

A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, taken during sunset. The bridge's iconic orange-red towers and suspension cables are silhouetted against a warm, hazy sky. The water of the bay is visible in the foreground, and the distant hills are shrouded in a soft mist.

# TRANSPARTISAN NOTES

## PART THREE

JULY - DECEMBER 2017

WRITTEN BY

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& James S. Turner

The following collection of essays originally appeared on the  
Transpartisan Review website: [www.transpartisanreview.org](http://www.transpartisanreview.org)

THE TRANSPARTISAN REVIEW is a digital journal of politics, society, and culture, exploring the apparent disintegration of the traditional political, social and cultural order from a transpartisan point of view. The TRANSPARTISAN NOTES series shares this exploration on the *Transpartisan Review* website every week. Unless otherwise noted, all rights to the material within remain with the authors of the articles or their original publication source. All other material is copyright ©2017 by *The Transpartisan Review*. Inquiries for the republication of any of the following essays, online or off, should be directed to [editor@transpartisanreview.com](mailto:editor@transpartisanreview.com).

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TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #53 • JULY 03, 2017

## Trump As “Disrupter”

We have been musing along the following lines: Among all criticisms of President Trump, the most common is his apparently unbreakable habit of sending provocative tweets that often conflict with and disturb efforts to advance his developing policy agenda.

Such criticisms are constantly repeated, and they all rest on the same assumption: that Donald Trump is stupid because he is choosing actions (tweeting) that are undermining objectives he cares more about (his policy agenda). Although it is hard to defend Trump’s Twitter habit from any perspective related to traditional politics, in this Note we look at his actions based on three assumptions: a) he is not stupid; b) he is not crazy; and c) he cares about *more than his policy agenda*. In this context tweeting is important to him to accomplish more than policy—he afflicts the comfortable.

Although he was critical of Trump during the campaign, former Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressed a positive insight about him this spring in calling him a “disrupter.” The political environment, Gates said, can get pretty calcified; and sometimes a disrupter can accomplish things that others cannot. Order out of chaos.

Disruption is a negative word, and it is hard to think how it can be part of any positive agenda. Its power comes from being entirely negative. How can Trump be understood as anything *except* a disruptor while tolerating contradictions such as those from associates – Cabinet Secretaries or Jared Kushner – softening and reinterpreting harsh tweets (which the White House insists are official declarations) to foreign leaders? The tweets are disruptive, keeping things churned up, nothing more.

Protesting otherwise, critics try to understand Trump as a traditional President or urge him to become one. What positive outcomes can be imagined from disruption?

One positive outcome for Trump personally is that he gets to do what he knows. He knows nothing about being President, but he knows how to host a reality television show. What greater impact than disruption is his decision to host a reality show out of the Oval Office?

When the President doesn’t know how to “lead,” what is the principal effect of his reality show disruptions? *It empowers other parties*, whether in Congress, who must pass tax reform, replace

Obamacare, or create numerous other policy initiatives. It also *empowers leaders of other countries* in global affairs, who must “step up” and act on a basis more equal with the U.S. than before.

Washington elites have absolutely *howled* their displeasure at what they see as Presidential abdication of responsibilities on both domestic and global issues. What possible *order* can be imagined (they seem to be saying) without the hegemon as leader, managing and directing all of the children, whether in Congress or in international forums? Would it really be so terrible if power and authority were shared in genuine equality with our European allies so they contributed their fair share, and not just in money, for common defense, as all recent Presidents have called for?

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #54 • JULY 10, 2017

## Independents Day: Introducing the Centrist Project

*Today we present The Centrist Project's announcement of its first Washington, DC press conference...*

Independent elected officials from across the country will join together for the first time in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, July 12, for an ‘Independents Day’ event organized by The Centrist Project.

The group of Independents will participate in a news conference at the National Press Club at 10:00 a.m. to describe how they are playing a unique role in bringing both political parties together to solve pressing challenges and in growing the Independents’ movement to impact national governance

*Participants include:*

- Governor Bill Walker (I-AK)
- State Senator David Johnson (I-IA)
- State Representative Jason Grenn (I-AK)
- State Representative Owen Casas (I-ME)

In **Alaska**, two independent state representatives helped flip control of the state house for the first time in decades from the GOP to a new ‘bipartisan governing majority’—comprised of several moderate Republicans and the House Democratic Caucus. The bipartisan governing majority has been instrumental in putting forward balanced and bipartisan proposals to address the state’s historic budget deficits.

In **Maine**, since two independent state representatives were elected in 2016, three incumbent state representatives—one

Strong Presidential leadership would allow the Republicans, who control both houses, to pass bills over Democrats’ unanimous opposition. Why should we applaud continuation of such unstable polarization? Voices are now starting to be heard that Trump’s “abdication” may push Democrats and Republicans to work together to pass a health reform bill.

While so far looking unlikely, why is that prospect seen to be so terrible?

If forced to work together, they may discover innovative transpartisan possibilities for effective policy, some of which are described in *The Transpartisan Review*. Vol. I, No.1, which was published on Inauguration Day, and Vol. I, No. 2, which will be available later this month.

Republican and two Democrats—dropped their party affiliation. Now, neither party controls an outright majority in the Maine state house. The Independents have been outspoken in advocating for structural political reform, including protecting a Ranked Choice Voting ballot measure passed by Maine voters last year.

In **Iowa**, State Senator David Johnson became the first serving Independent legislator in 45 years after he left the Republican Party in June of 2016. He acted during his fourth term as an objection to Donald Trump’s campaign. ‘I am feeling more comfortable with my votes than I ever have,’ Johnson recently told *The Des Moines Register*.

Independent voters now comprise the largest and fastest growing segment of the American electorate, at 40% as of May 2017 according to Gallup. This figure is significantly higher among millennial voters.

In France, a new centrist, independent\* movement (‘La République En Marche’) recently propelled a first-time candidate to the Presidency and a near super-majority of Parliamentary candidates into office. With a majority of voters holding an unfavorable view of both political parties in the United States, according to Pew Research, many political observers speculate that a similar movement can take hold in America.

The Centrist Project is a national organization that seeks to bridge the partisan divide in government by promoting centrist, independent leadership and policies that put ‘We, the people’ before any party or special interest. For more information, please visit [www.CentristProject.org](http://www.CentristProject.org).

We at *The Transpartisan Review* see left, right and other collaborations such as these springing up across the country and around the world as an expression of the Transpartisan Imperative.

Powerful subjective and objective forces drive these efforts and point to new political forms to express our democratic impulses. On July 17 we will post Vol. I, Issue 2 of the *Transpartisan Review*. Read it for some ideas for new forms of organization.

Our times offer great opportunity for innovation.

*\* En Marche! considers every person who submits identification information (date of birth, email, full address, and telephone number) and adheres to the party's charter to be an adherent. Unlike other political parties, it does not require adherents to make a monetary donation. Emmanuel Macron has indicated that it is possible to adhere to En Marche! while remaining a member of "another republican party." (Wikipedia)*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #55 • JULY 17, 2017

## The Centrist Project Meets the Washington Press

Alaska Gov. Bill Walker, an Independent and former Republican, and Byron Mallott, his Democratic rival, debated each other so many times that they got to be allies. "We discovered that we liked our state a whole lot more than we liked politics," Walker told a Washington, D.C., press conference on July 12. "So we did something that you don't typically do in politics. We combined our campaigns." They won. Walker is Governor, and Mallot is Lieutenant Governor.

The *Centrist Project*, which seeks to bridge the growing partisan divide in government by strategically electing Independent, centrist candidates to office, hosted the conference, which we attended. At the conference they presented four Independents, Governor Walker, state Sen. David Johnson (IA), and state Reps. Owen Casas (ME) and Jason Grenn (AK) for #IndependentsDay in the nation's capital. They got good press:

**Roll Call:** On building the infrastructure necessary to compete with the two parties: "The biggest problem is that voters only invest time and resources in Independents if they believe the candidates can win," said Project Executive Director Nick Troiano. "The Centrist Project aims to overcome these challenges by providing support to Independents," he added.

