch Times. “I'm absolutely not surprised, it's a democracy. It's not a problem, and it's actually exciting, even if people don't tend to agree with our point of view ... this is the right way to

address their grievances.”

Rogers said they have to “be mindful” of the Second Amendment, but he added that there are things that can be done “within the bounds” of it.

Daniel Spiker, state director at the National Rifle Association (NRA), expressed disappointment following the results of the committee hearing. He predicted the fight for Second Amendment rights will be a very long and drawn-out one.

“SB-16 being stricken from the record is an indication that the governor and some of the Democrats have seen that they've overreached and that these bills have unintended consequences,” he told The Epoch Times.

“We're encouraged by it. But at the end of the day, it's still multiple levels of new regulation and new laws imposed on law-abiding citizens,” he said.

State lawmakers have less than 60 days to get all the bills to become law. Spiker said that the result of the NRA's rallying call for citizens to flock to the state capitol “far exceeded their expectations of what the turnout was going to be.”

“It's indicative of what this movement is and the enthusiasm we're seeing at the local level with engaging their board of supervisors, their city councils,” Spiker said. “Our hope was for that enthusiasm to come to Richmond.”

The ‘Second Amendment Sanctuary’ Movement
On Jan. 7, the city council in Virginia Beach enacted legislation in a 6 to 4 vote to declare the state's largest city a “Second Amendment constitutional city.” In that vote, local residents crowded the building to have their voices heard, with an overflow crowd outside watching the proceed-

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ings on a TV screen.

Officials who have adopted such sanctuary resolutions or amendments generally state that they won't follow new gun laws they believe are unconstitutional. Local officials who voted for their counties to become Second Amendment sanctuaries told The Epoch Times the measures they passed were largely symbolic and were made to send a message to lawmakers. They said that any state laws enacted would still supersede any local legislation.

Following the Senate committee hearing, a county sheriff said he wasn't surprised by the committee's action, and that he was disappointed he couldn't speak for longer. He said the committee had “their minds made up” and “didn't want to hear any input,” adding that it could affect their seats in the next election.

“I thank them for starting down this road for one reason—it's going to flip Virginia back red in so many ways they don't expect,” Culpeper County Sheriff Scott Jenkins told The Epoch Times. “Elections have consequences.”

Jenkins said the strong push for tighter gun control has “awakened a population in the state that has long been quiet.”

“And that doesn't account for the court battles that are coming, because there are plenty of us willing to battle this out in the court the right way, as well,” he added.

Jenkins has gone further than others, saying he would “deputize citizens” as auxiliary deputies, if needed, to protect the constitutional right to bear firearms. In early December, Culpeper County's Board of Supervisors voted 7 to 0 to affirm itself as a “constitutional county,” prompting a standing ovation by residents who were present for the vote.

Northam and other Democratic lawmakers in the state, meanwhile, have credited their focus on gun control for helping them win full control of the General Assembly for the first time in more than two decades, according to The Associated Press.

Virginia, especially, has become the center of the gun debate, with 91 of the state's 95 counties passing some sort of measure affirming their support for Second Amendment rights. A number of municipalities in Virginia have also become sanctuaries.

Hundreds of local counties, cities, and towns across America are declaring themselves “Second Amendment sanctuaries” or “constitutional counties” as part of an expanding movement over the past few years. In Illinois, at least 70 of the 102 counties in the state have passed some form of sanctuary resolution.

Paul Moog, who works with the Virginia Citizens Defense League, a nonprofit grassroots organization whose goal is to advance the rights of Virginians to keep and bear arms, said he was very much in favor of the Second Amendment sanctuary movement.

“[We] helped put them in through Orange County,” he said. “I've been to several other meetings, and I think it's a great movement that will help defend some of the tension.”

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed by Congress on Sept. 25, 1789, and was ratified on Dec. 15, 1791. The text reads that “a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Moog claims that the proposed gun control agenda could cause a bigger fight to break out within the state.

“I think that the Democrats are very close to pushing civil war in Virginia,” Moog said. “If you try to turn your opposition into criminals, people have a tendency to want to fight back.”

The sanctuary movement is helping to take the heat off the anger people are feeling, because it's making them “feel more secure” according to Moog. “I think we're in a very touchy situation,” he said.

