

# Thoughts from Barry

Some Things Bother Me



By Barry Segal



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## Introducing Barry Segal

For those of you who don't have the honor and privilege to know Barry Segal personally, I want to use this opportunity to introduce you to him. Barry is a successful businessman and when he sold his company Bradco, a roofing supply company, he and his family were good financially and he was able to use his money to help humanity. Barry is not a man who can sit still, so, despite his considerable wealth, retirement was not an option. Upon the urging of his son, Richie, both Barry and his wife Dolly decided to attend Clinton Global International (CGI) in 2009. He met many people, including Anne Heyman and this led to a trip to Africa. Upon conclusion of that trip Barry had found himself a new profession, philanthropist. His first foundation, the Segal Family Foundation is currently third in terms of the number of grantees in sub-Saharan Africa. His influential and innovative style of philanthropy is representative of who he is at his core; bold, trusting, risk tolerant, and innovative. Decisions are made locally by African employees and citizens from the communities where Segal family does the majority of its granting. Under the guidance of Andy Bryant, the SFF Executive Director, and Martin Segal, Barry's youngest son, the SFF has grown into one of the most effective trust based philanthropy organizations serving Africa.

In 2009 Barry met a woman on an airplane whose child had autism. Inspired by that meeting, Barry started a second foundation called Focus Autism to advocate for those vulnerable children effected by Autism. In 2015, Focus Autism was expanded to become Focus for Health. Barry, Dolly, and the entire FFH team are dedicated to uncovering the cause(s) of skyrocketing rates of chronic disease and disability, and to advocate for transparency and change in government that will lead to better health outcomes for all Americans.

I have the privilege of being the Executive Director of Focus for Health Foundation. On its surface, Focus for Health seem to be in many different areas, and for those who don't understand Barry, it might seem not very focused at all. But the one common theme about everything Barry does and every organization we support is, at their core, fairness. Barry is the quintessential champion for the underdog, and all of the organizations Focus for Health supports have a mission to make the world a better place for everyone.

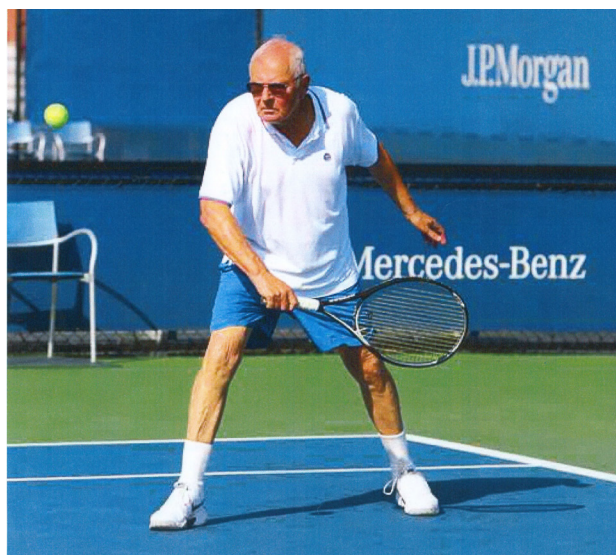
Back to Barry... at 86 years old (in 2021) Barry decided to start a third foundation, Focus Central America... In less than a year Focus Central America has staff and consultants in the Northern Triangle countries we are working in, has an in-country office, and an in-country Director who is a Costa Rican citizen. Barry's model of philanthropy that has been so successful with his other two foundations has already begun to be replicated in what could be called one of the most difficult regions in the world.

One of the things this global perspective has given Barry is a very strong sense that the way we do things in America might not be the best. When an issue comes up in the news and a problem is uncovered in the way American government and culture is functioning, Barry will come to me and say “What are they doing in the Netherlands? “What are they doing in Germany?” “What are they doing in New Zealand?” This book is a compilation of the answers to some of those questions.

The United States of America is an outlier; we trend differently than every other developed country in the world on almost every key social issue. The common thread behind all those differences seems to be greed and racism. For those who don’t believe us, please continue reading. What we have found is all the things we do wrong intersect in a way that has created huge wealth and health disparities. We are a society that was built on racism and the oppression and exploitation of people of color, and we systematically have kept that power structure in place. The laws that have been created and the representatives (who can be bought and sold by the corporations) serve the interest of the wealthy and not the people they pretend to represent. Even philanthropy, which was designed theoretically to help people, is also an outgrowth of the system that keeps the power and money in the hands of the wealthy. From the tax system to the way companies are regulated by our government all have resulted in a completely unfair and unjust society that is different depending on your gender, wealth, and color of your skin.

This book helps to explain the world from Barry Segal’s perspective and explain why these things bother him. Hopefully, this book will lead you to be bothered too, because only then will things change.

– Jennifer Shore

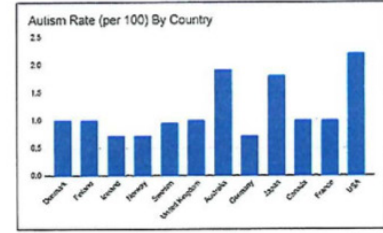
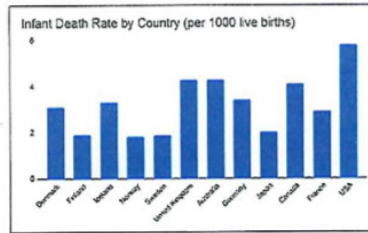
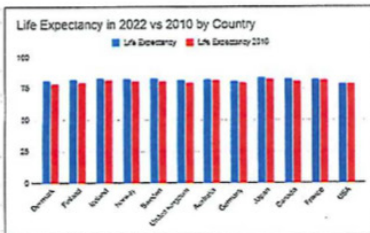
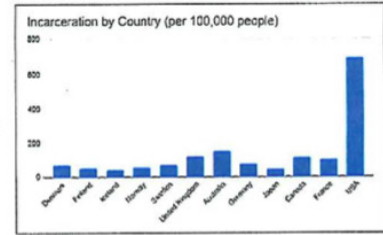
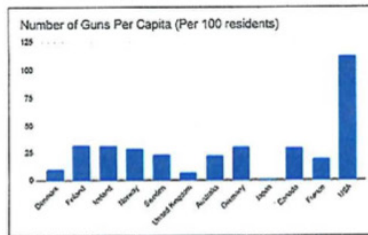




## Problems by The Numbers

This is a little summary of “some of the things that bother me.” It demonstrates how different the US is than other countries on key social indicators. The Scandinavian countries are a model of the way to best do things, but even compared to other countries outside those, the US trends very differently than other developed nations.

Country	Healthcare Cost (2020)	Life Expectancy	Life Expectancy 2010	Autism Rate	Overall Pop	Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	Incarceration rate per 100,000	guns per 100 residents
Denmark	5,849	81.00	79.00	1 in 36	5,833,859.00	3.10	72.00	9.90
Finland	4,662	82.48	80.00	1 in 100	5,558,297.00	1.90	51.00	32.40
Norway	6,748	82.94	81.00	1 in 139	5,507,710.00	1.80	57.00	28.80
Sweden	5,782	83.33	81.00	1 in 110	10,228,057.00	1.87	70.00	23.10
<b>Scandinavian Countries</b>		<b>82.44</b>	<b>80.25</b>	<b>*1 in 208</b>	<b>27,127,923.00</b>	<b>2.17</b>	<b>62.50</b>	<b>23.55</b>
United Kingdom	5,268	81.77	80.00	1 in 128	65,493,950.00	4.30	121.60	6.60
Australia	4,919	82.20	82.00	1 in 113	24,309,330.00	4.30	152.00	14.83
Germany	6,731	81.88	80.00	1 in 263	80,638,476.00	3.40	78.00	32.47
Japan	4,691	83.70	83.00	1 in 55	126,323,715.00	2.00	47.00	0.60
Canada	5,370	82.96	81.00	1 in 94	36,684,603.00	4.10	114.00	30.00
France	5,564	82.27	82.00	1 in 144	65,273,500.00	2.89	102.00	20.20
<b>Average</b>	<b>4,786</b>	<b>82.45</b>	<b>81.33</b>		<b>66,453,929.00</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>102.43</b>	<b>20.22</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>11,945</b>	<b>79.11</b>	<b>79.00</b>	<b>1 in 44</b>	<b>324,118,787.00</b>	<b>5.80</b>	<b>693.00</b>	<b>120.5</b>
**United Kingdom total is an average of: Scotland 141 N Ireland. 78 England 146					*Only Netherlands			



## The Healthcare System in the US is Broken

You can't pick up the newspaper without seeing articles about new medical research, conflicting health claims, and endless pharmaceutical ads. Meanwhile, "alternative" medicine advocates who try to counter pharmaceutical interventions (prescription drugs) of the mainstream medical establishment are met with growing resistance in the media. As a health and wellness organization, Focus for Health posts cited, researched articles about health conditions and frequently suggests the exploration of alternatives to conventional, pharma-based medicine as a solution. We print all needed disclosures, explaining that we are not doctors and reminding readers to always consult with their physician when making decisions about their health. But what do most doctors, who dedicate their careers to illness, know about health? A quick scan of the American Medical Association's (AMA) website does not even include a definition of health. The AMA defines "basic healthcare" and "disease" but does not include discussion of health outside of a hospital setting<sup>1</sup>. We hear that "lifestyle factors" such as diet, smoking cigarettes, stress, and exercise account for 40 to 80% of diseases, but 2010 research indicates that on average US medical schools offer only 19.6 hours of nutrition education across four years in medical school<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, most medical schools offset their operating costs through private and public donations. An informal survey of medical schools by National Public Radio (NPR), found that some schools rely on funding from pharmaceutical and other health industry sources<sup>3</sup>. Additional money comes from the public and private institutions, including the Centers for Disease Control, the American Heart Association (AHA), and the American Cancer Society (ACS), who receive a large portion of their funding from the pharmaceutical industry. In the US, healthcare does not seem to translate into health.

Healthcare Cost per Country (Total health expenditures per capita PPP international U.S. dollars 2020<sup>4</sup>).

Denmark	Finland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden	UK	USA
5,849	4,662	5,034	6,748	5,782	5,268	11,945

Much of the costs in the US are caused by having a third-party payer system that drives up costs at every level. Here is an explanation from the Cato Institute: *Third-party payers dominate health care. Like Medicare and Medicaid, some of these payers are public, while others—including insurers like UnitedHealth Group, Anthem, Aetna, Humana, Cigna, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield companies—are private. Public payers are political operations, so they naturally care about political things, like maximizing their budgets and keeping members of Congress happy. Private payers are like other businesses. They want to maximize their profits*<sup>5</sup>.