**Inside Sources:** On the takeover by independents in Alaskan politics: "As a result of a compromise ironed out by Grenn and his colleagues, moderate Republicans, Independents, and some Democrats have come together to form a centrist coalition to lead the lower house that is facing down the more conservative state Senate in the state's high-stakes fiscal negotiations."

**The Hill:** Owen Casas and Jason Grenn, two of the Independent legislators at the press conference, wrote: "We live on opposite sides of the country—one of us in Maine, the other in Alaska—but we each serve as state legislators in the center of our increasingly polarized politics. We're both Independents.

We're both millennials with young families. And like many across the country, we're frustrated with both major parties and the state of our dysfunctional politics."

**Real Clear Politics:** On the Centrist Project's "fulcrum" strategy: "Imagine a U.S. Senate with five or six Independent members, which would deny both major political parties an outright majority and give said coalition a large amount of power."

Imagine the same in each state legislative assembly across the nation. Or even in the U.S. House of Representatives. Note this May 7, 2017, news about the *Problem Solvers Caucus*, an outgrowth, according to the Washington Post, of the No Labels organization, whose motto is: "Stop fighting. Start fixing."

In a May 3, 2017 *press release*, Problem Solvers Caucus Co-Chairs Republican Tom Reed and Democrat Josh Gottheimer "announced a first win... get[ting] the FY17 funding bill passed... The Caucus' support of the bill was the result of the 40 Members of Congress, evenly split between Republicans and Democrats, working together."

The Centrist Project's ultimate goal is to elect 3-5 Centrist candidates to the U.S. Senate, where they can deny both parties an outright majority and, as a crucial swing coalition, use their political leverage to force both sides back to the center and forge common ground policy solutions. Their initial effort is to begin with state legislatures, with an intense 2018 focus on Colorado.

While they call their project "centrist," we suggest that, to the extent they integrate rather than balance the party differences on any given issue, they act more as transpartisans than bipartisans. They embrace bipartisan and transcend it to a new policy position different from that of either party. All these efforts underscore a political process that is expanding to embrace transpartisan initiatives that we report on. They are a hopeful sign for a maturing political process.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #56 • JULY 24, 2017

## Possibilities for Transpartisan Governance

In Note #54 we introduced the *Centrist Project*. This group promotes cooperation and collaboration among state legislators. It seeks out sitting legislators willing to declare independence from current parties and willing candidates to run as independents. They expect Independents to use their leverage to reduce conflict in politics.

The Centrist Project aims to get a minimum of *five* Independent legislators into each state legislative house across the country and in the US House and Senate. It believes these Independents—we might call them Transpartisans—can use their strategic positions to reduce partisan conflict and promote bipartisan or transpartisan legislative action.

*Here are some of our thoughts on achieving this objective:*

First, *concentrating force wins wars*. The Centrist Project follows this principle by concentrating first *on the state of Colorado*. This focus gives the energetic Colorado transpartisan community a goal for effective action. It creates the opportunity to build a model for other states and Congress.

Second, finding five or more Independent legislators—by conversion or election—works best if the assembled group comes from diverse political backgrounds. Sitting members from ‘safe’ districts offer the most enticing prospects. Working through key donors can be particularly effective.

Most importantly, we believe, recruiting with policy proposals aligned with our Four-Quadrant Transpartisan Matrix and focusing on issues of special interest to prospects can be especially powerful.

The Matrix shows both Democrats and Republicans split between ‘freedom’ and ‘order’ factions. Understanding individual legislators’ places on the Matrix allows recruiters of potential Independent legislators to appeal both to their immediate prospects and to people in other quadrants. Five or more Independents in a legislature broadens the policy playing field for new ideas and offers ‘cover’ (broader space for political action) for legislators who remain in their parties as partisans.

In *Beyond Left and Right*, Lawry Chickering, a conservative, told of approaching radical black lawyers about financing legal services for the poor. He proposed that instead of paying poverty lawyers from outside affected communities in effect to take clients from private lawyers, the government should pay the clients and let them choose their own lawyers.

This empowerment strategy would allow the indigenous bar to work for local clients who need help. Even the most radical black lawyers were indifferent to the fact that Lawry developed this idea working for conservative Governor Ronald Reagan. They responded to the empowerment vision behind this transpartisan proposal.

In *The Chemical Feast: The Nader Report on food protection at the FDA*, Jim Turner, a liberal/progressive, told of consumer initiatives that over time led to Congressionally-adopted policies such as Organic Food Production, Nutrition Labeling, and the National Institutes of Health’s National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

Conservatives and progressives such as Senators Orrin Hatch, Tom Harkin, Richard Lugar and Patrick Leahy championed these initiatives, which passed Congress with robust bipartisan support. Each of these initiatives created citizen/consumer empowerment programs that support individual people making personal choices that fit their specific needs and resources. They exemplify transpartisan.

This is a very large subject, which we explore in *Voice of the People: The Transpartisan Imperative in American Life*, our book on a transpartisan politics, our weekly Notes, and *The Transpartisan Review*.

As the Centrist Project and others seeking legislators and candidates to get Independents into power (or anyone considering office as an Independent) look for policy guidelines, we urge them to use The Transpartisan Matrix. It is a tool to help find policies that advance people’s desires for freedom and choice in a framework of security and order.



*Autumn 2018 Update: The Centrist Project reorganized its program in 2018 and is now named “Unite America”. You can learn more about its new mission at [www.uniteamerica.org](http://www.uniteamerica.org).*



TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #57 • JULY 31, 2017

## The Transpartisan Effect

We see “The Transpartisan Effect” all around us. It plays in our national politics, on the world stage, and in our local communities. Our weekly notes point to one place or another where events strike us as examples of the effect of people working together beyond the left/right partisanship that so intoxicates our entertaining media and political comedy/drama.

Today we post issue two of *The Transpartisan Review* containing a more detailed introspection of how we, our colleagues and contributors see the forces behind the daily events we write about each week.

*The articles in the Review include:*

### **The Transpartisan Effect**

We say Trump receiving votes of only 27% of the age-eligible electorate points toward a transpartisan effect. The 44% did-not-vote category — Transpartisans — hold the key to moving policy formation forward.

### **A Republic — If You Can Keep It**

Ralph Benko, *Forbes* online columnist, proposes a national

citizens’ league that would employ ‘soft power’ to improve the quality and legitimacy of our system of governance.

### **Russia Is Not Our Enemy**

Jack Matlock, former US Ambassador to Russia, thinks our preoccupation with alleged Russian campaign tampering obscures far more important issues of our relationship with that superpower. Risking war, he says, over mere differences in perspective creates a risk of stumbling into unimaginable devastation.

### **Taxation In The Age Of Digitalization**

Edgar Feige, economics professor, restates his proposal to replace the income tax with a miniscule user fee on all bank transactions, making taxes simpler, fairer, more productive, and less burdensome. At a stroke the fee eliminates loopholes, special interest lobbying, and deficit spending.

### **United And Divided: Where Do We Go From Here?**

Lynne Twist, philanthropist, and Lawry Chickering, Transpartisan Review executive editor, report on a Living



Room Conversation, founded by Joan Blades ([MoveOn.org](#) co-founder), bringing together three 'conservatives' and three 'progressives' on a transpartisan journey, learning from five celebrated civil society experiments accomplishing extraordinary success in work with the most 'difficult' populations.

### **Not Just An Abstraction Anymore: The Matrix Validated**

Michael Briand, *Transpartisan Review* editor, reports a new study showing how useful the transpartisan matrix can be. Neither Trump nor Clinton voters would have to alter their

positions significantly for a more pragmatic majority point of view to emerge.

*The Transpartisan Review* is a place for all of us to discuss these vital matters. We invite you to share your questions, thoughts, and reactions in the [comment thread found here](#).

You can download this issue of the Transpartisan Review for free at [www.transpartisanreview.org/issue-two](http://www.transpartisanreview.org/issue-two).

