

OPINION

2016 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Hillary's
House
of
cards

The United States can do better than Clinton. But unless Democrats or Republicans wise up, she'll become president.

Hillary Clinton stepped behind a microphone at the United Nations in New York City a few days ago to answer questions about public records that she generated as secretary of state.

Emails sent and received in the course of government business are supposed to be archived, both for history and to honor requests filed under the Freedom of Information Act. When officials use their government email accounts, correspondence is automatically saved.

Clinton, however, used a private email account even for government business, violating State Department policy, skirting public records laws and raising concerns among journalists and Republicans that she hasn't turned over all the emails that the people are owed.

This would be an obscure scandal but for the fact that Ms. Clinton is about to ask Americans to make her president of the United States. She participated in a press conference because,

while she hasn't yet officially declared her candidacy, she must behave like a candidate. Attempting to excuse her behavior, she granted that it probably would've been better to use government email for official correspondence, but explained that she used her personal email address for the sake of convenience.

"I thought it would be easier to carry just one device for my work and for my personal emails instead of two," she declared.

The explanation was quite strange.

For starters, a single smartphone, tablet or laptop computer is more than capable of allowing its owner to access multiple email

accounts. More broadly, Clinton didn't just use a private email address, she set up her own server so that she would control the disk drive where her emails were archived. Doing so is

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relatively costly and complicated, requires someone to do ongoing security and maintenance, and makes it difficult for a disinterested party to verify that all official emails were kept. There are legitimate reasons to run one's own

server. But it's about the least-convenient way to send and receive email.

Compounding her problems, Clinton said that she wouldn't turn over her ser-

ver to a third party because it contained private emails exchanged with her husband. The explanation might have garnered sympathy if not for the fact that a Bill Clinton spokesperson recently said the former president has sent just two emails in his life, both while he was in the White House. Observing the whole affair, longtime political reporter John Dickerson wrote that the question isn't just whether voters trust Ms. Clinton on the particulars of this incident, "but whether she can convince the public that she is a trustworthy person."

She's off to an awful start.

That is noteworthy because the Democratic Party is presently "all in" on her candidacy. Conventional wisdom has long held that she will cruise to her party's nomination thanks to her

POLITICS

Attacking
GOP senators
beyond
Orwellian

Rudy Giuliani, while speaking at a dinner in New York two weeks ago, made news – in a negative way – by opining aloud about President Obama's love of country.

"I know this is a horrible thing to say, but I do not believe that the president loves America," Giuliani said.

The former New York City mayor was roundly criticized for this remark, which serves now as a warning to public speakers everywhere. Call it

the Giuliani Rule: Any rumination prefaced by the phrase "I know this is a horrible thing to say" should probably go unuttered.

Democrats pounced on the ex-mayor's lapse, demanding that other Republicans repudiate it. Prominent political journalists asked 2016 Republican presidential contenders to respond. Some conservatives, noting that Giuliani hasn't held office – or any official GOP role – in 14 years, complained of a double standard in the media. As Florida Sen. Marco Rubio put it puckishly, "Democrats aren't asked to answer every time Joe Biden says something embarrassing, so I don't know why I should answer every time a Republican does."

The New York media was less forgiving. Familiarity with Giuliani over the years has bred, if not contempt, deep doubts about his maturity and prudence. In the New York Daily News, columnist Mike Lupica accused hizzoner of sounding like a "crackpot" who "makes news by pandering in an unhinged way."

When Giuliani doubled down on his comments, Daily News reporters Erin Durkin and Eli Rosenberg characterized them as "McCarthy-esque rants." That's not a description one normally finds in a straight news story, so one might conclude that the paper has a staunch institutional position against questioning the patriotism of others. One would be wrong.

