

Earth Manifesto



Assessment: The Top Ten Ways Our System Is Unfairly Rigged

An Earth Manifesto publication by Dr. Tiffany B. Twain
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Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump both gained great influence during the 2016 elections by recognizing and articulating the legitimacy of anger and grievances felt by millions of people due to job losses and the pathetically poor representation of their best interests in our national priorities. Most Americans are frustrated on account of the corrupting influence of Big Money in our elections and the abuses of power by giant corporations. Both Sanders and Trump made clear that our economic and political systems are rigged in many ways against the populace in favor of established interest groups.

Bernie Sanders, it turns out, has a much more accurate understanding of the complexities of the problems we face than Donald Trump. Just ask the Millennials, the largest generation in world history. Millennials under the age of 30 have a longer-term stake in social well-being than older folks, so it is quite appropriate that Bernie got many more votes from them in the presidential primaries than both Trump and Hillary Clinton combined. We need broadly beneficial solutions to the challenges we face, and thus more unifying ones, NOT more narrowly beneficial ones for the small minority of Americans who gain outlandishly from the way our system is rigged.

Abraham Lincoln echoed the Bible in a famous speech about the precarious destiny of "a house divided", and I believe with great conviction that our nation could negotiate a much better deal with the powers-that-be if we united together to actualize common good goals. This is true for people today as well as for all our descendants in future generations. I also feel strongly that a proper understanding of problems is crucial for us to come up with the best and most fair-minded solutions, and that democratic fairness is the key to honestly deciding how to fix problems in the most sensible ways. So I have created this Top Ten list of the best ways to understand the causes that are contributing to making our system unjust.

As we consider each of these aspects of our rigged system, let's give fair and scrupulously honest consideration to whether Republicans or Democrats in the White House and in Congress would be most effective in fixing these problems. Who would be most likely to address these big challenges in comprehensive, peaceable, just, inclusive, sustainable and unifying ways? Let's think honestly about who would most likely do the better job in fixing our corrupt economic and political systems, and in dealing effectively with the special interest groups that have been responsible for how unfairly our societies are structured. My own evaluation and long-winded analysis follows.

Here are the Top Ten Ways our system is rigged:

1. Students are being saddled with huge amounts of debt for their educations, creating a modern form of indebted bondage that is similar to the indentured servitude that was common in the thirteen Colonies before Independence. And student loan interest rates are too high, and repayment provisions are more onerous than loans for anything else.
2. The best interests of females are being severely underrepresented in our societies due to pronounced male supremacism in our still overly patriarchal culture. As a result, women are still being paid less than 80% as much as men for equal work, and their reproductive rights are being harshly suppressed and threatened with being denied entirely by conservatives. Women are still extremely underrepresented in Congress -- less than 20% of the 535

members of Congress are female, and throughout our country's history, no woman has yet been elected to serve as president. Trump's rude bait-and-switch electioneering swindle sadly cheated women in this regard.

3. The criminal justice system is deeply unjust, resulting in black people and Hispanics being incarcerated at stunningly disproportionate rates. Also, more people are imprisoned in the U.S. than in any other country in the world. Prison privatization schemes have compounded this hyper-costly problem, causing even more profound injustices. Donald Trump's Attorney General Jeff Sessions is about the worst person possible to ameliorate this situation, calling as he is for an intensification of the war on drugs.

4. Wall Street has too much power, and this diminishes the influence of *We the People* on Main Street. In addition, the concentration of banking power in too-big-to-fail institutions is putting the entire global financial system at risk. Surprisingly, financial institutions have gotten significantly bigger today than they were back in 2008, when their excessive size posed a great danger during the financial crisis.

5. Giant corporations have too much power to increase private profits by socializing costs and exploiting working people, and undermining reasonable protections of the environment and wantonly depleting natural resources. One of the most outrageous instances of this rigging of our economic and political systems is found in international trade deals designed with primary input from giant multinational corporations, so they have led to "a race to the bottom" by causing widespread job losses, worker migrations and severe economic dislocations and globalization inequities. Another aspect of this system rigging is found in extensive tax evasion efforts by big corporate entities that use tax havens abroad. And another is the nefarious abuses of power by giant drug companies, as exemplified by instances of huge price increases for critical drugs and rash "roadblocks to competition" provisions to prohibit the Medicare system from negotiating fairer prices for prescription drugs or allow generic drug maker competition in the Republican-pushed new entitlement "Medicare Modernization Act" of 2003, which has driven up the national debt by more than \$1 trillion in order to give bigger profits to huge pharmaceutical companies.

