

FEATHER RIVER DEMOCRATIC CLUB

Monthly Newsletter

November, 2016



General Meeting

Third Thursday of each month, 7-8 PM
Yuba City High School. Room 322,
850 B Street, Yuba City, CA

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Club Officers

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Vice-Chair: Candy Sawyer
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Secretary: Joene Tranter
Parliamentarian: Bob Morrish

November/January Meetings

E-Board Meeting: November 9
General Meeting: November 17
E-Board Meeting: January 11
General Meeting: January 19

Save the Date

St. Patrick's Day Dinner: Friday, March 17

Newsletter Editor

Joene Tranter

What Would Hillary's Win Signify for Women? Catherine Tinsley, *Huffington Post*, November 4, 2016

Over the past few weeks, I have heard the same question over and over: what will it mean for women if Hillary Clinton is elected? To me, the question isn't, "what do the election results mean?" but "what do they say about the United States?" If Clinton wins, it will reflect where we are. We have changed. We have moved on from antiquated views of who women are, and what behavior towards them is acceptable. To paraphrase both Michelle Obama and Condoleezza Rice, it would be saying, "Enough."

Clinton's presidency would certainly be historic and always would be a marker of a broken ceiling. Perhaps she would encourage more women to think of a career in politics. And, if the turnout for Clinton also brings people to the polls to vote for other women, a victory for her could be accompanied by victories for other women. The visible change to the demographic of those in politics would serve as models for younger women. We know it's harder to aspire to results when you have seen no evidence of their possibility. Simply electing a woman to high office will instill in both girls and boys the idea that both women and men can be leaders.

But, I don't think there will be any significant changes in our country in the short run. Organizations and systems change slowly. Changing institutions is like turning an ocean liner. What this election could show is that we are turning the ship. When Julia Gillard became Australia's Prime Minister in 2010, she experienced misogyny for years. We saw something similar in this country after President Obama was elected in 2008: his historic presidency turned out not to be a silver bullet for eradicating racial tensions and disparities.

Even in office, I expect Clinton will continue to face double standards, like those she has encountered on the campaign trail. Her likeability has been a frequent topic of discussion, while I haven't heard similar conversations about male candidates.

If Clinton is elected, we might see some subtle changes, like seeing more women in places of power. What we know about networks and homosocial reproduction tells us that she's likely to appoint more women to senior posts, just as Obama did with African Americans during his two terms. The phenomenon is not necessarily an implicit bias, but a natural outcome of the people she knows and the people in her network.

Sexism and gender inequality won't be solved overnight, but electing a woman to the highest office would be a significant step in the right direction.

Here's How You Destroy a Democratic Republic
Charles Lane, *The Washington Post*, November 2, 2016

With the 58th presidential election under the U.S. Constitution now less than a week away, it is clear that the 228-year-old document is not achieving one of its central purposes.

James Madison intended it to curb "factious spirit" — what we call "partisanship" — which he correctly identified as the bane of popular governments, both those that had existed before 1788 and the ones in the 13 newly independent American states. Yet today's Republicans and Democrats are so divided that they no longer seem like citizens of the same nation or acknowledge even the same factual reality.

Among the many manifestations of out-of-control factious spirit, none is more dismaying than the obeisance Republicans have paid their party's patently unfit presidential candidate, Donald Trump, out of a combination of opportunism, blind factional loyalty and hatred of his opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton.

None is more dangerous, though, than the potential partisan politicization of federal law enforcement, especially its investigative arm, the FBI.

On Oct. 28, the FBI announced new inquiries related to Hillary Clinton's private email server. If you really wanted to destroy a democratic republic, the surest way would be to turn its prosecutors, investigators and intelligence-gatherers into the instruments — actual or perceived — of a political party. Yet this specter haunts the United States in the aftermath of FBI Director James B. Comey's potentially election-altering letter announcing that the bureau must renew its investigation of the off-the-books email system Clinton operated while secretary of state.

Is that alarmist? To be sure, the FBI and the rest of the intelligence community — CIA, National Security Agency, Secret Service — have faced their share of scandals over the years, from wiretapping civil rights leaders to waterboarding terrorism detainees. For all that, these institutions remained generally above the fray with respect to outright electoral politics, restrained by law, policy and an ethos of national service traceable to the global crises, World Wars I and II and the Cold War, that shaped them. Notwithstanding the hyperbole of their critics, these agencies never became U.S. versions of the Gestapo or KGB, because, unlike the latter two, they were not the creatures and creations of a political party, much less a totalitarian one. They fought for their own bureaucratic interests but remained subject to oversight and legislative reform carried out on a bipartisan basis.

Nor is it clear that Comey, or his nominal superiors at the Justice Department, are acting out of conscious partisan motivation now, despite dueling partisan accusations to the contrary. Rather, they have lost their perceived impartiality despite their various attempts to preserve it, which a mistrustful, polarized society, obsessed with a high-stakes election, refuses to credit.