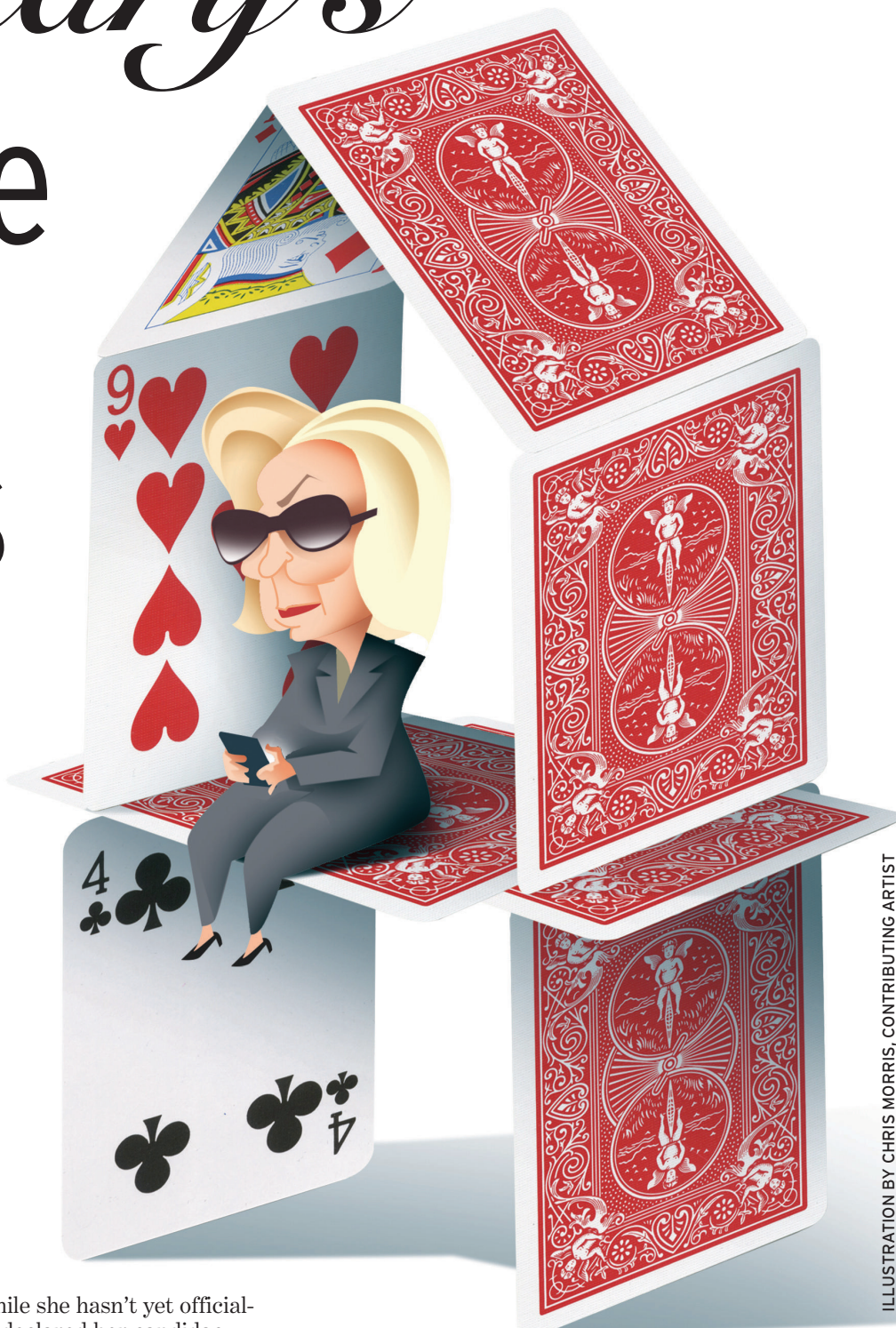
Only a week later, the same newspaper showed the pictures of four prominent Republican senators – Mitch McConnell, Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton and Rand Paul – over the bold-faced, all-caps headline, "TRAITORS." The accompanying editorial accused these four officeholders and 43 other GOP senators who signed an open letter to the leaders of Iran regarding