In a sign of tensions boiling over, Marsden last week called Second Amendment supporters “little kids” who should be ignored, according to a news post by the Fairfax County Republican Committee.

In an interview with radio station WMAL, co-host Mary Walter read from an email that Marsden had reportedly written to a constituent, where he had said that “too many of your members and other 2A supporters appear to have mental health issues.”

Marsden later defended his remarks and cited offensive emails and phone calls he claimed he received from some constituents.

In response to the rising number of Second Amendment sanctuaries, a U.S. House Democrat recently floated the idea that Northam could direct the state's National Guard to help enforce the proposed gun restrictions. Rep. Donald McEachin (D-Va) made the proposal on Dec. 11, 2019, while also suggesting cutting off state funds to counties that don't comply with gun control measures that might pass in the state.

The Virginia National Guard responded

with a string of Twitter posts, in which they said they haven't received any requests from the governor.

“We understand and respect the passion people feel for the U.S. Constitution and 2nd Amendment rights,” Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the state's adjutant general, wrote. “We will not speculate about the possible use of the Virginia National Guard.”

‘Innocent Until Proven Guilty’
Miles away from the state capital, a local gun store owner said that the constitution protects the people.

“Our constitution protects us ... But the people that want control understand that they can't get control as long as the population can protect themselves,” Tony Martin, the managing partner of a local gun store, said.

“That's the point of the Second Amendment—to be able to serve the people and not be oppressed by the government,” he added. “In Virginia, they want to change it completely.”

Red flag laws and other gun control proposals infringe upon the rights of the citizens, Martin said. He said the United States judicial system is based on the principle that everyone is innocent until proven guilty and that, in a court of law, people are entitled to a fair and reasonable opportunity to defend themselves.

Martin said that the red flag law approach appears on the surface as if it should make everyone safer, but, on closer examination, exposes serious issues. In particular, it would forgo the “innocent until proven guilty” principle.

“If in place, you can lose your rights and you can lose your personal property, based on somebody else's accusation,” he said. “This is an incremental process. You can't just come in and say, ‘Oh, here's the Constitution, let's shred it and start over.’ They can't do that, so they are taking baby steps and they have done so for many, many years.”

Martin noted that the “firearms industry is the most heavily regulated industry in the world.” He said he also objects to the term “gun violence,” saying that the gun itself isn't capable of committing any crimes.

“It's an inanimate object,” he said. “Now, could it be used violently by a person? Of course. And for that matter, anything could.”



(Left) A Second Amendment advocate shakes hands with Culpeper County Sheriff Scott Jenkins (L) after a hearing where four gun control bills passed the Senate Judiciary Committee at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond on Jan. 13, 2020.

(Bottom Left) Sheriffs attend a hearing where four gun control bills passed the state Senate Judiciary Committee at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond on Jan. 13, 2020.

(Below) Second Amendment advocates speak with Justin Fairfax, the lieutenant governor of Virginia, after a hearing where four gun control bills passed the Senate Judiciary Committee at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond on Jan. 13, 2020.





The Department of Housing and Urban Development building in Washington on July 22, 2019.

The Great Recession: 'Reparations' Gone Bad

LARRY ELDER



Commentary
Some of the Democratic candidates for president support studying reparations to blacks to compensate for slavery. But in

many ways, America has made reparations to blacks.

What are race-based preferences if not a form of compensation for historical wrongs? Many cities have "set-aside" programs that award government contracts to minority contractors. President Lyndon Johnson pushed his Great Society programs to "end poverty and racial injustice."

But few think of the federal government's housing policy, particularly the Community Reinvestment Act, or the CRA, as a form of reparations. But that's exactly what it was and still is. In many ways, the so-called Great Recession of the late 2000s was a product of affirmative action and a form of reparations gone bad. Really bad.

In 1999, almost a decade before the Great Recession, the libertarian Cato Institute issued a warning about the CRA, which President Jimmy Carter signed in 1977. The CRA was based on the assumption that racist lenders denied mortgages to creditworthy would-be borrowers, particularly minority applicants. The act initially merely sought data on banking practices to encourage lenders to practice fairness in granting mortgages.