On the issue of indicting Clinton, the buck should have stopped with Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, who, despite her obvious Democratic affiliation, is the politically accountable head of federal law enforcement. However, she accepted an invitation to hobnob with Clinton's husband, former president Bill Clinton, in late June, just three days before a scheduled FBI sit-down with Hillary Clinton. This blunder created a terrible appearance, inflamed Republicans and forced the attorney general to defer to Comey on Clinton — even though she didn't fully recuse herself from the case, and even though that is not his institutional role.

Then came Comey's news conference, an act of improvised transparency that buoyed Democrats and infuriated Republicans when he explained that Clinton was "extremely careless" with classified info, just not criminally so. His even more unorthodox subsequent testimony before Congress, in which he defended his finding of non-prosecutability before hostile Republicans but promised to act on any new information, set the stage for last week's bombshell, to which Democrats have responded by vilifying the same FBI chief they lionized when he exculpated their candidate.

Lynch, or her designee, had the power to order Comey not to send his letter. Media reports say unnamed Justice officials warned him that it would violate policies against prosecutorial action too close to an election, but they stopped short of an express command to stand down — for fear of precipitating an even bigger election-eve crisis.

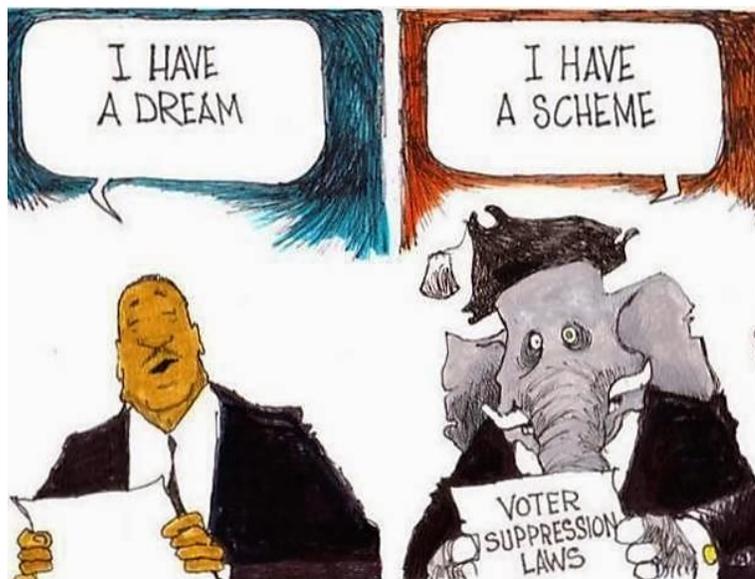
The net effect of so much irregular procedure has been to convince partisans of all stripes, possibly lastingly, that these vital institutions cannot be trusted, and therefore must be fought over.

If Trump wins, Democrats would consider it an FBI-engineered victory. If Clinton wins, she would face the awkward predicament of working on anti-terrorism and other vital efforts with an FBI director still pursuing a Republican-encouraged investigation of her emails. Comey's term expires in 2023.

Many Democrats (and not a few Republicans) think Comey should resign, in part to head off that predicament. But that would probably lead to a new problem: a partisan impasse in the Senate over replacing the FBI director, just like the one we already have involving Justice Antonin Scalia's former seat on the Supreme Court.



It's Never Been More Important to Protect the Right to Vote
Ari Berman, *The Nation*, November 3, 2016



There are so many different voting problems in this election, it's difficult to keep track. In Texas, voters are wrongly being asked to show strict photo ID to cast a ballot. In North Carolina, voters are being purged from the rolls and early-voting locations have been cut. In Wisconsin, voters are being turned away from the DMV without getting voter IDs and polling places have been denied on college campuses. In Ohio, thousands of ballots could be thrown out because of minor technical errors.

On top of all this, Donald Trump is working his supporters into a frenzy by claiming the election is rigged and recruiting poll watchers to "Stop Crooked Hillary From Rigging This Election!" His white-nationalist allies, including neo-Nazis and Klan members, say they're planning to deploy thousands of poll watchers to urban areas. And Trump adviser Roger Stone is sending volunteers to nine Democratic cities with large minority populations, like Cleveland and Las Vegas.

The question I'm asked more than any other is: What can be done to protect voting rights? This question is more salient than at any time since 1965, since this is the first presidential election in 50 years without the protections of the Voting Rights Act. Fortunately, the GOP's campaign to suppress the vote is being combated by a vigorous effort to defend voting rights.

The Election Protection coalition, spearheaded by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, is running the 866-Our-Vote hotline, which is a great resource for voters who experience problems at the polls. Election Protection will have 22 nationwide call centers fielding questions from voters and an on the ground presence in 26 states, with 5,000 lawyers and 3,000 organizers deployed nationwide. More than 120 organizations are part of the coalition, from the NAACP to the National Association of Latino Election Officials to the Arab-American Institute.

"The fact that this is the first presidential election cycle without the full protection of the Voting Rights Act makes it extra important for us to be on the ground, making sure voters have the information they need to cast a ballot but if there are problems, having people to address the issue," says Chris Melody Fields, manager of legal mobilization at the Lawyers Committee.

Here are some groups in the Election Protection coalition that were recommended to me by voting rights advocates: VoteRiders and Project Vote are helping people obtain voter IDs. Local chapters of national groups like the League of Women Voters, Common Cause, and the ACLU have been very active on the ground. State-based groups have been incredibly important in the fight for voting rights, including State Voices, Democracy North Carolina, New Florida Majority, New Virginia Majority, and Arizona Advocacy Network.

