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**Replace Negativity and Centrism with Bold Progress**

In public opinion polls Americans keep saying our nation is heading in the wrong direction. We’re experiencing serious crises (climate, endless wars, corrupt “big money” politics, etc.). We are trapped in a deeper, more profound crisis. We must liberate ourselves from that profound crisis in order to solve the various problems and choose a satisfying new future.

More and more Americans are recognizing the hard reality that every major system in our society is broken: politics, economics, environment, foreign policy, criminal justice, agriculture, energy, climate, news media – all of these systems are broken. Let’s understand the deeper context so we can boldly repair the broken systems.

**Negativity: Republicans from Goldwater and Reagan onward:**

What is the proper role of government? Our best American traditions include the Homestead Act, public schools and libraries, Social Security, Medicare, protections for the environment and workers and consumers, etc. Ordinary people really do want the government to protect and serve “we the people.”

But Goldwater, Regan, Gingrich, Trump and the right wing have promoted a negative view and weakened the necessary protections from pollution, poverty, corruption, and other problems. They have allowed cancer-causing chemicals into our air, water and food. They want to take away health care from tens of millions of Americans. P.J. O’Rourke wrote, “Republicans are the party that says government doesn’t work and then they get elected and prove it.”

**Centrism has been a losing strategy since the 1990s:**

Mainstream “centrist” Democrats such as Bill Clinton tried to steal the Republicans’ thunder by meeting them half way and taking credit for “centrist” policies. Clinton expanded the federal death penalty, replaced the AFDC public assistance program with the cruel TANF program, de-regulated banks and telecommunications companies, and promoted NAFTA and the WTO and other “free trade” scams.

After the banks crashed, Obama bailed them out but refused to prosecute the criminal bankers or help people with underwater mortgages. Obama designed his health care based on a conservative business model that kept insurance companies and Big Pharma in charge and failed to cover everyone or to control costs. Obama’s FCC appointee destroyed Net Neutrality. He mostly continued Dick Cheney’s endless wars. The list goes on and on.

The public knows that these “centrist” policies hurt us. By 2016 the public was angry and wanted strong progressive change. Bernie Sanders inspired many new people to vote, but the Democratic Party crammed Hillary Clinton down our throats instead of appreciating the candidate who inspired our nation. She supported the status quo with just a little tinkering around its edges instead of solving the real problems.

Candidate Trump recognized people’s anger at dysfunctional government and promised to serve the people, not big business or the war machine. Trump has been a lying con artist for decades, and he lied throughout his 2015-2016 campaign, but he fooled enough voters to win.

Now in 2020 Joe Biden is another “centrist,” while Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are true progressives. Mainstream media keep bashing them and supporting the “centrist.” But VOTING IS NOT NEARLY ENOUGH to solve the deep problems!

**Use our best values to envision and create the bold future we really want:**

The American people have better values than either the right-wing or the “centrists.” Unfortunately, our political culture offers only a very limited range of choices, so we remain stuck. To make progress we must (1) create a much wider range of choices based on our best values (truth, fairness, human rights, profound democracy, environmental consciousness, etc.), and (2) organize grassroots movements to enact them.

In the U.S., liberals timidly ask what is “politically feasible” and ask for small changes that the political parties and big business might allow. In Latin America, people demand bold reforms and agitate actively. In the U.S., our modest reforms are watered down and deferred. To make real progress, we must be more like Latin Americans.

**Organize grassroots movements to create a good future:**

We can solve problems if we: (1) Ground ourselves in humane, compassionate values; (2) Educate ourselves deeply about the real issues; (3) Nonviolently expose and resist the bad stuff; (4) Organize strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movements for bold social, economic, environmental, and political changes.

Human beings want our lives to be meaningful. Working for humane, peaceful, just, sustainable goals can give meaning to our lives and help us make progress. Let’s turn history around and accomplish positive goals for a better society and a better world. We can do it!

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