Pharmaceutical companies have too much power. They exert direct control over consumers through advertising and direct influence over physicians through numerous incentive programs. Consumers see a medication on television and will request a prescription from their doctor directly. The pharma companies use their army of drug representatives (in 2012 there were 72,000 employed in the US) to influence doctors to prescribe their drugs<sup>6</sup>. Each year, about half of all US doctors accept money or gifts from drug companies to the tune of \$2 billion<sup>7</sup>. 36 independent studies concluded that receiving industry money increases prescribing across all medical specialties and all types of drugs; a specific example, it directly influences how many opioids a doctor prescribed. The pharmaceutical industry also has a heavy hand in educating medical students: 41% of emergency departments bring drug companies into teach their residents<sup>8</sup>. The Pharmaceutical Industry's Role in U.S. Medical Education summed it up best: "The pharmaceutical industry and the medical field are inextricably entangled. One creates the necessary medications, and the other delivers the medications to patients in need. Driven by capitalism, the pharmaceutical industry exerts an influence over medical students, creating an atmosphere in which students come to value the industry's input in patient care that can lead to patient and societal harm."<sup>9</sup>

Most interventions suggested by doctors involve the patient taking a prescription. It is important to remember that all drugs have side effects and that not all drugs on the market are 100% safe for all people. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) does not properly evaluate the safety of drugs on the market. People assume the FDA tests drugs manufactured by pharmaceutical companies, but that is not actually the case. The FDA relies on the manufacturer of the drug to do the safety evaluation of the drugs they stand to make the profits from. What could go wrong?

One example... Merck promoted use of their drug Vioxx as an effective treatment for rheumatoid arthritis before it was approved by the FDA for that specific use. Merck also made false claims regarding the safe use of Vioxx for patients with cardiovascular issues<sup>10</sup>. I was prescribed Vioxx, but since I don't like to overmedicate, I didn't take it. Research published in the medical journal, Lancet, estimated that 88,000 Americans had heart attacks from taking Vioxx, and 38,000 of them died. Merck paid just under \$5 billion<sup>11</sup> to compensated victims for the issues with Vioxx, yet during the five years the drug was on the market, Vioxx earned Merck over \$10 billion in sales in the US alone.

The most outrageous example of a crime committed by a pharmaceutical company goes to Purdue Pharma. The Sackler family knew that Oxycontin was addictive but lied to the FDA to get a label claiming it was not addictive. They promoted this highly addictive medication to physicians through financial incentives, expensive continuing education trips, and false studies



about the safety of the medication<sup>12</sup>. They even created new pain scales to increase physician prescription of their drug. According to the CDC, 932,000 people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose. The Sackler family faced few consequences; lives and communities were destroyed, and they continued to make money<sup>13</sup>.

AMERICA'S NATIONAL PASTIME

**GREED**

## COVID VACCINE: Questionable Effectiveness, Yet Widely Pushed

COVID: Pfizer and Moderna are making about \$50 billion a year on Covid shots, and they want that to continue. Pfizer and Moderna have figured out a way to use regulatory capture to get their reformulated COVID-19 shots approved WITHOUT further clinical trials. Their scheme is called the “Future Framework” and it passed on June 28, 2022. Some young adults and adolescents developed myocarditis and pericarditis (both heart conditions) after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. These vaccines need further clinical trials to optimize the safety of this technology. According to the analytics group Airfinity, Pfizer and Moderna will make a combined \$93 billion next year on COVID-19 vaccination sales<sup>14</sup>. These companies mostly sell vaccines to rich countries, leaving many low-income countries without help. In addition, Pfizer has refused to share their vaccine technology with producers in other countries, stifling cooperation and preventing faster solutions for third-world countries. The narratives of vaccine effectiveness continue to be promulgated by the CDC, regardless of the incidence of COVID-19 infection in individuals who received the vaccine.

It is mystifying that people can plainly see the influence of pharma and the reality of the Oxycontin issue, but think vaccines are immune from manufacturer greed. The blind faith many Americans have in their doctors and in the safety and effectiveness of prescription medication is confusing. Citizens who even question the efficacy or safety of vaccines are labeled as spreading misinformation and those who chose not to get the shot are denied entry to schools, travel, concerts etc.



## Blind Trust in Prescription Medications

More than 84% of all office visits to primary care physicians involve medication therapy (CDC, 2016). Simply put, the most common activity engaged in by a medical doctor is writing a prescription.

According to a 2017 study, 55% of Americans regularly take prescription medications (4 on average) and 75% also take at least one over the counter medication<sup>15</sup>. Americans are 5% of the world's population, but we consume 50% of the world's prescription drugs.

Intense marketing by drug companies has brainwashed Americans into believing that medication is a solution to their health complaints, even though Americans continue to become less healthy as evidenced by our decreased longevity, prevalence of chronic diseases, obesity, addiction etc. Most patients go to the doctor with a specific outcome in mind—to obtain a specific referral or specific medication. When patients leave without the thing they came in for, they rank their doctor and their practice more negatively. Medical practices are incentivized (financially) for their positive customer service rankings.

In the US, the third leading medical cause of death is doctor error. Johns Hopkins patient safety experts have calculated that more than 250,000 deaths per year are due to medical error in the U.S. The Johns Hopkins team says the CDC's way of collecting national health statistics fails to classify medical errors separately on the death certificate. The researchers are advocating for updated criteria for classifying deaths on death certificates. According to their study, "most errors represent systemic problems, including poorly coordinated care, fragmented insurance networks, the absence or underuse of safety nets, and other protocols, in addition to unwarranted variation in physician practice patterns that lack accountability."<sup>16</sup>

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website, Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) studies estimate that 6.7% of hospitalized patients have a serious adverse drug reaction with a fatality rate of 0.32%. If these estimates are correct, then there are more than 2,216,000 serious ADRs in hospitalized patients, causing over 106,000 deaths annually.



## Autism Rates Continue to Rise

Autism is a common developmental condition, affecting approximately 1 in 44 children<sup>17</sup> in the United States. Far more boys are diagnosed with autism than girls (3.7% of boys versus .9% of girls<sup>18</sup>). Most diagnoses are made after the age of 4, though a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be reliably made by the age of 2. Earlier screening tools are being used to catch cases earlier, allowing for therapy to begin at the soonest point possible, which results in the most successful outcomes.

All ethnic and socioeconomic groups are affected by autism. There is no medical test or cure for the disorder.

A 2020 CDC report shows a nearly identical prevalence in black and white children. Researchers suggest these differences reflected a bias against non-white groups rather than a true difference in prevalence, and the new study supports that idea. However, autism prevalence in Hispanic children still lags behind those of other groups.

Some risk factors have been identified:

- If there is a family history of autism, it raises the likelihood that a child will develop autism; If your first child has ASD, your second child has a 2% to 18% chance of also having ASD.
- Children born to older parents have a higher risk of autism.
- There are significantly more boys diagnosed with autism<sup>19</sup> than girls.

**The US is leading the way in Autism rates. See the prevalence of Autism in the US vs. other countries:**

Country	Population	Prevalence	People with Autism
United States	331,000,000	1 in 45	7,355,556
Japan	126,476,461	1 in 55	2,299,572
Canada	37,742,154	1 in 94	401,512
Netherlands	17,134,872	1 in 208	82,379
Germany	83,783,942	1 in 263	318,570

**Tom's River, which is NJ state's largest suburban school district, had the highest ASD prevalence (7.3 percent), with a 12 percent prevalence among boys.** A Rutgers study concluded the percentage of children with autism spectrum disorder in Tom's River continues to

rise in a way that is more than just a reflection of better diagnostics<sup>20</sup>. There is something going on there. Perhaps related, Toms River has had a long history of EPA issues. The Ciba-Geigy site has been on the Superfund List since 1982, and it is still one of the most contaminated sites in the country.



## **Issue with the MMR Vaccine (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)**

In 1963, the measles vaccine was developed, and by the late 1960s, vaccines were also available to protect against mumps (1967) and rubella (1969). These three vaccines were combined into the MMR vaccine by Dr. Maurice Hilleman<sup>21</sup> in 1971. Prior to the widespread vaccine program that was implemented in 1971, measles cases had already decreased by 95% in the USA due to improvements in nutrition and sanitation.

In the past ten years, there have been 139 VAERS reports of death<sup>22</sup> following the MMR vaccine, primarily in the 1- to 2-year-old age range. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is egregiously under-reported, so we don't really know how many individuals have died due to the MMR vaccine. There has been only one death<sup>23</sup> due to measles in the same period (specifically in 2015).

There have also been 448 VAERS reports of seizures<sup>24</sup> and 84 cases of epilepsy<sup>25</sup> following the MMR vaccine in the past ten years. In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (now National Academy of Sciences) convened a special committee to look at specific vaccine adverse events<sup>26</sup>. The committee found that there was overwhelming evidence favoring a causal relationship between the MMR vaccine and febrile seizures (i.e., fever-induced seizures). However, there wasn't sufficient evidence to judge whether a relationship between the MMR and afebrile seizures (seizures without fever) exists. Afebrile seizures are more indicative of the development of epilepsy.

The CDC also directly reports that "Vaccines don't cause autism." However, in their own report on the MMR vaccine, there is a significantly higher risk of autism (67% more likely) specifically in boys who received the MMR on time versus those who waited on the MMR until after 3 years of age. Of course, the CDC dismissed this significant result as an artifact of vaccine requirements for special education preschool attendance. However, it doesn't make sense that they would see the effect in boys but not in girls. When the CDC data from this study were analyzed further, the risk was highest in African American boys who were 286% more likely to get an autism diagnosis.

The CDC, the WHO, and the media (The Washington Post) blame anti-vaxxers and "flawed" studies for vaccination hesitancy<sup>27</sup>, yet they refused to allow parents access to disease vaccine products or the opportunity to wait until the children are over 3 to start the MMR series. Also, the effectiveness of the mumps portion of the MMR vaccine provides incomplete protection as there have been outbreaks of mumps among fully vaccinated individuals. Shah et al. (2018) reported an upsurge of mumps cases in the United States<sup>28</sup> over the past two decades,

primarily in 18- to 24-year-old adults living in close proximity. In a study of university mumps outbreaks in Indiana<sup>29</sup>, 76.9% of the cases had documented evidence of MMR vaccination. So, the idea that vaccination of young children is needed for lifelong immunity is clearly not true in the case of the MMR.

## Hepatitis B Vaccination at Birth

Hepatitis B infection is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). The virus is passed from person to person through blood, semen or other body fluids. It does not spread by sneezing or coughing. Common ways that HBV can spread are as follows:

- Sexual contact. You may get hepatitis B if you have unprotected sex with someone who is infected.
- Sharing of needles. HBV easily spreads through needles and syringes contaminated with infected blood. Sharing IV drug paraphernalia puts you at high risk of hepatitis B.
- Accidental needle sticks. Hepatitis B is a concern for health care workers and anyone else who comes in contact with human blood.
- Mother to child. Pregnant women infected with HBV can pass the virus to their babies during childbirth.