In addition to these nonpartisan efforts, the DNC is suing the RNC and GOP state parties in Ohio, Arizona, Nevada, and Pennsylvania to stop coordinated voter-intimidation efforts, which are prohibited by a consent decree against the GOP dating back to the 1980s. The lawsuits say the Trump campaign, RNC, and GOP state parties are violating the VRA and Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 by "conspiring to threaten, intimidate, and thereby prevent minority voters in urban neighborhoods from voting in the 2016 election."

Voter intimidation efforts are especially concerning this year because the gutting of the Voting Rights Act "severely curtailed" the Justice Department's ability to send federal election observers to areas with a long history of discrimination, according to Attorney General Loretta Lynch. Now the DOJ can dispatch observers only to areas where there's a specific court order authorizing them. Thirty-two thousand federal observers have monitored elections since the VRA passed, and in 2012 the DOJ sent 780 federal observers and personnel to 51 jurisdictions in 23 states, including cities like Cleveland, Dallas, and Phoenix. In 2016, the DOJ will send federal observers to only seven counties in Alaska, California, Louisiana, and New York, according to press reports.

The DOJ says it'll make up for the loss of federal observers by sending lawyers and other staff as election monitors in roughly half the states in the country. "But unlike the specially trained election observers, monitors are not allowed inside unless local election officials invite them," *The New York Times* reports.

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The federal observer program was one of the most important and little-known parts of the VRA, writes Julie Fernandes, director for voting rights at the Open Society Policy Center and a former deputy assistant attorney general for civil rights:

“There are countless examples of the federal observer program being used to protect voters from racial discrimination at the polls. In 2012, federal observers monitoring an election in Shelby County, Alabama, documented the closing of doors on African-American voters before the voting hours were over, as well as voting officials using racial epithets to describe voters. That same year, observers were sent to Alameda and Riverside Counties in California to gather information regarding reports of serious failures to provide language assistance to voters who needed it. In 2011, a federal court relied on observer reports to conclude that Sandoval County, New Mexico, had effectively disenfranchised members of the Keres tribe. In 2010, during the early voting period in Harris County, Texas, federal observers documented intimidation and harassment targeting Latino and African-American voters by an organized, well-funded Texas-based organization with clear partisan electoral goals. And during a primary election in Grenada, Mississippi in 1999, white poll watchers showed up at polling sites with cameras that were used to take pictures of black voters who needed assistance casting their ballots, in an effort to intimidate them. Thankfully, as soon as these individuals found out that there were federal observers monitoring the election, they exited the polling site.”

At a time when there’s the greatest threat to voting rights since 1965, the federal government has the fewest tools at its disposal to protect the right to vote. That makes the work of groups like Election Protection all the more important.

The Election Polls That Matter **Jim Messina, *The New York Times*, November 3, 2016**

With just days left in the 2016 presidential election, Americans are wondering if polling is accurate or if we’ll see a Brexit-style shock. It’s not just voters who ask these types of questions. On the eve of Election Day in 2012, as the campaign manager for President Obama’s re-election, I was asked to meet him at a rally in Milwaukee. “Gallup has me down by three points, and other polls have me trailing, tied or with a slight lead,” the president said. “Your models have this race basically over. Why are we right and they are wrong?”

The best campaigns don’t bother with national polls — I’ve come to hate public polling, period. In the 2012 race we focused on a “golden report,” which included 62,000 simulations to determine Mr. Obama’s chances of winning battleground states. It included state tracking polls and nightly calls from volunteers, but no national tracking polls.

In Milwaukee, I assured the president that the golden report was predicting a victory, with 332 electoral votes. On Election Day, that was the exact number of electoral votes the president won.

Today, campaigns can target voters so well that they can personalize conversations. That is the only way, when any candidate asks about the state of the race, to offer a true assessment. Hillary Clinton can do that. To my knowledge, Donald J. Trump, who has bragged that he doesn’t care about data in campaigns, can’t.

When we started the president’s re-election effort, we instilled a team culture in which our assumptions were tested and our work was constantly measured and refined. No detail went overlooked: We did a study of how far the reception desk should be from the front door of a local campaign office to make volunteers feel welcome.

I could also point to hard numbers anytime President Obama wondered if yet another visit to Ohio was a good idea. (It always was!) The number-crunching that campaigns do ultimately leads to a rally in a high school gym in a state that is (or might become) important — something political junkies would do well to remember in the closing days of this election.

For example, in recent days, Mr. Trump has campaigned in New Mexico, a state he has no chance of winning. Candidates can get more money and adjust their message, but the one thing they can’t do is make more time; every wasted hour in a noncompetitive state is a grave error. Mrs. Clinton continues to go on the offensive in states like Arizona, where the race is close.

“Big data” is a buzzword, but that concept is outdated. Campaigns have entered the era of “little data.” Huge data sets are often less helpful in understanding an electorate than one or two key data points — for instance, what issue is most important to a particular undecided voter.