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CALIFORNIA

Make people more of a priority

California in 1970 was the American Dream writ large. Its economy was diversified, from aerospace and tech to agricul-



JOEL
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ture, construction and manufacturing, and allowed for millions to achieve a level of prosperity and well-being rarely seen in the world. Forty-five years later, California still is a land of dreams, but, increasingly, for a smaller group in the society. Silicon Valley, notes a recent Forbes article, is particularly productive in making billionaires' lists and minting megafortunes faster

California mints many billionaires but its poor and middle-income population fares worse than the nation as a whole.

than anywhere in the country. California's billionaires, for the most part, epitomize American mythology – largely self-made, young and more than a little arrogant. Many older Californians, those who have held onto their houses, are mining gold of their own, as an ever-more environmentally stringent and density-mad planning regime turns even modest homes into million-dollar-plus properties.

What about California society as a whole? The Chapman University Center for Demographics and Policy released a report this month, by attorneys David

Friedman and Jennifer Hernandez, on "California's social priorities." It painstakingly lays out our trajectory over the past 40 years. For the most part, it's not a pretty picture and – to use the most overused word in the planning prayer book – far from sustainable from a societal point of view.

EDUCATIONAL FAILURES

Forty years ago, California was the role model for education, particularly with its network of community colleges, state universities and, at the apex, the University of California

system. Today, that reputation is unraveling. For one thing, we are becoming proportionally less well-educated than our key domestic rivals. From 1970-2010, California's growth in adults with four or more years of college grew at around the national average – 402 percent – despite average population growth that was nearly twice the national average. California, largely due to the past, still ranks 14th in percentage of adults with a bachelor degree or above, but that is down from seventh in 1970.

The trajectory for the future is not encouraging.

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CANNON: Senators’ Iran letter tone-deaf but not treasonous

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ongoing nuclear arms talks of “un-Patriot games” and “treachery.”

Although this might be attributed to the idiosyncrasies of Daily News owner Mort Zuckerman, who is known to hold strong opinions about the Middle East, there’s a larger problem. This anti-patriotic cudgel was first wielded at the White House. And it’s been picked up by an array of liberal activists, left-leaning news organizations and very prominent Democrats.

Recovering instantly from their Giuliani-induced apoplexy, these Paladins of liberalism launched their own “McCarthy-esque” attacks.

Ed Gilgore, writing in the Washington Monthly, called the Republican letter “sedition in the name of patriotism.” Obscure law professors claimed that the 47 senators violated something called the Logan Act, a 1798 statute forbidding private citizens from negotiating on behalf of the nation “without the authority of the United States.” An unnamed character assassin placed on the

White House website a petition calling for the senators to be criminally prosecuted for treason. Hundreds of thousands of amateur constitutional scholars clicked their signatures on this ugly little petition, and when White House press secretary Josh Earnest was asked about it, he was too cute by half.

“For a determination like that,” he said with a straight face, “I’d refer to the Department of Justice.” (The correct response to this question goes like this: “I know the people signing that petition are trying to show support for the president, and we appreciate it, but calling that open letter a violation of Logan Act is insane.”)

But why would Josh Earnest say that? President Obama’s own response to the letter encouraged all this loose talk about treason. “It’s somewhat ironic to see some members of Congress wanting to make common cause with the hard-liners in Iran,” he told reporters. “It’s an unusual coalition.”

Hillary Clinton, holding a press conference ostensibly to explain why she hid her work

product at the State Department, took a similar tack. Although no one asked her about the GOP letter, she gave her opinion: “Either these senators were trying to be helpful to the Iranians, or harmful to commander in chief in the middle of high stakes international diplomacy.”

Among the nastiest slurs were those emanating from the Twitter account of Colorado Rep. Jared Polis, a liberal Democrat, who sent out tweets castigating Tom Cotton as “Tehran Tom”:

“Tehran Tom took his case directly to the Iranian government.”

“Tehran Tom asks Iranian Revolutionary Guards for help in battle against U.S. diplomats.”