Therefore, the only children that need to be vaccinated at birth are those children whose mother is Hepatitis B positive. The reason healthcare providers (and the CDC) recommend the shot for all newborns, even those with Hep B negative mothers is the unlikely event that the mother doesn't know that she has this virus in her blood because of an accidental exposure (cheating spouse or a healthcare exposure). The US conclusion is it is best to vaccinate everyone.

Japan, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland only give the shot to babies of mothers that test positive. In the US, that would be 1-2% on the general population.

The number of vaccines has increased tremendously since 1986, while childhood deaths from contagious illnesses is unlikely. Also, in 1986 Congress passed the **National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA)** in 1986, establishing a federal no-fault system to compensate victims of injury caused by mandated vaccines. This protects vaccine manufacturers from being sued in civil personal injury and wrongful death lawsuits resulting from vaccine injuries. Unfortunately, with COVID, people are taking a product that has not been properly tested and the manufacturer has no liability. To make these untested products mandatory for school attendance, going to work, or travel is unconscionable.

## 1986 Vaccine Schedule

<b>2 Months</b>	DTP	Polio
<b>4 Months</b>	DTP	Polio
<b>6 Months</b>	DTP	
<b>15 Months</b>	MMR	
<b>18 Months</b>	DTP	Polio
<b>2 Years</b>	Hib	
<b>4 Years</b>	DTB	Polio
<b>14 Years</b>	Td	

## 2019 Vaccine Schedule

<b>1 Day</b>	Hep B				
<b>1 Month</b>	Hep B				
<b>2 Months</b>	DTaP	Polio	Hib	PCV 13	Rotavirus
<b>4 Months</b>	DTaP	Polio	Hib	PCV 13	
<b>7 Months</b>	Influenza				
<b>12 Months</b>	MMR	Varicella	Hib	Hep A	PCV 13
<b>15 Months</b>	DTaP				
<b>18 Months</b>	Hep A	Influenza			
<b>2-10 Years</b>	Influenza				
<b>11 Years</b>	HPV	Meningococcal ACWY	Tdap	Influenza	HPV

## Decrease in US Life Expectancy

Americans live shorter lives and experience more injuries and illnesses than people in other high-income countries. Studies have confirmed this growing ‘mortality gap’ among adults 50 and older<sup>30</sup>. This cannot be explained away by the health status of racial and ethnic minorities or those with less economic resources. Studies have shown that even economically advantaged Americans may be in worse health than their counterparts in other countries.

### Life Expectancy by Country Chart

	Hong Kong	Japan	Switzerland	Canada	Germany	United Kingdom	Cuba	United States
<b>Life Expectancy (both sexes)</b>	85.29	85.03	84.25	82.96	81.88	81.77	79.18	79.11
<b>Female Life Expectancy</b>	88.17	88.09	86.02	84.74	84.14	83.28	81.12	81.65
<b>Male Life Expectancy</b>	82.38	81.91	82.42	81.15	79.62	80.22	77.25	76.61

Chronic Disease is a main driver in the decrease in US life expectancy. Chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. They are also leading drivers of the nation’s \$4.1 trillion in annual health care costs<sup>31</sup>.

The U.S. has the highest chronic disease burden and an obesity rate that is two times higher than the OECD average<sup>32</sup>. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization that works to build better policies for better lives.





Barry Segal  
67 Mountain Blvd. Suite 201  
Warren, NJ 07059

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH  
Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road,  
Atlanta, GA 30329

May 10, 2022

Dr. Walensky,

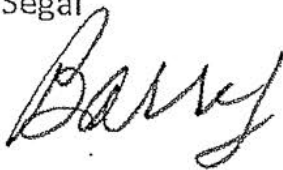
I am confused about what the CDC is supposed to be. For years it has refused to do a careful vaccinated vs. unvaccinated study. Why? Could it be you are afraid of the outcome? Attached is a study that obviously has flaws.

Where is the CDC on the Autism rates in Tom's River, NJ? There must be a reason. Compare the US prevalence of Autism to the Scandinavian countries.

These things have to be dealt with, unless you are just an arm of the pharmaceutical companies.

Respectfully,

Barry Segal

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barry". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'B' and a cursive 'Segal'.

Founder/President

Segal Family Foundation/ Focus for Health Foundation/ Focus Central America  
Foundation

C: Julie Gerberding

Condition	Rate in Unvaccinated Ulster Children	Background Rate
Allergy – Food	2%	8%
Allergy – Environmental	2%	8.4%
Asthma	1%	7.5%
Seizures	0%	0.6%
Diabetes	0%	Type 1: 22.3 per 100,000 Type 2: 13.8 per 100,000
Autism Spectrum Disorder	0%	1 in 54 children
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	2%	9.4%
Eczema	1%	12%

	US	Spain	Germany	Japan	Argentina
Population	353 million	47.4 million	83.15 million	126.3 million	44.9 million
Autism Rates	1 in 45	1 in 131	1 in 263	1 in 55	1 in 68
Male vs Female	4 to 1		4 to 1	4 to 1	
Life Exp	79.11	83.99	81	84.3	76.67
Health Cost	\$10,966	\$3,600	\$6,646	\$4,150	\$946

2019 Statistics

Just in case you missed it, Sharyl picked up Walter Zahorodny's remarks from Mike Smith's documentary. Mike called to tell me he would not have been able to produce the documentary without my support and he is extremely grateful.

NJAS data from 74 school districts that were studied determined that the autism rate among eighteen-year-old children had continued to steadily increase. Of the 74 districts, the largest suburban school district – Toms River Regional Schools in Ocean County – had an autism rate estimated at 1 in 14 children, or more than twice the state average and triple the 1 in 44 rate for the country.

The director of the NJAS, Walter Zahorodny, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, said, "It feels like some kind of science fiction, but in reality, this is true. And it can't be explained."

"We're well aware of it because we live it every day," said Joy Forrest, Director of Special Education for Toms River. "The district is constantly planning to meet individual students' needs. We have programs from preschool to age 21, and each year, we are adding additional programming because of increasing numbers of students."

Dr. Zahorodny reportedly believes that the autism rate at Toms River is likely a "harbinger" of the rate that all school districts in New Jersey will soon face. "It's very likely we will find even greater numbers of children with autism in what we consider underserved communities," he said.

## Regressive Taxes Worsens Income Inequality

Regressive taxes take a larger percentage from low-income people than from high-income people. A regressive tax is generally a tax that is applied uniformly; this means that it taxes lower-income individuals harder. The opposite of regressive taxes is progressive tax such as federal income tax, the effective tax rates increase as the taxpayer's income increases. While it may seem fair to tax everyone at the same rate, low-income households spend a larger portion of their income on taxes than people who earn more.

### Regressive tax examples:

- Sales Tax: Sales tax on food, clothing, transportation i.e. Taxing food is particularly regressive policy because poor families spend most of their income on groceries and necessities.
- User Tax: User fees such as toll roads, licenses, admission to government-funded museums, state parks, parking, cost of driver's licenses and identification cards, toll fees bridges.
- Sin Tax: Taxes levied on products that are deemed to be harmful to society are called sin taxes. These are added to the prices of goods like alcohol and tobacco in order to dissuade people from using them.
- Excise Tax: A tax on the production or sale of certain goods, services, or activities, such as, firearms, gasoline, sports wagering, air travel, and telephone services. Excise taxes are typically hidden taxes because they are incorporated into the price of the commodity without consumers realizing it.
- Social Security Tax: The 2022 Social Security tax rate in the United States is 6.20% for everyone earning \$12,400 all the way up to \$147,000. This means that someone making say \$50,000 would pay \$3,100, but someone earning \$350,000 would pay the max, \$8,537, which is 2.44% of his or her salary—half the rate of someone earning \$50,000.

Of the three main forms of taxes<sup>33</sup>—**sales, property, and income**—**the sales tax hurts the poor most.**

*Sales taxes inevitably take a larger share of income from low- and middle-income families than from rich families because sales taxes are levied at a flat rate and spending as a share of income falls as income rises.*

In the 10 states with the most regressive tax structures (the terrible 10), **the lowest-income 20 percent pay up to 6 times as much** of their income in taxes as their wealthy counterparts. Middle-income families in these states pay a rate up to four times higher as a share of their

income than the wealthiest families. In 2018, Washington State is the most regressive, followed by Texas, Florida, South Dakota, Nevada, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

The national effective state and local tax rate is 11.4 percent for the lowest income 20 percent; 9.9 percent for the middle 20 percent; and 7.4 percent for the top 1 percent. This means the poorest Americans are paying **one and a half times as much** of their income in taxes than the top 1 percent.

### **The Lottery as a Regressive Tax: Another Way the Poor Pay More**

The lottery is a regressive tax that disproportionately adversely affects lower-income families. Studies show that lower-income households spend a greater percentage of their income on lottery relative with families with higher household incomes.

The odds of winning any lotto jackpot are extremely low. And that means people spend a lot of money without getting much, if anything, back. And it's those who can least afford to lose any money who are most likely to be buying tickets.

In 2021, Americans spent \$105.26 billion on lottery tickets<sup>34</sup>. On average, an American adult spent about \$320 on lottery tickets in 2019. Spending on lottery tickets exceeds the amount of money spent on sports tickets, books, video games, music and videos combined.

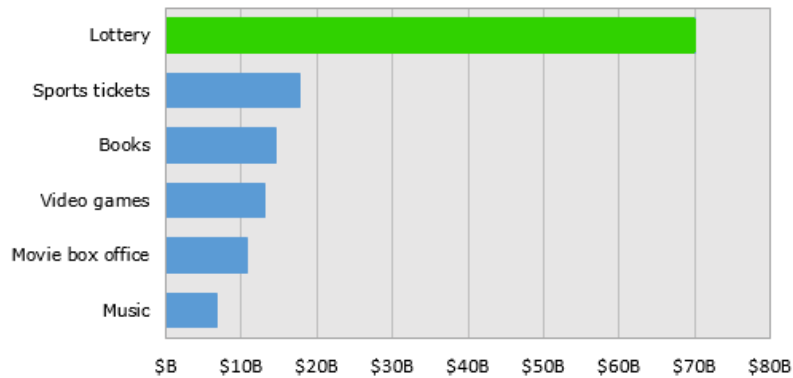
In 2015, the consortium of states that runs Powerball approved a series of new rules that allowed one to choose 5 of 69 numbers, up from 5 of 59 numbers. This decreased the odds of winning.

### **Where do the profits go?**

- Money from those ticket sales go to government coffers.
- The promise of many lotteries is that this extra government revenue will go to important things like education funding so people can rest easier about throwing their money at tickets. But even that promise is often hollow. In New Mexico and Georgia, two states that promised to create scholarship programs with lottery revenue, demand outstripped the money so quickly that both rescinded the promises.



### American Spending in 2014



*What Americans spent on the lottery in 2014 (CNN Money / NASPL)*



Americans spent \$50.4 billion on state lottery tickets and video kiosks in 2009. Households with take-home incomes of less than \$13,000 spent on average \$645 a year on lottery tickets—about 9 percent of their income. Eleven states raise more from lotteries than from corporate taxes.

