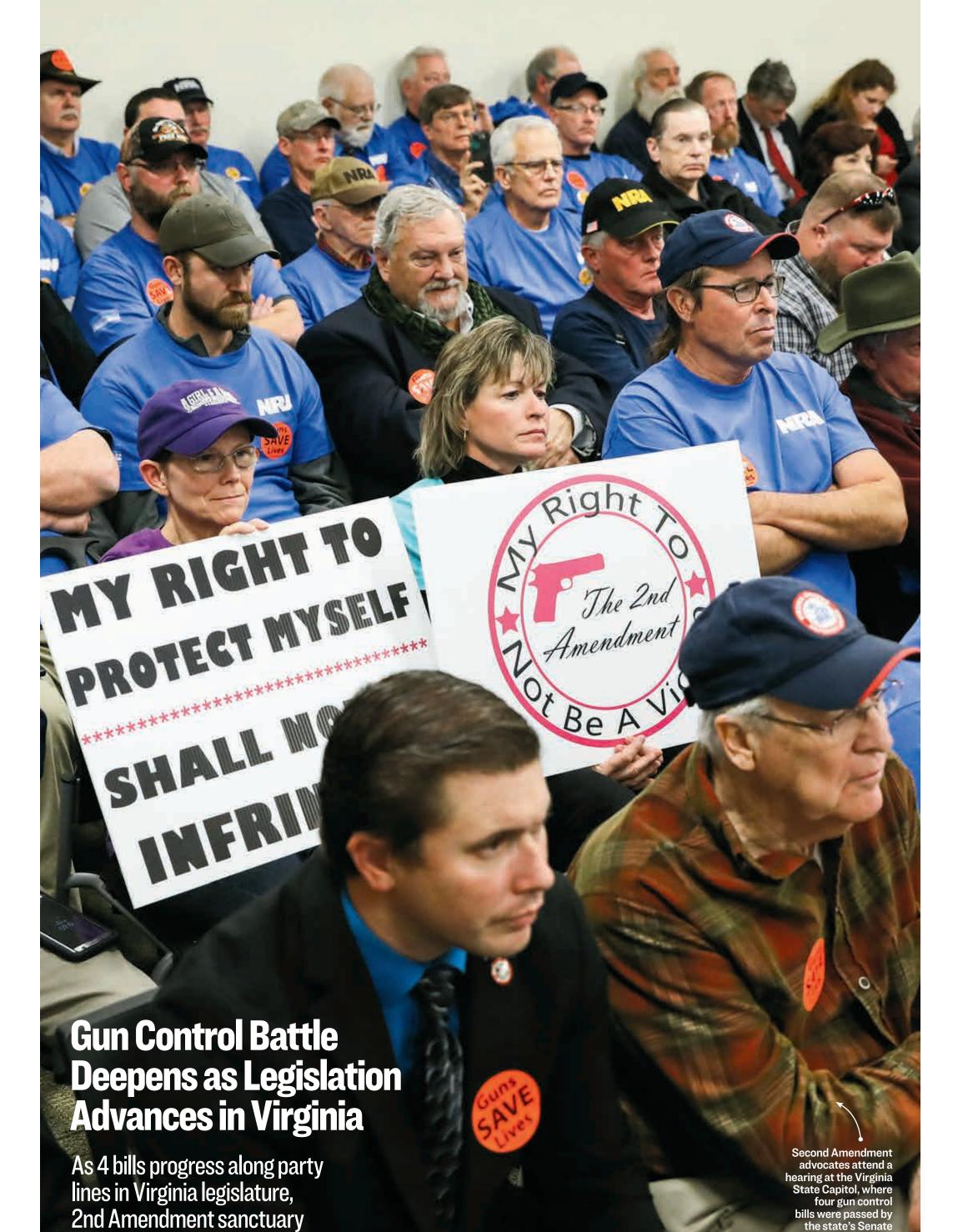
WEEK 3, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

OURNATION



Judiciary Committee, on Jan. 13, 2020.

movement gains momentum 6



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

RENTON, 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

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

When the Senate session was gaveled to a close at around 6 p.m., and it was clear the billknown 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.

The protesters say this is a battle over parents' rights to choose and the religious freedom to abstain.

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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 move-

ment, 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 situa-

tion 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

he 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 politi-

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

For example, an applicant who subscribes to "treating all students 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

Study after study shows that university faculty are disproportionately left-leaning in their politics, and that far-left thought is vastly overrepresented.