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #58 • AUGUST 07, 2017

## **A Black Republican President? Part I - A Four-Quadrant Analysis**

'Why the next black president could be a Republican', an August 4th *Washington Post* article by political scientist Theodore R. Johnson\* poses a provocative political question. Could a black conservative soon become President of the United States?

Citing studies showing ideology now trumps race in politics; pointing out that black Republican candidates are often more conservative than their white opponents; and noting efforts to suppress black votes, Johnson concludes it is possible a black conservative President could win election.

Johnson states the common view: Democrats and 'progressives' are light years ahead of Republicans and 'conservatives' in appealing to blacks. While this may be true on the linear left-right spectrum, it fails to distinguish the 'freedom' and 'order' themes that both hide conservative strengths and progressive weaknesses for black voters.

In the current issue of *The Transpartisan Review*, we explore why voters are turning away from both of the major political parties. We start this exploration with the numbers. President Trump is commonly thought to have won 46 percent of the popular vote in the last election (48% for Hillary).

However these numbers only count people who voted. If you count age-eligible citizens who did not vote for either or who did not bother to register and opted out, Trump's active base of supporters shrinks to only 27% (compared to Hillary's 28%, with Obama about the same).

This means that only about *one-quarter of citizens* actively supported either candidate. Each lost the support of nearly three-quarters of eligible voters. This puts into context reports that only 25% of people now support Trump—as if his support is declining.

In fact, current poll numbers align closely with an accurate reading of the election results. That a White House occupant's numbers are higher than the personal numbers supporting the occupant often reflect allegiance to the office rather than the person.

We think many of the three-quarters (including registered independents who voted for Trump or Hilary) are transpartisans. We believe observers misunderstand *all* voter (and potential voter) behavior because the simple left-right spectrum greatly *oversimplifies what people seek from voting and not voting*.

Our *Matrix* addresses this problem by distinguishing two values on both the left and right that everyone wants: freedom and order. Using the Matrix, interesting possibilities, like white conservatives voting for black candidates, appear when imagining how people might respond if candidates started *combining different quadrant values*.

Far from integrating values in conflict—whether *between* the parties or *within* them—the current binary (either-or) system pushes partisans to the *extremes* of their positions and drives transpartisans away from voting. The process thus creates perfect, mythic images of the *darkness* in each position because order (justice) without freedom is authoritarianism (repression), and freedom without order is anarchy or greed (chaos).

In our next Note, we use the Matrix to illustrate the conflicts within each side. We think this exploration reveals interesting insights about the continuing struggles Republicans have *attracting* and progressives have *satisfying* black voters.

\* *Theodore R. Johnson is a Fellow of New America and an adjunct Professor at Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy.*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #59 • AUGUST 14, 2017

## A Black Republican President? Part II - A Four-Quadrant Analysis

In our last Note, we used our Transpartisan Matrix to explore political scientist Theodore R. Johnson's analysis of '*Why the next black president could be a Republican*.'\* We continue our analysis, using the Matrix, to show the conflicts within the left and within the right, which will reveal interesting insights about the continuing struggles Republicans have *attracting* black voters and progressives have *satisfying* them.

The mainstream progressive narrative sees blacks as victims of white racism. In this disempowering view, whites hold all power, blacks little or none: black progress depends almost entirely, if not exclusively, on white progressives. Until their progressive allies get whites to change, blacks can do little or nothing themselves.

Although the 1964 Civil Rights Act was supported by an overwhelming bipartisan vote (over 70% of each House of Congress), mainstream conservatives have offered no proposals for healing racial conflict and in fact largely ignore the issue, which blacks understand as an implicit acceptance of racism that persists among the order-right.

This position is especially true among the *least educated* and *poorest* whites in the South—people *who have their own empowerment agendas*. President Lyndon Johnson saw the precise political implications of this in 1964, when he said, according to his press secretary Bill Moyers, 'I think we just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come.'

We think the political debate on racism is stagnant for two reasons: first, because it lacks any vision of what causes racism and how we can work to reduce it; and second, because it lacks any vision of a strategy to promote *black empowerment*, a vision of positive black experiences that promote hope for blacks.

*Racism cannot be overcome* by collective, order-left mechanisms (e.g., new laws) or by *arm-waving from the oval office*. Racism happens when people are treated as objects and disappears in personal engagement, when they are treated as *subjects*. Where racism persists, it happens when people (mostly order-right) live isolated lives, seeing others only as objects, lacking opportunities to engage with people who are 'different' (including blacks) as subjects.

All quadrants have positive elements and also dark sides. Transpartisan integration occurs among the positive elements. Unfortunately, our current political system and the major parties often feature extreme versions of the dark sides. The best of order-right holds *personal engagement as redemptive*. Personal

engagement, promoting trust, is by far the most powerful instrument for overcoming racism with interracial mixing.

The key to encouraging this is by *communication across loyalties* (here, between the races), and we have found that that often happens when institutions feature a freedom-right commitment to *shared property rights in public space*. Any political leader that champions a policy agenda toward citizen empowerment and engagement in community institutions will effect a fundamental change in our political system, now ravaged by conflict. In terms of relations between blacks and whites such an agenda, highlighted by *real experiences* where it is being shown to be transformative, the political conversation would come alive.

Reducing racism through engagement would help correct the second reason our political debate is stagnant—by creating a *vision of black empowerment and positive black experiences*. We believe that identity politics can play a positive role in healing racial conflict but *only in forms that promote visions of black empowerment*.

Hillary's identity politics treated all blacks as the same—as *victims* with no control over their lives until progressives could get whites (her 'deplorables') to change. Her vision implicitly denies the possibility of black success (until whites change). Blacks are no different than everyone else in needing to be treated as individuals. Treating all blacks as a voting block treats all blacks as objects. Empowerment depends on treating people, including blacks, as individual subjects.

(The common belief that reducing poverty can be a means for promoting development is part of the general perception of the poor, black and white, as objects and turns reality on its head. People overcome poverty *only as subjects*. In no policy is this insight more important than in empowering black individuals to real emancipation. Empower individuals and prosperity follows.)

We believe that Professor Johnson's article '*Why the next black president could be a Republican*' is pointing toward this possibility and reality. This empowerment vision is not specially fashioned from *conservative or progressive* ideas alone. It is the *heart of the transpartisan vision*, integrating freedom and order from both left and right.

It also underlies why the next black president could be a different kind of Republican or Democrat.

\* *Theodore R. Johnson is a Fellow of New America and an adjunct Professor at Georgetown's McCourt School of Public Policy.*



TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #60 • AUGUST 21, 2017

## Bridge Alliance Members Denounce Nazis, White Supremacists, and the KKK — Call for All Leaders to do the Same

*With 79 member groups from across the political spectrum and scattered around the political Matrix, the Bridge Alliance speaks with one of the strongest Transpartisan voices in contemporary American politics. The Transpartisan Review is pleased to support and join the Bridge Alliance in the following August 17, 2017 statement:*

The Bridge Alliance's 79 organizations work on multiple fronts to revitalize our democracy and bridge partisan divides. As members of this coalition and as Americans we stand together and reaffirm basic human values of love, respect, and inclusion. Our mission statement compels us to put country before self-interest and political party. We ask our friends, neighbors, colleagues, elected officials, and other leaders of varied political beliefs and backgrounds to do the same.

Today, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are united in condemning the elevation of overtly racist, bigoted and anti-Semitic individuals and groups; there is NOT equal responsibility "on both sides". Neo-Nazis, the KKK, and White Supremacists have no legitimate place in our society. There can be no hope for common or even higher ground when leaders support intolerance, bigotry or hatred.

Two Republican leaders have succinctly expressed our outrage. Paul Ryan, (R-WI) Speaker of the House, stated, "We must be clear. White Supremacy is repulsive. This bigotry is counter to all this country stands for. There can be no moral ambiguity." Senator Marco Rubio, (R-FL) said, "Mr. President, you can't allow white supremacists to share only part of the blame."

The Bridge Alliance works hard to stay above every-day politics. What we are witnessing is not politics. It is time to make

our voices heard. This moment strikes to the essence of who we are as Americans. We, the leaders and members of the Bridge Alliance, ask you to raise your voices in bringing our country together. Hate has no place in America. True patriotism requires us to stand united at this crucial time in our history.