With “little data,” campaigns can have direct, highly personalized conversations with voters both on- and offline, like an ad on a voter’s Facebook page addressing an issue the voter is passionate about. In 2016, we see that online political engagement rates (especially for young voters) are at a historic high.

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This is why campaigns no longer pay much attention to public polls, which often use conversations with just a few hundred people to make predictions about the entire electorate. Getting a truly representative sample has become ever more difficult because of the growing percentage of households with only cellphones, the number of voters who prefer to speak a language other than English, and the difficulty in contacting younger voters, who generally don't have landlines.

Smart campaigns can use "little data" to solve these problems. They look at public data sets that list each registered voter's name, address, party registration and election participation history. By analyzing these voter files, they develop an accurate idea of the makeup of the electorate. Rather than rely on voters' (frequently inaccurate) estimates of their own likelihood to vote, these campaigns look at their turnout record, thus getting a very precise idea of who "likely voters" really are. The media outlets that conduct national polls usually can't afford to do this.

Even the best public polling can tell us only about broad categories of voters — not much help guiding a personalized conversation via text message, as is more common with voters in 2016 than it was even in 2012.

When I work with campaigns, I prefer to focus on sophisticated modeling to make predictions about specific voter behavior. We can identify the key voters — not just big groups like "independent women" — with whom we want to communicate at each stage of the election, and what we want to say to persuade them or remind them to vote. For instance, campaigns in Florida no longer look at the Cuban-American electorate as a monolith — we know that younger Cuban-American voters are very supportive of the Democratic Party.

You see this clearly in the early-voting numbers. It's crucial for campaigns to "bank" their voters and make sure their key targets vote early. I suspect the early-voting numbers coming out of Nevada contributed to the Trump campaign's decision to spend less money on TV ads in the state.

As we move into the final days of the 2016 election cycle, the smart money is on the campaigns — like Mrs. Clinton's — that are leveraging the power of data to find every last vote they can.

GOP Senators No Longer Want the People to Decide on Supreme Court Justices **Sam Stein, *The Huffington Post*, November 1, 2016**

Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) made a noteworthy declaration about his post-election political intents on Monday, though it was lost amid his joke, for which he has since apologized, about shooting Hillary Clinton.

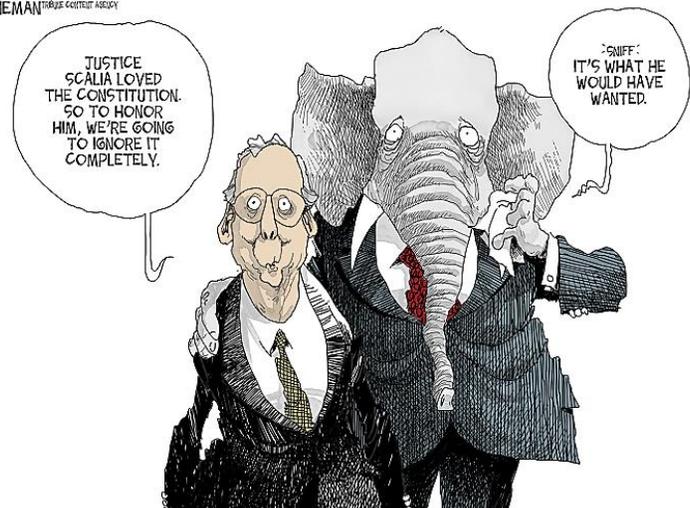
Should he head back to the Senate, Burr pledged, he would try to block any Supreme Court nomination from a President Clinton. "If Hillary Clinton becomes president, I am going to do everything I can do to make sure four years from now, we still got an opening on the Supreme Court," he said.

This is how constitutional crises are made. And it's also why Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.), Clinton's running mate, told *The Huffington Post* that Senate Democrats would try to nuke the filibuster option on Supreme Court nominees should they regain power in that chamber. Beyond that, though, Burr's words Monday are directly at odds with the preferred Republican talking point about the Supreme Court that arose when President Barack Obama nominated Merrick Garland in March to take the seat of the deceased Antonin Scalia — a talking point that Burr adopted.

Back then, the North Carolina Republican didn't wait long to explain that he wouldn't be considering Garland's nomination because it was coming too close to a presidential election. "The American people deserve a voice in the nomination of the next Supreme Court Justice," Burr explained. "This appointment could easily tip the balance of the court in a direction not supported by the American people as evidenced by 2014's election results giving Republicans both the Senate and House."

Note the specific wording of the statement, which is still on Burr's website. He wasn't arguing that voters deserved "a voice" in choosing the next president, who would nominate a Supreme Court justice, *and* the next Senate, which would advise and consent on that nominee. He spoke strictly about allowing voter input in the nomination. More than seven months later, Burr is now throwing that argument out the window, pledging to block a nomination if the "American people" choose a president he opposes.

SHENEMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE



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Burr isn't the only senator who has abandoned the March dictum of letting the voters decide. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) also recently pledged to block any Supreme Court nominee proposed by Clinton. And his press release from when Garland was nominated was even more explicit in saying that the next president, specifically, should get a say. "This issue is not about any single nominee — it's about the integrity of the Court. With less than a year left in a lame-duck presidency and the long-term ideological balance of the Supreme Court at stake, I believe the American people must have a voice in the direction of the Supreme Court by electing a new president."

