

Jo Ann Gould, fitness club manager,

"My husband and I find it unbelievable

that a baby could be born and kept com-

fortable until the mother decides if she

"Personally, I feel abortion is murder.

If a pregnant woman gets murdered, the

killer is accountable for two lives. Why is this different? I don't like the idea but

do understand rape, incest, or if mother

"How could you look at an ultrasound

photo and not see life? Cannot imagine

a baby born, then murdered. It actually

Jo Ann Gould (R) and friends before

a Make America Great Again rally in

Wheeling, West Va., on Sept. 29, 2018.

"The [legislation] highlights the increas-

ing confidence of the anti-Christian left.

What was unthinkable 10 to 20 years

ago is now openly advocated. Christians

are becoming a minority, both in society

and in our churches. The next step is on

the other end of life, where states like

Oregon have laws that allow physician-

"Social Security was implemented

with the expectation that 40 work-

ers would support one retiree. We are

having fewer children and have aborted

about 60 million potential workers since

1973; the number is down to three work-

"The trend will be to 'put down' the

elderly earlier, denying end-of-life care

to increasingly healthier individuals as

a cost-saving measure. We reap what

we sow. The generation that champions

abortion will be the generation that ex-

(Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times)

seems insane to me."

Ed Halland, retired

assisted suicide.

ers for each retiree.

periences euthanasia."

could die giving birth have validity.

West Virginia

at National Prayer Breakfast



President Donald Trump at the 2019 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington on Feb. 7, 2019.

BOWEN XIAO

resident Donald Trump pledged to protect religious liberty and freedom of faith during the National Prayer Breakfast in Wash- persecution around the world, including ington as he defended for the second time against religious minorities, Christians, this week the sanctity of all human lifeincluding the unborn.

Speaking to religious leaders at the 67th annual National Prayer Breakfast on Feb. 7, Trump told the audience that he will safeguard faith-based adoption centers and reiterated his pro-life stance.

"As part of our commitment to building a just and loving society, we must build a culture that cherishes the dignity and sanctity of innocent human life," he said. "All children, born and unborn, are made in the holy image of God.

"Every life is sacred, and every soul is a precious gift from Heaven."

Trump said at the event, held at the Washington Hilton hotel, that he would

always cherish believers who uplift and sustain the nation, and not only in the United States. He said his administration is also speaking out against "religious

Elon Carr, a new special envoy to moni tor and combat anti-Semitism, was appointed this week by Trump. Carr left on Feb. 5 to attend two conferences on anti-Semitism in for Belgium and Slovakia.

Trump, building on comments made during his State of the Union speech days ago, promised to support anti-abortion policies amid a renewed push from Democrats seeking to pass or propose measures to expand abortion. His remarks at the high-profile religious gathering echoed what he said at the Capitol, where he denounced multiple late-term-abortion bills that have passed in a number of states, including New York.

Senate Intel Committee Chair Says There Is No

As president, I will always cherish, honor and protect the believers who uplift our communities and sustain our nation.

President Donald Trump

Rhode Island, Vermont, Maine, New Mexico, and Maryland all have pro-abortion proposals on the table. Such a proposal in Virginia was recently defeated in the Republican-controlled legislature.

Trump, in his State of the Union address, told Congress "to pass legislation to prohibit the late-term abortion of children who can feel pain in the mother's

In his prayer breakfast speech, Trump stopped short of calling for a ban of lateterm abortions like he did earlier in the week, but said he stood behind those who champion the values of faith.

"I will never let you down," he said. "As president, I will always cherish, honor and protect the believers who uplift our communities and sustain our nation. To ensure that people of faith can always contribute to our society, my administration has taken historic action to protect religious liberty."

In his speech at last year's event, Trump promised to cut the Johnson Amendment, which states that nonprofit organizations (including churches) would lose their tax-exempt status if they engaged in political speech and activity. Republicans introduced a bill to do so shortly after that speech. In May that year, Trump issued an executive order instructing the federal government not to enforce the amendment, although it did not amount to a repeal.

Republicans tried to include a repeal of the amendment in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, but it was removed due to a Senate rule. Critics of the repeal say it "would have the potential of creating a mechanism where political contributions could be made without regard to other campaign financing laws."

Other notable speakers at this year's prayer breakfast included Dr. Lance Plyler of the Samaritan's Purse evangelical Christian organization, who stressed that regardless of skin color, language, religion, or country of residence, "we are all equal in the eyes of God" and "all neighbors."

The fight against human trafficking was also highlighted by keynote speaker Gary Haugen, CEO of International Justice Mission.

"With proper funding each year, we could see this ancient sin end for good," he said. "If we all do our part, all of us, to raise our voices and to raise the resources, millions of God's children can note the freedom for which they are made."

Trump is the 12th president to speak at the annual breakfast. Every president, from both parties, since Dwight D. Eisenhower has attended the event.

Conservatives Weigh In on Late-Term Abortion and Infanticide

CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON

WASHINGTON-President Donald Trump used the State of the Union podium to unequivocally denounce infanticide and late-term abortion.

"There could be no greater contrast to the beautiful image of a mother holding her infant child than the chilling displays our nation saw in recent days," Trump said on Feb. 5, right after announcing he had included paid family leave in his budget.

The president rebuked both New York and Virginia politicians in his comments.

"Lawmakers in New York cheered with delight upon the passage of legislation that would allow a baby to be ripped from the mother's womb moments before birth," he said, "And then, we had the case of the governor of Virginia, where he basically stated he would execute a baby after birth."

On Jan. 22, New York Gov Andrew Cuomo signed a bill that allows for lateterm abortions, up to birth, if the health of the mother is at risk or the fetus isn't viable.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam said on Jan. 30 that if a mother were in labor, the infant would be delivered.

"The infant would be kept comfortable. The MP infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then, a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother," Northam said.

Trump asked Congress to pass legislation that would prohibit the late-term abortion of children who can feel pain in the mother's womb.

On Feb. 4, the Senate failed to pass a bill that was introduced by Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) after Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) voted against it. The measure would have required infants who survived late-term abortions, where birth is induced, to receive the same care expected for any other newborns by onscene health care practitioners.

Trump said, "Let us work together to build a culture that cherishes innocent life. And let us reaffirm a fundamental truth: All children-born and unbornare made in the holy image of God."

Trump received resounding approval from Republican lawmakers during this part of his speech, most Democrats, however, sat silently

The Epoch Times asked Trump supporters from around the country, "What does recent legislation for late-term abortion and infanticide signal to you about America?"

Answers may have been edited for clarity and brevity.

Catrina Albo, homemaker, New

late-term abortion signals entering into a dark, black hole for our country. When a governing body within a society no longer values the life of the truly most innocent among us, we have accepted a lie that breaks down the very fabric of

"I believe all the recent legislation on

our morality and decency. "That 'clump of cells' is a life, no matter how you look at it. Killing it does not change that fact.

"The passing of these barbaric bills in many states just confirms and establishes that human life is not important. People absorb this ideology into their thinking if they do not have a strong religious faith or sense of morality. They believe that they have control of human life, including their own and that of an unborn child. They feel no conviction with taking life, because our society condones it."

"Taking God out of our society is now clearly on display for the world to wit-

Catrina Albo before a Make America Great Again rally in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., on Aug. 2, 2018. (Samira Bouaou/The Ep-

Rita Eveland, retired, Nashville, Tenn.

"Life is precious, at any age. While our society has made great strides in achiev-

ing equality and recognizing the rights of a free people, the devaluing of human life that started with Roe v. Wade has exponentially increased to the point we find ourselves today.

"Listening to 'leaders' extolling the process of killing live children, and celebrating their ability to do so, is horrifying. We are inside of another Holocaust and the monsters that hold this up as 'good' should be removed from public office. What sort of society murders its young? There is deep evil at work here."

Floyd Conaway, veteran

Catrina Albo in Wilkes-

Barre, Pa.,

on Aug. 2, 2018.

"Do the politicians that lead the way for the legislation get any of the [Planned Parenthood] funds, directly or indi-

"I would also like to point out that

the Democrats are pushing this infanticide and late-term abortion legislation and that their supporters applaud it. I guess this is population control for minorities and poor. Hitler and the Nazis couldn't have done a better job themselves thinking this up. But abortion has taken far more

> Hitler himself. "I, for one, am both saddened by what's happening and afraid of what the future holds for mankind-of course, for those aborted babies, there

lives than even

is no future." Floyd Conaway in Wheeling, West Va., on Sept. 29, 2018. (Samira Bouaou/The Epoch Times)

Del Oakes, electrician, Johnson City, Tenn.

life only proves our selfishrupted the soul

"All life is valuable. I mourn this much as I mourn the death of the children and adults who are perishing to reach our borders. The church must step up to meet both crises and stop relying on the government to do the job the church

is called to do."

born baby is in.

to their false gods?

Sabrina Corns, Ohio

out of it."

Virginia

Dan Cooley, forester, West

"It is so sad to see these liberal lead-

ers with no morals, ethics, or common

sense. We are human beings at the mo-

ment of conception. Abortion is murder,

no matter what stage of growth the un-

"It is extremely sickening and disturb-

ing to think that some of the elected of-

ficials have no regard for human life.

Imagine taking a baby and cutting it up

into little pieces and throwing it in the

garbage–is this any different than the

ancient heathens who sacrificed babies

"Our country is in sad shape morally

and ethically, and it will only get worse

if we continue to leave Almighty God

"I believe the new abortion bill is a dis-

grace. Where have we come as a nation

to the point abortion is legal to the point

of dilation? I mean, even to a leftist, this

should be concerning. Democrats have

children. Why is this OK for anyone?

That is a life! It's murder! It really blows

my mind that this is even being discussed.

God and his word. I also believe I don't

have the right to judge others and what

they do with their life, even if I disagree

with it. However, this late-term abor-

tion bill just crosses all lines. It is flat-out

"You know, I am pro-life. I believe in

"The recent legislation is a sad reflection on America. The fact we place so little value on human

ness and that disposable consumerism has cor-America. legislation as

Catrina Albo, homemaker, N.J

HATE

I believe all the

recent legislation

on late-term

abortion signals

entering into a

dark, black hole

for our country.