*Salon.com*



## Problems with Social Security



For years I have felt that there should be changes to Social Security. The program was originally intended to provide economic security to those U.S. citizens who needed it.

In 2011-2012 I tried not to accept Social Security, but it did not work, so I donated back the exact amount paid to me to the government for the purpose of paying down the national debt. I didn't continue to fight the system, because I felt that my charitable foundations were more effective than the government in helping people.

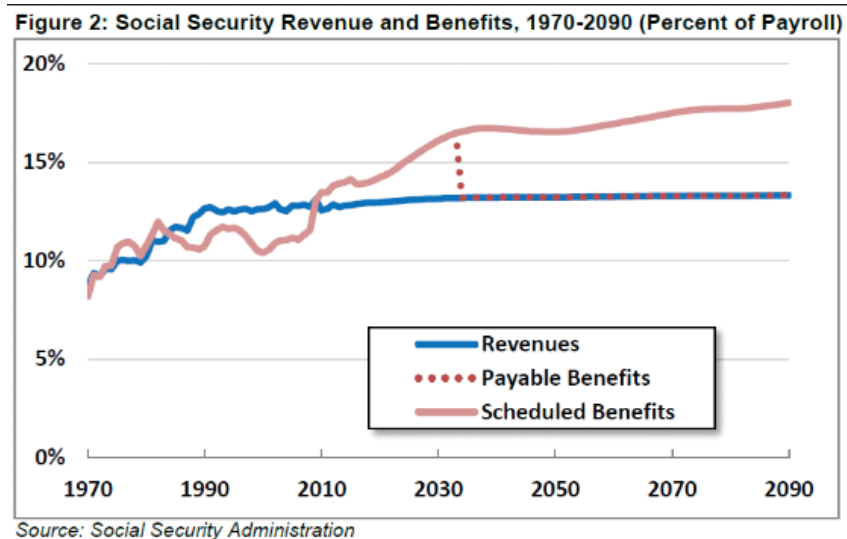
Social Security is currently on a financially unstable path toward insolvency. Based on the annual Social Security and Medicare trust report for 2019, the projections for 2020 state that Social Security will pay more in benefits than it raises from payroll taxes for the first time. The trend is expected to worsen as the baby-boom generation continues to retire and life expectancy grows.

In 2016, Social Security spent about \$70 billion more on benefits than it generated in tax revenue. As the population ages, that gap will only widen. Medicare and Social Security accounted for 41% of federal spending in 2016, up from 36% in 2011. The costs of both programs are set to rise due to the aging of the U.S. population, making it difficult for the government to outrun the solvency problems, even by sharply boosting economic growth. Nearly 56 million Americans collected retirement benefits through the program as of Jan. 2020, and 13,379 million received payments from a separate disability-insurance program [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat\\_snapshot/](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat_snapshot/)<sup>35</sup>.

***In this country most people have the impression that the money they pay into Social Security belongs to them. In other countries the general feeling is that it is the public duty to take care of the needy. The American attitude towards poverty needs to change, but obviously that is very hard to do.***

Others have said this, but I really don't think it would work or raise enough money, but people with income over \$500,000 a year shouldn't be taking money from Social Security or Medicare. For those who want to, there should be an option to divert the money to charity. You can keep it simple by giving them four options to choose from, such as veterans, poverty, health, education. Too much of this money is going to people who don't want or need it.

One way or another, this must be dealt with soon per this graph:



[http://www.crfb.org/sites/default/files/crfb\\_2016\\_campaign\\_social\\_security\\_myths.pdf](http://www.crfb.org/sites/default/files/crfb_2016_campaign_social_security_myths.pdf)<sup>36</sup>

My plan would be something like this: In 2024, start taxing individuals and corporations on salaries over 350k and stop at 3 million. In two years, adjust the numbers to 300k salary and stop at 3.5 million. Once the process is in place, you can adjust the numbers as needed.

P.S. The rate or age of retirement should not be raised. The country must make the necessary changes to fund Social Security.

### **Fixing Tax Breaks that Only Benefit the Wealthy**

**Change the rules on 1031 Exchange** which allow you to avoid taxes if you sell a property, and within 180 days, buy another one. This is a trick that is frequently used by the wealthy. Thankfully, only real estate is subject to 1031 exchanges; artwork and airplanes are no longer eligible. One independent study indicates that lost treasury revenues from 1031 exchanges range from \$200 million to \$3 billion depending on the year. I feel that as of 1/1/2024, you should have to be taxed on 25% of the gain.

**Depreciation:** Since assets lose value over time, they can be written off as expenses (depreciation). If you want, you can legally say that these assets lose more value in the early years, allowing you to pay less upfront (accelerated depreciation). The depreciation rate is way too generous. It should be scaled back. Accelerated depreciation should be stopped or phased out.

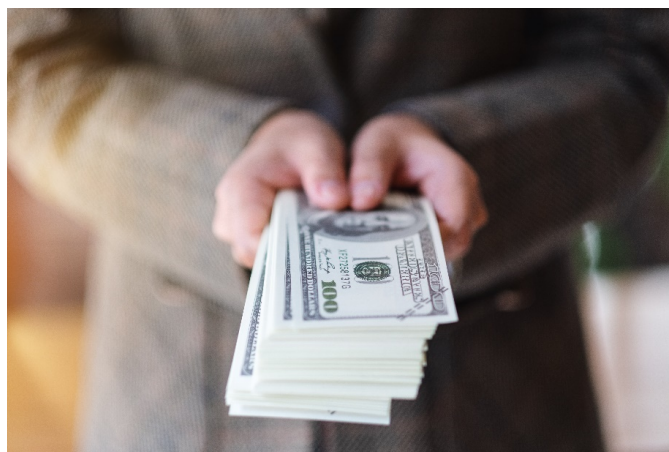
**Annual Gift Tax-Right:** Now an individual can literally gift \$15,000 to as many people as they want. For married couples the amount is \$30,000. I have 6 children, 15 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren, and my wife and I can gift \$30,000 annually to each of them. The recipients do not pay taxes on this money. This should be capped at \$75,000 per person.

**Private foundations, endowments, public charities, and donor advised funds** should be required to spend 7% of their assets in 2024, increasing to 10% annually. This would be a 40% increase on private foundations which is fair. Now, it leaves a ton of money on the sidelines that could be helping humanity.

**Grantor trusts,** Grantor Retained Annuity Trusts (GRAT), and Charitable Lead Annuity Trusts (CLAT) should be eliminated or phased out.

**Donor Advised Funds:** (See Article) Donor-advised funds have been in existence for a while. A foundation is required to give away 5% of their equity yearly—a DAF does not have to do this, and to make matters worse the foundation can gift to their DAF and that counts even though the DAF does not have to fund and can just accumulate. This one is so ridiculous I did a whole section on it.

By implementing simple changes to the tax code, the very wealthy will have their percentage of taxation more in line with the rest of the citizens. It would be one way to stop the tax burden for falling disproportionately on lower-income people. High-income inequality has negative consequences for the political stability of a country and long-term economic growth. Policies that improve the re-distributive role of the tax system may help avoid the negative effects of income inequality in the US—countries that have lower income disparities, have much better health outcomes.



## **Donor Advised Funds and Foundations: The Way to Hoard Money and Avoid Taxes**

Donor-advised funds are separate funds operated by section 501(c)(3) organizations, otherwise known as sponsoring organizations. Multiple donors will contribute to donor advised funds, but once the money is contributed, the fund has full control over what to do with it. Donors maintain advisory privileges and can help decide where the money will go<sup>37</sup>.

Private foundations are typically founded by a single individual or business, and the initial donation is known as the endowment of the foundation. These foundations typically make donations to other organizations or individuals. Because of the nature of private foundations, the founders maintain control over operations and are less likely to factor public opinion into decision-making<sup>38</sup>.

Public charities are required to receive at least a third of their contributions from the public. They directly fund activities and operations, such as running a domestic violence shelter. Public charities are required to have a diverse board of directors, and because they are constantly soliciting donors, they are typically more responsive to public opinion<sup>39</sup>. Donor advised funds and foundations are both known as intermediaries. Rather than directly contributing money to public charities, many of the wealthy contribute to intermediaries, which often offer tax advantages. Private foundations are only required to give away 5% of their equity every year. Donor advised funds have zero payout requirement yearly, which means money can accumulate in DAFs. Foundations can count grants to DAFs and administrative expenses towards their 5% annual payout, meaning they can easily hit that 5% without making any positive changes. This is ridiculous.

The number of individual donor-advised fund accounts topped one million for the first time, according to a 2021 report by National Philanthropic Trust, a non-profit that advises donors, foundations, and financial institutions<sup>40</sup>. While the nearly \$160 billion held in donor-advised funds is no match for the \$1.1 trillion sitting in private foundations, DAFs have swelled in popularity.

**Private Foundations and Donor-Advised Funds:** These funds should be required to spend 7% of their assets in 2023, increasing to 10% annually. Donor-Advised Funds should not be a deduction for foundations and should have to abide by the same rule as foundations in annual grants. Donations to endowments should only count as 50% of the amount. Any monies not used below the required percentage annually should be given to the government.



## Donor-Advised Funds are the Opposite of Philanthropy

One of the problems is the vast power of billionaire super citizens to promote their interests in a political system tilted in their favor—wealth hoarding remains the order of the day for the vast majority of billionaires who give too little to charity. In a recent survey of philanthropic professionals, nearly  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the respondents said that efforts to address racial justice have to be enhanced<sup>41</sup>.

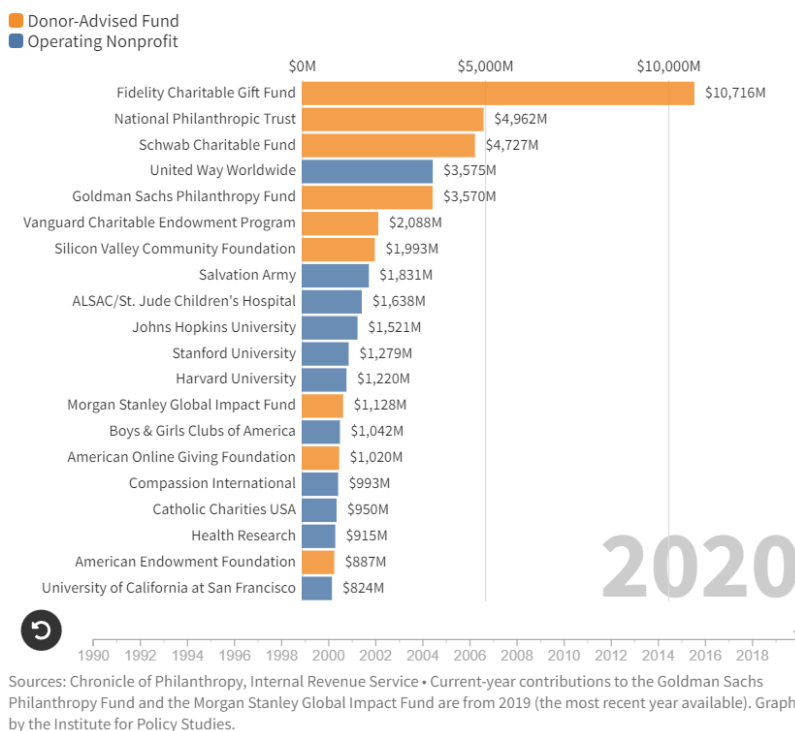
The Institute for Policy Studies released a blog post and data visualization graphic showing that “the largest commercial DAF sponsors now take in more money each year than our largest public charities.”<sup>42</sup> This reflects the problem with the current charitable tax laws that IACG’s proposals seek to address.