There is also Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), who is now making the case that there is ample precedent for the Supreme Court to operate with only eight members. When the Garland nomination was announced, he too said the Senate should sit on its hands and let the election happen first. "I proudly stand with my Republican colleagues in our shared belief — our advice and consent — that we should not vote on any nominee until the next president is sworn into office," the Cruz statement read. "The People will decide. I commend Mitch McConnell and Chuck Grassley for holding the line and ensuring that We the People get to exercise our authority to decide the direction of the Supreme Court and the Bill of Rights."

Cruz's statement from March allows more wiggle room for him to now argue that he was talking about waiting for both the composition of a new Congress as well as the next president before considering a Supreme Court nominee. McCain's and Burr's weren't nearly as broadly worded.

And for Burr in particular, advocating for an open seat on the court is a patently obvious flip in position. Back in 2005, he specifically argued that an eight-person Supreme Court would render the institution toothless. "If we are not able to produce a Justice out of this fine Hall, then they will meet with eight Justices. I have to believe there is an odd number of Justices for a very logical reason. It was so there would not be a tie. On a 4-to-4 tie, what happens? Seldom have we asked the question," he said in a speech arguing for the appointment of a circuit court justice. "On a 4-to-4 tie in the Supreme Court, the lower court's decision stands. That means all of a sudden the Supreme Court, our highest court, the Court we look to be the best and brightest to interpret law and the Constitution, is insignificant in the process."

Queen Offers to Restore British Rule Over United States Andy Borowitz, *The New Yorker*, October 29, 2016

LONDON (The Borowitz Report)—In an unexpected televised address on Saturday, Queen Elizabeth II offered to restore British rule over the United States of America.

Addressing the American people from her office in Buckingham Palace, the Queen said that she was making the offer "in recognition of the desperate situation you now find yourselves in."

"This two-hundred-and-forty-year experiment in self-rule began with the best of intentions, but I think we can all agree that it didn't end well," she said.

Queen urged Americans to write in her name on Election Day, after which the transition to British rule could begin "with a minimum of bother."

Elizabeth acknowledged that, in the wake of Brexit, Americans might justifiably be alarmed about being governed by the British parliamentary system, but she reassured them, "Parliament would play no role in this deal. This would be an old-school monarchy. Just me, and then, assuming you'd rather not have Charles, we could go straight to William and those children of his who have mesmerized you so."

Using the closing moments of her speech to tout her credentials, the Queen made it clear that she has never used e-mail and has only had sex with one person "very occasionally."



With the Supreme Court at Stake, This Election Could Determine the Future of Our Environment
Tom Steyer and Michael Keegan, *The Nation*, November 2, 2016

In September the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit heard arguments in a case about the first-ever federal limits on power plants' carbon pollution, a policy that would fight climate change and prevent thousands of air pollutant-related premature deaths each year. Some of the country's biggest polluters brought a challenge to the policy that, no matter what the appeals court decides, will probably end up at the Supreme Court.

As has happened many times before, the Supreme Court will likely have the last word on a legal question with enormous implications for the health of Americans for generations to come. Experts have already predicted that whether these and other key clean air rules are upheld or struck down will likely depend on whether Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump wins the presidency on November 8.



It's hard to overstate the influence of the Supreme Court when it comes to safeguarding our health and our communities—from making sure Americans can access clean air and water, to regulating harmful pollutants that make our kids sick, to effectively addressing climate change once and for all. In recent years, a number of closely divided cases relating to pollution and our right to clean air and water have come down to a single Supreme Court vote—with many of these decisions inflicting significant harm on America's efforts to safeguard our communities.

So when we consider the fact that the Supreme Court hangs in the balance in next month's presidential election, it's important to realize that the future of our health, our communities, and our environment depends on the outcome.

Whoever is elected to be our next president this November will likely be nominating multiple justices to the Supreme Court. And there is no question in our minds that a Trump presidency and a Trump Supreme Court would endanger the health of our environment and our families. It may not come as a surprise that a man who thinks climate change is a "hoax" has floated some potential Supreme Court justices with disturbing track records on the environmental impacts our families face every day. For example, in a case about emissions from a Utah refinery, Judge Thomas Lee—who is on Trump's shortlist of nominees—called into question whether a group of physicians had standing in the case. The doctors' "economic interests" would "cut the other way," Lee argued, since worse air quality would mean "more patients with more problems."

Trump has even said he would hand over his selection of judges to a far-right organization funded by the super-polluting Koch brothers. And assuming Trump follows through on his pledge to look to the late Justice Scalia and Justice Thomas as role models for his Court picks, recent Court decisions provide several examples of the damage a Trump Supreme Court could do. For example, a Court with several more such justices could well reverse the Court's recent 5-4 decision and rule that the EPA has no authority to regulate greenhouse gases.

By contrast, Hillary Clinton has made addressing climate change and transitioning to clean energy a priority, and would nominate justices who could shift the jurisprudence of a Court that has repeatedly put the interests of powerful corporations above those of everyday Americans.