Medaille College

The Royce Hall at the

Los Angeles. Eight

University of California-

University of California

campuses now require

applicants for faculty

positions to submit

diversity statements.

Blake Winter, assistant professor of mathematics,

underrepresented students." Raquel Aldana, a law professor at UC–Davis, said the rubric represents "a more nuanced understanding of

equal protection principles that acknowledges that formal equalitytreating 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."

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

Blake Winter, assistant professor of mathematics, Medaille College

"The idea of using a political test as a shiver down our collective spine," she he views them as compelled political wrote. "Mathematics must be open speech. 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 "disgust ing" 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 dis-

advantaged 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 screen for job applicants should send a that required DEI statements because

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."



CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON

nicago area jails released 1,070 inmates who were in the country illegally in fiscal 2019, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE said it had requested, via an immigration detainer, that Cook County jail in Illinois notify the agency when the aliens were to be released. However, the detainers were ignored and the inmates were let out.

"The most concerning issue about working in an area that refuses to cooperate with ICE is not only that we do not know which criminal aliens are being released from custody, but the public doesn't know either," Henry Lucero, ICE's acting deputy executive associate director for Enforcement and Removal Operations, said in a statement on Jan. 10.

More people are being victimized, and it's a matter of time until something more significant happens.

Henry Lucero, acting deputy executive associate director, ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations

ICE provided the example of Rasheed Abass, a 50-year-old South African national, who was arrested in June for indecent exposure. In July, he was arrested again, this time for assault. ICE said it lodged detainers after both arrests, but neither were honored, and Abass's current whereabouts are unknown.

Politicians and advocates of sanctuary policies-which shield illegal immigrants from immigration authorities—say the policies make communities safer. Advocates say the policies mean illegal aliens will come forward deportation.

In July 2019, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot said Chicago police "will not team up with ICE to detain any resident."

"We have also cut off ICE from any access from any CPD databases, and that will remain permanent," Lightfoot said.

Lucero said not having access to standard Illinois law enforcement databases makes it impossible to accurately tell how many illegal aliens have been arrested, released, and then committed additional crimes.

"However, with the limited information ICE can verify, we know that police resources are

being wasted, more people are being victimized, and it's a matter of time until something more significant happens," he said.

where it was announced that

in the city, Lightfoot wrote on

grants and refugee families in

However, ICE says it only

lodges detainers on individu-

als who have been arrested on

criminal charges and who ICE

removable aliens. The agency

says regions that forbid ICE into

jails to pick up aliens are forcing

has probable cause to believe are

Chicago."

ICE placed a detainer on a 22-year-old from Lithuania on Dec. 3, 2018, following his arrest for attempted murder, aggravated battery of a victim over the age of 60, and aggravated battery in a public place. The man, Rokas Ablacinskas, was released on Sept. 17, 2019, and remains at large. Following a press conference

by ICE in Chicago last week,

ICE to operate out in the comarrests of illegal aliens are down munity more, which results in officers arresting other illegal Twitter: "Not sorry. I will never aliens who may not have been on apologize for protecting immitheir radar.

Last October, at the annual conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police held in Chicago, President Donald Trump criticized the city's

sanctuary policies as a "disgrace." "I will never put the needs of illegal criminals before I put the needs of law-abiding citizens. It's very simple to me," Trump said.

JOSH DENMARK/DHS



Treasury Official Who Leaked Documents on Trump Associates Faces Up to 5 Years in Prison

IVAN PENTCHOUKOV

Former Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) senior official Natalie Mavflower Sours Edwards faces up to five years in prison after she pleaded guilty on Jan. 13 to conspiring to illegally leak documents to

Federal prosecutors from the Southern District of New York tentatively outlined a zero-to-six-month sentence and a fine of up to \$9,500 as part of the plea deal signed by Edwards on Jan. 13. The crime she pleaded guilty to carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

Between October 2017 and October 2018, Edwards illegally leaked suspicious activity reports (SARs) on financial transactions by former Trump-campaign associates Paul Manafort and Rick Gates, the Russian Embassy, and Maria Butina, among others.

The Department of Justice didn't identify the news organization that published stories based on the leaks, but a review of court documents and published articles points to BuzzFeed News.