Additionally, a recent Inside Philanthropy survey of philanthropy professionals found that “over 70% of respondents indicated that they favor mandatory payouts by donor-advised funds, while

nearly the same percentage support increasing required foundation payout.”<sup>43</sup> Please see the article below for more on this report. The vast power of billionaire super citizens to promote their interest in a political system tilted in their favor and we have near-ideal conditions for the next generation of Rockefellers and Carnegies to spring up.

When I sold the Bradco business in 2008, I ended up with about \$500 million. The kids had stock in Bradco, so they got part of that money. The government got a big portion of the proceeds. I met some people at Clinton Global International and started the Segal Family Foundation which is active in Sub-Saharan Africa. In a little over 10 years, we have accomplished major things in philanthropy—we do not accept donations outside of our family. Our equity is in the \$100 million area, and we have over 350 grantees. I feel strongly that the SFF Foundation accomplishes more per dollar than any other foundation.

### 20 U.S. Charities Receiving the Most Contributions



## **Student Debt is A Barrier to Financial Stability for People From Low/Moderate Income Families.**

Of the billions of dollars given to charity every year, 14% is donated to educational institutions. Much of these funds, called college endowments, represent huge sums of money whose earnings are intended to pay for anything from operating expenses, new building construction, and staff salaries to student support services.

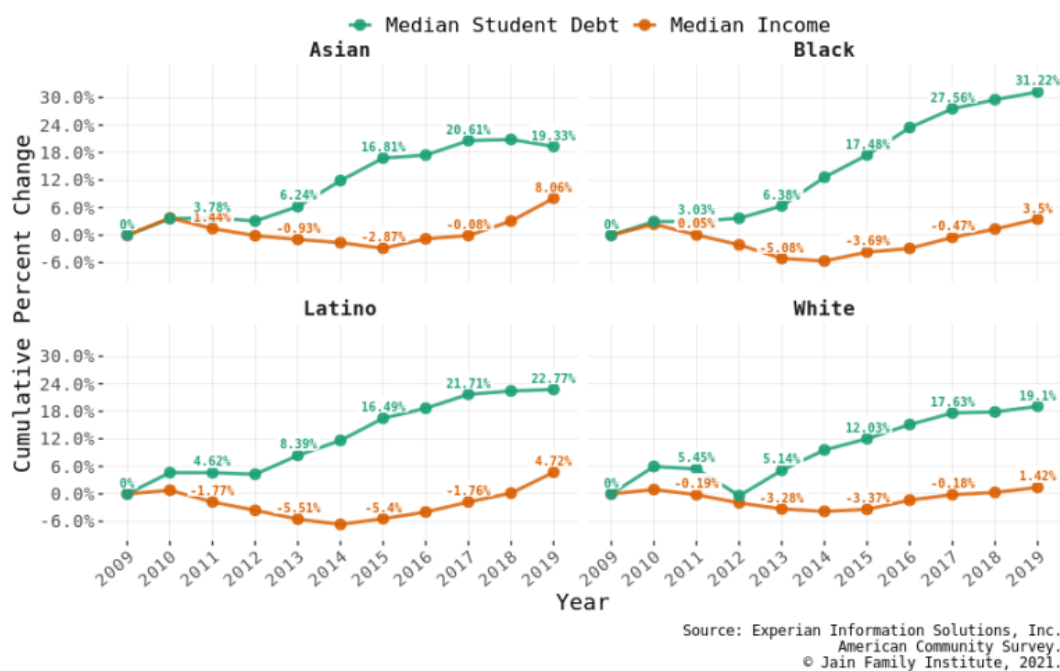
State Universities and Community Colleges were formed to allow affordable access to education, but the cost of tuition has gone up 50% in the past two decades. The average annual tuition for public, four-year colleges for 2019-2020 was \$10,486 for in-state residents and \$15,873 for out-of-state residents. Room and board costs can double these numbers.

Currently, US student loan debt sits at \$1.7 trillion, affecting 42 million Americans (and according to one article, that is larger than the GDP of all but 11 countries). The average individual debt level for a student leaving college is approximately \$30,000, and such debt affects over 37 million student borrowers nationwide. It begs the question, why do schools not use their endowment equity to substantially reduce tuition costs to ensure that students leave college not only better educated but better positioned to create prosperous futures?

Princeton University, holding a \$26.1 billion endowment, uses about 18% of their annual endowment income to support their students. Typically, it is the endowment's interest—the earnings generated by their investment portfolio—that the university spends, not the principle of the endowment. What is not typical of universities, however, is that Princeton uses their earnings to aggressively support student services, allowing the school to cover 100% of fees, tuition, and room and board for students whose families earn less than \$65,000 per year. In 2019, 82% of Princeton graduates left school debt free. Princeton can do this while their endowment stays very well intact.

Education is frequently touted as the way for most people to get out of poverty, but with the rising cost of school tuition and concern about looming loan debt, many now question the value of pursuing a college education. Student debt impacts people long after school is over. Furthermore, college does not benefit black students (who typically acquire greater debt to attend college) in the same way it does white students. When student debt is taken into considered, we see that higher education is just one more thing that widens the Black-White wealth gap.

## Changes in Student Debt and Median Income by Race



If we cannot develop a path for students from low- or middle-income backgrounds to obtain college degrees affordably, we are accepting that in the US, a college education is a pursuit reserved for the elite. This situation is even worse for those who start college, take out loans, but do not graduate. Data on students who complete a degree over a six-year period are predominately white and Asian, while those who do not complete their degree program are disproportionately black and Hispanic.

Student debt has an even more insidious and pervasive effect on health. The high cost of education unjustly burdens young people with long term debt that affects all aspects of health and longevity. The countries that do it better and are healthier because of it. The wealth gap is a health gap.

### Possible solutions to reduce college tuition cost:

1. Using higher than average annual pay-outs by endowments to offset operating expenses, thereby dropping the tuition fee.
2. Make a commitment, like that of Princeton University, that most students can leave school debt free.
3. Expand community college options to offer two-year and four-year degree programs.
4. If possible the colleges should fund student education at a reasonable cost for students from a low- or moderate-income background.

## Tax the Rich from Patriotic Millionaires

For more information about the way the wealthy avoid taxes read *Tax the Rich* by Morris Pearl and Erica Payne. Here is my summary of the book with page numbers for easy reference.

A recent study found that of the 379 fortune 500 companies that were profitable in 2018, a whopping 91 paid a federal income tax rate of 0%. That means in the first year after the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, nearly a full quarter of profitable Fortune 500 companies ended up paying no federal income taxes whatsoever. (Page 108)

Corporations use this easy transferability of intellectual property to transfer profits away from high tax countries to low tax countries without actually changing where they do business at all. For example, a lawyer in Seattle could easily transfer some of Starbucks' intellectual property—such as the company's logo—to Starbucks of Ireland. It's slightly more complicated than that but let's simplify it for the hypothetical example. Starbucks of Ireland would then technically own that logo, and Starbucks of the United States would have to send royalty payments to Starbucks of Ireland for the privilege of using it. Starbucks doesn't actually send any money or gold or coffee beans for anything else to Ireland. Instead, some nimble-fingered corporate officer in Seattle simply moves billions of dollars of investments from the "Starbucks of the USA" account to the "Starbucks of Ireland" account with a quick click of the mouse every year. (Page 114)

If a company is paying 20% in taxes on the profits they earned in Brazil, for example, they would still owe another 15% to the US Government to get the full 35% they owe. But the US international corporate tax rate is now so low that this credit is often larger than what many corporations owed the United States in the first place. (Page 116)

Under the new law, corporations that already get a 50% off coupon on all taxes paid on overseas profits, also get a special accommodation—no taxes below a certain threshold—if they have 'tangible assets' (such as factories and equipment) overseas. The United States now taxes only these profits above what is considered a "routine" rate of return on physical assets overseas. For now, that rate of return is set at 10%, meaning that for every \$10 million in tangible assets a company owns overseas, the first \$1 million it earns in profits is tax-free. (Page 118)

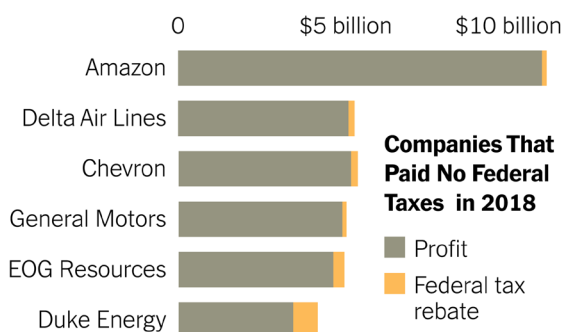
One of the biggest problems is that our campaign system ensures that most politicians spend an enormous amount of time hearing the perspectives of wealthy people and very little time hearing the perspectives of everybody else. Wealthy people tend to talk with politicians about ways to make the economy work well for wealthy people. I assume regular people would, likewise, talk with politicians about what would make the economy work well for

them. Unfortunately, you don't find many regular people in multimillion-dollar Park Avenue apartments. (Page 136)

Corporate tax cuts create jobs—wrong. Across the economy, the average private sector company increased the number of people they employed by 6% during that time period. The ninety-two profitable, tax dodging companies, on the other hand, had their employment levels drop by an average of 1%. The companies that paid less in taxes actually shed jobs overall as the economy grew. Despite their low tax rate, more than half of the companies' studied—48 out of 92—cut jobs, downsizing by a total of 483,000 jobs. The next time someone tells you the correlation between tax cuts and job creation is 'very tight', tell them about Randall Stephenson. (Page 140).

The 2000's housing crisis was fueled by banks who gave mortgages to people they knew could not afford them so the bank could make money and foreclosure on the house. Over six million American households lost their homes to foreclosure, yet banks received a bail out. A 2008 Cato Institute report estimated that about \$92 billion went to subsidize American businesses in 2006, yet most Americans are happy to blame people who need welfare as being the problem.