6. Big Money corruptly influences the politicians who should be representing the best interests of the people, with the result that our national priorities are radically askew. Moneyed interest groups have abused the power of their influence to gerrymander congressional districts and promote ridiculous tax policies and pass laws designed to prevent minority voters from having their voices heard and respected. The wrongly decided *Citizens United* ruling by the Supreme Court in 2010 has drastically worsened this problem of *Dark Money* corrupting our system. Among the most blatant Big Money offenders are the billionaires Charles and David Koch, who have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to crush the collective bargaining rights of working people in order to maximize private profits in part by treating workers as stingily as possible. Being owners of big corporations that pollute extensively, the Kochs also strive to weaken crucially important protections of the land, rivers, oceans, forests, wildlife habitats, endangered species and the atmosphere.

7. Climate change. Huge fossil fuel subsidies persist, threatening the economic and political health of countries around the world. Such subsidies have serious global consequences, reducing economic growth and boosting emissions of greenhouse gases by about 2 percent annually. Opposition is powerful to shifting from perversely misguiding subsidies to putting a price on carbon, despite the fact that a well designed fee-and-dividend plan would auspiciously shift incentives from dirty, nonrenewable resources to clean and sustainable sources, and would do so in a way that would help reduce environmental injustices and economic inequality. Clean energy initiatives are part of real climate justice, and more democratic decision-making is a way that we could make sure our government is listening to the people, not just the polluters.

8. The concentration of wealth in the hands of the few keeps increasing, creating growing inequalities. This dangerous trend is due mainly to our political representatives having become pawns of wealthy proponents of regressive taxation schemes and the enabling trickle down theory, which is basically a Big Lie. The illegitimacy of allowing this tinderbox situation to grow ever more extreme threatens our national security and the general welfare of the American people.

9. The mainstream media, dominated by a handful of giant corporations, has been failing to fairly present issues of public importance ever since the Fairness Doctrine was eliminated in 1987. This doctrine had been in effect for

almost 40 years, and when it was revoked, the federal requirement was terminated for media broadcasters to present important issues in an honest, equitable and balanced manner. There has simultaneously been a stunning concentration in the ownership of daily newspapers, magazines, television, books and motion pictures in the United States, a trend that has dramatically reduced media diversity. This is a dangerous development because the centralized control over information, either by the government or corporate entities, is often contrary to freedom of expression and understanding. Modern democracies need an expansive choice of ideas and political policies, and such choices require access to truly diverse and competing sources of news, science, understanding, literature, entertainment and popular culture. Additionally, as Catherine Rampell makes clear in *Origins of a GOP Debacle*, Republicans have built an extreme right-wing media machine that is hyper-divisive because it has convinced the faithful in the Republican base to believe "completely bonkers, bigoted garbage." This troubling propaganda is pushed by mainstream media outlets like Fox News and right-wing talk radio, along with one-sided social media communications that are promoted by scheming politicians, corporations, and the extremist alt-right, and propagated by "alternate facts" and fake news stories, and echoed by angry Internet trolls. Independent-minded media reforms are needed!

10. Vested interest groups involved with the military-industrial complex have joined with rich investors to stoke military spending and run up the national debt in order to give low tax rates to the highest income earners and capital gains recipients. This has enabled the "engineers of austerity" to gain power, forcing hardships onto the vast majority of people and undermining the effectiveness of government to invest in high priority goals like improving public education, expanding opportunity, maintaining physical infrastructure, fostering peaceable coexistence, actualizing global justice initiatives, better protecting the environment and advancing other hallmarks of civilized societies.

Clear-Eyed Commentary

Abraham Lincoln once purportedly declared, possibly apocryphally: "... I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for safety of my country. As a result of the war, corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow, and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until the wealth is aggregated in a few hands, and the Republic is destroyed."

What exactly should we rightly do to responsibly remedy the problems we face today with our critically divided electorate and the wrongful tenets of our rigged economic and political system? To fix things, we should strengthen our democracy by making it more fairly representative, and we should champion smart policies like those recommended in *One Dozen Big Initiatives to Positively Transform Our Societies*. The top goals in a truly fairer democracy should be improved representation of all citizens' needs and stronger efforts to reduce inequality and create more broadly shared opportunities for prosperity, along with adequate controls on banking and more effective limitations on unacceptable corporate abuses of power.

