

The Punditalia 2020 Presidential Platform

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Punditalia has been offering a political platform in election years since 2008 in the form of lists of policies that we advocate. They are still available on the home page of punditalia.net. We continue to support the proposals of past years. This year, after having heard a number of debates of Democratic candidates for president, we offer what we would hope to hear in an opening statement from any candidate who would gain our support.

For nearly two and a half centuries the United States of America has withstood challenges to its existence from abroad and from within. It has fought wars with Great Britain to obtain and retain its independence and wars with Spain and Mexico largely of its own making. It fought two World Wars and overcame the Axis powers seeking to place the world under Fascist control. It then fought a Cold War, including some not so cold surrogate wars, in a long battle to avert a totalitarian communist takeover of the world.

It has also survived challenges of its own making, from the secession of the Confederate States to the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression and the Great Recession, while suffering throughout its history from the ravages of racism and the legacy of slavery.

Following WWII the USA, in perhaps its greatest moment, led the world in establishing a society in which the benefits of industrialization, including access to education, spread to a majority of the society, and the American Constitution served as a model for the new constitutions of many of the defeated powers. Ironically, Germany, Japan and Italy are today far more democratic than the US, which served as their model.

Now, the United States faces two existential challenges, both largely self-generated. The first and most important is the reality of climate change, which threatens the possibility of life on our planet. Science deniers are not new. Galileo was imprisoned for teaching about gravity and the spiritual descendants of his persecutors now dominate the Republican Party. Consumerism in the US has led to a proliferation of material benefits to Americans while also contributing to the degradation of the environment. Just as the US served at one time as a model for democratic government, it now serves as the consumerist model and planet earth is paying the price. The US must take the lead in combating environmental degradation and climate change or the whole world's population will pay a grim price. Americans will not be spared.

Virtually all of the difficulties and challenges that Americans now face stem from the passage from a democratic republic to an oligarchy. Even former President Jimmy Carter acknowledges that the US can no longer be regarded as a representative democracy. When three men in the country own as much wealth as the economically lower 50% of the population, even while acknowledging the talent and effort of those particular oligarchs, this cannot be seen as a democracy at work. It was not the will of God nor an inevitability of nature that brought us to this point. This is a result of a massive political failure and must be corrected or there will be a return to medieval feudalism.

The USA has perhaps become the most corrupt major power on earth. Oh yes, there may be less need to bribe your local building department for a home repair permit or to

bribe a party functionary to get a job than people are accustomed to in former Soviet countries and in other troubled parts of the world. However, the will of the American public, as expressed by majorities averaging around 70%, on nearly all major issues such as education, health care, job security, military policy, border security, energy policy, social security, environmental protection, immigration policy and trade agreements, is being ignored by Congress and opposed by administrations of both major parties. Our laws are now written by lobbyists. Former legislators and military officers slide effortlessly into positions as well-paid lobbyists. How can this be?

In the worst decision of the US Supreme Court since the Dred Scott decision of 1857, which ruled that Constitutional rights did not extend to black people, the Court, in its Citizens United decision of 2010, ruled that money equaled speech and that corporations had the Constitutional rights of people. With this ruling, bribery of government officials and the corruption of US elections were legalized. We are now seeing the results. Congress has failed in its oversight of the Executive branch, the Government has failed to pursue its anti-monopoly responsibilities, we have an administration run by a petulant sociopath and a Congress controlled by an ethics-free grifter with ties to the Chinese Government. Just as Dred Scott was overturned, Citizens United must be undone, by whatever means.

With a government of the oligarchs, by the oligarchs and for the oligarchs, the US has the most expensive and least efficient health care system in the developed world, a military which reportedly has up to \$21 trillion in unaccounted spending between 1998 and 2015, consolidated media which serve as establishment propaganda outlets more than as fonts of journalism, a gutted State Department and members of the Cabinet dedicated to undoing all the activities that their agencies were created to undertake.

American patriots and other public-spirited people with knowledge of crimes committed by the US Government, who have had the courage to report such crimes, have been prosecuted, jailed, tortured or hounded in a manner reminiscent of the persecution of dissidents in Nazi and Soviet regimes, with the corporate media building support for the demonization of whistle blowers, while the perpetrators of the government crimes have consistently gone free.

The two party system has dominated American politics for most of its history. Often criticized, it is not all bad, as the system often offers clear choice and majority governments. The Republican Party, founded with Abraham Lincoln on a wave of abolitionist sentiment, has grown irredeemably corrupt over the past fifty years and it must be dealt a mortal blow in the up-coming elections. The glaring corruption of our electoral system will make this obligation more difficult to achieve than it should be. The vacuum created by its demise of the GOP will be filled, as it was when the Whigs passed into history, but the Democratic Party must not be distracted by the absurdities of identity politics, the inanities of political correctness or by the juvenile charges that our problems are a result of Russian aggression. We have created our problems and now it's up to us to solve them.