In court documents, prosecutors didn't designate anyone as a co-conspirator. The count Edwards pleaded guilty to singled out a reporter as well as a senior official at FinCEN. Edwards called the senior official "Enigma"; she had sought to connect him or her with the reporter.

Edwards had access to the SARs on Manafort, Gates, and others, and she saved

by FinCEN, according to a press release issued by the Department of Justice. She relayed the information in the reports to a journalist by taking pictures of the documents with a smartphone and sending the photos via an encrypted messaging appli-

Edwards had the flash drive and the phone in her possession when she was arrested in October 2018. During an initial questioning, she denied having any contact with the media, but eventually admitted to communicating with the reporter, including during two in-person meetings.

In addition to the SARs, Edwards sent or described to the reporter "internal FinCEN emails or correspondence appearing to relate to SARs," investigative memos and intelligence assessments that "contained confidential personal information, business information, and/or security threat assessments," the press release states.

June 9, 2020. She's one of a handful of leakers to be prosecuted during the Trump administration.

Edwards is scheduled to be sentenced on

On Oct. 16, 2018, two days after Edwards' arrest, former security director for the Sen-

MLADEN ANTONOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

thousands of reports on a flash drive issued The emblem of the Treasury Department in Washington.

guilty plea, a federal judge sentenced former FBI special agent Terry Albury to four years in prison for leaking classified documents

ate Select Committee on Intelligence, James

Wolfe, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI

about his contacts with reporters.

On Oct. 18, 2018, two days after Wolfe's

During an initial questioning, Edwards denied having any contact with the media, but eventually admitted to communicating with the reporter, including during two in-person meetings.

In August 2019, IRS analyst John Fry pleaded guilty to leaking sensitive financial documents about Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's former personal attorney. In the four months following Trump's inauguration on Jan. 20, 2017, the White House was subject to 125 leaked stories, according to a report by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. The rate of leaks with the capacity to damage national security was seven times higher than during comparable periods in the administrations of Presidents George W.

Bush and Barack Obama.



Sex Trafficking Survivors Share Heartwrenching, But Common, Stories

CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON

ASHINGTON-Barbara Jean Wilson was 8 years old when she was first trafficked. Her mother was the pimp.

"Instead of me going out, she would bring the men home," Wilson said during a trafficking summit at the Justice Department on Jan. 14.

"I was fed drugs. I was fed alcohol. The one time that I had the courage to say 'No,' one of them put a gun to my head and said, 'No one tells me no." Wilson said she would plead with her

how the rent was getting paid. "And so I had nowhere to seek help and I just dealt with it. That's how lived," she said.

mother for it to stop, but was told that's

Wilson was eventually thrown out of her home, and to survive, she got deeper into drugs and did the only thing she knew-sell her body.

Don't be ashamed of what you were put through because you're not to blame.

Barbara Jean Wilson, victim

By 15, she had a daughter to support. At around 17, Wilson overdosed on drugs, and ironically, that's what she said saved her.

"The Holy Spirit came to me and said, 'Enough is enough," she said. "And I made a promise to God that if he got me through it, I would spend the rest of my life sharing my story to help other victims ... [and] bring understanding and awareness to those who don't know

what we go through." She's been doing so ever since, but the pain is still evident. Despite what her mother put her through, she said she has forgiven her.

"She asked for forgiveness. I forgave her. I forgave my abusers. ... In order for me to go forth, I had to forgive," she said. "But it damaged me in a lot of ways, damaged me in so many ways."

Homelessness and Trafficking

Bill Bedrossian, CEO of Covenant House in California, said his organization is the largest provider for homeless youth in the United States.

"And by default, we've become the largest provider of housing for victims of human trafficking," he said. "For a lot of these young people, they literally have begun being trafficked at 8, 9 years old by their family members, by the gangs, by the street life that they've been exposed to."

A recent study conducted by Covenant House found that 20 percent of young people who experience homelessness are sex trafficked, Bedrossian said.

He said he has noticed a change over





 (L-R) Barbara Amaya, sex trafficking survivor, Erica MacDonald, U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota, and Barbara Jean Wilson, sex trafficking survivor, at a human trafficking summit at the Department of Justice in Washington on Jan. 14, 2020.

2. Barbara Jean Wilson, sex trafficking survivor, at a human trafficking event at the Department of Justice in Washington on Jan. 14, 2020

3. Barbara Amaya, sex trafficking survivor, at the Summit on Combating Human Trafficking at the Department of Justice in Washington on Jan. 14, 2020.

the past five to 10 years in both the sophistication of the traffickers and the insidiousness of the crime.