Unfortunately, things have gone on too long and the people who benefit from things staying the same are not going to change things. Americans have accepted this culture of greed for too long. Japanese CEO pay never reached the ridiculous levels of American CEOs. According to the consultancy Towers Perrin, CEOs of big Japanese companies earned an average \$809,000 in 2003—chump change compared with the \$11.4 million raked in by their average U.S. counterpart. During the recession of 2008-2009, Merrill Lynch's John Thain was splurging on a \$1.2 million office makeover and Lehman Bros.' Richard Fuld was drawing a \$22 million bonus, while the president of Japan Airlines was riding the bus to work, eating in the company cafeteria, and cutting his salary to \$98,000.



## Reforms Needed to Address Systemic Racism

Every person of color in the United States is burdened by the racism that exists in our political, social, and economic institutions. This structural racism maintains people of color at a disadvantage, limits their upward mobility, and neutralizes their collective ability to change the inequitable conditions in which they are born and live.

Many structural changes need to occur to level the playing field and give people of color a fair chance.

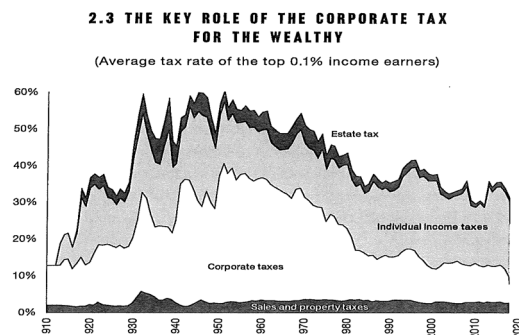
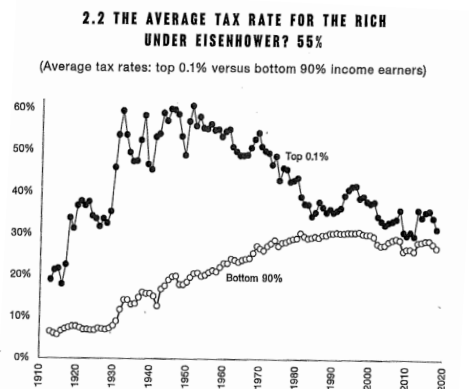
Change is happening. We must ensure that it continues and is effective.

**Electoral Reform:** The current structure keeps the wealthy in power and isolates and neutralizes black and Hispanic votes.

- If possible, stop the Electoral College. It is hard to do because California would decide too many elections.
- Gerrymandering, the practice of changing political borders, must end. It compartmentalizes the black and Hispanic vote so that their collective power to effect legislation is minimized. Black and Hispanic Americans must be able to change the laws that oppress them.
- Stop the legal disenfranchisement of voters which intentionally and disproportionately affects minorities. (In the South black male voting rates are currently at the same rate as during Jim Crow)
- Federal oversight of state voting processes to ensure ability of people of color to exercise the right to vote.

**Electoral reform** is so important, I dedicated a whole page to it at the end of this section.

**Tax Reform:** The wealthy pass laws to help themselves and this is the result:





**Economic Reform:**

- Banks and lending practices need reform to prevent redlining and other discriminatory lending practices
- Medicaid, or affordable healthcare, for those who are low-income, under-employed, or part of the working poor.
- Decrease crippling student debt. Redetermine the loan amount based on earnings and set a cap on the % that can be paid back based on their earnings.
- Pay a living wage and allow for sustainable incomes that allow for home ownership in traditionally working-class occupations.
- Raise the minimum wage and support gender and racial pay equity.
- Increase access to affordable housing in non-income segregated communities (HUD Choice Voucher Program) and allow for home ownership opportunities.

According to a study cited in Blink by Malcom Gladwell, a researcher, Ayres, sent a group of black and white men and women, with identical cover stories, to hundreds of car dealerships around Chicago. Then he noted the opening prices quoted by salesmen to each gender and racial group. He wanted to create some “comparables” for the purposes of measuring price discrimination. The experiment demonstrated that black men are quoted prices about \$1000, on average, higher than white men<sup>44</sup>.

**Social Reform:**

- Equalize funding opportunities for schools, so they are not dependent on property taxes solely, to ensure better education and enrichment opportunities.
- Try and get disadvantaged kids into pre-school.
- Sex Education, increased access to birth control and attempt to decrease teen pregnancies.
- Develop programs for low-income youth to attend two-year colleges. Teach financial education early.

**Police Reform:**

- Collect police violence data/mapping police violence. In 2014 Obama signed into law the Death in Custody Reporting Act to force police departments to report every time a citizen dies in custody. The law also requires data be turned over to the Attorney General report on how to reduce deaths every two years.
- No Choke Holds, No Knock Warrants to be eliminated
- Improve community policing practices, reduce the role of police, and increase team support for specific interventions such as domestic violence, child abuse etc. Have police be specialized in certain areas of interventions.



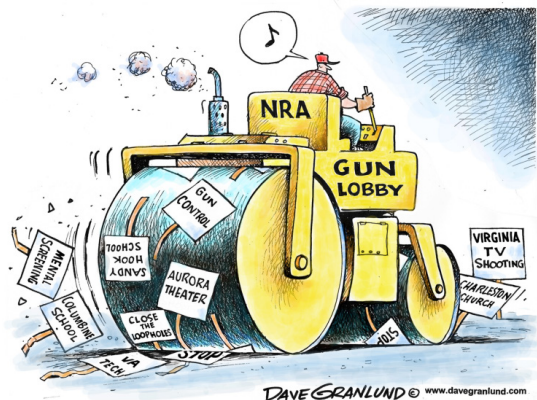
- Police oversight boards to include community members and mandate representation to mirror the community in terms of racial demographics.
- Anytime a body cam is off, burden shifts, police must prove they did not murder/violate civil rights/assault the person—even if a crime is committed.

Follow the lead of European countries and require 2-3 years of training. In the USA a candidate for the police force needs a high school diploma and undergoes approximately 21 weeks of training. 1,004 people were killed by police in 2009 alone. More than 8,000 people since 2001. In Norway, the government require 3 years of training to become a police officer. Between 2002 and 2016 they had 4 fatalities caused by police. In Finland, a 3-year degree is required to become a police officer and they are required to undergo two years of training. 7 people were killed by police between 2000 and 2018. In Germany, 2 years of training is required, and 267 people have died by police shooting since 1990.

- Change rules of engagement for when the use of deadly force is permitted. Shift the burden of proof on the person who fired the weapon to prove the need.
- Remove personal immunity. People should have the right to sue individual officers.
- Add personal liability for police. Officers should lose their pensions for violating an individual's civil rights.
- For non-violent crimes allow officers to issue summons and not arrest citizens.

### Legislative Reform:

- Supreme Court Justices need term limits. Former President Donald Trump no longer holds formal power, but the Supreme Court is ensuring his legacy lives on with repercussions that can impact generations. Fifteen to twenty years is long enough.
- Presidents should serve one term of 5 or 6 years. It's a waste of energy for a president to be campaigning and not focusing on the needs of the country—one and done.
- Term limits for both houses of Congress. Two terms in office should provide any senator enough time to complete their public mission. Ten years each should be plenty for the House of Representatives. In other words, there should be no "career" politicians.
- There should be strict limits on campaign contributions; corporate lobbyists (Ex. pharmaceutical companies, National Rifle Association) should not be able to buy influence with politicians. Citizens United should be repealed.



## Electoral College: A Deeper Dive

The electoral college is an outdated system that gives some citizens' votes much more power than others. This system must change. In the current system, the presidency can be won without a majority of the popular vote, which has created civil unrest in recent years. In American history, five presidential candidates have won more votes than their opponent and still lost the election. This includes the 2016 election, where Donald Trump lost the popular vote to Hillary Clinton by 2.87 million votes. Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232, the same margin that Trump had when he beat Hillary Clinton in 2016, which he repeatedly described as a "landslide." For him to demand a recount is absurd.

For 10-15 years, abolishing the electoral college would not see much of a positive, but over time it would help. The parties would have to stop fighting each other and elected officials would need to accomplish something if they wanted to stay in office. They would have to stop their dumb games and make policy changes that reflect the wishes of the people.

The public has continuously supported abolishing the electoral college. The Gallup Poll reported in 2001 that "there is little question that the American public would prefer to dismantle the Electoral College system and go to a direct popular vote for the presidency."<sup>45</sup>

In September 2020, 61 percent of Americans polled by Gallup favored using the popular vote to elect the president<sup>46</sup>. By June of 2022, 65 percent of American wanted presidential elections decided by the popular vote, and only 32 percent preferred using the electoral college<sup>47</sup>. However, more recently there has been a partisan difference in opinion on the issue. More democrats favor abolishing the electoral college, while fewer Republicans favor it.

The problem we are facing is simple. Since 1968 approximately 80-90 percent of the black vote has gone to one party. Under the electoral college and with political gerrymandering, those votes are diluted.

This is not democratic, and it is why if we want to end systematic racism, the electoral college can't continue. I feel the Electoral College (EC) is obsolete and should be abolished in 2024. Only 12 other countries still use an electoral college system, and most of them are much smaller than the United States.

In this country, the election seems to be decided by 7 swing states and peoples' votes in other states do not count as much. By eliminating the EC, we would ensure that everyone's vote carries the same weight. Eliminating the EC will also mitigate other countries from interfering

with our elections. If our country does not have the ability to reevaluate outdated and unproductive systems to move forward efficiently, we will move farther away from justice.

January 6th was an expensive waste of time, and it should not have happened.



## **“Criminal” “Justice” System**

What to do with all the people incarcerated? The American criminal justice system holds almost 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 109 federal prisons, 1772 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails, and 80 Indian country jails as well as military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, state psychiatric hospitals and prisons in the US territories<sup>48</sup>. In September 2013, the incarceration rate in the United States of America was the highest in the world at 716 per 100,000 of the national population<sup>49</sup>. While the United States represents about 4.4 percent of the world’s population, it houses around 22 percent of the world’s prisoners. The Sentencing Project, a Washington DC-based nonprofit organization, released in 1990 that almost one in four Black men in the US between the ages of 20 and 29 were under some degree of control by the criminal justice system<sup>50</sup>. In 1995, the organization announced that the rate had increased to one in three. In the same year, the non-profit stated that more than half of young black men were then under criminal supervision in both DC and Baltimore. In addition, African American women are the largest growing incarcerated population.

### **Some solutions:**

1. Only put people in jails who are actually a threat to community safety. Increase access to mental health and substance abuse treatment and stop using a jails as a way to avoid addressing public health issues in low income communities.
2. Probation. Probation treatment or community service are all more appropriate for many lower-level crimes, not to mention much cheaper (probation is 10 times less expensive). State legislatures and Congress should change sentencing laws to make alternatives to prison the default penalty for certain lower-level crimes, like drug possession and petty theft.
3. Get School Resource Officers (SRO) out of schools. Students end up with the criminal justice system for being late and having minor fights in school.
4. Legalize marijuana and implement the change retroactively: change the drug laws in the United States and address the release of people in jail related to marijuana possession and distribution. Allow for avenues for people to have their criminal records expunged so they may more easily be assimilated into society without being stigmatized as a criminal.
5. Allow for incarcerated people to vote. Felon disenfranchisement (disallowing voting due to incarcerations or conviction of felony crimes) varies by state, but nationally has barred well over a million citizens from the polling booth; some estimates suggested that more than 20 percent of black men in certain states.