And in the interests of all Americans under the age of 18, who cannot vote, and every one of those to be born in the future, I posit a broad positivity in the notion that nations around the globe should ALL ratify a Bill of Rights for Future Generations, as proposed in the Earth Manifesto.

So, my fellow Americans: ask not how our economic system can be rigged to be of greater personal benefit to you, ask what you can do to help make our nation fairer now, and how to ensure that our world will remain propitious and providential for generations to come. Let us hear the ringing of the bells of individual freedom and responsibility, and thereby support this overarching cause, seeing it to be just, for it should be clear for whom the bell tolls, and it tolls for us all.

"The true rule, in determining to embrace, or reject any thing, is not whether it have any evil in it; but whether it have more of evil, than of good."

--- Abraham Lincoln

Truly,

Editorial Addendum

Michael Moore made a film just before the November 2016 elections titled *Michael Moore in Trumpland*. It was a clever, touching and persuasive film, and made a good case to those who live in areas with strong Trump support that they should do the right thing for their country and the future by voting for Hillary Clinton, even if they have been conditioned to be skeptical of her trustworthiness. A balanced perspective on the merits of voting for Trump was contained in an Op-Ed article by Ross Douthat in the New York Times one Sunday in late October. Titled *The Dangers of Donald Trump*, Douthat provided a clear-eyed analysis of the far-reaching risks of allowing Trump to become our leader, and seven months later it is becoming clear that these risks are getting worse.

Before the election, the American Civil Liberties Union declared that Donald Trump represents "a one man Constitutional crisis". The ACLU wrote, "In the event of a Trump presidency, we have undertaken a constitutional analysis of his most controversial policy proposals. These include his pledges to deport over 11 million undocumented immigrants, to ban Muslims from entering the United States, to surveil American Muslims and their houses of worship, to torture again, and to revise libel laws. We have found them all wanting, to say the least. According to our analysis, Trump's proposals taken together would violate the First, Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Amendments to the Constitution." In many respects, Trump is engaged in what looks like a devious plot against the best interests of the vast majority of the American people, and he and his far right Attorney General appear to present a clear and present danger to our personal freedoms.

While Trump correctly declared during the campaign that our economic system is rigged against the people, his view of the world is bizarrely skewed by yugely simplistic perspectives and alt-right ideologies and a plethora of absurd conspiracy theories. As a result, his prognosis is dark and he prescribes poorly thought-out plans to fix problems, and he used extremely manipulative tactics in his bid to gain domineering power. These tactics include fear mongering, immigrant blaming, race baiting, emotion hijacking, wide-ranging deception, and identity politics that exploit sexism, racism, xenophobia, authoritarian tendencies and urges for white male supremacy.

A theatrical production titled *It Can't Happen Here* was produced before the election that was based on the sensational story told in a book of the same title published in 1935 by Sinclair Lewis, the first American writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In the book and play, a power-hungry man named Buzz Windrip exhibits authoritarian tendencies in a run for president in 1936 against Franklin D. Roosevelt. The times were exceedingly hard back in those days of the Depression, and the specter of widespread unrest stalked the land. Buzz Windrip used fear-mongering tactics that Donald Trump has ominously mimicked in his bid to gain power, and thereby managed to win the election by exploiting right-wing populism and fomenting people's fears and promoting strident views of patriotism and promising drastic reforms of economic and social policies. After he was elected, he imposed totalitarian control over the government and created a ruthless paramilitary force to enforce this abrogation of democratic governance, much like Hitler was doing at the time with his SS troopers. President Windrip outlawed dissent and incarcerated political enemies in concentration camps, and curtailed the rights of women and minorities, and generally became a ruthless despot. In relatively short order, Windrip lost his hold on power due to the failure of his promised economic prosperity to materialize, and he was deposed and exiled to France, but destructive political instability ensued, leading to riots, rebellion and civil war.

When Trump and many conservatives in the Senate and the House won their contests in the November 8, 2016 national elections, it was shocking. Trump, after all, used terribly divisive demagogic tactics, and his character, egomaniacal narcissism and self-admitted sex molester propensities made him a lousy person to be our national leader. His pathological lying, as confirmed by extensive fact checking by the media and PolitiFact, continues to get more preposterous every day, in late May, as his Administration scandalously unfolds. It is becoming obvious that he uses the tweeting politics of distraction to keep people from realizing what is really being done to our government and against the best interests of the people.