AKE NEWS

America Great Again rally in Johnson City, Tenn., on Oct. 1, 2018

Del Oakes before a Make



"It's very sad. Not only are late-term abortions and infanticide allowed to occur, but people are celebrating the fact that they can kill their children. It sick-

ens me and signals to me a decline in morality, compassion, and human decency. We should be alarmed, and praying for our country."

iffany Short, manufacturing, Rosehill, Va.

"It means that we as human beings have lost all of our compassion. People nave got so far from being caring moms and dads-to ones who are willing to kill their own baby as it is being born. "This is so sick and deranged that it is considered legal, but if someone kills a woman and her unborn baby, it is

murder. Why would people want to kill their own flesh and blood? This world is letting so much evil take over. I do not even understand why people would support this.

"Instead of pushing for more abortion laws, why don't these people push for more birth control? This signals to me how far of a downward spiral America is on. President Trump is for things that are conservative, pro-life-something we need more of in Congress. Pray for America."

Mike Alicea, retired banker

"On principle, I don't believe in abortion. I have a hard time believing God is thinking this is a good idea. That being said, abortion is the law of the land and we must abide by the laws of the land and change them by Constitutional amendments, the way Prohibition was abolished.

"I respect the right of a woman to be the determinant of her body.

While it is a woman's right, I don't believe that this is something that should be federally funded at all.

"Let me just say, a woman's right for an abortion to save her life is unquestionably justifiable in my opinion. But it seems to me that passing laws that say you can abort a baby till the day it is born seems contradictory to the fact that a criminal can be charged with homicide of a pregnant mother's baby."

on human life only proves our selfishness and that disposable consumerism has corrupted the soul of America.

Del Oakes electrician, Johnson City, Tenn.



so little value

Evidence of Trump-Russia Collusion

After questioning more than 200 witnesses and reviewing more than 300,000 documents over the course of two years, investigators working for the Senate Intelligence Committee have found no evidence to support the allegation that the 2016 Trump presidential campaign colluded with Russia, according to the committee's chairman, Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.).

"If we write a report based upon the facts that we have, then we don't have anything that would suggest there was collusion by the Trump campaign and Russia," Burr said.

Burr made the remarks in an exclusive interview with CBS News published on Feb. 7. The senator shared the same conclusion with Fox News in September 2018, noting at the time that more facts may come to light.

The House Intelligence Committee came to the same conclusion in March last year, and found no evidence that any member of the Trump campaign colluded with Russia. The committee instead discovered that the Clinton campaign paid a former foreign spy to compile a dossier of opposition research

If we write a report based upon the facts that we have, then we don't have anything that would suggest there was collusion

Russia. Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.)

by the Trump

campaign and

on then-candidate Donald Trump. The FBI then used the dossier, without due verification, to surveil a former member of the Trump Burr's committee unsuccessfully attempted

to interview former British spy Christopher "We've made multiple attempts," Burr said. In contrast to the House committee led by

Rep. Devin Nunes (R-Calif.), Burr's committee operated in a bipartisan fashion and only took steps that both sides agreed on. Burr's committee also did not draw the kind of intense public attention associated with the work of the House intelligence committee.

"When you don't do something in public, you don't become the target of criticism or praise. And that's fine with me," Burr said.

Special counsel Robert Mueller is also investigating allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. Similar to the House and Senate committees, Mueller has not charged anyone for colluding with

According to CBS, Burr has often been concerned that his committee's findings may con-

flict with that of the special counsel. He said he is not waiting for Mueller's report before releasing his own.

"If I can finish tomorrow, I would finish tomorrow," he said. "We know we're getting to the bottom of the barrel because there are not new questions that we're searching for an-

Burr said the conclusions of his committee's investigation won't satisfy Trump's ardent critics or supporters. "I have no belief that at the end of our process,

people that love Donald Trump are going to applaud what we do. And I have no belief that people that hate Donald Trump are going to reverse and say, 'Well, you know, this clears him.' They are solidly in one camp or the other."

"I'm speaking to what I hope is the 60 percent in the middle that are saying, 'Give me the facts that I need to make a determination in this one particular instance—what happened.' And that's what our focus is," he said. Burr concluded by cautioning the media and

the American people about false reporting. "My only advice to you is, be careful. There are a lot of false narratives out there," he said. WEEK 7, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

Climate Change HASN'T CAUSED CRISIS, Heartland Institute Scientists Say

NATHAN SU

lmost 27 years after the United Nations adopted the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), many scientists now say there is no crisis caused by climate change

In the past few decades, people around the world have become used to hearing scientists insist that there's a consensus on global warming and a resulting climatechange crisis.

Most people never question the details of the so-called consensus that scientists have agreed to, because everyone knows the earth is getting warmer. But to researchers and scientists at the Heartland Institute, an Illinois-based free-market think tank, the details of the climate-change issue are very important

"There are only two things scientists are in consensus: climate has become warmer, and the greenhouse gas generated by human activities made the temperature increase," James Taylor, a senior fellow for environment and energy policy at Heartland Institute, told The

But "the real issue is whether we have created a climate crisis," said

Epoch Times.

Taylor, in an interview with C-Span on the Green New Deal on Jan. 8.

In other words, a warmer climate doesn't mean a crisis is coming.

Taylor said the earth has been warmer or colder many times during human civilization. He said that for most of the past 6,000 to 8,000 years, the earth's temperatures were much warmer than they are today.

For the scientists and researchers at Heartland Institute, the only consensus is that global warming hasn't brought a climate-change crisis. Many researchers and scientists in the United States have joined the campaign led by the institute to

promote a healthy, science-based skepticism regarding climate change.

Al Gore's Misprojection

In December 2018, during the 24th U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP24) at Katowice, Poland, the Heartland Institute and the Polish Solidarity labor union issued a joint statement calling on the U.N. to ensure the "restoration of the Scientific Method and the dismissal of ideological dogma."

During COP 24, the Heartland Institute shared a video that listed the top five things that former Vice President Al Gore got spectacularly wrong on climate change:

5. Gore in 2006 said that we had 10 years

to save the planet, but the planet is still not doomed, as of the end of 2018. 4. Gore predicted that the Arctic would

be ice-free by the summer of 2014, which was not the case. 3. It was said that the flow of the Gulf

Stream would slow, leading to a climate catastrophe. But NASA data show the Gulf Stream current may actually be speeding 2. Polar bears were said to be in danger of

> extinction. But polar bear numbers are now at an all-time high. 1. Gore said in 2006 that sea levels would rise by as much as 20 feet "in the near future.

President Donald Trump arrives to announce his decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris climate agreement at the White House on June 1, 2017.

Heartland Institute senior fellow James Taylor.

But the sea level increase hasn't deviated from its pace of about 3 millimeters a year, or about the

height of two dimes. Taylor said that "[the] environmental movement is utilizing global warming issues as a means to centralize power and a global bureaucracy that is premised on redistributing wealth, [and increasing] government control."

Heartland Institute's Rebuttal of Climate

In September 2018, while the Global Climate Action Summit (GCAS) was being held in San Francisco, the Heartland Institutè

The environmental movement is utilizing global-warming issues as a means to centralize power and a global bureaucracy that is premised on redistributing wealth, [and increasing] government control.

> James Taylor, senior fellow, Heartland Institute

Activists remove polar bear costumes on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, after a protest in Washington on Sept. 26, 2013. The polar bear has become a symbol of concerns about global warming.

rebuttal panel discussion in Oakland, California, against GCAS. In the rebuttal discussion, a group of sci-

entists and researchers claimed that there isn't universal scientific approval of a cli-"We feel that it is very important that sci-

and the Independent Institute held a joint

ence drives the discussion and the politics," Taylor said during the rebuttal discussion. GCAS, on the other hand, held "A Dialogue on How Science Is Supporting Climate

Action" as part of its events. The dialogue at GCAS featured speakers such as California Gov. Jerry Brown, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy, and University of California President Janet Napolitano.

Taylor described the science of GCAS as "a politician or two referencing drought or Hurricane Florence, and attributing them to global warming without any data, scientific theories, explanations, or observations."

In the rebuttal discussion, Dr. Stanley Goldenberg, one of the meteorologists who sits on the panel, read a monthly weather review published by the American Meteorology Society in 1922.

"The Arctic Ocean is warming up," he read. "Within a few years, it is predicted that due to the ice melting, the sea level will rise and make most of the coastal cities uninhabitable."

Dr. Goldenberg then suggested that that 1920s weather review be read at GCAS.

President Shows Support

Taylor said that President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Agreement, which seeks to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, was a "fantastic decision," and that "the basis for the Paris Agreement is false and scientifically unjustified."

Taylor pointed out that if carbon dioxide emissions and global warming were truly the concerns of the Paris Agreement, nations around the world would appreciate and learn from the United States, because carbon dioxide emissions in the states have declined 14 percent since 2005, while in the same time period, the rest of the world's carbon dioxide emissions rose by 56 per-

However, instead of being held as a shining example, the United States has been criticized by the nations joining the global climate summit, Taylor said.

The Paris Agreement requires developed countries to pay \$100 billion each year, which proves that "the United Nations' goal is to transfer money and power from the democracy countries to the United Nations," Taylor stated

Taylor said that France has the most support for taking steps to address global warming, but even in France, the "yellow vest" movement shows that there's a limit to how much of their taxes the people are willing to spend on these measures.

Although the rebuttal to the claims of a climate-change crisis by these scientists comes 27 years after UNFCCC, it may be just in time for the Green New Deal battle in Congress.

DOJ Opens Probe Into 'Sweetheart' Plea Deal for Billionaire Child Predator Jeffrey Epstein

WILLIAM PATRICK

he U.S. Department of Justice announced Feb. 6 that it has opened an investigation into a 2007 plea deal that allowed New York billionaire Jeffrey Epstein to serve only 13 months in a Florida jail while being accused of molesting more than 100 underage girls, some of them just 14 years

years in a row."

manded they be young.'

him young girls.