The Bridge Alliance is dedicated to solutions through dialogue, deliberation, and collaboration. The work of citizens from across the country to change the political process of governance is just beginning. The task is not an easy one. Our nation's Founders, though flawed, were idealists who imagined a nation "of the people, by the people, and for the people." More than 240 years later, we stand behind our Constitution and our democratic ideals.

Now more than ever we can and must build upon their brilliant and exemplary framework to finish what they collectively intended, but never managed to complete. We The People can fulfill the dream that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

We are asking you to make your voices heard by writing us a short paragraph saying how you believe we can come together at this time as a country. We will be posting citizen responses on Facebook and [our website](#).

If you want to be more involved and we can be of any assistance contact us directly at [info@BridgeAlliance.us](mailto:info@BridgeAlliance.us) or contact any of the Bridge Alliance members.

We the People can and will make a difference. Join us.

— The Bridge Alliance ([www.bridgealliance.us](http://www.bridgealliance.us))



Image credit: from BYU Magazine. Photo Courtesy Jeffrey Flake.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #61 • AUGUST 28, 2017

## Partisans Transcend Differences on Eru Island

U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich, a New Mexico Democrat, and Arizona Republican Jeff Flake *worked together* on the Pacific Island Eru in the Marshall Islands using only three tools. Discovery Channel aired the six day experiment as “*Rival Survival*” on October 29, 2014.



Flake’s Brigham Young University *alumni magazine* quoted him saying, “Out here it doesn’t matter if you’re a Republican or a Democrat; ...you have to help each other...Republicans and Democrats can rely on each other, can trust each other—that’s what this week proved.”

Heinrich, wrote the BYU magazine, “says the trip helped build trust, which is ‘[foundational to] find common ground in order to make compromises.’ Ultimately, Flake says, he learned—and hopes others will too—that ‘compromise isn’t a bad word, and it should be used.’”

In August of 2017 Flake, a Goldwater Republican, roiled Washington political waters with a full throated *attack* on his Republican party for facilitating the rise of Donald Trump. Trump struck back, *attacking* fellow Republican Flake as soft on the border wall and soft on crime.

Simultaneously, Heinrich’s Democrats feature their own split. Progressives led by Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren battle party leaders to control upcoming campaigns. A New York Times headline says: “*Democrats in Split-Screen: The Base Wants It All. The Party Wants to Win.*”

We think these twin splits support our view that a four-quadrant left/ right, order/freedom *matrix*, with each quadrant contributing to the result, more accurately describes current politics than a two dimensional left/right spectrum. The Flake/ Heinrich island teamwork highlights our view.

More voters today register independent than with either party. With unregistered age-eligible voters, they are more than both parties combined. Much of the political angst visible today comes from the efforts of this majority to find ways to be heard. The island lessons help point the way.

Flake and Heinrich introduced The Advancing Conservation and Education (ACE) Act, helping government land exchanges, and the Restoring America's Watersheds Act, supporting national forest watersheds. They organized a bipartisan lunch for members of Congress and their families.

Today Governors Hickenlooper (D-CO) and Kasich (R-OH) work so closely they had to deny they were forming a third party. "Loving the attention on our bipartisan work but no ulterior

motive. Not a unity ticket, just working with a new friend on hard compromises," Hickenlooper wrote.

After Affordable Care Act repeal failed, Republican Lamar Alexander and Democrat Patty Murray, Senate Health Committee leaders, announced hearings and a bill to preserve the 2010 law's insurance marketplaces. Forty-three House members, from both parties, moved to support such an effort.

Increasingly, legislators apply the Flake/Heinrich lessons of the island—reliance, collaboration, trust, compromise and friend. Increasingly lawmakers look for common ground. The Transpartisan Matrix integration offers a tool to aid the search. Everyone plays a role moving forward.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #62 • SEPTEMBER 04, 2017

## 40+ House Dems & Reps Caucus To Solve Problems

As Congress left for its August recess, its *Problem Solvers Caucus* (22Rs and 22Ds) said, "We are proud to deliver a set of bipartisan solutions to move health coverage forward so that our fellow Americans can also move ahead with restored hope in their own future and in the ability of Congress to resolve critical issues."

Returning from recess this week, the Caucus has pending, along with its health care effort, *tax reform and infrastructure*. "Addressing either issue, on a broad bipartisan basis," the caucus says, "could give a significant boost to our economy and provide Americans with confidence that government can work for them."

"Why, though," *asks No Labels*, the bipartisan citizens group vigorously supporting the Congressional Problem Solvers, "does the Caucus want to tackle tax reform and infrastructure at the same time? Because the success of the two proposals is intricately tied together."

Lower tax rates free up more capital for businesses to invest. Poor infra-structure is bad for the economy's bottom line. It costs the US nearly 1% of GDP every year (\$180 billion in 2015 alone). As long as roads, bridges and airports remain outdated, businesses lose money on investments in the American economy.

"Legislators," says No Labels, "have a lot of work to do to pass the kind of tax reform and infrastructure investment bill America needs. But the Problem Solvers Caucus has provided a rare opening for bipartisan cooperation on these two critical issues. It's time for the White House and leaders in Congress to seize the opportunity."

Other Transpartisan advocates suggest that the Caucus and the Congress consider Professor Edgar Feige's Automated Payment Transaction Tax/Fee in their tax reform, infrastructure and health

financing deliberations. It lowers taxes and raises income to government. (We have written about it [here](#), and [here](#).)

Drawing on modern-day information technologies and fully implemented, the Feige Fee massively reduces taxes and increases government income. Advocates claim that individual annual payments to the government of a \$100,000 per year income earner drop to \$100 (yes \$100) while fully funding the current budget with a \$1 billion surplus.

Congress and the Problem Solvers Caucus could help the country learn about current financing strategies by studying the technology of the information economy. Information tools generate massive sums of money for giants like Apple, Amazon, Google and Microsoft. We could learn about funding government from them and their tools.

Just as government income shifted from 19th century tariffs to 20th century income taxes, 21st century government income could shift from income taxes to transaction fees. Considering such a shift adds a transforming dimension to current partisan politics. With plenty of money, the politics shifts from debating what we can afford to discussing what works.

Let's modernize the government money discussion.

**Note:** *In the time between drafting this note and posting it, President Trump surprised the media by making a budget ceiling deal with the Congressional Democratic leadership that, apparently, also surprised, and consternated, Republican congressional leaders. This might be a toe in the water toward the bipartisan possibilities of the Problem Solvers Caucus.*



Public domain image.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #63 • SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

## Transpartisan Action: Five Presidents Address Storms' Impact

On September 7th 2017, all five living former U.S. Presidents launched the *“One America Appeal”* to Help Hurricane Victims. The appeal, initially announced to raise funds for organizations helping Hurricane Harvey victims, expanded to also help those affected by Hurricane Irma.

A special restricted account has been established through the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library Foundation to collect and quickly distribute donations to ensure that 100 cents out of every dollar goes to assist hurricane victims. Donations are tax deductible.

The presidents asked fellow citizens and friends around the world to support the staggering recovery needs from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. They came together to lend their support to affected people and communities and first responders, organizations, volunteers and neighbors who have been assisting Hurricane victims.

Harvey has already displaced more than one million people and caused an estimated \$180 billion in damages over its 300-mile path of destruction. Irma continues its path toward the

American Midwest with damage mounting daily and may yet cause losses equal to or exceeding those in Texas.

Following the announcement, President Donald Trump tweeted his endorsement of the program, saying, “We will confront ANY challenge, no matter how strong the winds or high the water. I’m proud to stand with Presidents for OneAmericaAppeal.”

The appeal debuted with the PSA “Our Friends in Texas,” broadcast during the NFL’s Thursday night regular season opening game between the Kansas City Chiefs and the New England Patriots. A *second PSA* that addresses both hurricanes was shown prominently during NFL contests Sunday afternoon.