From tackling climate change to protecting the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink, the Supreme Court will continue to have the final say on the health of our kids and the safety of our communities. But the makeup of the Court making those decisions will be determined by the outcome of the 2016 election.

Which means it's up to us: We must show up, we must vote, and we must win. Our future truly depends on it.

Tom Steyer is the founder of NextGen Climate. Michael Keegan is the president of People For the American Way.

SEE WHAT OUR CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATORS THINK ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES
Congressman John Garamendi, California 3rd Congressional District: www.garamendi.house.gov
Senator Barbara Boxer: www.boxer.senate.gov
Senator Dianne Feinstein: www.feinstein.senate.gov

Republicans Are Now Vowing Total War, and the Consequences Could Be Immense **Paul Waldman, *The Washington Post*, November 3, 2016**

The election is just five days away, and something truly frightening is happening, something with far-reaching implications for the immediate future of American politics. Republicans, led by Donald Trump but by no means limited to him, are engaging in kind of termite-level assault on American democracy, one that looks on the surface as though it's just aimed at Hillary Clinton, but in fact is undermining our entire system.

I know, my conservative friends will say that this kind of talk is just fear-mongering and exaggeration. But there is something deeply troubling happening right now, and it goes beyond the ordinary trading of blows in a campaign season. Consider these recent developments:

- There appears to be a war going on inside the FBI, and from what we can tell, a group of rogue agents, mostly in New York, may be in such a fervor to destroy Hillary Clinton that they may be aggressively leaking damaging innuendo to the press against her in the waning days of the campaign. They succeeded in their apparent goal of making FBI director James Comey a tool of their campaign — and the basis for their investigation is an anti-Clinton book written under the auspices of an organization of which the CEO of the Trump campaign is co-founder and chairman. Pro-Trump FBI agents now seem to be coordinating with Trump surrogates to do maximal possible damage to Clinton.
- Republicans continue to cheer the fact that the electronic systems of American political groups were illegally hacked, and then private communications were selectively released in order to do damage to one side in this election. The Republican nominee has explicitly asked a hostile foreign power to hack into his opponent's electronic systems.
- High-ranking Republican officeholders are now suggesting that they may impeach Clinton as soon as she takes office. These are not just backbench nutbars of the Louie Gohmert variety, but people with genuine power, including Ron Johnson, the senator from Wisconsin, Michael McCaul, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, and veteran legislators like James Sensenbrenner and Peter King. The message is being echoed by top Trump surrogates like Rudy Giuliani.
- There is a growing movement among Republicans in the Senate to simply refuse to approve any nominee appointed by a Democratic president to the Supreme Court, leaving open any and all vacancies until a Republican can be elected to fill them.
- State and local Republican officials are engaged in widespread and systematic efforts to suppress the votes of African-Americans and other groups likely to vote disproportionately Democratic; in many cases officials have been ordered by courts to stop their suppression efforts and they have simply ignored the court orders.
- Republican elected officials increasingly feel emboldened to openly suggest violence against Clinton should she be elected.

It is important to understand that is not normal. This is not just bare-knuckle politics. Something extraordinary is happening.

Let's take the FBI case as just one example. You have a situation where a group of FBI agents is in direct conflict with prosecutors who believe the agents have a weak case in their attempt to find evidence of corruption that can be used against Clinton. The agents, in an atrocious violation of FBI policy against injecting the Bureau into an election, begin leaking dark innuendo to reporters. That convinces the FBI director that he has no choice but to go public with the fact that the Bureau is looking at some emails that might or might not have something to do with Clinton, though no one has actually read them. That news lands like a bombshell, despite its complete lack of substance. And then it turns out that these agents are basing their investigation on a book called "Clinton Cash" by Peter Schweizer. Schweizer is the president of the Government Accountability Institute, an organization co-founded and chaired by Steve Bannon, who is the CEO of the Trump campaign.

While the "imagine if the other side was doing this" argument can sometimes sound trite, in this case it's more than apt. Imagine if a group of FBI agents were leaking damaging information on Donald Trump in violation of longstanding departmental policy, and it turned out that they were basing their innuendo on a book published by the Center for American Progress, which Clinton campaign chair John Podesta founded and used to run. Republicans would be crying bloody murder, and I'm pretty sure the entire news media would be backing them up every step of the way.

It's not that this kind of thing is completely unprecedented. When Bill Clinton was impeached, people talked about "the criminalization of politics" — the idea that Republicans were trying to use the levers of the justice system as a means to prevail in what should be just ordinary political competition. George W. Bush's administration fired a group of U.S. Attorneys because they were unwilling to pursue bogus voter fraud cases against Democrats or were too willing to investigate genuine corruption among Republican officials. And there was this guy named J. Edgar Hoover.

But as he has in so many ways, Donald Trump takes every ugly impulse Republicans have and turns it up to 11, and just about the entire party follows him down. So now they are making it very clear that from literally the day Hillary Clinton is inaugurated, they will wage total war on her. There will be no rule or norm or standard of decency they won't flout if it gets them a step closer to destroying her, no matter what the collateral damage.