President Bill Clinton.

first met Epstein, became a young recruiter.

would listen to and he was right," Wild said.

of how young the girls were, "because he de-

could find them," she said, explaining that

Epstein would get angry if she couldn't find

"If I had a girl to bring him at breakfast,

lunch, and dinner, then that's how many times

I would go a day. He wanted as many girls as I

could get him. It was never enough," she said.

ments, revealed that Epstein's many guests

included entertainers, politicians, business

magnates, and even royalty. Among them was

According to court documents obtained

by Fox News in 2016, subpoenaed flight logs

show Clinton, a longtime Epstein associ-

ate, took at least 26 trips aboard Epstein's

jet. Clinton reportedly traveled without his

Secret Service detail on many of those oc-

The Herald, along with civil court docu-

"He went after girls who he thought no one

She explained that Epstein was well aware

In a letter to Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.), Assistant Attorney General Stephen E. Boyd said an internal investigation is underway to examine whether DOJ attorneys committed "professional misconduct."

"The Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) has now opened an investigation into allegations that Department attorneys may have committed professional misconduct in the manner in which the Epstein criminal matter was resolved," Boyd wrote.

Boyd was responding to two separate letters Sasse sent to the department regarding the Epstein matter—one on Dec. 3. and another Jan. 14. On Jan. 15, Sasse pressed President Donald Trump's U.S. attorney general nominee, William Barr, for a commitment to investigate the

"If I'm confirmed, I'll make sure your questions are answered," Barr said during his testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Barr has yet to be confirmed, but momentum on the case already appears to be building. On the afternoon of Feb. 6, Sasse issued a statement in response to Boyd's letter.

"Jeffrey Epstein is a child rapist and there's not a single mom or dad in America who shouldn't be horrified by the fact that he received a pathetically soft sentence," said Sasse.

"The victims of Epstein's child sex-trafficking ring deserve this investigation-and so do the American people and the members of law enforcement who work to put these kinds of monsters behind bars."

'Perversion of Justice'

Epstein, a former hedge fund manager, now 66, allegedly operated an international child sex ring at his Palm Beach, Florida, mansion and 72-acre private island estate in the Caribbean. He reportedly used human-trafficking re-

cruiters to coerce young girls into his orbit, only to perform sex acts with them, along with many of his Palm Beach and island guests. The girls were often transported from the

United States to his island estate on his private jet, dubbed the "Lolita Express" in the media. Boyd's letter, along with Sasse's questioning of Barr, referenced the Miami Herald's threepart investigative series, "Perversion of Justice.' which delved into Epstein's alleged crimes and the DOJ's subsequent "sweetheart" plea deal, which the newspaper called "the deal of a life-

Many of the girls were one step away from homelessness, the Herald reported.

"We were stupid, poor children," said one anonymous woman who had never told anyone about Epstein. She was 14 and a high school freshman when he first abused her. "We just The Deal of a Lifetime wanted money for school clothes, for shoes. I

Facing life in prison if convicted on human remember wearing shoes too tight for three trafficking charges, Epstein assembled an elite team of lawyers, perhaps rivaling O.J. Simp-Courtney Wild, who was also 14 when she son's 1995 so-called "dream team."

> The attorneys included Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz, Jay Lefkowitz, Gerald Lefcourt, Jack Goldberger, Roy Black, Guy Lewis, and former special prosecutor Kenneth Starr, who investigated Bill Clinton's infamous affair with White House intern Monica Lewinski.

"He told me he wanted them as young as I Despite a mountain of evidence and witnesses, federal prosecutors and Epstein's lawyers arranged an extremely lenient deal.

> Epstein, then 54, pleaded guilty to only two felony prostitution charges in state court, a number of challenges. Boyd's Feb. 6 letter rather than federal court, and served only 13 indicates that the DOJ's Office of Professional months in a private section of the Palm Beach County iail.

Per the agreement, Epstein was allowed to maintain that he was unaware that any of the girls he molested were under age 18. The deal also provided a work release arrangement allowing Epstein to leave the jail for 12 hours a day, six days a week.

He was reportedly being picked up by his private driver on those days, and transported to his downtown West Palm Beach office, where

he logged unsupervised work release hours. The deal, called a federal prosecution agreement, was also sealed. As a result, information

relating to Epstein's alleged crimes, the people who participated in them and details of the plea negotiations are still unknown.

Secretary of Labor Alex Acosta was the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida at the time of the highly unusual plea arrangement. Court records and emails obtained by the Miami Herald show that Acosta was personally involved.

A Labor Department spokesperson said in a statement that Acosta "welcomes the OPR's additional review of this matter."

Conflict of Interest

Those hoping for accountability still may face Responsibility is conducting the investigation.

The OPR functions similarly to a police department's internal affairs division, but is no toriously secretive. Unlike the DOJ Inspector General, who could have handled the investigation if allowed, OPR internal probes rarely become public.

Sasse alluded to resistance within the department when he questioned Barr on Jan. 15.

"Those of us who have been pressing on this matter have found in different parts of the Department a lot of anxiety about the way this was handled ... and a bunch of people who think they are not responsible," said Sasse.



The Department of Justice in Washington on Dec. 7, 2017.

Skills Gap Crisis Is Great Threat to US Economy, Congressman Says

EMEL AKAN

WASHINGTON-Optimism within the nation's business world has reached its highest levels in years, yet this optimism is challenged by a growing shortage of skilled workers-an issue that cuts across many industries. As the U.S. economy continues to expand,

investment in workforce education and training have never been more important to sustain growth, according to the National Skills Coalition. Nearly 80 percent of jobs require some form of education or training beyond high school.

"There is a tremendous return on investment when we invest in any type of workforce development," Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-Pa.) told The Epoch Times.

"I've always been one to advocate for more money invested" in workforce education programs as they "can take people off of government dependency," he added.

Thompson believes that the skills gap problem is one of the greatest threats to the nation's

"Given future retirements, given the current state of seven million jobs that are open or available, not having a qualified and trained workforce is a tremendous risk," he said.

Thompson, together with Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Ill.), sponsored the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The bipartisan effort over-

hauls the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, providing \$1.2 billion for the program annually Following years of delay, the bill passed both

the House and Senate unanimously in July last year and was signed into law by President Donald Trump. It reforms the career, technical, and vocational education system in the United States for the first time since 2006.

The bill is a significant step in fixing the skills problem, but Washington needs to do more, according to Krishnamoorthi. "There's still a very big stigma associated

with skills-based education. So we have to figure out ways to lessen the stigma," he told The Epoch Times. "We also have to figure out ways to equip people who go through a skillsbased education curriculum with potentially business skills, so that they can become entrepreneurs."

Krishnamoorthi also stressed the importance of apprenticeship programs and praised companies such as Zurich North America Insurance that develop skills pipelines to support economic growth. In his congressional district, he said, the insurance company partnered with a local community college to offer an apprenticeship program that trains hundreds of stu-

Businesses Struggle to Fill Jobs

Many Americans lack the talent or credentials they need to compete for existing jobs. As of the end of November, there were 6.9 million unfilled jobs. Meanwhile, 6.5 million unemployed Americans are looking for jobs, and the labor force participation rate lingers at 63 percent.

Historic labor-market tightness, combined

with years of underinvestment in technical skills training, has made it very difficult for companies to fill job openings. Small business owners, for example, continue to hire at record high levels, but 88 per-

according to a recent report by the National Federation of Independent Business. Another report, by Deloitte Consulting and the Manufacturing Institute, found that about 2 million positions in the manufacturing sector

cent struggle with finding qualified employees,

would go unfilled in the next 10 years because of the skills gap. Trump signed an executive order in July to create the National Council for the American Worker, which is responsible for developing strategies to address this growing skills problem. The council, made up of top government

officials, works with the private sector and local governments to expand vocational education, technical, and on-the-job training for students and mid-to-late career workers. More than 100 U.S. companies and organiza-

tions said they would support the workforce initiative, by pledging to train over 6 million workers and students to help them gain new

In addition, Trump created the Apprentice-

ship Task Force and signed an executive order to lift the regulatory burden on apprenticeship programs. The White House also took action to increase access to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education for K-12 students.

In the State of the Union speech on Feb. 5, Trump didn't mention the workforce development initiatives, although he did tout the record unemployment numbers.

"I thought that was a missed opportunity," Krishnamoorthi said. "This was one of the biggest achievements of the last two years-completely bipartisan, bicameral. I think he would have earned a big standing ovation."

There is tremendous bipartisan support on this issue, as "everybody knows that skillsbased education is the future of our country,"

Growth in the labor force is one of two key factors in high and sustainable economic growth. For more than five decades, a growing labor force provided a sizable boost to economic expansion, thanks to the emergence of the baby boom generation and the entry of women into the workforce.

Since the turn of the century, however, workforce participation has steadily declined from just above 67 percent to a low of below 63 percent. The recent decline has been concerning to many economists and policymakers who recognize the strong link between labor force participation and economic growth.

Then-acting

FBI Direc-

tor Andrew

McCabe tes-

tifies before

the Senate

Intelligence Committee

on May 11, 2017.

Congressional testimony by Trisha Anderson highlights unusual process used by FBI and DOJ in obtaining FISA warrant on former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page

JEFF CARLSON

risha Anderson, the principal deputy general counsel for the FBI and head of the bureau's National Security and Cyber Law Branch, signed off on an application for a warrant to spy on former Trump campaign adviser Carter Page-before the application went to FBI Director James Comey-despite not having read it,

Anderson, whose division was also assigned the Mid-Year Exam-the FBI's investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server-was responsible for legal oversight of the FBI's Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) applications process, and provided a final sign-off before FISA applications were sent to the FBI director level. Anderson, who supervised the FBI attorneys involved in FISA applications, characterized her role as being "involved at a supervisory level within the legal chain of command."

Although she did not voluntarily reveal the information, she admitted during questioning that she was the individual responsible at the senior executive service (SES) level for signing off on the original Carter Page FISA application:

MR. BREITENBACH: "You had mentioned earlier that all FISAs have to be signed off, have an approver at an SES level. In OGC? Or is that anywhere inside the FBI?"

TRISHA ANDERSON: "In NSLB, in my particular branch."

MR. BREITENBACH: "In NSLB?" MS. ANDERSON: "Yeah. Uh-huh."