The coming together of five former Presidents from two major parties, the sitting President, and the National Football League gives a taste of transpartisan power. As One America Appeal says on its *website*: “Hurricanes Harvey and Irma have brought terrible devastation – but also brought out the best in humanity.”

This transpartisan experience underpins America. Focused on an agreed upon problem, working together comes naturally.

It happens across the country every day. Our current political situation might be seen as an effort of the country to work toward focusing people's natural problem solving skills on political

problems and institutions. People united solve even the biggest problems.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #64 • SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

## Dick Gregory: Transpartisan Spirit

Richard Claxton (Dick) Gregory, comedian, activist, natural health advocate passed August 19, 2017. Born October 12, 1932 the standup comic earned more money in 1961 than any other standup comic—white or black—and had the number one selling humor recording in 1963. Then the civil rights movement claimed his attention and he turned to activism to express his beliefs and to strict health practices to keep up his strength. Less than a week before his passing he sent the following statement on life to various friends:

*As I approach my 85th revolution around the sun this year I wonder why has it been so difficult for humankind to be kind. So difficult to be loving and lovable. For my militant brothers and sisters, please don't misconstrue loving and lovable to be weak or submissive. Love will always be triumphant over hate. I know I will not be here forever, nor do I desire to be. I have seen progress like most cannot appreciate because they were not there to bear witness. I dedicated my life to the movement. By doing so, I never thought I'd still be here. So many of my friends are not here. They were cut down by a system of hatred and evil. If they were here, they'd see the progress that I see. The reality is far from perfect, but profoundly better than what daily*

*reality was for my generation. Young folks if you are wise you would talk less and spend more time listening to the elders who saw evil up front and personal everyday. #howlong I've been asking this question for over 40 years! How long before we realize our Universal God given potential? We have made immeasurable progress that cannot be debated. That said, we still have a long way to go. I have no desire to see this all the way through, the dreams I dreamed about 60 years ago have definitively been realized. To the young folks of all ethnicities I say #staywoke not as a catchphrase but as a lifestyle. Most of the things that are killing us are in our minds and our daily routines. The way we think, the "food" we eat and the water we drink or so often don't drink. When so many go out and protest the small evils, the big evils are ever present and welcomed into our homes. From the top to bottom of my heart I say #staywoke*

*Love you to life, Dick Gregory*

One of our regular readers, who advised Dick Gregory and befriended him forty years ago, suggested this message from Dick as a statement of a transpartisan point of view. We agree and hear a transpartisan spirit in this expression of life by Dick Gregory.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #65 • SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

## Post Columnist Says 2016 Election Not A Fluke

*Washington Post*, Pulitzer Prize-winning 'liberal' editor and columnist Eugene Robinson *wrote on Sept 18, 2017* that 'Leaders of both major parties are wrong to think of the 2016 election as some kind of fluke. I believe a political realignment is underway,' and those who cannot see it 'could end up powerless and irrelevant.'

Trump winning? 'That's not just unlikely,' Robinson says, 'it's impossible. At least it should have been, according to everything we knew—or thought we knew—about politics. . . . None of what happened should have happened.' Robinson continues:

*[I]t is a mistake to blame Clinton's character flaws, Trump's mastery of Twitter or the media's compulsion to chase every bright, shiny object. Something much bigger and deeper was going on.*

*My view is that the traditional left-to-right, progressive-to-conservative . . . political axis . . . is no longer a valid schematic of American political opinion. And I believe neither party has the foggiest idea what the new diagram looks like.*

*I don't think Trump can see the new spectrum either . . . [since] his approval ratings have plunged since his inauguration. But both he and Sanders deserve credit for seeing that the old model has outlived its usefulness.*

*Look at the issues on which Trump and Sanders were in basic agreement. Both doubted the bipartisan consensus favoring free-trade agreements, arguing they had disadvantaged U.S. workers. Both spoke of health care as a right that should be enjoyed by all citizens. Both pledged to strengthen, not weaken, entitlement programs such*

as Social Security and Medicare. Both were deeply skeptical of U.S. involvement in foreign wars, vowing to do their nation-building here at home. Both advocated mammoth, job-creating investments in infrastructure. Both contended 'the system' was rigged to favor the rich and powerful at the expense of everyone else . . .

'Leave aside for the moment the fact that Trump has not fulfilled his promises. The overlap in what he and Sanders said they would do is striking — as is the contrast between what Clinton and Trump's GOP rivals were saying.' [Read the entire column here.](#)

Robinson's opinions appear in 262 newspapers and on many major television shows. His voice, along with New York Times writer Ross Douthat's '[In Search of the American Center](#)' (NYT 6/21/17), on the non-voter ([our comments here](#)) and Post conservative Columnist Michael Gerson, who writes 'Tribalism Triumphs in America' (Post 8/18/17) [here](#) (we plan to comment), suggests media stirrings of a transpartisan sensibility.

Robinson says "neither party has the foggiest idea what the new diagram looks like." We offer the [Left/Right, Order/Freedom Transpartisan Matrix](#) as a diagram of forces, always present in political situations, now becoming more visible.

Douthat explains what happened when New America's Lee Drutman arrayed the Democracy Fund's 2016 election data on a matrix with an economics horizontal axis and a social/identity vertical axis ([our comment](#)). It revealed that over half the electorate, non-ideological Transpartisans, stayed home.

Gerson's column recognizes diversity. He identifies fellow columnist [Andrew Sullivan's, 'America Wasn't Built for Humans'](#) as setting out our current political problem—'. . . tribalism is our default value . . .'

Sullivan, Gerson says, 'urges a renewed appreciation of individuality, citing himself—a gay Catholic, conservative independent, religious secularist—as a misfit challenge to tribal conformity. As an evangelical Christian sympathetic to gay rights,' Gerson writes, 'a Republican critic of Trump and a compassionate conservative, I can relate. We need a political system that makes room for human complexity.'

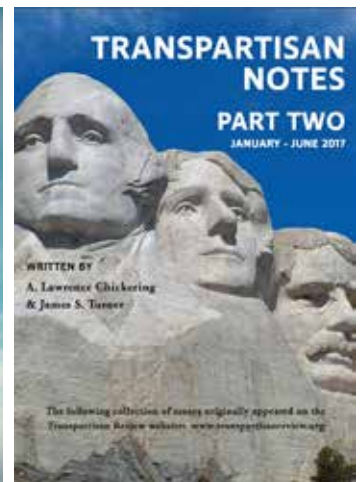
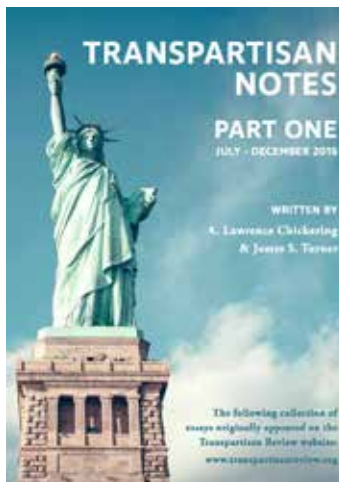
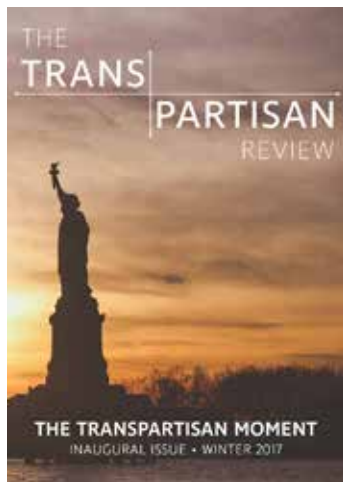
Robinson sees a left/right breakdown. Using the Matrix form, Douthat sees a departure from past elections in the absence of ideological voters (over half the electorate) in the 2016 election. We would say they are Transpartisans.

Gerson highlights the expanding recognition of complex individuality we believe drives contemporary politics and says 'Sullivan proposes a response to tribalism that is not structural but essentially spiritual.' These statements begin to sketch the transpartisan reality.