Kay Duffield, executive director of the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative, said that in about 84 percent of sex trafficking cases, the trafficker uses the internet to sell their victims. "One sex buyer said that buying sex was as easy as going online and ordering a pizza," she said.

'Traffickers Are Predators'

Barbara Amaya grew up in Fairfax, Virginia, in a home she said looked beautiful on the outside, but wasn't on the inside.

Amaya said she was abused and ended up going through "all the systems," including child welfare, foster care, and juvenile justice. By 12, she was a habitual runaway.

"I wasn't just running away, I was

"And traffickers are predators. They prey upon the vulnerable."

One day she was approached by a young woman at Dupont Circle in Washington, who suggested she come home with her to get food.

there was her boyfriend, who was actually her trafficker," Amaya said. "They started training me for purposes of prostitution. I was 12 years old."

"He had many other young people in different hotels around New York. He had two apartments in Manhattan on either side–East Side, West Side, and he would move everybody all around all the time to keep everyone off balance and isolated in that world," she said.

running to find something," she said.

"She took me back to her place. And

Soon after, she was sold to a man who took her to New York and trafficked her out with other minors he had bought from all over the country.

me out of New York City." **Getting Out**

Wilson said victims of sex trafficking

should know they can get out and go on to live a productive life. "Don't be ashamed of what you were

Her trafficker became violent if she

"He would beat me with a wire coat

hanger ... throw me down the stairs,

and also at the buyer's hands. I've been

shot, I've been stabbed. I've been every-

thing that you could probably think ofor not think of. When someone thinks

they're buying you, they think they can

At around 15 or 16, Amaya was hooked

on heroin and in Rikers Island prison.

She broke out of the brainwashing fog long enough to tell the authorities her

real name and age and asked them to

call her parents. They came back and

cause I'd been gone for so many years

and I don't know what they told my parents. I had shame, horrible shame-

Amaya said she still doesn't know

how her trafficker knew to be there.

But she was desperate for a heroin fix and left with him, missing her parents

by 10 minutes. It put her back into the

"[The drugs] numbed my brain and

my body to the existence that I was

suffering. So by the time I was 23, 24,

I'm five foot nine, 99 pounds, proba-

bly going to die. I knew that," she said.

"I knew I had to do something and I

pulled myself into a drug clinic over

She recalled vividly how the recep-

tionist treated her "like a human being."

don't remember feeling like that, may-

be ever," Amaya said. "And because of

her, taking time out of her day to treat

me like a human being, she propelled

"She cared. I felt like I mattered. I

this is all my fault," she recalled. "I opened the door to the room. And I walked into the room, and it was my

trafficker standing there."

life for another seven years.

on the Lower East Side."

said her parents were on their way "I had all this flood of emotions be-

do whatever they want to do to you."

throw me out of a car," Amaya said. "The violence occurred in his hands

didn't bring in enough money.

put through, because you're not to blame," she said. "That is not the life that anyone should have to live. And

especially a child. "When you see those young girls and those young boys out there on the street, they're not out there because they want to be. They're out there because they have no place to go. They don't trust anyone." Bedrossian said a common thread in homeless and trafficked youth is that

they crave love and belonging. "We all long for significance in our lives," he said. "The No. 1 deterrent from a young person to become trafficked is having a meaningful relationship, positive relationship with an adult in their life."

Gun control advocates

attend a hearing where four gun control bills passed the Senate **Judiciary Committee at**

the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond on Jan. 13,

sparked the most

controversy was

taken off the table.

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

ICHMOND, 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" stickersshowed 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" in the 1960s. equal less gun violence."

state's Democratic-led General Assembly after approval by the Senate Judiciary Comuniversal 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

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

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

Matthew Thwing, a 41-year-old small-The rallying crowds did little to stop four business owner in Virginia, said he attended gun control measures from advancing in the the hearing to have his voice heard and to show that he and the other "nearly 1,000" Second Amendment advocates weren't gomittee. The committee passed legislation for ing 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, its a democracy. It's not a problem, and it's actually exciting, even if people don't tend to agree with elections and have vowed to enact stronger our point of view ... this is the right way to

One proposed measure (SB-16) that had



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,

(Left) A Second

Amendment advocate

(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,

(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,

tional Rifle Association (NRA), expressed committee hearing. He predicted the fight for Second Amendment rights will be a very long and drawn-out one.

an indication that the governor and some of the Democrats have seen that they've overreached and that these bills have unintended

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 turn-

level with engaging their board of supervisors, their city councils," Spiker said. "Our hope was for that enthusiasm to come to Richmond."