Trump promised to fix the "rigged system" and "drain the swamp" in Washington D.C., but once in office it turns out that this promise is one of the biggest political bait-and-switch schemes ever perpetrated in history. Not only has he filled his Cabinet with billionaire donors, Wall Street bankers, corporate CEOs and extreme right-wing ideologues, but his agenda represents a double-cross of his rural white supporters. Instead of standing up for the health, well-being and best interests of those supporters and the vast majority of the American people, Trump is pushing for huge tax cuts for corporations and rich people, and trying to roll back Wall Street reforms, and undermining the healthcare system, and attacking consumer rights and the collective bargaining rights of working people, and gutting regulations that protect our water supplies, air, land and climate.

This is a disastrously sad state of affairs, and a pathetic testament to the betrayal of the American people by their representatives on tax issues that egregiously favor the rich, and on trade deals that primarily promote the interests of multinational corporations at the expense of the vast majority of the people. The overheated pressure cooker of social unrest could easily be made much safer by turning down the heat of injustices and discord, and by instead seeking common ground in relatively small Fairness Principle investments in social insurance policies, like a more progressive tax structure, higher minimum wages, bigger investments in good public education, truer national security and greater domestic tranquility.

Bill Weld, the Libertarian Party candidate for vice president in 2016, courageously spoke out during the heated campaign in favor of Hillary Clinton, personally vouching for her and quoting passages from George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* that was about totalitarian control of the populace. These passages revealed the toxic effects of hate speech that master manipulators of people's emotions use to promote the dominance of reactionary leaders over the fear-deluded people.

We must step back from the chasm of incivility, intolerance, antagonistic biases, anti-democratic inequalitarian policies and dogmatic partisanship, and begin to communicate better and collaborate more sensibly for the greater good -- and proceed together to create a fairer and healthier country and world.

A main reason that the American people have not been able to unite over common good goals is that conservative politicians have been "doing whatever it takes to win" in recent years, as if any means whatsoever are justified to accomplish narrow ends. Professor Robert Reich analyzed the exceedingly high cost of this prevailing ethos in the United States in an October 30 article *The High Cost of Winning*. Reich pointed out that two observers from the Brookings Institution and the American Enterprise Institute trace the beginning of this divisive hyperpolarized scorched-earth strategy to Newt Gingrich back when he was Speaker of the House in 1995. The Republican Party under Gingrich became "ideologically extreme, scornful of compromise, dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition and unmoved by conventional understandings of facts, evidence and science." This stance has betrayed the trust of the American people in government. Corporate leaders, too, have pursued consequentially harmful courses of action in order to benefit personally at the expense of the public.

These trends have gotten much worse over the years, creating a "vicious cycle of public distrust," writes incisive Professor Reich. "Leadership of our nation's major institutions is not just about winning. It's also about making these institutions stronger and more trustworthy." It time for us to work together to actualize common good goals and to reject the powerful divisive forces that keep us from achieving such auspicious priorities. We need stronger and more trustworthy institutions! Instead, the dangerous influence of Donald Trump has momentarily triumphed, making a travesty of civil discourse, honesty, rational thinking and fair-mindedness.

Thinking that Hillary Clinton would win, incumbent U.S. Senators like John McCain and Ted Cruz proclaimed that Republicans would never consider any candidates that Hillary would nominate for the Supreme Court if she became president. Soon after Trump became president, Democrats felt that the addition of more ideologically hard-right Justices to the Supreme Court would give unreasonable Republicans such a dominance over all three branches of government that our democratic republic could be threatened with authoritarian rule and the loss of many personal liberties. So, many of them suggest that Democrats mimic the stubborn intransigence that Senate Republicans manifested when they abrogated their constitutional duty to consider the candidate Barack Obama had nominated almost a year before the election, and thus oppose any nominated candidate for the Supreme Court who is outside the mainstream. Republicans, abusing their ill-gained power, changed long-standing Senate rules to put Neil Gorsuch,

an extreme ideological conservative, on the Court to once again give a 5 to 4 advantage to corporate friendly Justices who claim to see no corrupting influence of allowing huge amounts of money in our elections.

John Dean, the White House Counsel under Nixon, penned a scathing portrayal of the authoritarian impulses of *Conservatives Without Conscience* in 2006. In this illuminating book, he asserts that conservatism has been co-opted by people with authoritarian personalities and policies, citing data from Bob Altemeyer. "According to Dean, modern conservatism, specifically in the Christian Right, embraces obedience, inequality, intolerance, and strong intrusive government." This stance stands in stark contrast to the philosophies and policies advocated by the conservative Barry Goldwater, John Dean's personal role model. "Using Altemeyer's scholarly work, he contends that there is a tendency toward ethically questionable political practices when authoritarians are placed in positions of power, and that the current (in 2006) political situation is dangerously unsound because of it."