But President Bill Clinton, in 1995, added teeth to the CRA. Economists Stephen Moore and Lawrence Kudlow explained: "Under Clinton's Housing and Urban Development (HUD) secretary, Andrew Cuomo, Community Reinvestment Act regulators gave banks higher ratings for home loans made in 'credit-deprived' areas. Banks were effectively rewarded for throwing out sound underwriting standards and writing loans to those who were at high risk of defaulting. If banks didn't comply with these rules, regulators reined in their ability to expand lending and deposits."

"These new HUD rules lowered down payments from the traditional 20 percent to 3 percent by 1995 and zero down-payments by 2000. What's more, in the Clinton push to issue home loans to lower-income bor-

rowers, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac made a common practice to virtually end credit documentation, low credit scores were disregarded, and income and job history was also thrown aside. The phrase 'subprime' became commonplace. What an understatement."

But is it true that banks were discriminating against minority borrowers?

Cato, in 1999, said that despite widespread accusations and lawsuits alleging discriminatory lending, the facts show otherwise. Cato said: "Researchers using the best available data find very little discernible home-mortgage lending discrimination based on area, race, sex or ethnic origin. ...

"Other well-structured studies also found no evidence of redlining or unwarranted geographic discrimination. Thus, the claim that lenders redlined or were biased in making loans for the purchase of homes in central cities is not supported. Nor did the studies find that financial institutions discriminated against actual or potential borrowers on the basis of the racial or ethnic composition of neighborhoods."

What caused this narrative that rac-

isist banks refused would-be minority borrowers?

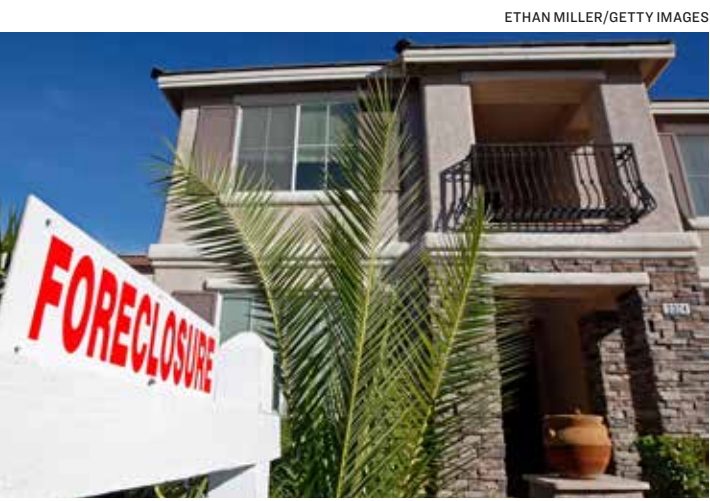
Enter lawyers like then-private citizen and attorney Barack Obama. In 1995, Obama, representing 186 blacks, filed a class action mortgage discrimination lawsuit against Citibank. The case was settled, and his clients got mortgages. But, according to the Daily Caller in 2012, just 19 of Obama's 186 clients still had their homes. About half had gone bankrupt and/or had their homes in foreclosure.

Incredibly, at least two of his former clients now believe banks should be prevented from lending to people who otherwise can't afford their homes. One client said: "If you see some people don't make enough money to afford the mortgage, why should you give them a loan? There should be some type of regulation against giving people loans they can't afford."

Lending standards became so lax that virtually anyone who could fog up a mirror got a home. Then, along came the recession, and a lot of people lost homes that they would not have bought in the first place but for lax lending standards. The result? According to the Federal Reserve, from 2010 to 2013, white household median net worth—a household's assets minus its liabilities—increased 2.4 percent. But black net worth fell from \$16,600 to \$11,000, a four-year drop of 34 percent. As another of Obama's former clients put it, "(Banks) were too eager to lend money to many who didn't qualify."

In 1999, the Cato policy paper on the CRA made the following recommendation: "The Clinton administration wants an even stricter CRA. But more than two decades of its operation suggest that repealing rather than tightening the act would be the economically and socially responsible thing to do."

Too bad nobody listened.



ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

ALASTAIR PIKE/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Cause of American Men and Women in Service

JEREMY STALNECKER



Commentary
Over the past several days, much has been said about the United States' role

in the world. With the elimination of a terrorist responsible for murder throughout the Middle East, many have even declared that we're on the precipice of World War III.

And, clearly, if another World War is on the horizon, then so is the draft.