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 over-

flow crowd outside watching the proceed-



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 ange County," he said. "I've been to largely symbolic and were made to send a several other meetings, and I think message to lawmakers. They said that any it's a great movement that will help 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 sanctu-

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 Ordefuse 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."

Matthew Thwing, 41, small-

business owner in Virginia,

lines up to attend a hearing

on gun control bills, at the

Virginia State Capitol in

Richmond, Va., on Jan. 13,

2020.

Daniel Spiker, state director at NRA, 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 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 con-

trol 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

OUR NATION

"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,

possible use of the Virginia National

'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

"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

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

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

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







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 Na-

"SB-16 being stricken from the record is 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 lawabiding citizens," he said.

out was going to be." "It's indicative of what this movement is and the enthusiasm we're seeing at the local

The 'Second Amendment



US, China Sign 'Phase One' Trade Deal, Calming Trade Tensions

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON-The United States and China signed a much anticipated "phase one" trade deal on Jan. 15, making an important breakthrough in the nearly 2-year-old trade war.

President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He signed the accord at a White House ceremony.

"Together we are righting the wrongs of the past and delivering a future of economic justice and security for American workers farmers and families," Trump said. "This is a very important and remarkable occasion."

"Our negotiations were tough, honest, open, and respectful, leading us to this really incredible breakthrough. Most people thought this thing will never happen. It should have happened 25 years ago, by the way."

Vice President Mike Pence praised Trump's leadership and the trade deal.

"There's an ancient Chinese proverb that says: Men see only the present, but Heaven sees the future," Pence said. "So let today be the beginning of a brighter future, more prosperous to the American people, the Chinese people, and the world."

Trump offered rounds of praise to individual cabinet members and officials involved in negotiating the treaty, and to businessmen attending the ceremony at the White House, including executives of Mastercard, Honeywell, Boeing, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AIG, J.P. Morgan Chase, and Ford.

Trump also promised an end to punitive tariffs on China after the completion of the "phase two" deal, negotiations on which he said would begin as phase one kicks in.

Toward the end of the remarks, Trump said: "This is the biggest deal there is anywhere in the world, by far. And that's good. We're doing another big one next week [the USMCA comes up for a vote in the Senate]. But this is the biggest deal anybody has ever seen. And it can lead to being a deal that's unprecedented, because China has 1.5 billion people, and ultimately, in phase two, we're going to be opening up China to all of your [American] companies. So I hope you folks can handle it."

Liu He began his remarks by thanking the president of the United States, and then said he would like to read a letter from Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

"Mr. President, as China and the United States sign a phase one trade agreement, I've asked Vice Premier Liu He to bring my warm greetings," the letter states.

Xi reminded Trump of a Dec. 20 phone call in which he said the conclusion of the deal was good for China, the United States, and the whole world, and he hoped the two nations could now work on mutual respect.

"In that spirit, I hope the U.S. side will treat fairly Chinese companies and their regular trade and investment activities and give support to the collaboration between enterprises, research institutes, and schools and colleges of the two countries," Xi wrote.

Xi expressed hope for better U.S.-China relations and extended greetings for the Lunar

Liu spoke optimistically about the significance of the deal as well.

"Over the past two years, the two sides encountered some difficulties in the economic and trade field," Liu said. "However, our two economic teams did not give up. With the relentless efforts from both sides on the basis of equality and mutual respect, we have reached this phase one trade agreement."

The Deal

Beijing has committed to buying \$200 billion worth of additional U.S. goods and services over the next two years, including \$40 billion to \$50 billion of agricultural goods each year.

"The farmers are going to be so happy," Trump said.

In addition to farm products, Beijing has committed to buying additional manufactured goods of more than \$75 billion, energy products of over \$50 billion, and services close to \$38 billion over the next two years, a senior administration official told reporters.

These purchases are expected to continue on the same trajectory for several years after 2021 and contribute to the rebalancing of the U.S.-China trade relations, according to a factsheet on the deal released by the administration.