We believe The Transpartisan Matrix offers one possible diagram for charting the emerging political reality that these writers are spotlighting. Our Matrix integrates all quadrants, includes both voters and non-voters, recognizes the increasing need of people (as individuals) for self-expression while in addition (in their personal complexity) seeking community and connection, and also finally, expressing their objective wants and needs and spiritual, subjective selves.

We believe the Matrix describes the transpartisan forces that are emerging all around us. Robinson's and his media peers' insights sound to us like the first, nagging awareness of a transpartisan awakening. 'Those who fail to discern its outlines' Robinson notes, 'could end up powerless and irrelevant.'

## Other publications from the Transpartisan Review...







TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #66 • OCTOBER 02, 2017

## Trump and the NFL: The Real Issue of Race

Among all conflicts that concern transpartisans, those resulting from language alone—‘conflict’ caused by using words differently—pose the most straightforward problems to address. When people use words differently, they can appear to conflict even while saying the same thing. Today the country has such a conflict of meaning about the NFL, football players and the American flag.

The origins of the conflict seem well-known, the details less so. It began last year when Colin Kaepernick and Eric Reid knelt during the National Anthem in protest against racial injustice. Kaepernick had sat during the Anthem for three previous games with little notice. Kneeling catapulted the matter into public consciousness.

After consulting with a retired Green Beret and former NFL player, Reid proposed kneeling as a respectful statement about the flag. As Reid wrote in the *New York Times* on September 25th:

*We chose to kneel because it's a respectful gesture. I remember thinking our posture was like a flag flown at half-mast to mark a tragedy.*

*It baffles me that our protest is still being misconstrued as disrespectful to the country, flag and military personnel. We chose it*

*because it's exactly the opposite. It has always been my understanding that the brave men and women who fought and died for our country did so to ensure that we could live in a fair and free society, which includes the right to speak out in protest.*

President Trump, applying his well-known ability to rub sore spots, called the kneeling players SOB's and basked in his media coverage. In interviews individual players critical of Trump said they intended the protest to be about race and not the flag

Since 1931, when *Congress adopted* the Star Spangled Banner as the National Anthem, the flag and the Anthem celebrate the principle that all people are created equal. The flag and Anthem also honor the principle that when individual government officials fail to apply the law equally, *they* are violating the oaths they took to uphold the law. Racist actions *dishonor the flag*.

On the commitments to flag and country, all sides can advance beyond conflict by committing to a national conversation on how ‘the system’ can overcome the real challenges underlying the race issue.

We believe that racial conflict is mostly rooted in *isolation*: lack of

personal engagement. We are not talking here about 'integration' measured by objective body-counts. We are talking about *subjective* connection, which moves people beyond conflict to real

relationships based on trust and on seeing others as human.

Transpartisan action begins with human engagement.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #67 • OCTOBER 09, 2017

## The Nuclear Threat Returns

William J. Perry, U.S. Secretary of Defense (1994-1997) says 'The gravest security threat of our time is the danger of a nuclear weapon being detonated in one of our cities.' Lifelong cold warrior, Stanford emeritus Engineering professor and Hoover Institution fellow, Perry currently leads The William J. Perry Project, which he created, to work towards a world in which nuclear weapons are never used again.

Fear of nuclear weapons dates from 1949, when the USSR joined the United States as the second nuclear power, and the nuclear adversaries started threatening Doomsday. This fear was a defining element of the 1950s, with public and private bomb shelters, doomsday literature (*On the Beach*, 1957), and a narrative of terror that touched even small children.

Today's North Korean maneuvering brings back the fear. Perry's project, with speaking, writing and courses by some of the world's most credentialed security professionals, offers every citizen a chance to overcome the fear. The current course, *'The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism'*, begins October 17th. The course is offered in collaboration with Stanford Online and is FREE, no pre-requisites—anyone can take it. The previous course, *'Living at the Nuclear Brink'*, remains active until 1-1-23. We urge you to enroll in either or both courses. The project also includes a dialogue blog and a news service with articles from everywhere.

The 1962 Cuban missile crisis brought the first *live* threat of doomsday. When that threat passed, Perry thought it permanently over. Now 89, Mr. Perry spends his time warning about and seeking to diffuse the threat. He says 'I believe that the likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe is greater today than it was during the Cold War. So I've set off on a mission to educate people on how serious the problem is. Only then can we develop the policies that are appropriate for the danger we face.'

Warning about the Nuclear Threat stirs powerful transpartisan interest. Perry coauthored articles with prominent Democrats and Republicans Henry Kissinger, George Shultz, and Sam Nunn advocating abandonment of the missile leg of the Triad (missiles, bombers and submarines), which they judge most vulnerable to nuclear accidents.

The issue is about survival of the species. It obviously deserves widespread attention. Yet it is almost invisible in a debate preoccupied by trivialities. In this age of partisan conflict, is it cursed by widespread *agreement*, which the media think makes poor theater for the evening news? Big agreements make less 'news' than trivial controversies.

A transpartisan perspective on the issue should consider a possible developmental *sequence* of threats.

**First stage: Intentional aggression.** Fear of annihilation involves intentional uses of weapons and responses. In the Cuban Missile crisis everyone came to understand that no one would ever 'WIN' a nuclear war. Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) worked as a deterrent because it was insane. Nuclear aggression would become an act of suicide. Assuming the rationality of adversaries, observers including Secretary Perry concluded that the issue was behind us.

**Second stage: Mistakes.** Mistakes go beyond intention even though some mistakes can be interpreted as intentional acts. A single mistake will cause massive destruction, but without a response, the consequences will be contained.

**Third stage: The Madman.** The current conflict between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump is 'special' not because Kim's irrationality seems unique, but because Trump's rationality is so widely questioned. If Kim is thought more rational, it is because he is not assumed suicidal, while Trump, who doesn't have to fear suicide, creates vulnerability through deliberate confusion.

**Fourth stage: Where deterrence fails.** MAD only deters when the adversary is rational, known, and visible. It fails when he is irrational (and like today's terrorists open to suicide), unknown or invisible. This is the greatest fear—the invisible terrorist group getting the bomb.

This threat is no longer essentially *objective*; it is disturbed and *subjective*. We believe that an important element of it is *isolation*, and the most powerful antidote is a strategy that *connects* people. This is one of the most important themes in our transpartisan vision, and we will continue exploring it.



Composite image created from public sources.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #68 • OCTOBER 16, 2017

## When to Wage War Transcends Partisan Passion

Congressmen Walter Jones (R-NC), Thomas Massie (R-KY), Ro Khanna (D-CA) and Mark Pocan (D-WI) want to block American involvement in the civil war in Yemen—unless Congress ratifies it through amending the War Powers Act of 1973.

The [resolution](#) introduced October 11 and co-sponsored by Democrats and Republicans, follows an April 10 letter to President Trump from 55 members of Congress and an April 28 Letter from 46 house members to Speaker Paul Ryan demanding—from Democrats and Republicans—Congressional approval before ordering military action.

The letter to the President says that engaging our military in Yemen ‘without prior congressional authorization would violate the separation of powers clearly delineated in the Constitution.’ The Speaker’s letter says that before the nation commits its forces to battle, Congress must hold ‘a debate and vote on whether to authorize any future military action.’

‘The United States has been combating growing global threats with the same Authorization for the Use of Military Force

(AUMF) since 2003. With American forces engaged against ISIS in Syria, a debate in Congress about the use of force against that enemy in that theatre is long overdue,’ Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK) said.

‘The Constitution is clear: Congress has a responsibility to debate and vote on matters of war and peace. The American people deserve better than a Congress that abdicates this sacred responsibility,’ said Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA).

***H. Con. Res. 81*** – Directing the President pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution to remove United States Armed Forces from unauthorized hostilities in the Republic of Yemen, the 115th Congress (2017-2018) offers the transpartisan American majority a chance to influence events.

Whichever way the vote goes, if there is a vote, the issue will not go away. Whether the proposal passes or not, issues will remain (what action becomes a ‘war?’), to be contested in the courts, the ballot box, or informal negotiation between the Oval Office and The Hill. The war powers debate, and calls for and offers Transpartisan involvement.