Hypocrisy may be too mild a word for liberals who complain when their patriotism is questioned, and then immediately resort to that tactic when they perceive an opening. But even taking these smears at face value, they make little sense.

Let’s start with the claims made by Obama and Hillary Clinton. No, the 47 senators don’t want to “help Iran” or want the same thing as Iran

“hard-liners.” They want to gum up the negotiations with Iran because they believe your administration has been too easy on Iran. The Republican senators want stronger sanctions and tougher requirements. They want to cripple Iran’s nuclear program – precisely the opposite of what Iran’s hard-liners want.

Let’s also be clear that the 47 Republicans didn’t negotiate with the ayatollahs. They wrote an open letter – really an op-ed, conveying their concern that the Obama administration is essentially negotiating an international treaty without seeking Senate ratification. Unlike the Logan Act nonsense, this is a serious argument involving separation of powers, which Obama often treats as an inconvenience instead of a hallowed constitutional doctrine.

As for calling Tom Cotton a traitor – this is a man who, after graduating from Harvard Law School, joined the U.S. Army after 9/11 and fought in Iraq and Afghanistan – that’s just, well, Orwellian.

Having said all that, if Sen. Cotton or his 46 co-signatories

had sought my counsel, I would have advised against writing the letter in that form. I found it politically tone deaf, disrespectful to the nation’s elected president, confusing to America’s allies – and counterproductive.

But demonizing those senators is a much greater offense. The end of civil discourse doesn’t just make political compromise in Washington harder. It makes it hard to remember why we’re fighting about these things in the first place. This was a point made starkly by George Orwell himself during World War II. As Allied bombers razed German cities in 1944, Orwell received a letter from a troubled reader. Although he realized “the Hun [has] got to be beaten,” the letter-writer said, he worried about the civilians being killed by American and British pilots.

“It seems to me,” Orwell replied in his column, “that you do less harm by dropping bombs on people than by calling them ‘Huns.’”

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FRIEDERSDORF: Hillary’s weaknesses surprisingly glaring

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name recognition and ability to raise many millions to finance her campaign. As a result of those strengths, no rival capable of stopping the coronation has emerged within her party, and while Election Day is a long way off, time is still short if anyone is to seriously challenge her.

Perhaps the political bet Democrats are making will pay off. Ms. Clinton could, indeed, win the White House. Name recognition and money will be assets in a general election, too; she can point to significant experience at the highest levels of government; many voters will be attracted to the idea of electing the first female president; and a weak Republican nominee is always a possibility.

Still, her weaknesses are surprisingly glaring for someone who is a front-runner and heavy favorite before even formally announcing her candidacy.

Indeed, the email scandal is the least of the red flags her record raises.

Clinton’s foreign policy judgment has been atrocious. She favored an American intervention in Libya that preceded that country’s descent into a chaos that ISIS has exploited. She urged aggressive action against a dictator in Syria who presently is among the most powerful foes of ISIS in that country. And, like George W. Bush, she favored the Iraq War, a conflict that cost trillions, ended thousands of American lives and helped to create a region where ISIS has been able to thrive,

and Iran is significantly more powerful.