MR. BREITENBACH: "Okay. Who was that SES approver for the Carter Page FISA?"

MS. ANDERSON: "My best recollection is that I was for the initiation."

In her Aug. 31, 2018, testimony, a transcript of which was reviewed for this article, Anderson described her role in the FISA process as "a backstop" whereby she would serve as "a last check in the process to ensure that all necessary elements of the FISA package were present and that it met the basic requirements of probable cause.'

application, only the DOJ cover note: MR. BREITENBACH: "Does that mean you read the FISA -"

MS. ANDERSON: "No."

MR. BREITENBACH: "Okay. So you did not read the FISA, but you would've been familiar then with at least part of the FISA with regard to the legal predication for probable cause in the FISA in order to be able to sign it?"

MS. ANDERSON: "I would be familiar based on the cover note, ves."

MR. BREITENBACH: "On the cover note. Okay. So

MS. ANDERSON: "In the case of the Carter Page FISA. I was generally familiar with the facts of the application -

MR. BREITENBACH: "Okay." **MS. ANDERSON:** "— before I signed that cover

Anderson claimed that in the case of the Page FISA, her approval was "more administrative in nature" because "all necessary approvals, including up through and including the leadership of the FBI and the leadership of the Department" had been obtained by the time the Page FISA came to her desk for sign-off.

The Page FISA application relied heavily on allegations made in the so-called Steele dossier paid for by Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and the Democratic National Com-

At the time of the FISA application, none of these allegations had been verified or validated by the FBI when they were presented to the FISA court in support of probable cause, and the Steele dossier remains unverified to this

Yahoo News article by Michael Isikoff, which focused on Page's July 2016 trip to Moscow. This information, which was used by the FBI to "corroborate" the dossier, was provided to Isikoff by the author of the dossier, former MI6 agent Christopher Steele.

that "Deputy FBI Director McCabe testified" and we were doing so in way that was consisbefore the Committee in December 2017 that no surveillance warrant would have been sought from the FISC without the Steele dossier information." According to former FBI counterintelligence head Bill Priestap, "corroboration of the Steele dossier was in its 'infancy' at the time of

Anderson admitted that the Page FISA process was handled outside of normal procedures, cials at both the FBI and DOJ-including Deputy FBI Director Andrew McCabe and Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates-prior to the docu-

MS. ANDERSON: "In this particular case, I'm drawing a distinction because my boss and my boss' boss had already reviewed and approved this application. And, in fact, the Deputy Attorney General, who had the authority to sign the application, to be the substantive approver on the FISA application itself, had approved the application. And that typically would not have been the case before I did that. Before, I would usually sign the cover note on the FISA

in that sense, in that it received very high-level review and approvals - informal, oral approvals – before it ever came to me for signature. And so, in this particular case, I wouldn't view it as my role to second-guess that substantive approval that had already been given by the Deputy Director and by the Deputy Attorney General in this particular instance."

When asked to describe the attention the FISA application received from FBI and DOJ Director was involved in reviewing the FISA line by line. The Deputy Attorney General over volved, as I understood, reviewing the FISA application line by line."

acterization of McCabe's level of review, noting that "[t]he Deputy Director read it, as I under-

McCabe's review of the Page FISA was not ad-

dressed at any time.

In particular, Anderson singled out the involvement of her former boss, FBI General Counsel James Baker, in the Page FISA review process. Anderson described Baker as "one of the Nation's leading experts on FISA...one of the best people you could possibly consult about what was contained within the FISA application."

Anderson, while defending her handling of the Page FISA signing, claimed that Baker had "personally reviewed and made edits to the

However, according to Baker's Oct. 3, 2018, testimony, he had only read a small portion of the Page FISA and specifically did not review the underlying Woods Procedure file, which provided documentation for the accuracy of facts represented in the FISA application: **REP. MEADOWS:** "And did you read the whole

JAMES BAKER: "I – my recollection is that I read the factual part of the initiation of the Carter Page FISA. I am not going to say I read -"

Carter Page FISA application?"

Baker clarified that by "factual part" he meant that he had only read the probable cause section of the Page FISA. He also testified that he had asked Anderson to personally notify him when the Page FISA began "moving through the system." Baker noted that he did not believe he reviewed the final document, stating "the final would not necessarily have to come to me for approval."

Contrary to Anderson's claim, Baker said that he was primarily relying on briefings from his staff, which presumably would have included Anderson in her role as head of the National Security and Cyberlaw Branch–the specific legal division within the FBI that was responsible for the Page FISA:

"[W]hatever briefing I received from my folks about what was in the application, my assessment was that the information that we were providing was adequate and consistent, it was adequate to put the FISA court on notice of the The House Intelligence Committee noted important information that it needed to know,

in the FISA application:

of evidence, that the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court should have been apprised of

Questions Over FISA Process

for the surveillance of American citizens, has been sold to the public as being subject to a thorough and rigorous process that entails a detailed vetting of the application at multiple levels within the FBI and DOJ. But Anderson provided some startling insights into the actual

Judging from Anderson's testimony, it appears that most of the work, including detailed reviews, are primarily done at lower levels within the FBI. By the time a FISA application makes its way to Anderson, her description of involvement at the SES level invokes something more closely resembling bureaucratic approval than intensive review:

"[T]he review by an SESer within FBI OGC, it happens on a very short timeframe. In other words, those SESers often will get a stack of FISAs that are – it could be 10, could be 15, could be 5 – you know, perhaps, the morning they're obligated to go to the Director or the

As Anderson herself noted, "There's not a lot of opportunity for substantive review."

The FISA process does not appear to be any more rigorous at the leadership levels of the FBI. Anderson claimed that the FBI "Director might on any particular day receive a stack of as many as 15, 17, 20 FISAs." And the allotted time for the director's review of the applications seems surprisingly short:

Director to receive a stack this tall. I'm indicating about a foot and a half between my hands here, for the benefit of the reporter. And so that, obviously, is not commensurate with the 20 minutes the Director has in his schedule for review and approval of the FISAs.

"And so he does rely heavily on the process, on the rigor of the process, both on the FBI side and on the DOJ side, as well as on the cover note that is generated by a DOJ lawyer who has read and been involved in the drafting of that FISA application. And so, yes, the Director or Deputy Director, if he signs the FISA, you The amount of time spent reviewing and signing off on FISA applications at the leadership level appeared to surprise the House majority investigative counsel involved in An-

MR. BAKER: "And you said just a minute ago – I thought you said that the Director has 20 minutes set aside to review all the FISAs?" **MS. ANDERSON:** "Approximately, yes."

know, relies on others."

derson's interview:

by the next morning.

MR. BAKER: "That's a real number?" **MS. ANDERSON:** "It's not set in stone, and so we do have a process in place by which the Deputy Director or Director often will get a heads-up about the number – there's an email that goes out every evening that indicates the number of FISAs that are ready for the Director's signature

Despite the fact that Anderson did not read the final FISA application she signed off on, Anderson repeatedly noted the particular importance of the Page FISA and claimed that it received an extraordinary level of scrutiny and preparation:

"We understood, because of who Carter Page was, that people would second-guess the appropriateness of submitting the FISA application, and so we were taking extra care with the application itself."

Anderson claimed not to recall if she signed any of the three subsequent renewals of the Page FISA. But she did, toward the very end of her testimony–after denying multiple times that she had read it-suddenly recall that she had read the FISA at an undisclosed "earlier

In particular, Anderson singled out the involvement of her former boss FBI General

Counsel James

review process.

Baker, in the

Page FISA

point in the process."

Anderson had testified, however, that her only knowledge of the legal predicate for probable cause came from the DOJ cover letter that was attached to the final version that she signed, not from the actual FISA itself.

Political Bias?

Anderson was asked if she had observed any "improper considerations, including political bias" that might have affected or impacted the Page FISA process. To this question, she immediately responded that she had not.

Anderson was then asked if she had observed "any improprieties in that process that would have required subsequent disclosures to the FISA court about content that the FBI had

At this point, Anderson halted her testimony and the FBI counsel interjected.

Upon resumption, Anderson testified that she had been "advised by the FBI lawyers that I can't answer that question in an unclassified setting." The topic of additional or supplemental information provided to the FISA court would be returned to once more during Anderson's testimony:

MR.BAKER: "Do you know if any additional information, either supplemental or for clarification, was provided to the court for any of the FISAs in the Russia case?"

MS. ANDERSON: "This question raises the same classification issue that was raised by the question a few moments ago by the minority staff. And so, based on my consultation with the FBI lawyers, I'm not able to answer that question in this unclassified setting." MR. BAKER: "Okay."

Anderson did testify that in the Page FISA process, she was not aware of any attempts by the DOJ or FBI to intentionally mislead the FISA court.



James Baker.





However, there appears to be significant latitude in the "backstop" review process. According to Anderson, the Department of Justice (DOJ) attached a "cover note" that identified potential issues, if any, for her to review with every FISA application. If no issues were identified by the DOJ, then according to Anderson, there would be no need for her to read the FISA application:

MS. ANDERSON: "[So] there typically would be a cover note that would summarize the FISA. That cover note is generated by DOJ. And because of the time pressures involved and the sort of very-last-stop-in-the-process nature of the review, the SES review, that's done, I wouldn't read a FISA unless there were some sort of issue that was identified based on the cover note."

MR. BREITENBACH: "You are, though, reviewing for the sufficiency of probable cause –"

MS. ANDERSON: "After many people have reviewed that assessment. And so, as I mentioned, this was essentially a backstop to all of the other processes and the rigor that had been applied by DOJ attorneys and by FBI investigative and legal personnel."

Despite the FISA application's politicized nature and obvious sensitivity, it appears that no issues were identified in relation to it, as Anderson testified that she had not read the

campaign and the Democratic **National** Committee.

The Carter Page

FISA application

relied heavily

on allegations

so-called Steele

made in the

dossier paid

for by Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential

The seal of the FBI at the

bureau's headquaters in

Washington on March 9,

2007.

CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

The dossier extensively cited a Sept. 23, 2016,

the initial Page FISA application."

receiving early approvals from leadership offiment reaching her desk:

"So this one was handled a little bit differently

Normally, the applications would be presented to Anderson for sign-off and then sent to the FBI director, before being sent to the DOJ for final approval by either the attorney general, deputy attorney general, or assistant attorney

general for the National Security Division. leadership, Anderson testified that the "Deputy on the DOJ side of the street was similarly in-

Anderson later appeared to soften her char-

Notably, during McCabe's testimony before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees, with Anderson acting as his FBI attorney, disclosures regarding the role of DOJ official Bruce Ohr and his wife, Nellie, had been unknown to him at the time of the Page FISA

During his testimony, Baker admitted that application. Ohr was passing on information from Steele, and Fusion GPS co-founder Glenn Simpson, to the FBI.

Baker also testified that this information, had he known of it at the time, would have been subject to further consideration for inclusion

tent with our practice with the FISA court that I have been involved with for 20 years."

REP. RATCLIFFE: "But you agree with me, generally speaking, that if the number four person at the Department of Justice and his wife both play roles with respect to the creation of a piece

JAMES BAKER: "If they played a role in the creation of it, and that's how it came to the Bureau, then that seems like something that at least again, I would like to know more details about it, but it seems like something that should have been evaluated about whether it should go into the FISA application or not. I would have what you say concerns me and I would like to know more about it."

The issuance of a FISA warrant, which allows

approval process.

night before."

"[They're] very thick. It's not unusual for the

Former FBI General Counsel

WILLIAM PATRICK

North Carolina man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for attempting to provide material support to the ISIS terrorist group.

Erick Jamal Hendricks, 38, was convicted via jury trial in November, in Akron, Ohio. His prison sentence was announced Feb. 4 by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers and U.S. Attorney Justin E. Herdman of the Northern District

"This defendant posed a very real threat to the safety of our community and nation," said Herdman.

In many ways, the case is symbolic of the ongoing terror threat as outlined by FBI Director Christopher Wray in October.

Speaking before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Wray warned that homegrown violent extremists, or HVEs, are "the greatest terrorism threat to the homeland."

"These individuals are global jihad-inspired individuals who are in the U.S., have been radical-

> ized primarily in the U.S., and are not receiving individualized direction from foreign terrorist organizations. We, along with our law enforcement partners, face

significant challenges in identifying and disrupting HVEs," Wrav said. A leading factor in homegrown radicalization is the worldwide pro-

liferation of the internet and social media, which have changed the nature of the post-9/11 terror threat. "Due to online recruitment

and indoctrination, foreign terrorist organizations are no longer dependent on finding ways to get terrorist operatives into the United States to

recruit and carry out acts of terrorism," Wray said. According to court documents, Hendricks is a U.S. citizen who became radicalized online and attempted to recruit and train others to commit jihad, all while living in the United States.

Hendricks admitted his goal was to create a sleeper cell that would be trained and housed at a secure location, and conduct attacks on vulnerable Americans. He claimed to have 10 recruits when arrested.

Hendricks planned to target members of the U.S. military whose information had been released online by ISIS, and an activist named Pamela Geller.

Geller, who is culturally liberal, is an abrasive critic of Sharia law. She organized a "Draw the Prophet" cartoon contest in Garland, Texas, in 2015, creating the controversial free-speech event after a Danish newspaper cartoon sparked widespread protests and violent riots across Europe and the Middle East in

On April 23, 2015, Hendricks used social media to contact an associate named Elton Simpson. Ten days later, Simpson and a second individual, Nadir Hamid Soofi, launched an ISIS-inspired attack on Geller's cartoon event

Simpson and Soofi, both U.S. citizens, arrived at the Curtis Culwell Center, the contest's venue, and opened fire. The attackers were killed in a shootout

with police, but not before wounding an unarmed security guard.

According to court documents, Hendricks also had been unwittingly communicating via social media with an undercover FBI employee who was supposed to film the attack as it happened so it could be posted on social media. "If you see that pig [Geller] make your 'voice' heard against her," he said.

Hendricks also asked the undercover agent a series of questions: "How big is the gathering?" "How many ppl?" "How many police/agents?" "Do you see feds there?" "Do you see snipers?" "How many

ISIS went on to claim responsibility for the Garland plot, which was the first time the terror group took credit for an attack on U.S. soil.

Separately, Hendricks was connected to another man, Amir Al-Ghazi, who was arrested in Ohio in June 2015, after attempting to purchase an AK-47 assault rifle and ammunition a month after the Garland shooting.

Al-Ghazi had pledged allegiance to ISIS on social media and made statements "expressing interest" in conducting attacks inside the country, records show. Hendricks had connected with Al-Ghazi over social media to recruit him in the spring of 2015, with Hendricks allegedly telling him that he "needed

people" and that there were several "brothers" in Their plan was to train together, but first, Hendricks tested Al-Ghazi on his religious commitment to "jihad," his willingness to die as a "martyr," and

his desire to enter "jannah," or paradise. Al-Ghazi is now serving 16 years in prison after pleading guilty to attempting to provide material support for ISIS, and for being a felon in possession

"Erick Jamal Hendricks represents the significant online ISIS threat that we face daily," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Eric Smith on Feb. 4.

According to the FBI, the internet and social media have allowed international and domestic terrorists to "gain unprecedented, virtual access" to people living in the United States.

ISIS, more so than any other foreign terror group, encourages sympathizers to carry out simple attacks against so-called soft targets, or unprotected people and places, and to travel to ISIS-held territory in Iraq and Syria.

The Epoch Times contacted the FBI for current information about the scope of the issue, but didn't immediately receive a response. However, Wray told NBC News in March 2018, that the agency had more than 3,000 open terrorism investigations.

The FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force is a major aspect of the agency's counterterror and national security activities. It's comprised of members of the FBI, Department of Homeland Security and Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and members of local law enforcement.

In January, the JTTF made 15 major announcements, with seven of them involving domestic terrorism linked to ISIS and Al Oaeda.

As recently as Jan. 30, an Ohio man named Damon M. Joseph, also known as Abdullah Ali Yusuf, was charged with attempting to provide material support to ISIS, in addition to attempting to commit a hate crime and possessing firearms in furtherance of a crime of violence.

Joseph had planned to conduct a mass-casualty attack on a synagogue in Toledo, Ohio.

"This man allegedly spent months planning a violent terrorist attack on behalf of ISIS here in the United States, and targeted a Jewish synagogue in the Toledo area specifically because of the faith of the people who worship there," Herdman said.

"We will work to identify and arrest anyone who take steps to use violence to spread their ideology and to interfere with the free exercise of our essential rights," he said.

REUTERS/RODI SAID



Syrian Democratic Forces and U.S. troops during a patrol near the Turkish border in Hasakah, Syria, on Nov. 4, 2018.

New York Governor Blames State Budget Shortfall on Republicans in Congress

WILLIAM PATRICK

Assistant Attorney

General for National

Security John Demers.

JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced a projected \$2.3 billion budget shortfall on Feb. 4. in what looks to be the beginning of a longterm revenue challenge for the high-tax state.

Cuomo, a Democrat, blamed New York's revenue woes on congressional Republicans and President Donald Trump. More specifically, a provision in the Republican-led Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, known as the state and local tax deduction, or SALT.

Previously, SALT allowed residents in hightax cities and states to deduct those taxes from their federal income tax liabilities. But under the new tax law, which takes effect for the 2018 tax year, those state and local deductions will be capped at \$10,000.

Last year, New York state's average SALT deduction was \$22,000.

"SALT was an economic civil war," Cuomo said gravely on Feb. 4.

"It was a diabolical political maneuver," he added. "It literally restructured the economy to help red states at the cost of blue states. That's exactly what it did," said Cuomo.

Grover Norquist, president of the conservative Americans for Tax Reform, disagreed and said Cuomo's reasoning is exactly backward.

"He said we started a war. No, we ended a

"For the past 50 years, high-tax states like New York have been looting the rest of the country and getting subsidies in the form of tax loopholes," he said. "Now, all 50 states can play on the same flat playing field."

Economic studies tend to support the conclusion that wealthier individuals living in high-tax cities and states disproportionately benefit from SALT deductions, thus putting more of the federal tax burden onto lower-earning individuals living in lowtax states, or those with no state income tax at all.

According to the Washington-based Tax Foundation, the disparity among those who benefited from the previously uncapped SALT deduction is significant.

"The benefits of the SALT deduction overwhelmingly go to high-income taxpayers, particularly those in high-income and hightax states," a Tax Foundation analysis states.

"In 2016, 77 percent of the benefit of the SALT deduction accrued to those with incomes above \$100,000; only 6.6 percent went to taxpayers with incomes below \$50,000."

In the study, New York had the highest benefit of any state, with its residents receiving an effective tax deduction of 9.4 percent of adjusted gross income. The average across all war," Norquist said in a Feb. 5, FOX Business 50 states and the District of Columbia was just

California, another high-tax state, was responsible for 20.7 percent, or one-fifth, of all SALT deductions.

Norquist predicted that House Democrats many of whom hail from high-tax cities and states—will try to repeal the \$10,000 SALT cap. But that puts them in the position of allowing the rich to go back to offloading a large portion of their tax liabilities, often onto working people—which is normally anathema to

Compounding the problem is the steady migration of residents from high-tax states to lowtax states, which has been occurring for years.

Cuomo acknowledged the issue during his Feb. 3 press conference, though he again blamed the recent tax reform law. "SALT encourages high-income New Yorkers

to move to other states. If even a small number of high-income taxpayers leave the state it would harm state revenues," he said. According to the Foundation for Economic

Excellence, a libertarian think tank, people are already leaving high-tax states as part of a nationwide trend. And that spells long-term trouble for states like New York.

"People move between states for many reasons, including climate, housing costs, and job opportunities. But when you look at the detailed patterns of movement, it is clear that taxes also play a role," said FEE's Chris Edwards, also the director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute.

"Of the 25 highest-tax states, 24 of them had

net out-migration in 2016. Most of the fleeing residents are relocating to economic growth-friendly states, such as Utah, Arizona, Texas, and Florida.

In 2014, Florida surpassed New York in total population, which has continued to increase. New York, however, ranked dead last among all 50 states in population growth in 2018.