In return, Washington has agreed to modify its Section 301 tariff actions. It canceled a 15 percent levy on nearly \$160 billion of Chinese goods scheduled for mid-December. It reduced tariffs to 7.5 percent from 15 percent on about \$120 billion of Chinese imports.

In addition, the 25 percent tariffs on nearly \$250 billion of Chinese goods were kept in place, instead of increasing them to 30 percent, as was scheduled.

Beijing also canceled imposing tariffs on U.S. goods that had been scheduled for Dec. 15 as retaliation.

Trump said that he would use the remaining U.S. tariffs as a bargaining chip for the second



Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and President Donald Trump, surrounded by officials, during the signing of phase one of a trade deal, in the East Room of the White House, on

Jan. 15, 2020.

Together, we

are righting

the wrongs

of the past

a future of

economic

justice and

security for

farmers, and

President Donald

Tim Bardole uses

harvest soybeans

in the field at the

Bardole & Sons Ltd farm in Rippey,

Iowa, on Oct. 14,

a combine to

American

workers

families.

and delivering

Enforcement Mechanism

credit companies.

phase of the deal.

finish phase two."

Included in the deal is a dispute resolution system that prescribes time frames for actions at various stages: starting from the working level, escalating all the way up to the USTR and Vice Premier level of both countries.

"I'm leaving them on, because otherwise,

we have no cards to negotiate with," Trump

said. "They will all come off as soon as we

The agreement also includes some commit-

ments by China to protect intellectual prop-

erty, stop forced technology transfers, and

provide transparency on foreign exchange

China has also promised to open up its fi-

nancial services markets to U.S. banks and

It's designed to be a 75-day period from the start of the appeal until resolution of the dispute, according to a senior administration official. If there's no resolution within that time frame, there will be an opportunity for expedited consultations on the remedy for an additional 15 days. If parties fail to reach a resolution, they have the choice to quit the agreement, the official said.

"If we decide to take an action against China for violation of the agreement, they will have to make an assessment whether they want to be in the agreement or not," he said.

It was designed this way to avoid China retaliating or challenging the United States at the World Trade Organization, he said.

Uncertainty to Persist

Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), an outspoken critic of the Beijing regime, casts doubt on whether China can fulfill its pledges.

"While it's positive the United States is working towards a deal that would increase sales of U.S. agriculture products, Communist China never lives up to the bar-

> gain," he told The Epoch Times in an email. "Communist China is stealing our technology and refuses to open their markets to foreign goods as required by their agreement to be part of the WTO, and needs to be

held accountable." Despite this partial agreement, the uncertainty is likely to persist in 2020 as U.S.-China bilateral relations go beyond trade.

"This is also about human rights,"

The Florida senator has been critical of Beijing for militarizing the South China Sea, for breaking the Hong Kong agreement, and for attacking religious freedom.

Thorny Issues Remaining

The most important issues in U.S.-China relations are put off for a future negotiation. The phase one deal does not address China's state subsidies, for example, one of the top concerns of the administration and the impetus for starting a trade war.

Beijing has made no indication of how it would cut state subsidies and, politically, there seems to be no appetite to do that, according to experts. In the past decade, by funneling hundreds of billions of dollars into government subsidies, China has managed to create its own national champions in key industries.

In addition, China's stance on intellectual property will continue to be a thorny issue, as Beijing wouldn't make a significant concession to meet U.S. demands, experts say.

China has passed legislation to improve market access and strengthen IP protection in recent years. However, skepticism remains over the enforcement of these rules.

The phase one deal is "a small down payment on what needs to be done," according to Peter Morici, an economist and business professor at the University of Maryland.

"As the agreement stands right now in terms of actual substantive changes in Chinese policy, there's not a lot there," he said.

"We have to see whether the Chinese will keep their word, whether they will indeed buy \$200 billion more in U.S. products. If they do that, it might be easier to achieve a phase two deal because then liberalization in China might come easier."

Morici, however, does not anticipate any progress on phase two talks until after the U.S. presidential election.

"If Trump is not reelected, this agreement becomes very questionable," he said.

Currency Manipulation

The U.S. Treasury Department on Jan. 13 dropped its designation of China as a currency manipulator in its latest semi-annual currency report, reversing its August decision.

The United States accused China of resorting to currency manipulation to create an unfair competitive trade advantage. The Treasury's designation in August was the first since 1994.

In the latest report, the Treasury stated that China had made "enforceable commitments to refrain from competitive devaluation" and provided transparency on foreign exchange activities as part of the phase one trade deal.