Larger issues may in fact arise as the idiosyncratic maneuvers of this President, who demands action from Congress while seeming at the same time to ignore it, pushes Congress to move beyond partisan paralysis and unite to re-establish its authority behind new transpartisan cooperation.

*Michael Ostrolenk, TTR advisor and longtime Transpartisan colleague, co-authored an important article on the War Powers debate, “Congress Faces A Crucial Test On War Powers” at The Hill 10/15/17.*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #69 • OCTOBER 23, 2017

## Alternative Futures, Transpartisan Options

On October 5, 2017 *The Institute for Alternative Futures* (IAF) celebrated its fortieth anniversary of working in Washington, DC, at a daylong Symposium on ‘Foresight and Creating the Futures We Prefer’.

IAF describes its mission as ‘a leader in the creation of preferred futures’. Since its founding in 1977 by Clement Bezold, Alvin Toffler and James Dator, IAF has helped organizations monitor trends, explore future possibilities, and create the futures they prefer.’

IAF offers these possibilities using futures methodologies—environmental scans, forecasts, scenarios, visioning, and its own ‘aspirational futures’ technique—to guide government agencies, corporations, and non-profit organizations to discover alternative futures and possibilities. They offer useful tools that help see ways forward.

The Institute for Alternative Futures’ work on the future of healthcare includes perspectives from consumers, providers, payers, regulators, and industry. In its health foresight project for Congress, IAF convened staff health assistants from Congressional offices representing every political hue and exchanged important, grounded health information with them.

The process highlighted points of agreement in the contentious health debate, including covering preexisting conditions, the importance of insurance coverage, and being able to take insurance from job to job. The process teases out such issues from the complexities of a debate driven largely by partisan

politics. It begins with the agreements of diverse of people, which makes it transpartisan at its core.

IAF works in other fields, such as education, stressing lifelong learning and creating adaptive ‘learning organizations’ with its clients. It focuses on monitoring research on how individuals and groups learn, emerging technologies for learning, and future-responsive curriculum design.

At its fortieth anniversary symposium IAF demonstrated the methods it applies to non-profit, government and corporate clients like The American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Johnson and Johnson.

It traces its methods and approach to a 1933 report of the President’s Committee on Social Trends, with a forward by outgoing President Herbert Hoover, who created the Committee, and the work of Franklin D. Roosevelt brain truster Rexford Tugwell.

With transpartisan roots IAF offers tools for transpartisans saying ‘We open eyes, hearts and minds to alternative futures showing that aspiration is powerful and enduring. We . . . look over the horizon so that their decisions today are accountable to tomorrow.’

For the past forty years The Institute for Alternative Futures pointed to future directions that uplifted its colleagues, clients and collaborators. Its tools offer transpartisan choices for the next phase of American development.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #70 • OCTOBER 30, 2017

## Transpartisan Voice Joins Maven Digital Publishing

Introducing *The Transpartisan Voice!* And Maven!!

Even though we see more and more citizens from all walks of life embrace their transpartisan nature and work together to solve local problems, our national political debate remains torn by conflict and misunderstanding.

*“This need not be.”*

That is the vision of *The Transpartisan Voice*, a new venue for transpartisan news & information which we at *The Transpartisan Review*, along with our partner, education innovator Michael Strong, have the pleasure of announcing this week.

Launching November 1, 2017, on the *Maven* digital publishing platform, *The Transpartisan Voice* will create opportunities for engagement with other transpartisan community members by benefiting from the functionality of the Maven publishing platform and collecting the most notable and important transpartisan news and information.

Maven is an expert-driven, group media network, whose innovative platform serves – by invitation-only – a coalition of professional, independent channel partners.

By providing broader distribution, greater community engagement and efficient advertising & membership programs, Maven enables partners to focus on the key drivers of their business: creating, informing, sharing, discovering, leading and interacting with the communities and constituencies they serve.

For a real impact, we urge your participation! Check out The Transpartisan Voice at [www.transpartisanvoice.com](http://www.transpartisanvoice.com).

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #71 • NOVEMBER 06, 2017

## Center-Right / Center-Left – Transpartisan Americans All

Eric Levitz writes, in the New York Times November 1st, that “America is not a ‘Center-Right Nation’. In fact, on economic policy, America is a center-left nation.” He points to certain facts:

- The vast majority of the American electorate has no ideology, whatsoever.
- When polled on discrete policy questions, Americans consistently express majoritarian support for a left-of-center economic agenda.
- Over the past eight years, Democrats lost control of more than 1,000 state legislative seats, the House, the Senate and the presidency.

Mr. Levitz cites two books published more than fifty years apart arguing that Americans have no ideology:

- Political scientist Philip Converse’s classic 1964 essay “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,” demonstrated that only 17 percent of American voters could both correctly assign the terms “liberal” and “conservative” to the nation’s two major political parties and offer a sensible description of what those terms meant.
- Political scientists Donald Kinder and Nathan Kalmoe’s 2017 book “Neither Liberal Nor Conservative: Ideological Innocence in the American Public,” shows that the electorate is scarcely more ideological today, at the peak of partisan polarization, than it was at the height of the New Deal consensus (when Mr. Converse published his landmark study).

Mr. Levitz summarizes his point saying, “Or as Mr. Kinder and Mr. Kalmoe conclude an analysis of four decades of voter survey data, ‘ideological identification seems more a reflection of political decisions than a cause.’ In other words: The average conservative Republican isn’t a Republican because she’s a

conservative — she self-identifies as a conservative because she’s a Republican.”

“One crucial implication of this finding,” Mr. Levitz says, “is that political elites have enormous power to dictate ideological terms to their rank-and-file supporters. For a healthy chunk of conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats, the ‘liberal’ and ‘conservative’ position on most issues is whatever their party leaders say it is.”

The nearly seventy percent of the public that distances itself from the two major parties—we call them transpartisan— resist being dictated to and look to sources other than political elites for the value terms of their political choices. Ordinary voters, Mr. Levitz says, select the party that appears “to best represent their people, a group they might define with reference to class, region, religion, race or partisanship itself.”

“This make intuitive sense,” he says, “The left-to-right political spectrum is a construct born of seating arrangements during the French Revolution. The impulse to define oneself in relation to an in-group — and opposition to an out-group — is a survival strategy that’s been with us since the dawn of our species.”

The vast majority of Americans avoid locking themselves into the left (dispatch the king)/right (save the king) seating chart of the 1789 French National Assembly. They are transpartisan.

Changing the subtitle of the Kinder/Kalmoe book makes the point. “Neither Liberal Nor Conservative” calls current voting behavior the “Ideological *Innocence* in the American Public.”

In fact current voting behavior might demonstrate the ideological *Sophistication* of the American public. It is possible that transpartisan Americans know their politics. “Ideological” parties may miss the point.

We are all left. We are all right. We are all Transpartisan.



Photo: Homeless by Matthew Woitunski CC BY 3.0

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #72 • NOVEMBER 13, 2017

## Does Anyone Care About the Poor?

Long ago—decades, in fact—the subject of the very poor played a prominent role in our intellectual and political debate. It was in the late sixties and early seventies, when the government first started *measuring economic poverty*. The objective was to reduce the numbers who were poor.

Now, fifty years later, despite massive money spent, it is hard to see very much *accomplished*.

The same is true of other forms of social dysfunction—alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence and so on. Billions spent; little to show for it. Worse than that, it is hard to find evidence that anyone effectively cares. There is only the eerie sense that all anyone can think about is that we keep spending the money, maintaining the *theater* of caring.

The subject here is the *most difficult population*: people at the economic bottom in a society that values monetary achievement—the demoralized poor, people without hope. Forty years ago books like *Tally's Corner* and *The Children of Sanchez* recorded their struggles.

J.D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* is perhaps the best example today.

Very much worth the read. Among current political leaders only Bernie Sanders has raised the issue, but in a form that fails to effectively address it. As hard as he tries his campaign about economic inequality and against the 'one percent' seems more like artifacts of the old left's mainstream playbook than a serious attempt to bring new insights and new tools to bear on the issue.