New York also faced an even steeper budget shortfall last year, but was able to balance its budget by reigning in spending.

According to Cuomo's fiscal year 2019 executive budget, the state faces nearly twice its current shortfall. "From the outset, this was going to be a dif-

ficult year for New York state's budget. We face a \$4.4 billion shortfall driven by declining revenues, expounded by a \$2 billion cut in federal funding for health care that could rise to \$5 billion in the out years," the governor's executive budget stated.

Norquist was unforgiving following Cuomo's newly bleak fiscal announcement.

"All [Cuomo] has to do is reduce state taxes and high-income earners would stay," he said. "In New York City that means a reduction in

US Special Representative Discusses Diplomatic Strategy on

NORTH KOREAN DENUCLEARIZATION



Military pallbearers carry the remains believed to be of U.S. service members collected in North Korea during a repatriation ceremony at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Honolulu, Hawaii, on Aug. 12018.

CYNTHIA CAI

PALO ALTO, Calif. After 70 years of tension between North Korea and the United States, and two decades in which North Korea has possessed weapons of mass destruction, the two countries are making progress toward transforming their relationship in positive ways. Eventually, the United States seeks the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

This was the message delivered by Stephen Biegun, U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, in remarks at Stanford University's Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center on Jan. 31, 2018.

As the U.S. Special Representative for North Korea, Biegun is responsible for overseeing and leading the broad diplomatic initiative for the denuclearization of North Korea.

"The last 25 years were not wasted," said Biegun, although certainly the United States and North Korea missed opportunities.

Biegun began by explaining that more than two decades ago, North Korea was first found to have acquired the means of producing weapons of mass destruction. Since then, the United States has been working to resolve the issue, but has seen limited progress.

After the 2016 elections and during the presidential transition, then-President Barack Obama impressed upon President Donald Trump that the top national security priority the United States faced was the North Korean nuclear missile program.

Although "nothing in today's circumstances necessarily guarantees that we will be successful," said Biegun, Trump is taking steps to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to end the 70 years of hostility.

The Korean War ended in 1953 with an armistice, but no peace treaty formally ceasing hostilities. In April 2018, North Korea and South Korea issued the Panmunjom Declaration that promises the nations will work toward peace and unification.

Meetings

On Jan. 18, Ambassador Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman and adviser to Kim, visited the United States to meet with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. During this visit, the delegation covered several issues and set into motion plans for a second summit between Trump and Kim.

Biegun added that he also had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Kim, engaging in a "results-oriented" discussion that laid out a plan for future negotiations between the two countries.

Through this "top-down approach," the United States and North Korea are working toward transforming the relations between the countries. "The New Year's speech by Chairman Kim at beginning of this year reaffirmed his commitment to denuclearization and economic modernization," stated Biegun. Many senior-level officials-including the vice president and

national security adviser-have been pressing the goals of improving diplomacy and relations with North Korea at the United Nations, APEC summit, and the G-20 summit, among others. Biegun explained that the support of global partners and allies is important in building a strong backbone in diplomatic



Before the process of denuclearization is final, we must also have a complete understanding of the full extent of the North Korean weapons of mass destruction programs.

Stephen Biegun, U.S. special representative for North Korea

endeavors. "Last fall, we had the opportunity to lay out our strategic vision to our NATO allies at the North Atlantic Council, and our partners in the European Union at the Political Security Committee," Biegun said. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs also hosted a meeting with

the United States, Britain, and Germany. Earlier this year, Sweden hosted a conference with South and North Korean participation. The Trump administration seeks to create progress and results in resolv-

ing relations with North Korea. "The purpose of diplomacy is not more meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to produce outcomes and progress," stated

Through these meetings, the countries have been able to develop better communication with each other. Biegun said, though it's still challenging at times.

Evidence of progress under the current administration is that there are no more detained U.S. citizens in North Korea as of today. The most recent case of a U.S. citizen crossing into North Korea occurred in the fall of 2018. However, the citizen was quickly interrogated and flown back to the United States with the aid of Sweden, the U.S. consular protecting power.

Moreover, the official demilitarization of the "demilitarized zone" between the two Koreas, humanitarian programs, and the cooperation between North Korea and the United States on returning 55 sets of human remains believed to be from the Korean War are all examples of accomplishment and movement toward progress.

In terms of denuclearization, during the past North-South summit, Kim allowed access for international experts to verify the dismantlement of two nuclear test sites. Although these test sites aren't critical sites for the nuclear weapons programs, the act of allowing international experts into North Korea for inspection is a first in 10 years.

As Biegun expressed, these "mini actions" are all steps toward building a better relationship between the countries, but there are many steps that still need to occur.

"Before the process of denuclearization is final, we must also have a complete understanding of the full extent of the North Korean weapons of mass destruction programs. We will get that at some point with a comprehensive declaration," said Biegun.

The Trump administration's goal is "the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea," said Biegun.

Trump and Kim are expected to meet in a second summit at the end of February in Vietnam. Trump said he expects "significant and verifiable progress on denuclearization. Actions that are bold and are real in that next summit," added Biegun.

At the summit in Singapore, Trump described to Kim a vision of economic development driven by investment for North Korea, which could allow the country to flourish.

"I think it's fair to say that we have more work ahead of us than we do behind us," Biegun said. With 70 years of hostility on the Korean Peninsula, Trump has made the commitment to pursue the goal of re-envisioning North Korea.

JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) (C), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) (2nd R), and other lawmakers discuss "Medicare for All" legislation on Capitol Hill on Sept. 13, 2017.

The Canada

Canada, along

one of the few

history of the

countries in the

world to outlaw

private medical

Don Humbertson, a

64-year-old lung can-

cer surviver, is examined

by Dr. Wade Harvey at

the Clay-Battelle Com-

munity Health Center

in Blacksville, W.Va., on

March 21, 2017.

care.

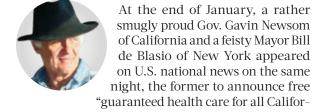
Korea and Cuba,

with North

OPINION

So Americans Want Canadian Health Care? Think Again!

WILLIAM GAIRDNER



smugly proud Gov. Gavin Newsom of California and a feisty Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York appeared on U.S. national news on the same night, the former to announce free "guaranteed health care for all Californians" and the latter, free "universal health

care" to all New Yorkers. The United States is talking about trying

Canadian-style socialized medicine.

I've been a fairly contented user of Canadian socialized medicine my entire adult life, and I know a lot of good people in the system. But I'm also a public critic of it, due to its expense, delays, and limitations, but especially because there's simply no moral justification for the forced socialization and policing of health care in a free society.

Ideologically speaking, no socialized medicine scheme can succeed for long, because the very principles and deceptions by which it is justified lead to its downfall. Canadian socialized medicine is near the end of a long process of consuming itself both ideologically and financially. So, in what follows, I offer a few warnings to our U.S. friends.

Lies About 'Free' Health

'Insurance' When it comes to governmentcontrolled, single-payer health care, the word "free" is an illusion. So is the word "insurance." Nothing is free–although it may be prepaid for you by someone else. The province of Ontario, where I live, has an "Ontario Health Insurance Plan" (OHIP). It's a well-meaning Ponzi, or "pay-go," scheme, as economists say, because there is no insurance, and never has been. Money is simply taxed from mostly younger working people and doled out for the health care of mostly older sick people. In Ontario, 10 percent of the citizenry (mostly seniors) consumes 77 percent of all health care.

Socialized Medicine Is Very Expensive

Canada's state-controlled system is per capita among the most expensive in the world (\$6,839 for every citizen in 2018). But it rarely gets a B from international agencies ranking national health care systems. A 2017 Commonwealth Fund study of 72 metrics of health care in 11 nations ranked Canada third from the bottom. The United States ranked last, which is an irony, because the United States has the best medicine and medical science in the world, but not the best medical delivery system.

A further irony, when comparing medical spending, is that there is no particular connection between national health care spending and the health of citizens. Many countries, such

as Japan, spend as little as half of what Canada master and gatekeeper. spends (and a third of what the United States spends), but their citizens are no less healthy, Health Care Act and often more so. Canada and the United States each spend of 1984 made

about 7 percent of GDP on public health care. The rest of Canada's roughly 11 percent total, and the United States' 17 percent total, is private. Canada's program is publicly adminis- citizen's private medical file could be seized tered, but privately delivered under strict state and reviewed by a medical officer of the statecontrols. The difference in the totals is because American citizens are still free to spend as have the right to open your file and inspect the much of their own money as they wish on private details of your reflux, your cancer, your additional private health care and insurance, whereas Canadians aren't. Individual doctors erectile dysfunction, whatever. and medical institutions in many provinces of Canada are subject to prosecution and serious fines for providing private care in competition with the public system. You could say Canadians are health care prisoners.

Canada's Experience

Canada formalized its socialized health care of 1984, which insisted on provincial compliance with certain "principles" of the Act, such as universality and accessibility. The federal government then offered massive

cost-sharing subsidies—a form of fiscal bribery–to all provinces in exchange for coast-to-coast compliance with the principles. Provinces found in breach have been docked millions

of dollars. The act made Canada, along with North Korea and Cuba, one of the few countries in the hismedical care (though North Korea and Cuba have recently dropped up to \$25,000 to individuals and hos-

pitals found guilty of queue-jumping (although, as I shall point out, there is lots of that). This calls for a lot of inspectors and surveillance.

Medical Police

Canada's once-free physicians soon realized their entire profession was going to be over- ment expenditures, and it's heading straight seen by–there's no other word for it–medical police. There would be strict state control and scrutiny of fees, fines for contraventions of the act, and queries from government inspectors about the "reasonableness" of additional treatments or referrals to specialists.

My own general practitioner (GP), a good rise to 80 percent by 2030. and caring man, has remarked to me often, when I inquire about possibly being allowed a certain additional treatment, "Well, I don't (total revenue, minus federal subsidies and suppose that would be an abuse of the system." He means that, in my case, he's decided that it's justifiable to spend scarce public money on of their own revenue on health care. As U.S. me (and that he'll be able to defend his decision if questioned by the medical police). So you see, he's not just my doctor. He's my medical

eSnooping

All physicians in Canada used to swear on the Hippocratic Oath to maintain strict physicianpatient confidentiality. But administratively speaking, that has evaporated. Poof! From the start of Canada's socialized system, any perhaps your neighbor down the street? They hemorrhoids, your gall-bladder surgery, your

But it gets worse. Now we have eSnooping. With recently updated electronic patient-record systems, health inspectors can now do all their peeking into your once-private medical history electronically. To reflect a little on such unlimited invasion of intimate privacy by a government official is to feel a slow burn.