Further adding to the hysteria, network news channels have run stories detailing the high cost this global crisis will have on the men and women already serving. As is typical in the world of 24-hour news, the emphasis has been placed on the potential "victims" of this action by the White House, instead of on the probability that countless lives have been saved.

I have opinions on all of this, as I'm sure most people do, but it isn't my intention here to discuss the rightness or wrongness of what has happened over the past few weeks in Iraq.

What I would like to address is something that happens every time there's a military action anywhere in the world: The men and women of the U.S. military are painted as the unwilling victims of a government that failed to tell them that fighting bad guys may be part of the job.

The U.S. military is the greatest fighting force on Earth because it's made up of men and women who spend their lives working to defeat the enemies of freedom.

While I'm fully aware that they're affected by bad policy in a unique way, to believe that those in uniform struggle with why they're serving and what that service means simply isn't true. They're not victims: They're warriors who willingly live their lives for others.

So, why do they do it? Why do the best and brightest in this country decide to serve in the military? Perhaps my own story will help.

I was serving as a Marine infantry officer when the Twin Towers



A U.S. Marine observes the French amphibious assault ship BPC Dixmude in the Atlantic Ocean, on Jan. 6, 2020.

U.S. MARINE CORPS CPL. KENNY GOMEZ/NAVY.MIL

fell on Sept. 11, 2001. Although it seems like this would be a scary time for those who would respond to the attack on our country, the reality is that we couldn't wait for the opportunity to deal with those responsible for killing our countrymen.

To serve in the U.S. military is to stand with fellow Americans who value the principles and ideals of freedom and hope more than they do their own lives.

Eighteen months later, on March 19, 2003, I crossed the berm with about 30,000 of my best friends as we began securing strategic objectives in Iraq. We would move north for the next several weeks, eventually securing the Presiden-

tial Palace in northern Baghdad. There are many things in my life for which I'm proud, but none more than the opportunity to serve in combat alongside the best Americans I've ever known. While I may hold personal feelings and opinions about the wars in which we have been engaged, it's not the politics of the action that cause me to be thankful.

To serve in the military of the United States is to stand with fellow Americans who value the principles and ideals of freedom and hope more than they do their own lives—those with the character and integrity necessary to sacrifice one's own hopes, dreams, and future for the people who either can't or won't serve.

This character is what ties those who do serve together with an invisible, yet unbreakable, bond. I understand firsthand what it means to fight alongside those who, far away from the country that they represent, are both

ready and willing to lay their lives down for the people to the left and right of them.

I know what it's like to await an order that will come at the darkest part of the night to engage in an action that will almost certainly result in death, and then to look, while waiting, into the faces of those who will carry out this order and see not fear or dread, but a courage and certainty that whatever awaits in the darkness will be defeated.

Pride in service isn't about politics or conflict or some kind of sadistic love for war; it's pride to have been ready, willing, and able to do what most of the world will never do. It's the reason why the honor and pride of having served, and the loyalty to others who have, tear down age, racial, or gender barriers, and why, in a group of veterans, everyone stands on equal ground.

Fighting members of the U.S. military aren't victims; they're

men and women who've decided that they want to give their life to a cause bigger than themselves. They want to live and serve, and, if necessary, die knowing that they've not done any of it in vain.

President Ronald Reagan once said: "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem." This could be said of all who are bold enough to wear the uniform of the U.S. military.

Our service members aren't victims to be pitied; they're warriors to be respected, leaders to be followed, and the hope for a strong tomorrow.

Jeremy Stalnecker is the executive director of the Mighty Oaks Foundation.

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



U.S. Army soldiers salute during the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner" at a homecoming ceremony in the Natcher Physical Fitness Center on Fort Knox, Ky., on Feb. 27, 2014.

LUKE SHARRETT/GETTY IMAGES

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Thoughts About Time Will Shape Our Future

MARK HENDRICKSON



Commentary

Time is one of the most fascinating and impactful aspects of our human experience. Calendars and clocks can be little dictators. At the same time, if you're like me, movies and stories that involve time travel are particularly engrossing.

Einstein's special theory of relativity showed that time is an elastic concept, a relative rather than an absolute construct. Each of us has experienced periods of time that dragged on slowly while others passed far too quickly.

Time is also a crucial factor in the study of economics and sociology.

Losing a historical perspective on how our society got to where we are today is dangerous.