After depreciating as far as 7.18 per dollar in September, the Chinese renminbi appreciated and is currently trading at about 6.90

6 Sectors to Benefit Most

The trade deal is welcome news for U.S. farmof farm products, including soybeans, corn, wheat, cotton, rice, and sorghum, as well as livestock goods. Soybean has been among those hit hardest, as it accounted for nearly 10 percent of total U.S. exports to China before the trade war.

In a research note, Cesar Rojas, an economist at Citigroup, wrote that the United States might need to increase the output of six products to meet the terms of the deal. These products include soybeans, auto chassis, auto bodies, aircraft, liquid natural gas, and LED lamps.

"Over the longer run, this is constructive for U.S. domestic investment and industrial production, but potentially costly in the shortrun," Rojas said. "This is because the U.S. has the greatest potential to immediately ship soybeans and grain to China, but not motor vehicles and aircraft."

'Trade War Is Not Over Yet'

The Chinese regime issued on Jan. 13 a cautionary note on a social media account affiliated with the state-run Economic Daily newspaper, saying the "trade war is not over yet."

The regime called the signing of the phase one trade deal "just the first round of a game."

"We must bear in mind that the trade war is not over yet-the United States hasn't revoked all its tariffs on China and China is still implementing its retaliatory measures. There are still many uncertainties down the road," the note said.

The world's two biggest economies have for months been embroiled in a tit-for-tat trade war. Trump launched a tariff campaign in 2018 as part of a strategy to end Beijing's decades-long unfair trade practices.

After joining the World Trade Organization, China has embarked on policies to support its key industries, including market barriers, state subsidies, currency manipulation, product dumping, forced technology transfers, and the theft of intellectual property and

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, one of the lead negotiators in talks with China, warned earlier that it would still be wise to be skeptical of whether China would deliver on its promises. The United States won't impose new tariffs as long as Beijing continues to act in good faith, he told reporters.



Department of Justice Inspector General Michael Horowitz testifies in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee in Washington on Dec. 11, 2019.

FISA Court Not Apolitical in Addressing Spying Abuses Against Trump Campaign

SHARYL ATTKISSON



Commentary The news of whom the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Court has just appointed to oversee

FBI fixes is nothing short of breath-

On Jan. 10, the FISA court posted an order naming anti-Trump lawyer David Kris to "assist the court" in assessing the FBI's response to the court-ordered cleanup of lapses and abuses identified by Department of Justice Inspector General (IG) Michael Horowitz.

In a report released in December 2019, the IG found that FBI officials violated rules, policies, and law in their applications to wiretap Trump 2016 presidential campaign volunteer Carter Page. Horowitz testified that the FISA surveillance process needs to be fixed "from top to bottom."

To some, the appointment of Kris to help with the job is as mysterious as to why the FISA court's judges failed to flag the FBI abuses on their own. It would seem more important than ever to have an apolitical person, or a balanced group of peoDavid Kris's vocal criticisms of President Trump present numerous. obvious conflicts of interest.

politically sensitive matters. Kris's vocal criticisms of President Donald Trump present numerous, obvious conflicts of interest. On Twitter, Kris called Rep.

Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) "a politicized, dishonest [Intelligence Community] overseer who attempts to mislead," and wrote that Trump and his advisers should be "worried" that the "walls are closing in" regarding the Mueller probe. Kris also bought into the now-disproven conspiracy theory about Trump colluding with Russia and Putin.

But even more importantly, since that time, Kris has advocated for Trump's removal.

which elected officials can use their governmental power to attack political opponents? If not, it's pretty simple: Trump has to go," Kris wrote on Twitter in October 2019. Specifically, Kris criticized what he said was Trump using government powers against political opponents, seeming to dismiss the possibility that the government had used its powers improperly against Trump. In addition, Kris writes for the blog "Lawfare" and has called Lawfare's Editor-in-Chief Benja-

The FBI headquarters in Washington on Jan. 2, 2020.

ple, conducting oversight of these prior to Trump's election:

"Do we want to be a country in min Wittes "incisive." Wittes is the

SAMIRA BOUAOU/THE EPOCH TIMES

man who wrote of the need for an "insurance policy" against Trump

CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON/THE EPOCH TIMES

"Our democracy needs a health insurance policy. ... The courts have a few obvious advantages, starting with hundreds of independent judges of both parties whom Trump cannot remove from office and who don't have to face his supporters in forthcoming elections. ... The goal ... will be to offer a systematic defense of the values the Coalition of All Democratic Forces holds in common and to have the ability to respond rapidly to actions that threaten those values: to forestall such actions in court as long as possible, to whittle them down, and to block those that can be blocked. The goal is to use the courts to render Trump's antidemocratic instincts as ineffectual as possible."