Canada is the canary in the mine for the United States' socialized medical future. So here's what can be expected. Socialized medicine is in competition for public funding with all other government services, such as roads, education, culture, policing, and so on. When it began in Ontario in 1968, the OHIP program accounted for about 25 percent of all expenditures.

There were lots of warnings from skeptics that triage of patients and rationing of scarce resources would soon begin, and government would be unable to control spending due to unlimited demand from patients and gaming tory of the world to outlaw private of the system by doctors, nurses, specialists, technicians, medical equipment suppliers, and drug companies. And because Canada he ban). Ontario can issue fines of had turned the illusory notion of free medical care into a sacred "right," no one would dare limit it. Whenever they try, as a former premier of Alberta soon found out, "everyone's hair lights on fire."

Crowding Out in Socialized Medicine

By 2017, the cost for socialized medicine in Ontario had risen to 44 percent of all governfor 50 percent. In a disturbing report on health care spending issued in 2012, Don Drummond, chief economist of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, warned, "Things will only get worse as health care eats up every other public service, like an insatiable Pac Man," and that it would

Critics thought he was exaggerating. But in terms of a province's "own-source revenue" debt repayment), many provinces of Canada are already very close to spending 80 percent political satirist P.J. O'Rourke warned long ago: "If you think health care is expensive now, just

Long Waits

Dr. Brian Day, a former president of the Canadian Medical Association, warned in a New York Times interview in 2006 that "[Canada] is a country in which dogs can get a hip replacement in under a week and in which humans can wait two or three years."

Vancouver's Fraser Institute, a highly respected think tank, published an annual survev of 12 medical specialties in 2018. It revealed that, on average, specialist physicians report a median wait time for medically necessary treatments of 19.8 weeks from referral by a GP to receipt of treatment.

The wait from first consultation to orthopedic surgery is the longest, at 39 weeks–10 months-and from diagnosis to the start of oncology treatment, 3.8 weeks. For scans, it's 4.3 weeks for a CT scan, 10.6 weeks for an MRI scan, and 3.9 weeks for an ordinary ultrasound. The institute reports that, typically, more than a million Canadians are wait-listed for medically necessary treatments.

Waiting for care is so common that, in 2005, Canada's own Supreme Court publicly warned the nation that "access to a wait list is not the same as access to health care," and that in some serious cases—which are on the record— "patients die as a result of waiting for public health care." Citizens die because the government makes them wait for health care. What kind of country admits such a thing without shame and blushing? Toronto's mayor describes the sad spectacle of patients languish ing in the corridors of overcrowded hospitals, as "hallway medicine."

A Multi-Tiered System

Socialized medical systems are never single tier, as promised, or even two-tiered (that publicly dreaded possibility). They are, in fact, and inevitably, multi-tiered. First, there are several triage tiers—tiers within tiers—where patients wait differing lengths of time, according to the severity of their illness.

Then, there are the professionals, or even ordinary citizens, who just happen to know someone working in the system—the big-name athletes; the big business people; the media stars; the politicians; the police; the military brass; and, not surprisingly, doctors and nurses themselves, who get immediate care from their own hospitals. Finally, there's anyone who lives close to the best hospitals and doctors rather than hundreds of miles away. Unionized workmen get treatment for injuries in a week because the government doesn't want to get stuck with their disability payments, while an ordinary citizen may have to wait for months.

When I first began investigating the questions of medical tiers in Canada, I discovered that many of Canada's members of Parliament in Ottawa were walking down the street for same-day medical care at a military hospital intended for soldiers only. That was halted once the story broke. And I almost forgot: Statistics Canada reports a huge tier of almost 2 million Canadian citizens who complain they have no doctor because Canada is short on doctors.

Medical Tourism Booming

There's another very large Canadian tier engaged in medical tourism. Thousands of Canadians-64,000 in 2018 that we know of, and surely thousands more who aren't telling-travel a long way to countries such as the United States, Costa Rica, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, and South Africa for services that are unavailable in Canada. People in this tier spend close to a billion dollars per year in other countries, either because they are forbidden to spend it for private care in Canada, or because the services, technology, or specialists are not available here, or the pain and the wait are just too long.

Most shocking of all is that many of the people engaged in these expensive medical jaunts are the very politicians who write laws forbidding Canadians to spend their own money on private medical treatment. Among them are two former prime ministers of Canada (Joe Clark and Jean Chretien), two provincial premiers (Danny Williams and Robert Bourassa), and we suspect other government ministers and elected officials who aren't telling. These people want private health care for themselves, but not for the voters.

Private Clinics

Most shocking

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Most of Canada's provinces have below-theradar private clinics that operate in contravention of the Canada Health Act. Medical police pursue them for years to shut them down. Lawsuits follow. Some are shut down. New ones open up. More medical police. And around it goes.

The same Dr. Brian Day mentioned above has already spent \$2 million in court fighting for the survival of his private medical clinic in Vancouver. Even though, when citizens pay his clinic for care, it reduces the government's expenditures, the government is trying to shut him down for ideological reasons. They argue that money in your pocket shouldn't determine the quality of care you get, even though the same government doesn't mind if money in your pocket determines the kind of condo, or car, or bicycle, or food you buy. And they go silent when informed that there would be a lot more money in everyone's pockets if the government weren't taking so much of it in the first place.

The most recent private initiative in Canada was to open private hospitals on Indian reserves, where Canada's laws against private

medicine don't apply. Health Canada reacted sharply: Such private hospitals might be allowed, but only if they cater solely to foreign-

Foreigners Can Pay Cash for Care

If you're a foreigner, and have cash-money from outside Canada's socialized system-immediate health care is available to you for, say, a surgical procedure today, for which a tax-paying Canadian may have to wait a very long time. So let's see now: A full citizen who has been paying taxes for an entire working life for medical care is forbidden by law to use personal funds to purchase the same surgery offered today to a foreigner for cash? That seems very wrong.

Physicians Gaming the System

And, of course, many physicians learn to game the system to keep their earnings up. Good, honest folk, for sure. But only human. Lots of studies have revealed that in any governmentcontrolled health system with scarce resources, physicians may be found engaging in "time shuffling," "upgrading," "injury enlargement," "ping-ponging," "service splitting," "phantom treatment," "assembly-line treatment," and more. I didn't invent these terms. They are easy to find in the fevered calculations of health

Veterinary Medicine for Humans

Surely, the most damning moral fact about any socialized medical system, however, is that it converts human medicine into veterinary medicine for humans. Think about it. The machinery, medicines, and procedures used to treat your pet dog or cat are the same as those used to treat you.

In a free and open society, humans have a say as to how much and what kind of treatment they want to purchase, or to insure themselves for, or to refuse. But animals don't: Animals have medical masters. Meanwhile, in a closed society with a socialized medical regime, the quality, availability, and timing of medical services that citizens are permitted to receive are dictated by their master, the state. It follows that socialized medicine is veterinary medicine for humans.

Is this what Americans want?

William Gairdner is an author who lives near Toronto. His latest book is "The Great Divide: Why Liberals and Conservatives Will Never, Ever Agree" (2015). His website is WilliamGairdner.ca

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

Advocates of American Socialism Need to Learn Some Lessons

ROB NATELSON

Critics of the U.S. public-school system must feel vindicated, in a sickening way, to see so many American politicians and younger citizens advocating socialism. After all, the critics have warned us for years that the schools don't adequately teach history, economics, or political affairs.

It would be hard to name a political ideology so thoroughly debunked as socialism. It would be difficult to find an idea whose implementation has proved so horrific. Socialism comes in two economic forms.

In the first, the state owns all, or at least the most valuable, economic enterprises. Factories, medical clinics, schools, travel agencies, newspapers—the government owns them all. The prototype was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); surviving examples are Cuba and North Korea.

In the other economic form of socialism, the state doesn't own as much-but it controls almost everything. It controls by parceling out benefits to favored groups. It controls by central regulation, by state monopolies (where the government is the sole provider of a product or service), and by government monopsony (where government is the sole buyer). A prototype for this form was Adolph Hitler's National Socialism. Communist China was originally in the first category and now is in the second.

The second form is the one now promoted by American "progressives." Central to their platform is massive redistribution, detailed regulation of private economic decisions, some government ownership, expansion of the role of government schools, and a health care monopsony ("single payer").

In addition to socialism's two economic forms, it has two political forms: authoritarian and (purportedly) democratic. Both Soviet communism and German Nazism were authoritarian. So are Cuba and North Korea today. Britain and Scandinavian countries traditionally have been considered examples of democratic socialism, although they have

become far more capitalist in recent years. Actually, socialism can never be truly demo-

cratic. The state and its officials are too powerful. They control people's choices, pensions, and jobs. Most major political decisions are either (1) pre-determined from above, or (2) confined to a narrow range of choices. For example, in a country with government health care, people can't vote to privatize it. The option is practically impossible because citizens rely so heavily on the government for health care.

Yet, "democratic" socialism has proved unstable over time. It tends to become either more autocratic or less socialistic. Venezuela is a good illustration of socialism starting democratically and veering toward autocracy. Britain, Canada, and the Scandinavian countries are examples of democratic socialist countries that have become much less socialist and more free. Repeated experiments in many countries over the past century prove one fact beyond

doubt: As an economic system, socialism doesn't work.

Scapegoats

While free markets convert even places with few resources into fountains of economic well-being (e.g., Hong Kong), socialism consigns countries with fabulous resource wealth to poverty (e.g., the USSR). Moreover, an injection of the socialist virus can transform a healthy economy into a wasteland within a very short time (e.g., Venezuela and

One reason socialism doesn't work is that it distorts people's incentives. People become dispirited and they are encouraged, or forced, to make bad decisions. Another reason socialism doesn't work is that

the central planners don't have the information necessary to run an economy: Only individuals and private organizations have that. A third reason is that socialism gives too much power to government officials. Power corrupts.