"Dean cites the behavior of key members of the Republican leadership, including George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Tom DeLay, Newt Gingrich and Bill Frist as clear evidence of a relationship between modern right-wing conservatism and this authoritarian approach to governance. He places particular emphasis on the abdication of checks and balances by the Republican Congress, and of the dishonesty of the conservative intellectual class in support of the GOP, as a result of the obedience and arrogance innate to the authoritarian mentality."

Then in 2007, John Dean wrote *Broken Government: How Republican Rule Destroyed the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches*. In this book, Dean built on *Worse Than Watergate*, and *Conservatives Without Conscience*, to argue that the Republican Party has gravely damaged all three branches of the federal government in the service of ideological rigidity and with little regard given to the public interest or the general good. Dean concludes that conservatism must regenerate itself to remain true to its core ideals of limited government and the rule of law.

The single most egregious instance of activities by conservatives without conscience is the brainwashing of millions of Americans into believing trickle down economic ideologies that serve to concentrate wealth into the hands of the few, at the expense of the many, because this undermines the general welfare and proves to be contrary to the common good and the fundamental tenets of democracy itself.

Unfortunately, with Trump and Republicans trying to impose a monopoly on power, things are likely to get much worse for the American people. Strong Resistance is needed! And stop voting for deceitful Republicans.

Assessment

Trump asserted during the campaign that only he can fix things, and that he represents the true voice of those left behind in our rigged system. Let's assess these two assertions with realistic and honest intent. Trump's tax plans would give giant corporations and the richest 1% of Americans the biggest tax cuts in history, and lead to a huge spike in the already record high \$20 trillion national debt. The resulting reduction in revenues would contribute to less funding of education and harsh budget cuts and economic stagnation and ramped up revolutionary fervor. These developments would be very negative for almost every American, and for billions more people worldwide.

Viewing again the list of the top ten ways our economic and political systems are rigged, I cannot see any way Trump is working to properly remedy any of them. He is an extremely unlikely candidate to help create a more truthful and independent media, or heal the dangerous divisiveness that is making the USA so vulnerable to abuses of power, for he has demeaned and insulted Latinos, Muslims, disabled people, PTSD-suffering troops, Gold Star veterans, Hollywood celebrities, Miss Universe and indeed all females with his male chauvinist and advantage-taking sexual behaviors. Trump is a climate action opponent who has indicated he would try to revoke our national commitment to people in 200 other countries to make sensible efforts to reduce the growth in greenhouse gas emissions. He wants to ramp up spending on the military and police forces, and create a "deportation force" to get rid of millions of immigrants. On the female front, he has outlandishly said there should be some form of punishment for women who get an abortion, and his bragging about taking sexual advantage of attractive women make him the wrong person to treat women fairly and value them and champion their rights.

Trump gives angry American workers a deeply misleading prescription for how to fix the loss of manufacturing jobs, for most of them have been lost to computers and machines, not people in Mexico and China. It is noteworthy that

American manufacturers produce twice as much as they did in 1984, but with one-third fewer workers, according to Thomas Friedman. Trump declares that we should build walls and increase trade barriers, in addition to giving huge tax breaks to the rich, but Thomas Friedman expresses a convincing and diametrically opposed opinion about a much better course of action:

"The smartest thing we can do now is to keep our economy as open and flexible as possible -- to get the change signals first and be able to quickly adapt; create the opportunity for every American to engage in lifelong learning, because whatever jobs emerge will require more knowledge; make sure that learning stresses as much of the humanities and human interactive skills as hard sciences; make sure we have an immigration policy that continues to attract the world's most imaginative risk-takers; and strengthen our safety nets, because this era will leave more people behind."