Wittes also is a friend of former FBI Director James Comey, who was referred for criminal charges for mishandling and leaking government information in his anti-Trump efforts. (The Justice Department declined to prosecute, with officials stating they didn't believe Comey meant any harm.)

Horowitz flagged 17 mistakes in the FBI's surveillance applications against Page and testified, "I think it's fair for people to ... look at all these 17 events and wonder how it could be purely incompetence."

Likewise, one could look at the FISA court's appointment of Kris to help fix things ... and wonder whether it could be purely incom-

The latest FISA court action could be construed as a moment of chilling clarity in the ongoing questions about how these abuses could have occurred, and the challenges with fixing them.

Sharyl Attkisson is the New York Times bestselling author of "Stonewalled," a five-time Emmy Award winner, and the host of Sinclair's national investigative television program "Full Measure with Sharyl Attkisson." She is a recipient of the Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative reporting.

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



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

The Great Recession: 'Reparations' Gone Bad

LARRY ELDER



rations to blacks.

Commentary Some of the Democratic candidates for president support studying reparations to blacks to compensate for slavery. But in action and many ways, America has made repaa form of

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-

In many ways, the so-called **Great Recession** of the late 2000s was a product of affirmative reparations gone bad. Really bad.

(Below) A sign stands outside a foreclosed home in

Las Vegas on Nov. 13, 2008. (Bottom) A foreclosure sign stands in front of a home in Miami

Beach, Fla., on Jan.

22, 2009.

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 com-

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-

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



FORECLOSURE

rowers, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac ist 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 discrimimonplace. What an understatement." nation lawsuit against Citibank. The But is it true that banks were dis- case was settled, and his clients got 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

Too bad nobody listened.

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk show host. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an "Elderado," visit LarryElder.com

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

The Cause of American Men and Women in Service

JEREMY STALNECKER



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

I was serving as a Marine infantry officer when the Twin Towers eventually securing the Presiden-

A U.S. Marine observes the French amphibious assault ship BPC Dixmude in the Atlantic Ocean, on Jan. 6, 2020. fell on Sept. 11, 2001. Although it seems like this would be a scary to the attack on our country, the reality is that we couldn't wait for the opportunity to deal with

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.

those responsible for killing our

19, 2003, I crossed the berm with who do serve together with an about 30,000 of my best friends as we began securing strategic objectives in Iraq. We would move means to fight alongside those north for the next several weeks,

tial Palace in northern Baghdad. ready and willing to lay their lives men and women who've decided There are many things in my time for those who would respond 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.

invisible, yet unbreakable, bond. I understand firsthand what it who, far away from the country that they represent, are both

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

down for the people to the left and 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.

ILS MARINE CORPS CPL KENNY GOMEZ/NAVY N

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

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

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OUR NATION Week 3, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES

edented wealth for granted and to forget the

crucial fact that it was our market-based

economy that led to this explosion of wealth

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.

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.

Basically, many city-dwellers have become

insulated from "real life" and forgotten how difficult it can be. Rural folks live closer to

In practice, there is."

In their desire for "quick fixes," they fall

Thoughts About Time Will Shape Our Future

MARK HENDRICKSON



Commentary Time is one of the most fascinating and impact-

ful 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 in-

volve 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 ratesor 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

the natural world. They know how merciless, resistant, and even deadly For years, our country's large cities have become more it can be to grow food, politically progresextract raw materisive (i.e., inals, harness encreasingly in favor of ergy, and otherwise make possible the ease of

A woman uses her

smartphone while

crossing a street in New

York on Nov. 13, 2014.

DON EMMERT/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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."

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-

Urbanites are more dependent on rural Americans than they realize. Perhaps, if they recognized this truth, they might not be so inclined to look down their noses at

the urbanites' daily lives.

Why would urban dwellers tend to be them as "deplorables" who read the Bible to keep going in the face of harsh adversities or have guns because they know life to be a struggle.

Demanding the Impossible

As a society, we very much need to have

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

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.

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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





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