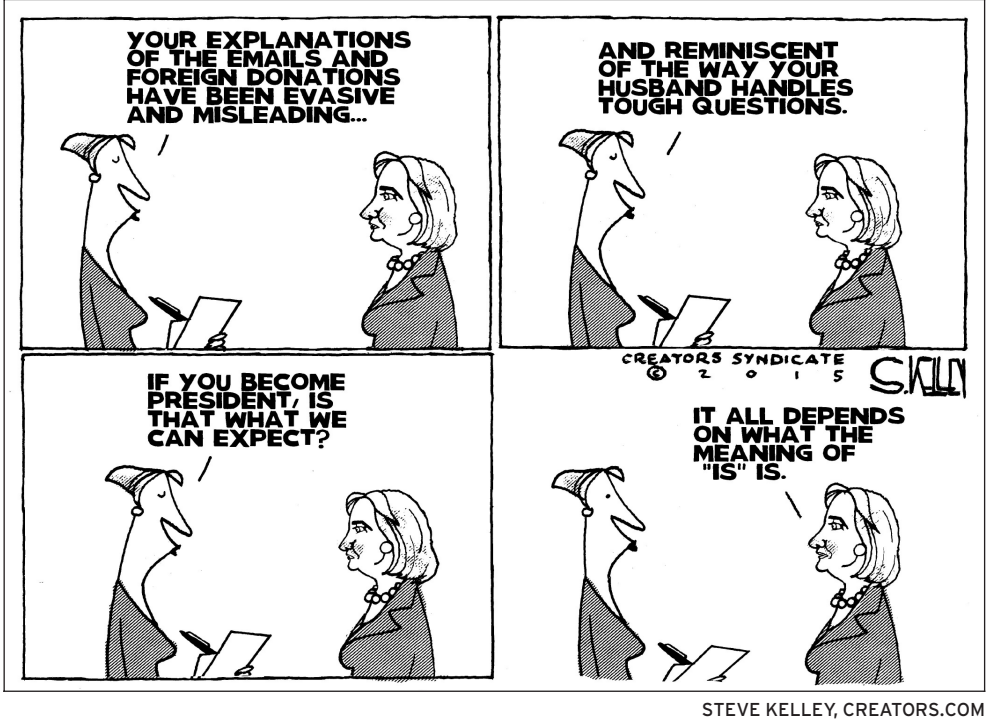
If Clinton gets to the White House despite having supported so many wars that weakened America, it will only be because Republicans nominated their own Washington establishment hawk who foolishly favored the same wars, sometimes while taking money from the same defense interests.

Clinton’s Senate record includes support for numerous post-9/11 programs that blatantly infringed on the civil liberties of Americans, including the National Security Agency program that logs and stores information, called metadata, about most every phone call dialed in the United States.

More recently, the nonprofit foundation run by Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton has faced criticism for taking large donations from foreign governments even when Ms. Clinton was secretary of state, a self-evident conflict of interest even if it was perfectly legal.

For example, Algeria gave \$500,000. “At the time, Algeria, which has sought a closer relationship with Washington, was spending heavily to lobby the State Department on human rights issues,” the Washington Post reported last month. “While the foundation has disclosed foreign-government donors for years, it has not previously detailed the donations that were accepted during Clinton’s four-year stint at the State Department.”

The New York Times reports that the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation “has accepted tens of millions of dollars in



donations from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Algeria and Brunei.” Would that affect how a Hillary Clinton White House would relate to those countries? Would Mrs. Clinton be sitting in the White House, wondering how to ensure that there are more big donations once she leaves office?

The Democrats can do better than Clinton, though it’s nearly too late for their party to change course. The Re-

publicans would be best positioned to beat her if they nominate someone who can credibly attack her interventionist excesses and abrogations of civil liberties. But they’re as likely to nominate a hawk who supports NSA spying.

The United States can do better than Clinton. But unless Democrats or Republicans wise up, she’ll become president.

Staff Opinion columnist Conor Friedersdorf also writes for the Atlantic.

KOTKIN: State’s job creation, income growth lag the nation

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The rate of college education growth in California is already well below that of such states as Texas, which expanded this cohort of its population by 555 percent, or Arizona, which boosted its college-educated adult population by more than 860 percent. California’s increase in college graduates also lagged that of key high-tech rivals, such as Colorado, Washington, Oregon and North Carolina. This also reflects, in part, the significant growth of major public universities in all these states. People saw the California approach to higher education – most closely identified with Gov. Edmund G. “Pat” Brown – and copied it, with considerable effect.

But the state’s real problems can be found further down the educational food-chain. California’s production of adults with some college experience grew from 1970-2010 by 304 percent – which includes people getting skills in community colleges, for example – well below the national average of 409 percent. Meanwhile, our state’s numbers of adults who didn’t advance beyond high school also trailed the nation – 40 percent against a national average of 69 percent.