Time Horizons

In economics, "time preference" deals with higher and lower values—the premiums and discounts that people place on the present compared to the future. These time preferences shape the structure of interest rates—or at least they used to. Today, interest rates reflect desperate official manipulations, such as zero- and negative-interest rate policies, rather than humans' actual time preferences.

Sociologists have studied "time horizons." Cultures in which people have relatively short time horizons are characterized by people devoting little time to thinking, worrying, and planning for a long-term future, and instead focus on maximizing happiness in the present or in the near future. Short time horizons correlate significantly with poverty. Conversely, in wealthier cultures, people defer consumption and accumulate savings to make sure they have the monetary means to support themselves even after they quit working.

There is (at least) one other identifiable social subgroup besides the poor that tends to have short time horizons: politicians. They focus almost exclusively on the next election. Thus, they are unwilling to make helpful but inconvenient preventative adjustments today to avert serious crises in the future. The vote-craving politician kicks the can down the road, even though the "can" (the problem) will be much larger, more costly, and more difficult to fix then.

It's an ominous parallel that both poor people and politicians have short time horizons.

Although I'm not aware of social scientists applying the concept of "time horizons" to the past, I believe that backward time ho-

rizons could be as significant in their societal impact as forward time horizons. Short backward time horizons can cripple future prosperity as effectively as short forward time horizons.

I'm sure that professional historians (at least those who have not become ideological propagandists) would agree with me. Historians have long urged humans to learn from history's lessons. Similarly, the philosopher George Santayana framed a great truth with his famous dictum about those not learning from the past being condemned to repeat it.

Losing a historical perspective about how our society got to where we are today is dangerous. Short backward time horizons can lead to utopian blindness about how the world works and substitute impracticable utopian theories and ideologies for practical, viable (albeit imperfect) solutions.

Urban Versus Rural

For years, our country's large cities have become more politically progressive (i.e., in-



A woman uses her smartphone while crossing a street in New York on Nov. 13, 2014.

DON EMMERT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

creasingly in favor of more government laws, controls, and plans) than their rural counterparts. Last month, for example, The Washington Times posted an article entitled, "Conservatives losing ground in cities across globe."

Why would urban dwellers tend to be more progressive?

My theory is that urbanites have shorter backward time horizons. They have become so used to modern affluence that they have forgotten how poor Americans were just a century ago. It's too easy to take our unprec-

edented wealth for granted and to forget the crucial fact that it was our market-based economy that led to this explosion of wealth creation.

Furthermore, urbanites have adapted so completely to a dizzying array of amazing conveniences—an almost magical world where all they have to do is flip switches, push buttons, send texts, etc., to get almost anything they want—that they often act as though all they have to do to change the world is vote for a certain political agenda.

In their desire for "quick fixes," they fall prey to seductive perfectionistic political proposals. They lack the wisdom embodied in the venerable adage, "In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice, there is."

Basically, many city-dwellers have become insulated from "real life" and forgotten how difficult it can be. Rural folks live closer to the natural world. They know how merciless, resistant, and even deadly it can be to grow food, extract raw materials, harness en-

a more expansive time horizon toward the past. We can't afford to let the instant gratifications of modern life blind us to how inescapably complicated and challenging life can be. We must not lose sight of how difficult, costly, and time-consuming such grandiose proposals as converting the entire energy infrastructure of the country to renewables from fossil fuels in 10 or 20 years would be.

Short backward time horizons can cripple future prosperity as effectively as short forward time horizons.

We can't simply vote such a massive change into existence in a mere decade or two. It's beyond the ability of human will and human politics to give us a new physical reality to supplant the old one.

Like it or not, to proceed toward the world we would like to have, we can't avoid dealing with the world as it is. We must consider the enormous economic costs as well as the physical limits of what can be done quickly. Without this perspective—much clearer to those with a longer backward time horizon—we run the risk of a political majority demanding the impossible and then raging at fellow Americans for not being able to turn their fantasies into hard reality. (Stalin would have denounced those pointing out the impossibility of attaining unrealistic goals as "saboteurs.")

Without a healthy awareness of and appreciation for how we have gotten to where we are and a realistic sense of how the world works, we may imprudently abandon time-tested practices and viable policies, and thereby inflict a grim future upon our children.