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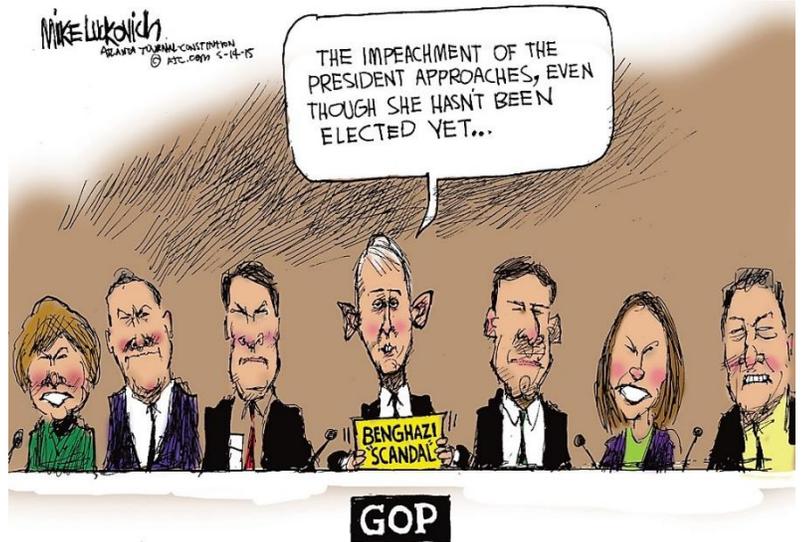
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It's important to understand that strong institutions are what separate strong democracies from weak ones. In a strong democracy, one party can't come into power and just lock up its opponents. It can't turn the country's law enforcement agencies into a partisan tool to destroy the other party. It can't say that the courts will function only at its pleasure. We have the world's most stable system not just because there aren't tanks in the streets on election day, but because we have institutions that are strong enough to restrain the venality of individual men and women. And now, Republicans are not even pretending that those institutions should be impartial and transcend partisanship. They're saying, if we can use them to destroy our opponents, we will.

And please, spare me any explanations for this phenomenon that rely on how "divided" Americans are. Are we divided? Sure. But there's only one party

that is so vigorously undermining core democratic institutions in this way. You may not like what Democrats stand for, but they aren't engaging in widespread official vote suppression, chanting that should their candidate win her opponent should be tossed in jail, promising to prevent any Republican president from filling vacancies on the Supreme Court, suggesting that they'll try to impeach their opponent as soon as he takes office, cheering when a hostile foreign power hacks into American electronic systems, and trying to use the FBI to win the election.

Only one party is doing all of that. And we should all be very worried about what Republicans will do after November 8, whether they win or lose.



Who Broke Politics Paul Krugman, *The New York Times*, November 4, 2016

As far as anyone can tell, Paul Ryan, the speaker of the House — and the leader of what's left of the Republican establishment — isn't racist or authoritarian. He is, however, doing all he can to make a racist authoritarian the most powerful man in the world. Why? Because then he could privatize Medicare and slash taxes on the wealthy. And that, in brief, tells you what has happened to the Republican Party, and to America.

This has been an election in which almost every week sees some longstanding norm in U.S. political life get broken. We now have a major-party candidate who refuses to release his tax returns, despite huge questions about his business dealings. He constantly repeats claims that are totally false, like his assertion that crime is at record highs (it's actually just a bit off historic lows). He stands condemned by his own words as a sexual predator. And there's much, much more.

Any one of these things would in the past have been considered disqualifying in a presidential candidate. But leading Republicans just shrug. And they celebrated when James Comey, the director of the F.B.I., broke with policy to lay a heavy thumb on the election scales; if Hillary Clinton wins nonetheless, they have made it clear that they will try to block any Supreme Court nomination, and there's already talk of impeachment hearings. About what? They'll find something.

So how did all our political norms get destroyed? Hint: It started long before Donald Trump.

On one side, Republicans decided long ago that anything went in the effort to delegitimize and destroy Democrats. Those of us old enough to remember the 1990s also remember the endless series of accusations hurled against the Clintons. Nothing was too implausible to get on talk radio and get favorable mention in Congress and in conservative media: Hillary killed Vince Foster! Bill was a drug smuggler!

Nothing was too trivial to trigger congressional hearings: 140 hours of testimony on potential abuse of the White House Christmas card list. And, of course, seven years of investigations into a failed real estate deal. When Mrs. Clinton famously spoke of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" out to undermine her husband's presidency, she wasn't being hyperbolic; she was simply describing the obvious reality.

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And since accusations of Democratic scandal, not to mention congressional “investigations” that started from a presumption of guilt, had become the norm, the very idea of bad behavior independent of politics disappeared: The flip side of the obsessive pursuit of a Democratic president was utter refusal to investigate even the most obvious wrongdoing by Republicans in office. There were multiple real scandals during the administration of George W. Bush, ranging from what looked like a political purge in the Justice Department to the deceptions that led us into invading Iraq; nobody was ever held accountable.

The erosion of norms continued after President Obama took office. He faced total obstruction at every turn; blackmail over the debt ceiling; and now, a refusal even to hold hearings on his nominee to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court.