The trajectory overall is not pretty. In 1970, we ranked second in the number of adults with some education. Today, we are 24th.

But the worst news, by far, is at the very bottom: adults who do not have high school degrees. Nationwide, this population dropped by more than 23 million people, but California was one of only four states to boost its ranks of uneducated adults, and by 515,000 people, the largest increase in the country. This is a group that tends to be very poor and dependent on public assistance, which puts enor-

mous stress on the state, counties and communities. In 1970, California had very opposite numbers, ranking 44th in adults without high school degrees; today we stand second.

The immediate, if politically incorrect view, would be this reflects our large population of Latinos, particularly the undocumented. But Texas has more Hispanics as a percentage of its society, yet managed to reduce the number of adults without a high school education by nearly 30,000 since 1970, despite massive population growth. More important, particularly for the future, Texas educational institutions, especially at the grade-school level, appear to be getting somewhat better results from Latino, and African American students.

EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND POVERTY

It’s no surprise, then, that Latinos, who will shape much of America’s future, are overall doing better in Texas than in California. In Texas, they are more likely to be married and own a business or a home than their California counterparts – and far less likely to be on some form of public assistance. One explanation has been the relative decline of the California economy, particularly in fields such as construction, manufacturing, energy and logistics, that have been traditional sources of upward mobility for working class, noncollege educated people.

California has largely chosen – through artificially high land prices as well regulatory excess – not to participate in either the recent U.S. energy boom, despite its massive reserves, or in the revival of American manufacturing, both prime sources of higher-wage blue-collar jobs. Nor has the state offered a stellar example of job growth overall in recent years.

Until 1990, California created jobs at an average rate of 3 percent per year, well above the national average. Since then the rate has been only 0.8 percent, well below the national average. Texas, with 70 percent of California’s population, has created 4 million new jobs since 1990, almost twice California’s production.

Overall, California has lagged, ranking 45th among the state in per capita income growth since 1970, up 62 percent versus a national average of more than 77 percent. Many of our key competitor states, including Texas, Washington and Colorado, have all done substantially better by this measurement.

Of course, not all Californians have done poorly under this regime. Since the mid-1970s, incomes for the top 20 percent of the state’s population have risen at above the national average. But for the rest of the population, the results have been well-below average.

Not surprisingly, California’s growth in income inequality has surged well ahead of the nation. In 1970, the state ranked 25th in income inequality. It now stands as fourth-worst. California’s poor and middle-income population has done far worse than the national average, but the state’s top 5 percent have done considerably better.

Most tragic of all has been the growth of poverty. In the 1960s and 1970s, notes University of Washington geographer Richard Morrill, California had a lower percentage of residents in poverty than the national norm. California’s share of the nation’s poor has steadily increased since then, and in the latest Census Bureau analysis, which factors in cost of living, its rate of poverty – some 24 percent – is the highest in the nation, worse even than such longtime sad sacks as Mississippi and Louisiana, not to mention Texas.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

California’s progressive politicians, such as the leftist icon Attorney General Kamala Harris, make a big point about their helping our state’s beleaguered middle and working classes. In reality, many of their policies, for example, in housing and energy, do little to encourage broad economic growth, and, in fact, restrict it. Even worse, recent indications are that progressives, and the Jerry Brown administration, seemed determined to double down on climate change-related regulations that will hamper most blue-collar sectors, at least those that do not require subsidies.

Ultimately, California does not have to give up its key environmental and social values, but it needs to pursue them in a way that benefits the majority of its residents. Once, the idea of upward mobility and broad-based growth were essential liberal values. Those need to become part of liberalism again.

As Friedman and Hernandez note in their report for Chapman, California should “pend as much energy on alleviating poverty and income inequality” as it does on “reducing emissions and protecting natural resources.” The reality is that we do have a chance to restore California to its place as a harbinger of opportunity for more than a handful of people, but we can only do so if we recognize the socially disastrous path the state is currently on.

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