6. Human treatment. Create a prison system that is human and focused on rehabilitation, not punishment and torture. Increase programs that allow for people to develop pro-social behavior through visitor outreach, prison gardens, and allowing inmates access to animals to take care of. Studies indicate people with visitors and ties to their family and community are less likely to re-offend. When we put prisoners in inhumane conditions, isolate them, and treat them in ways we would not even treat animals, we cannot be surprised when they cannot adjust to our expectations post-incarceration.

"No one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones." –Nelson Mandela

### **Next Problem: Private Prisons**

In 1984, at the height of the “War on Drugs,” the first private prison was opened in the United States<sup>51</sup>. The idea may have been well-intentioned. At first, the goal was to stop massive overcrowding in government-run facilities that led to cruel and overly harsh conditions. The second goal was to save the public the exorbitant amount of money it was costing to incarcerate so many individuals—many charged with minor drug offenses. Since that time, two major companies, GEO and CoreCivic, have come to control nearly 80% of the private prison business<sup>52</sup>.

The rise of privatization of prisons throughout the 1980s to the 2000s has led to a \$5 billion industry. With an 800% increase in incarceration in this country between 1980 and 2013<sup>53</sup>, private prisons were viewed as a necessary and welcome solution. Like all successful businesses, these companies strive to remain prosperous and financially lucrative. Though entrusted to rehabilitate prisoners for a successful return to society, their main focus as private, for-profit companies, is just that—to make a profit.

### **Prisoners in Private Jails Fare Worse**

While private prisons did serve a purpose when government-run prisons were overcrowded and undermanned, there was a shift beginning in 2013, when rates of incarceration in the United States began to decline. Private prisons were losing prisoners, therefore income. In 2016, the Justice Department announced that private prisons were “less safe and less secure

than government-run ones”. Evidence against them was so strong that in August 2016, the U.S. Deputy Attorney General released a memorandum stating that private prisons should be phased out.

### **The Facts on Private vs. Public**

There is clear evidence that private prisons increase recidivism, foster violence, and allow more abuse of detainees than public prisons. Reasons for the disparities between private and government prisons are many. Private companies can make their own rules. They cut costs by employing less staff and correctional personnel, leading to more violence among prisoners and less humane conditions. One GEO youth facility employed only one correction officer per 120 prisoners<sup>54</sup>. That’s about 10 times less than what a government-run facility would employ for a youth detention center.

Multiple studies show that those incarcerated in privately run prisons have higher recidivism than governmental managed counterparts. Very little, if any, rehabilitation services are provided to privately incarcerated prisoners, making them more likely to be unsuccessful in the community once they are released.

According to a 2014 study by RAND Corporation, educated offenders have a 40% lower recidivism rate than those who receive no education while incarcerated<sup>55</sup>. Private prisons remain profitable by reducing costs and cutting services like education and training programs. Not only do they save money, but they can also count on 40% more of their “customers” returning. Rehabilitation is bad for business.

The use of private prisons decreases communication with family members. Research shows that private prisons make no effort to keep the offender near their loved ones, or even in their home state. Prison telephone companies charge higher rates and have lobbied to ban cell phone use in prisons, even further cutting off communication with support systems. An “In the Public Interest” report released in 2016 stated

*“A study of 255 former prisoners participating in six states’ reentry programs between 2004 and 2007...found that **“familial telephone contact was most consistently associated with reductions in recidivism...”** FCC explained, “while contact between inmates and their loved ones has been shown to reduce the rate of recidivism, high inmate calling rates have made that contact unaffordable for many families, who often live in poverty.”*

If prisons are truly designed to rehabilitate prisoners and protect the public by deterring future crime, then use of private prisons should be phased out.



	Incarcerated people (prior to incarceration)		Non-incarcerated people	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
All	\$19,650	\$13,890	\$41,250	\$23,745
Black	\$17,625	\$12,735	\$31,245	\$24,255
Hispanic	\$19,740	\$11,820	\$30,000	\$15,000
White	\$21,975	\$15,480	\$47,505	\$26,130

**Figure 1.** Median annual incomes for incarcerated people prior to incarceration and non-incarcerated people ages 27-42, in 2014 dollars, by race/ethnicity and gender.

## Kids for Cash Scandal

The “Kids for Cash” scandal centered on judicial kickbacks to two judges at the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. In 2008, judges Michael Conahan and Mark Ciavarella were convicted of accepting money in return for imposing harsh adjudications on juveniles to increase occupancy at the PA Child Care for-profit detention centers.

Ciavarella disposed thousands of children to extended stays in youth centers for offenses as trivial as mocking an assistant principal on Myspace or trespassing in a vacant building. After a judge rejected an initial plea agreement in 2009, a federal grand jury returned a 48-count indictment. In 2010, Conahan pleaded guilty to one count of racketeering conspiracy and was sentenced to 17.5 years in federal prison. Ciavarella opted to go to trial the following year. He was convicted on 12 of 39 counts and sentenced to 28 years in federal prison<sup>56</sup>.





## The 13th Documentary Fact Sheet

- **National prison statistics**
  - 97% of the American prosecutors are white.
  - The United States is home to 5% of the world population, but 25% of the world's prisoners.
  - We have the highest rate of incarceration in the world; There are 2.3 million people in prison in the United States.
  - Black men make up 6.5% of the U.S. population, but they make up 40.2% of the U.S. prison population; 1 in 3 black males are projected to go to prison in their lifetime, while 1 in 17 white males are projected to go to prison in their lifetime.
  - In 1970, the U.S. prison population was a little over 357,292 (with a 205.1 million general population). In 2014, the prison population was 2,306,200 (with a 318.4 million general population). That's a jump from 0.17% to 0.72% of the country population.
- **The 13th Amendment and its exceptions**
  - When slavery was abolished, the majority of economic productivity was halted in the South, because slaves had made up most of the infrastructure.
  - Although the 13th amendment makes slavery unconstitutional, criminals are an exception to this rule.
  - After the Civil War, black Americans were arrested and imprisoned for small crimes. They provided the labor (essentially slave labor) to reestablish the economy in the South post-Civil War.
- **Criminalization of drugs**
  - Nixon started the "War on Drugs", classifying addicts as criminals instead of as struggling humans who need help.
  - John Ehrlichman, Nixon's advisor, admitted to encouraging the public to associate communities of color with heroin.
  - Mandatory minimums for many drugs were introduced, taking power away from judges and giving more power to the police.
  - **Ronald Reagan** was even worse than Nixon—he took the ideas Nixon was promoting and brought them to life via the 1982 National Crusade on Drugs.
    - The consequences for crack (which was commonly an inner-city problem) and the consequences for cocaine (commonly used by rich white people) were very different. The disparity in sentencing and laws heavily burdened the black community and ruined lives; Stricter penalties for crack possession and distribution and longer mandatory sentencing.
    - Tripled law enforcement spending from 1980-1985, sending many black

men to jail and destroying black families.

- Lee Atwar (Reagan's strategist) was caught on tape explained how he employed the "Southern Strategy" and his real goal was to hurt blacks and benefit whites without appearing to be openly racist.

- **The psychological effects of these issues**

- Unnecessarily sending people to prison not only traumatizes the individuals in prison, but also heavily affects the families of those imprisoned for generations afterwards.
- Having a parent in prison is a category on the Adverse Childhood Experience scale. Adverse Childhood Experiences (which also include sexual and physical abuse) are associated with depression, substance abuse, greater likelihood of perpetrating domestic abuse, heart problems, and a host of other issues.
- By disproportionately sending so many black people to prison, this country is creating traumas that will last for generations afterwards. These traumas will be felt physically, mentally, financially, socially, and will continue to harm the quality of life of these people and their families.

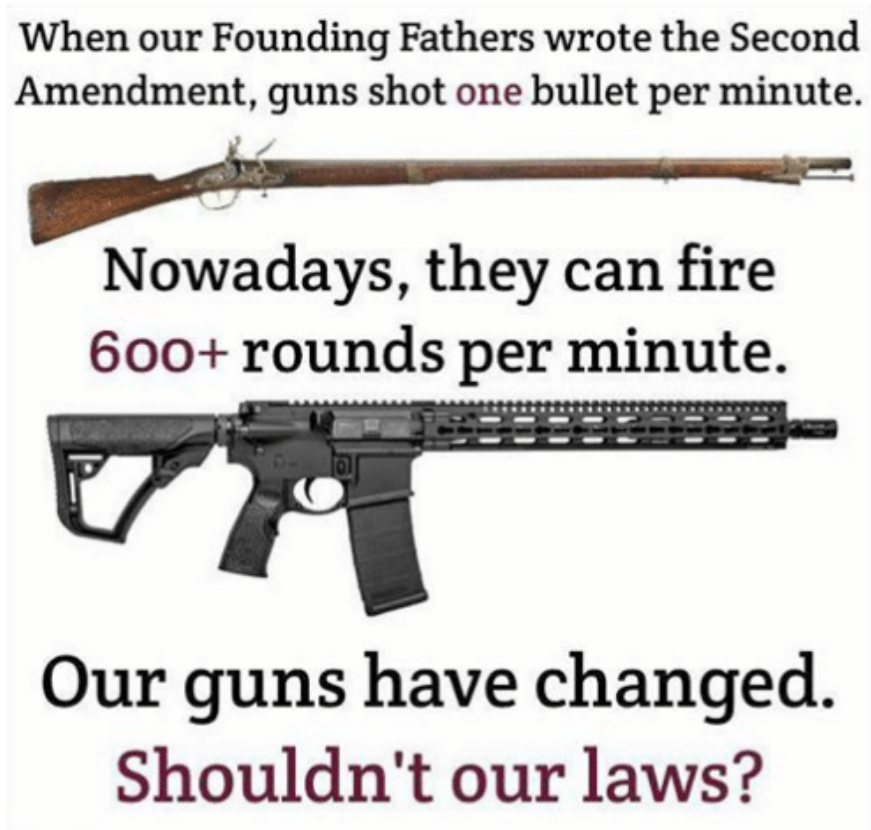
## Gun Control is Needed

What's going on in the county is ridiculous. In other parts of the world, mass shootings are called "American Style Shootings." Greed on the part of the people who make the arms is the cause of the problem—you can't buy a drink until you are 21 but you can buy an automatic repeater at the age of 18.

The UK banned nearly all semi-automatic and pump-action rifles and show guns, as well as exploding ammunition. They require licensing and background checks, including examining the applicant's social media. Only 4% of British homicides involve guns and their overall rate is 20% that of ours.