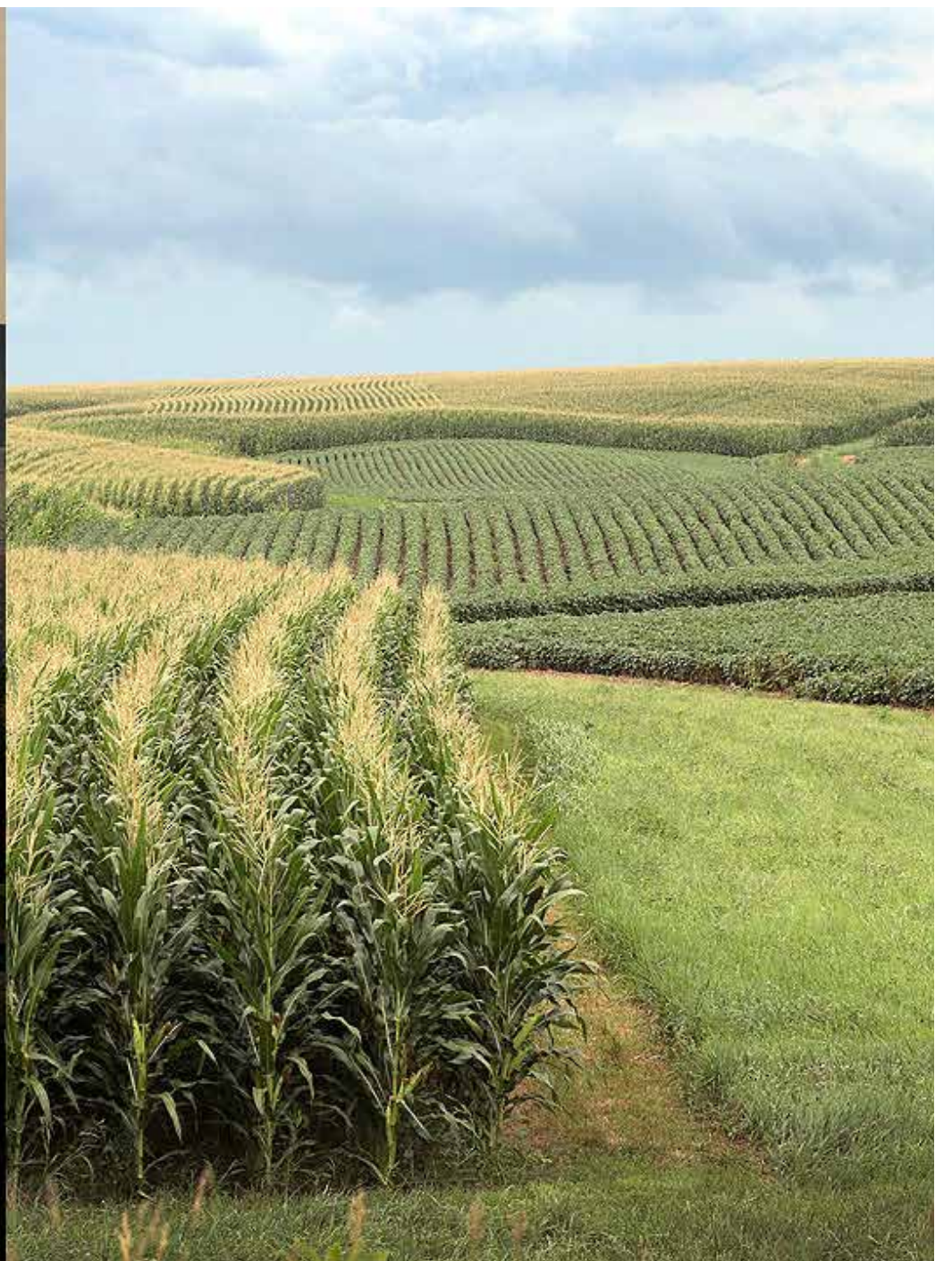
With mature, clear backward time horizons that keep us moored to reality, we can prudently build a prosperous future on a solid foundation. To use a biblical metaphor, we have a choice between continuing to build the house of our economy on the solid rock of experience or on the unstable sands of utopian idealism.

Let us maintain healthy time horizons and choose wisely.

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 and Freedom.

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(Left) The skyline of downtown Manhattan in New York on Jan. 12, 2007. (Right) Corn and soybeans grow on a farm near Tipton, Iowa, on July 13, 2018.