What was the purpose of this assault on the implicit rules and understandings that we need to make democracy work? Well, when Newt Gingrich shut down the government in 1995, he was trying to, guess what, privatize Medicare. The rage against Bill Clinton partly reflected the fact that he raised taxes modestly on the wealthy.

In other words, Republican leaders have spent the past couple of decades doing exactly what the likes of Mr. Ryan are doing now: trashing democratic norms in pursuit of economic benefits for their donor class.

So we shouldn't really be too surprised that Mr. Comey, who turns out to be a Republican first and a public servant, well, not so much, decided to politically weaponize his position on the eve of the election; that's what Republicans have been doing across the board. And we shouldn't be surprised at all that Mr. Trump's lurid personal failings haven't caused a break with the leaders of his party's establishment: They decided long ago that only Democrats have scandals.

Despite Mr. Comey's abuse of power, Mrs. Clinton will probably win. But Republicans won't accept it. When Mr. Trump rages about a “rigged election,” expect muted disagreement at best from a party establishment that in a fundamental sense never accepts the legitimacy of a Democrat in the White House. And no matter what Mrs. Clinton does, the barrage of fake scandals will continue, now with demands for impeachment.

Can anything be done to limit the damage? It would help if the media finally learned its lesson, and stopped treating Republican scandal-mongering as genuine news. And it would also help if Democrats won the Senate, so that at least some governing could get done.

And Then Michelle Obama Showed Up Connie Schultz, *Creators.com*, October 19, 2016

Hillary Clinton's candidacy has sparked endless commentary about her gender, and rightly so. She is increasingly likely to be the first female president of the United States. That's a big deal — even if the thought of it makes you curl up into the fetal position, you poor thing.

Two other women have become increasingly visible in this presidential race: Michelle Obama and Melania Trump. In word and deed, the contrast in their recent public appearances in response to the video revealing Donald Trump's admission that he has engaged in sexual predator behavior illustrates how far women have come — and how desperately some want to cling to our oppressive past.

Anyone paying even the slightest bit of attention to this race knows by now what Trump said about women on the decade-old video first revealed by The Washington Post. The quickest of summaries: He believes he is entitled to touch, kiss and grope any woman he finds attractive, without her consent. The public backlash has been swift and enduring. Trump's dismissal of the recorded conversation as “locker room talk” and his repeated mocking of the growing number of his female accusers are further eroding his impossible dream of living in the White House.

What's a campaign to do? On Oct. 17, his wife, Melania, agreed to talk to CNN's Anderson Cooper. This is the politics of old. When all else fails, summon the wife.

I hesitate to lay claim to anything exceptional about me as a journalist, but this is a fact of my life and requires full disclosure: I am married to Sen. Sherrod Brown. I know a little bit about the prevailing low and constricting expectations for women married to politicians. Not because of my husband. He knew what he was getting into when he proposed to a newspaper columnist, and it wasn't blind compliance. This is an archaic notion of political spousedom cherished by politicians and too many of my colleagues in the media who continue to regard candidates' wives as either a prop or a problem.

Melania Trump broke with her usual practice as the mute go-along to blame another man for egging on her husband and to double down on the “locker room” defense.

Anderson Cooper: “He described it as locker room talk. ... You've sort of alluded to that, as well. Is that what it is to you, just locker room talk?”

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Melania Trump: "Yeah, it's kind of two teenage boys. Actually, they should behave better, right?"

Cooper: "He was 59."

Trump: "Correct. And sometimes I said I have two boys at home. I have my young son and my husband, so, but I know how some men talk, and that's how I saw it, yes."

As Cooper stressed, Donald Trump was 59. That's my age right now. I keep thinking about that and all that I am expected to know by this age.

And let's be clear: A teenager admitting to the behavior that Donald Trump was bragging about would be just as predatory — and the behavior would be just as illegal.

Fortunately, first lady Michelle Obama knew that the only response to Trump's behavior was to condemn it. Last week, she took the stage in New Hampshire. With a tremor in her voice, she opened her heart and delivered a speech as breathtakingly real as it gets. "I have to tell you that I can't stop thinking about this," she said. "It has shaken me to my core in a way that I couldn't have predicted. ... This wasn't just locker room banter. This was a powerful individual speaking freely and openly about sexually predatory behavior. ... And I have to tell you that I listen to all of this and I feel it so personally — and I'm sure that many of you do, too, particularly the women — the shameful comments about our bodies, the disrespect of our ambitions and intellect, the belief that you can do anything you want to a woman."

This is the face — and the voice — of the new political spouse. She is using all of her power to help other women lay claim to their own, and she is going to help elect the first woman to be president of the United States.

After watching the first lady's speech, I couldn't help but think it's probably a good thing her successor will not be a woman. We're going to need some time to get over how much we're going to miss Michelle Obama.



Michelle Obama **Calvin Trillin, *The Nation*, November 3, 2016**

She's been the star of this campaign—
Her style a hit, her speeches stunning.
And voters murmur to themselves,
"A pity that she isn't running."

If you would like to join our club, please call Janet Brown at 530-674-9227 or attend our November 17 meeting. We meet from 7PM – 8PM at Yuba City High School, Room 322, 850 B Street, Yuba City.