We should be like Australia. They outlawed some weapons and mandated licensing and background checks. The Aussies eagerly turned in thousands of guns in their buyback program. The death rate by guns dropped by 50%<sup>57</sup>.

Most rich countries including Japan and most of Europe have gun control and boast homicide rates of less than 1.5 per 100,000—the US rate is approaching 8%.



Below is the number of firearms per hundred people.

Country	Population	Guns per 100 people
Australia	25.69 M	14,83
Germany	83.24 M	32.47
England & Wales	59.5 M	4.6
France	67.39	20.02
Switzerland	8.7 M	41.28
Spain	47.35 M	7.5
Italy	59.55 M	12.89
<b>Average</b>	<b>50.2 M</b>	<b>19.08</b>
USA	329.5 M	120.5

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Unfortunately, we have avoided this situation too long. There are too many guns out there in the wrong hands—something has to be done now.

## Issues of Gender Equity in the US

**General Health and Wellbeing:** US women report<sup>59</sup> lower levels of health and higher levels of chronic illness and emotional distress than women in other developed nations. This is not merely a subjective impression of health; our statistics for cancer, chronic illnesses, and maternal and infant mortality are significantly higher than other countries. The lack of supports for mothers in the US is an important driver of these poor health and happiness outcomes for US women.

- U.S. women report the least positive experiences among the 11 countries studied. They have the greatest burden of chronic illness, highest rates of skipping needed health care because of cost, difficulty affording their health care, and are least satisfied with their care.
- Women in the U.S. have the highest rate of maternal mortality because of complications from pregnancy or childbirth, as well as among the highest rates of caesarean sections. Women in Sweden and Norway have among the lowest rates of both.

In ranking the top ten countries to be a mother, the US placed at 33. The US has the highest number of households headed by a single parent and when that parent is a woman, poverty is a likely outcome for her and her children. Despite common narratives that poor decision making when picking a spouse is the problem, it is discriminatory public policies that propel single mothers into poverty; 3.3 million single mothers who were never married live below the poverty line, 1.09 million mothers end up in poverty following a divorce, 333,000 from being abandoned by a spouse, 853,000 from separation from a spouse, and 137,000 end up in poverty when a spouse dies. Public policies and safety net programs to ensure the basic needs of families with children under 18 could alleviate the uncertainty and stress many families (usually those headed by women) endure.

Year after year, FBI statistics<sup>60</sup> on nationwide homicides reveal that a vast proportion of women killed in the US are killed by current or former intimate partners. According to the CDC, homicide is the fourth leading cause of death for girls and women one to 19 years old, and the fifth leading cause of death for women 20 to 44<sup>61</sup>.

The word femicide, the epidemic of women killed by men in intimate settings, is barely understood in the US and it seen as a problem that occurs elsewhere. But women in the US are killed in this way 10 times more often than in France (1,014 confirmed intimate acquaintance killings of women in the US in 2018 compared to 120 that same year in France)<sup>62</sup>. Adjusting for population size, the problem is twice as bad in the US than it is in France.

Pregnant women in the United States die by homicide more often than they die of pregnancy-related causes—and they’re frequently killed by a partner, according to a 2021 study published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*<sup>63</sup>. Researchers revealed this grim statistic by using death certificates to compare homicides and pregnancy-related deaths across the entire country for the first time.

70% of domestic violence<sup>64</sup> calls do not result in prosecution.

Between 22 and 57% of all homeless women report that domestic violence was the immediate cause of their homelessness<sup>65</sup>.

In New York State, a 2014 study found that 67% of women sent to prison for killing someone close to them were abused by that person<sup>66</sup>.

These statistics do not just reflect issues with a few bad actors (the abusers) but are reflective of policies that fail to protect woman from abuse.

In addition to domestic abuse, rape and sexual abuse are big factors affecting the quality of women’s lives and these issues are so pervasive in the US, there is a whole section about it later in the book.

**Legal Abortion Access:** So now add the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* into the equation for women... There are approximately 2 dozen countries that completely ban access to abortion for women (Egypt, Iran, El Salvador, Honduras to name a few). Most developed countries allow access to the procedure without too many restrictions, with the US being the most significant exception. The June 24, 2022, overturning of the *Roe v. Wade* ruling in the U.S. means that thirteen states have enacted “trigger laws,” designed to ban all or nearly all abortions. More bans are expected to come soon and at least nine other states have laws on the books they will likely try to put into effect.

Again, this will disproportionately harm women of color and people with disabilities. About 58% of Native American women, 57% of Black women and 53% of low-income women live in states that have banned or are likely to ban abortion, according to an analysis by the National Partnership for Women and Families<sup>67</sup>. Adults with disabilities are nearly twice as likely as people without disabilities to report unmet health needs because of barriers to care and are twice as likely to live in poverty, which could make traveling to other states for abortions difficult or impossible according to the National Partnership for Women and Families and the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network<sup>68</sup>.

The global trend in abortion law has been toward liberalization. Since 2000, thirty-eight countries have changed their abortion laws to be more protective of women, and all but one—Nicaragua—expanded the legal grounds on which women can access abortion services. America, Poland, and Honduras have moved in the opposite direction and while other countries are expanding services to protect women, they are restricting access. The World Health Organization first recognized unsafe abortion as a public health problem in 1967, and in 2003 it developed technical and policy guidelines that include a recommendation that states pass abortion laws to protect women's health.

**Underrepresentation:** Not unrelated to the above issue...the United States lags behind most established democracies with respect to women's representation in politics<sup>69</sup>. While many countries have made rapid progress in this domain, the United States has not kept pace: when it comes to women's representation in national legislatures, the United States' rank has sunk from 41 in the world in 1997 to 101 in 2017. Women currently hold 19.3 percent of seats in the House of Representatives and 21.0 percent in the Senate<sup>70</sup>. Over the past decade, these percentages have barely increased. At the current rate of progress, women will not achieve full legislative parity in the U.S. Congress for another hundred years.

A picture with the men photoshopped out:





## Sexual Abuse: Pervasive and Generally Ignored

Women are 16.5 percent of military personnel yet nearly one in four servicewomen reports experiencing sexual assault in the military, and more than half report experiencing harassment, according to a meta-analysis of 69 studies published in 2018 in the journal *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*<sup>71</sup>.

The consequence for those reporting abuse is usually harsher than to those accused of the abuse. Women who report sexual assault in the US military are most likely to end up dishonorably discharged. This is more serious than it sounds because this status prohibits servicewomen from getting access to VA services that they need to address their mental health and physical needs after discharge.

The Federal government is the largest American employer by far—they have 4 million employees worldwide (this includes the US military and federal prisons).

In general rape is not taken as seriously as law enforcement as it should be. A 2013 study found that rape may be grossly underreported in the United States. Furthermore, a 2014 study suggested that police departments may eliminate or undercount rapes from official records in part to “create the illusion of success in fighting violent crime”.

A 2014 report by the Department of Justice estimated that 34.8% of cases of sexual assaults are reported to the authorities. When sufficient DNA or injury evidence was procured from a woman’s body, she was more likely to follow through with the legal process of prosecution as there was more confidence in a favorable outcome for her. DNA evidence is obtained when a recently raped individual goes through an intrusive physical exam (sometimes at a monetary cost to her) in order to obtain DNA evidence against the perpetrator.

Yet, a 2017 documentary, *I Am the Evidence*, highlighted the back log of 175,000 rape kits that prevent justice for those women in the US while continuing to allow serial rapists the freedom to perpetrate crimes against other women<sup>73</sup>.

Female prisoners are also 30 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than their non-incarcerated counterparts<sup>74</sup>. Of those female prisoners that reported sexual assault, 50% of the incidents name a correction officer or staff person as the perpetrator. Most professional studies suggest that prisoners, regardless of gender, are unlikely to report sexual assault for fear of retaliation, so these numbers may be much higher. It is important to remember that these correctional officers and military personnel are likely local, state, or federal employees. The

likelihood of being a victim increases if you are a racial or ethnic minority, have a disability, or are gender non-conforming.

Sexual trauma, when unresolved, is a big driver of female substance abuse. According to a report by the ACLU, the prevalence of emotional, physical, and sexual violence against women is a significant contributing factor to women's use of illegal drugs<sup>75</sup>. Over 70% of all women in substance abuse treatment have been victims of violence at some point at their lives. Most women in the criminal justice system have little or no access to any form of drug treatment. Nearly 75% of women in the criminal justice system were using drugs prior to their arrest, yet only 25% of state and federal prisoners and 17% of people on probation receive any kind of drug treatment.

The majority of women in prison are mothers and most were the primary caretaker of their children prior to incarceration. In 1999, an estimated 700,000 state and federal prisoners were parents to nearly 1.5 million children under age 18<sup>76</sup>. Over 64% of incarcerated mothers lived with and cared for their children before prison.

Without access to protection from abuse, some female victims will fight back with their abusers. Despite "stand your ground laws" that allow men (primarily white) to protect their property from threat, women do not do as well in the criminal justice system when they seek to protect their bodies. Women who assault or kill their abusers are also represented in the growing number of incarcerated women.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, estimates show there are between 17,000 and 32,000 rape-related pregnancies in the country every year<sup>77</sup>. Currently, in the United States, there is no overarching law that dictates what rights rapists have over children conceived from their attacks. The laws differ by states, falling into four general categories, according to the country's largest anti-sexual violence organization, RAINN. Therefore, depending on where you live, a woman could find herself co-parenting with her rapist and will be forced by the government to allow her child access to a sex offender.

The church sex abuse scandal is what first got me focused on this issue. There was a period when you could not pick up a paper without hearing about child sexual abuse scandal in the churches, schools, sports organizations, Boy Scouts and so on. My issue with this was certainly the perpetrator was a criminal and should be punished, but the number of bystanders, who did nothing, should be charged as accomplices. Recently, the Pope went to Canada and apologized for what happened to indigenous children in the Canadian Catholic Schools, but the apology fell short of the church accepting responsibility for the role they played in allowing the abusive

priest continued access to children in their care. According to a 2004 research study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 4,392 Catholic priests and deacons in active ministry between 1950 and 2002 have been plausibly (neither withdrawn nor disproven) accused of under-age sexual abuse by 10,667 individuals<sup>78</sup>.

More than 82,000 abuse claims have been filed against the Boy Scouts, which has called the deal the largest sexual abuse settlement in history<sup>79</sup>. The problem was the same—people knew about the abuse but didn't do anything to stop it. In my mind, those people are accomplices to a crime and should be put in jail along with the abusers.



**PLEASE HELP US END  
CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE**

*The Time is Now: Prosecute the Institutions  
Covering Up Childhood Sexual Abuse*

[www.EndChildSexAbuse.org](http://www.EndChildSexAbuse.org)

**FOCUS**  
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Barry Segal  
Founder, Focus for Health

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