Those implementing or promoting socialist economics usually don't want to admit failure. Hence, they seek scapegoats. The scapegoats geoisie" and "kulaks" in the USSR), or ethnic or religious groups (such as the Jews and Slavs in Nazi Germany), or political opponents. When socialists are able to, they ruin or kill

This is why socialist governments have been responsible for so many deaths: Communist

China (40–80 million), Soviet Russia (30–40 million), Nazi Germany (perhaps 11 million non-combatants). The list goes on from there. Some claim that mass murder and other forms of oppression are the products only of the authoritarian brand of socialism. But they are wrong.

Oppression is inherent even in "democratic" socialism, because the government restricts people's right to live as they wish. During the 20th century, when "democratic" socialism was at its height in Western Europe, several million people from Western Europe fled

> to America. Many no doubt thought in terms of better opportunity, but that is really to say that they were fleeing socialist constraint. Venezuelans are now doing the same.

Like their avowedly authoritarscapegoats. Among American socialists, the a vengeance. scapegoats are "the 1 percent," "Wall Street," "the hydrocarbon industries," "corporations," "the gun lobby," "deplorables," and "white males." These economic, social, and ethnic categories closely resemble those used by authoritarian socialists.

Social Darwinism

I recently came across an essay by George Bernard Shaw, the famous playwright. Shaw was a leading founder of British socialism. In "The Perfect Wagnerite," he expressed frustration with the failure of reforms his own allies had advocated. He proposed fiercer measures:

"And this dilemma will persist until ... our governors ... see that their business is not the devising of laws and institutions to prop up the weaknesses of mobs and secure the survival of

may be economic groups (such as the "bour- the unfittest, but the breeding of men whose wills and intelligences may be depended on to produce spontaneously the social well-being our clumsy laws now aim at and miss. The majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive; and no serious progress will be made until we address ourselves earnestly and scientifically to the task of producing trustworthy human material for society. In short, it is necessary to breed a race of men in whom the life-giving impulses predominate."

> Now, British socialism as promoted by Shaw and his fellow "Fabians" was perhaps the gentlest form of socialism on the planet. Yet this passage reads as if it were composed by Hitler. Socialists often accuse capitalists of social

> Darwinism—of advocating a struggle of all against all, with death to the hindmost. This is a lie. Modern capitalist societies are the most philanthropic in history. Successful capitalists have given more to charitable causes than any group of people, other than religious societies.

But read again the words of Shaw: We must reject the "unfittest" for "[t]he majority of men at present in Europe have no business to be alive." We must act "scientifically" to "breed ian cousins, "democratic" socialists use a race of men." This is social Darwinism with

> Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo.) is correct: Socialism is a fraud. But it's more than that, and worse: It is dysfunctional and evil. Americans knew that when the Soviet Union fell. It's time for us to re-learn it.

> Rob Natelson, the nation's most published active constitutional amendment scholar, served as a law professor for 25 years. He is senior fellow in constitutional jurisprudence at the Independence Institute in Denver, director of the Institute's Article V Information Center, and recently became a senior adviser to the Convention of States project.

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12 AMERICA WEEKLY WEEK 7, 2019 THE EPOCH TIMES

OPINION

So-called

CHRISTIAN POLITICIANS REJECT GOD'S VIEW

DR. CAROL M. SWAIN

Many U.S. Democratic politicians present themselves to the world as Christians. But their Christianity is completely devoid of a biblical worldview. The most shocking statements come out of

ing statements come out of their mouths disguised as genuine concern for the suffering of the less fortunate.

Consider the "gospel" of proabortion Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. It contains her favorite scripture, which isn't found in any known translation of the Holy Book. According to armchair theologian Pelosi: "The Bible tells us that to minister to the needs of God's creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us."

This, from someone who hasn't been shy about dishonoring the God who made us in His image.

Offering her expert opinion about abortion, Pelosi has described herself as "an ardent, practicing Catholic" who considers herself knowledgeable about the issue because she has studied it.

Based on her studies of conception and when life actually begins, which apparently equals her biblical knowledge, she argues, "Doctors of the church have not been able to make that definition. ... St. Augustine said at three months. We don't know. The point is, is that it shouldn't have an impact on the woman's right to choose."

There is no reason to question Pelosi. She strikes me as sincerely confused about her faith and its teachings. A fellow Catholic, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, recently signed one of the most liberal abortion laws in the world, a law that places us in the company of China and North Korea.

We have several prominent Protestants who find support and justification for abortion. One Episcopalian, in particular, takes the cake for most egregious remarks about the deaths

of the unborn: Rev. Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, an Episcopal priest and the former president of Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She famously said:

"Abortion is a blessing and our work is not done. Let me hear you say it: Abortion is a blessing and our work is not done."

Other Christian abortion supporters who seem quite comfy cozied up under the Democratic Party's all-inclusive umbrella include Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam and former President Barack Obama, the latter of whom, as a state senator, once fought against Illinois' Infants Born Alive Act.

Northam, a Southern Baptist and pediatric neurologist, stunned many Americans by casually endorsing infanticide. When asked if he would support legislation that would permit abortion of a woman in labor, he said: "If a mother is in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then, a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother."

Speaking at a Johnstown, Pennsylvania, town hall in 2008, presidential candidate Obama said: "I've got two daughters, 9 years old and 6 years old. I am going to teach them first about values and morals. But if they make a mistake, I don't want them punished with a baby."

What Scripture Says About Life

The Bible says each unborn child possesses a unique identity and destiny. God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). King David writes in Psalm 139:13–16: "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb." In the cases of Jesus and John the

of Human Life

Our national disregard for human life places us on par with the nations God brought into judgment.

Baptist, an angel named each child before he was born, giving names later connected with the child's world-changing mission (Luke 1:13; Matthew 1:21).

Exodus 20:3–17 lists the Ten Commandments that God gave to the Israelites. The Sixth Commandment states, "You shall not commit murder" (v. 13).

Throughout the Bible, starting with the death of Abel, God distinguishes between murder and other kinds of killing such as that in capital punishment, God-ordained war, and accidents. Murder—the deliberate taking of innocent life—is strongly condemned. The Bible speaks of innocent blood crying out from the ground, and of lands polluted by

the shedding of innocent blood. In Genesis 4:10, we read "And the Lord said [to Cain], 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground." Proverbs 6:17 tells us that God hates "haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood."

In Leviticus 18:21, the Israelites are told, "You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God." Likewise, we read in Psalm 106: 37–38: "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood."

These scriptures admonished the Israelites not to follow the detestable practices of the Canaanites and neighboring peoples who sacrificed their children to Baal and Molech.

If God exists and is unchanging, as the Bible states, how would he feel about a nation whose government legalized the spilling of the innocent blood of more than 61 million babies? Our national disregard for human life places us on par with the nations God brought into judgment, including his beloved Israel.

Dr. Carol M. Swain is a former tenured professor at Vanderbilt and Princeton universities. Her Be The People News blog and podcast empower individuals to think independently, understand their responsibility, and make a difference in the world.

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

DREW ANCEDED (CETTY IMAGES



Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton applauds as New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks about late-term abortion at Barnard College in New York on Jan. 7, 2019.

Trump's SOTU Reminds Us That by Uniting, We Can All 'Choose Greatness'

BRAD PARSCALE

The president's hopeful State of the Union address was a welcome respite from the ceaseless barrage of division, cynicism, and pessimism that Americans are subject to every day from the swamp in Washington.

The speech served as a reminder that, whatever disagreements our two parties may have, the democratic institutions that allow us to peacefully resolve them remain strong.

While confidently presenting his vision for the future, President Donald Trump pushed aside Washington's bitter divisions as much as possible. He sought to remind us that Americans, no matter how they vote and which news networks they watch, have much more reason for optimism than fear, and more to gain from unity and patriotism than from partisan animosity.

In 2019, the state of the union is indeed strong, despite our tendency

to focus exclusively on the problems we face. America is experiencing the strongest economic growth since the Great Recession, the healthiest job market in almost 50 years, and the strongest wage growth for hardworking Americans in a decade.

We're also making progress in tackling the problems that still plague our country. For example, the data indicate that we've turned a corner on the surge in violent crime we saw in 2015

and 2016, even in particularly hardhit places such as Chicago.

More impressive still, we were able to achieve that while enacting historic, bipartisan prison reforms that protect our communities while ending decades-old injustices. President Trump was able to invite the first person released under the FIRST STEP Act, Matthew Charles, to the Capitol to hear his State of the Union address. Charles served 23 years of a 35-year sentence imposed for selling crack cocaine, during which time he found God, became a law clerk, and

America is experiencing the strongest economic growth since the Great Recession, the healthiest job market in almost 50 years, and the strongest wage growth for hardworking Americans in a decade.

mentored fellow inmates.

Following President Trump's enthusiastic endorsement of the measure last year, both parties in Congress came together to pass the package of proven, common-sense reforms that will allow prisoners like Charles to earn their way back into society's good graces while helping to reduce the rampant recidivism that drives crime rates up.

The president's State of the Union address also held out the promise of many more such bipartisan victories, but those can only be achieved if we can set aside what divides us and cling to what unifies

us.
Luckily, there is
much that we can still
agree on, even in the current political climate.

For instance, President Trump proposed a new initiative to fix our country's outdated and neglected infrastructure, and asked both parties to help find a solution that will bring down the prices of health care and prescription drugs.

Even on the issues that divide us most, such as illegal immigration, border security, and trade, Americans across the political spectrum share a common goal of justice, safety, and prosperity. The president asked Congress to build on those shared ideals, rather than continue to let partisan differences distract from the important work that needs to be done in this country.

"Together, we can break decades of political stalemate. We can bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions, and unlock the ex-

America's future. The decision is ours to make," the president told

traordinary promise of

Congress and the nation.

Whether

our elected officials live up to that inclusive vision will be determined over the next two years. But, for this moment

at least, the opportunity to do as the president urged and "choose greatness" is there for the taking by all.

Brad Parscale is the campaign manager for Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.

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