An Aside on NAFTA

Trump curiously blamed Hillary Clinton for just about everything, including the North American Free Trade Agreement. It is true that Bill Clinton signed this trade agreement when he was president, but surprisingly to many, NAFTA was supported by 75% of Republicans in Congress in 1993 when it was passed, and it was opposed by 60% of Democrats, so it was primarily a Republican deal. The results of this trade agreement were largely the opposite of what its boosters had promised. The non-profit advocacy group Public Citizen reported on the legacy of this trade agreement on the 20th anniversary of NAFTA in 2013, and its findings included the fact that the trade agreement contributed to a \$181 billion trade deficit with Mexico and Canada, a net loss of 1 million U.S. jobs, larger agricultural trade deficits with Mexico and Canada, and more than \$360 million paid to corporations through "investor-state" lawsuits that attacked domestic policies such as toxics bans, land-use rules, water and forestry policies, and other regulations geared toward environmental protections and the public interest. The report also highlighted how U.S. companies like Chrysler and Caterpillar, who promised to create specific numbers of jobs upon NAFTA's approvals, quickly fired U.S. workers and relocated to Mexico. NAFTA trade and investment trends, particularly the displacement of manufacturing jobs, have contributed to downward pressure on wages and the growing trend toward extreme inequality. A flood of U.S. corn imports, combined with subsidies that favor agribusiness, caused the loss of 2 million farm jobs in Mexico -- and this severely exacerbated illegal migration to the U.S., particularly from poor areas where small farmers were barely able to eke out a living.

Trade should be designed to lift all boats, not to facilitate a race to the bottom on labor and environmental issues.

Conclusion

Remember that when Bill Clinton left office, the economy was booming and there was a budget surplus. Then George W. Bush was president for eight years and he left America in the middle of a severe economic crisis and with 10% unemployment. When Barack Obama left office, there had been a net gain of 15 million jobs and a moderately growing economy, and wages were finally starting to increase after the Bush recession. We would be much better off with a leader that is more in the Clinton and Obama mold, and NOT the Bush mold. Since Donald Trump's proposed huge tax cuts are extremely regressive and inegalitarian, they would be highly likely to disrupt economic growth and cause the national debt to spike dangerously, if put into effect. Sensible Americans should strongly express their disapproval with such proposals to their representatives!

Trump's plans for import taxes could result in belligerent trade wars and consequentially negative economic outcomes. For these reasons, it would be a big risk for our representatives to go along with his proposals.

I felt strongly before the election that we should rightly protect President Obama's laudable legacy and NOT elect the manipulative charlatan Donald Trump, for he promises to undermine all the progress that has been made under Obama in the last eight years despite reprehensibly staunch opposition by Republicans. I urged all Americans not to vote for representatives in Congress who are so self-serving and without an honorable sense of conscience as to support Trump and his vile hate-mongering attitudes toward others and the wide-ranging risks he poses to our democracy and the American people and environmental sanity and world peace.

Most of the British people already regret the fact that a narrow majority of their countrymen allowed right-wing anti-immigrant voices of isolationism to convince them to vote for a Brexit severance of their ties to the European Union. It seems likely that most Americans and increasing numbers of Trump voters will begin to see that an "America-exit" from the world of nations is an exceedingly bad idea. What we need is a powerful and peaceful progressive revolution, not a dangerous, dark, uncompromising, reactionary revolution led by racist, sexist, nationalist, ethnocentric alt-right white supremacists who would be most likely to bring widespread discord, economic disruption, and extremely exacerbated inequality and violence.

Let's get out of our echo chambers, my fellow Americans, and ignore the dividers and media manipulators and exploiters of hot button "wedge" social issues. Let's immunize ourselves against those who stoke fears and hostilities toward others. Let's resoundingly reject those who propagate wild conspiracy theories and engage in character assassination and intimidation and insinuation and innuendo. Open your eyes to what trickles down under the guise of trickle-down ideologies that are so repetitiously peddled by rich conservatives -- and recognize the far-reaching risks of using such propaganda to facilitate the gushing up of private profits into the hands of the few. And let's support leaders who will not let reactionary elements of our society continue to take excessive advantage of the profound sexism embedded in our male-dominated cultures.

The overarching emphasis of my online Earth Manifesto, and the twelve 212-page books that contain these ideas, is on ecological sanity. So I conclude these observations by pointing out that our civilizations are primarily structured to indulge in materialistic consumerism and a rash willingness to sacrifice the habitats of all life on Earth to meet our needy and greedy desires. This is an overarching reason that we need revolutionary progressive change with the goal of making our societies more sustainable. And this is why I advocate that all countries embrace a Bill of Rights for Future Generations.

Dr. Tiffany B. Twain

Tiffany Twain is "the illegitimate great-granddaughter of the estimable and irreverent writer, lecturer, humorist and philosopher Mark Twain." She has published Twelve Books of the Earth Manifesto as a save-the-world treatise containing wide-ranging and far-sighted observations that deal with all the biggest issues facing humankind here in the second decade of the 21st century. Check it out online!