Progressives want to increase taxes on the rich to slightly reduce inequality. Conservatives want to cut corporate taxes and on the rich to slightly increase opportunity and growth. So they fight. Neither has a program for—or any practical interest in—the really poor. Or how addressing the really poor addresses all our social assumptions.

These traditional left/right positions all focus on *objective* issues, which touch people only as objective victims. The reality here, and in most of our pressing issues, concerns people *as subjects*. How might a serious debate arise about how, in addition to more money, to ease, if not eliminate, the pain of people who are at the economic bottom in a society that, above all, values financial achievement and success as ours does? How can we

reimage the drive to 'get ahead' and be 'winners' so that it does not force others to be 'losers' and live in shame?

Both left and right avoid serious answers on the subjective plight of the demoralized poor. Are there Transpartisan approaches that deserve attention for people who really do care about the issue?

There is a *better question*. There are many 'extraordinary' programs serving the most difficult populations that are producing powerful results. We have often written about them. What works is out there. The better question is *why people in power, both left and right, show little ability to learn from these existing programs?*

In our lead article in *TTR (Vol I, No. 2 p. 26)* we mentioned

five programs addressing the plight of the poor, working on different issues in all global regions. One key to the success of these programs is *personal engagement among people empowered by shared ownership of public spaces*.

How can governments far from people help promote the personal, even intimate, contact and connections that are crucial to relieve the pain felt by people who live in the misery born from isolation? How can a political system obsessed by *how money is spent* shed light on this tragedy? When will our leaders start to learn from the experiences of others that have found newer means?

Across the country and around the world people working together outside partisan divides point the way.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #73 • NOVEMBER 20, 2017

## Peace Drums USA: Jewish and Arab Youth in Israel Make Music and Peace

*Here is part of what our Transpartisan colleague Raquel Lazar-Paley reports on Jewish and Arab youth drumming for peace together. Find the full article on the [Transpartisan Voice](#).*

"A group of 15 Jewish and Arab youth from Northern Israel recently had a unique opportunity to be the first musicians in the world to perform on steelpans at Vienna's Musikverein, one of the most prestigious concert halls in the world. The concert was part of Austria's 500th anniversary celebration of the Lutheran Reformation.

"The young pannists are participants in 'The Peace Drums Project,' a unique interfaith initiative that promotes peace between Arab and Jewish youth in Israel/Palestine by introducing reconciliation and harmony through the shared activity of a dynamic steel drum band.

"The Peace Drums Project was founded by clergy of the Delaware Churches for Middle East Peace and four Delaware rabbis from the Orthodox, Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist Jewish denominations, who met in 2011 to exchange views regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and explore how they might collaborate to promote peace in their shared Holy Land.

"Their vision was to develop a peace-making project involving Israeli and Palestinian youth, and they enthusiastically adopted a model created by University of Delaware Associate Professor of Percussion Harvey Price.

"The Peace Drums Project directly addresses a major problem facing all youth in Israel and Palestine – their futures stand to be drastically altered by the Arab-Israeli conflict but they are excluded from the political process and from most aspects of peacebuilding.

"This is a crucial time for them – they are at an age where they are beginning to see outside the confines of their families and their schools. For many, it is the first time they ask themselves: 'What kind of person do I want to be?' and 'What kind of place do I want the world to be?'

...

"The Peace Drums Project teaches them to make positive choices that integrate non-violent community-building into their daily lives, and has led to more than one close friendship between the Jewish and Arab participants and their families.

"In a country where divisions are highly publicized, Harvey Price has created a program that provides an excellent opportunity to show these kids a better path, and to display to the international community a successful example of Arab-Jewish collaboration."

*To learn more, read the [entire article](#) on the [Transpartisan Voice](#) and visit the [Peace Drums website](#) at [www.peacedrumsproject.org](http://www.peacedrumsproject.org).*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #74 • NOVEMBER 27, 2017

## Race, Sex & Power: Transpartisan Canvas?

*Strom Thurmond, US Senator (R-South Carolina), 1954/2003:*

Arguably the most successful public racial segregationist American politician of the 20th century, Strom Thurmond made his signature move to prominence in 1948. That year he joined the walkout of delegates from the Democratic Party convention in Philadelphia protesting the party's civil rights platform. He then accepted the nomination for President of the Southern segregationist States' Rights ("Dixiecrat") Party.

That year Essie Mae Washington-Williams, Thurmond's biracial daughter, turned 23 and Carrie Butler, her mother, and former maid in Thurmond's home, died at age 40. Mrs. Washington-Williams married lawyer and NAACP member Julius T. Williams in 1949, raised four children, got a University of Southern California Master's degree, spent 30+ years as a schoolteacher and administrator in Los Angeles, and got an honorary PhD from South Carolina State University in 2005. That same year she published a memoir, *Dear Senator: A Memoir by the Daughter of Strom Thurmond*, written with William Stadium, that was nominated for both a [National Book Award](#) and a [Pulitzer Prize](#).

In February 2015, two years after her mother died at 87, Mrs. Washington-Williams's daughter, Monica Williams-Hudgens, spoke of her mixed race heritage to a Winthrop University audience in Rock Hall South Carolina—the state Strom Thurmond represented in the US Senate for 48 years.

The Rock Hall South Carolina Herald reported Williams-Hudgens's speech and an accompanying interview saying in part:

*'Anger is unproductive,' Williams-Hudgens said. 'I may not like what happened to me. I don't even have to accept certain things that*

*happened to me. But I don't want anger to cause me to be a person I don't want to be. I believe in going out into the world and doing good'...*

*When Williams-Hudgens later visited Thurmond's archives, she was surprised to see he'd kept every letter her mother sent him, and kept a copy of every reply he sent her. 'He never threw anything away,' she said. 'If he wanted to keep us a secret, he would have burned all that stuff'...*

*Asked if the school's Thurmond Building should be renamed, Williams-Hudgens said 'Yes, I'd like it to be called the Strom Thurmond-Essie Mae Washington-Williams Institute. ...I didn't really feel one way or another about him,' she said, 'but I knew my mother knew things about him that we didn't know, and she respected him as a person.'*

At a time when current headlines spotlight battles over Confederate State symbols and the sexual consequences of the power imbalance between men and women, Essie Mae Washington-Williams' family story highlights the intertwining of important strands of America's complicated journey.

Monica Williams-Hudgens embracing of her family's story offers one positive way to approach powerful divides. In 2004, the South Carolina State Legislature altered the official Strom Thurmond state monument, which listed the Senator's children, to include his daughter Essie Mae Washington-Williams.

*Read the entire February 2015 article, "[Granddaughter: Strom Thurmond Saved Correspondence with His Bi-racial Daughter](#)," by Bristow Marchant on the Rock Hall South Carolina Herald website. It is worth reading. You can order the "Dear Senator" memoir [here](#).*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #75 • DECEMBER 04, 2017

## The Centrist Project's Report On The 2018 Election

[Centrist Project](#) executive director Nick Troiano, reports that "Election Day 2017 reminded us of the old adage, 'all politics is local.' Independents were elected against major-party candidates in municipal races across the country, foreshadowing what may come in 2018."

In Colorado, he says, the [Centrist Project](#) successfully supported Thornton City Councilman Sam Nizam's reelection in a three-way race against a Democrat and a Republican. Nizam

told Colorado Politics, "Thanks in large part to the infrastructure and resources the Centrist Project provided, I can continue to serve my constituents free from the constraints of partisan politics."

The group also celebrated Ben Walsh as the new, independent Mayor of Syracuse, NY. His win is receiving national coverage as a blueprint for independent candidates to win against the major parties. Troiano told the Wall Street Journal, "Ben's win will encourage more independents to run because they will see that



it's possible." Troiano says "We are heading into 2018 with real confidence that independents can and will win major races across the country."

Troiano also reported:

- That former Congressman Brian Baird (D) and former GOP chair and state legislator Chris Vance launched Washington Independents the Centrist Project Washington state partner.
- Former Republican Congressman and MSNBC anchor Joe Scarborough saying about the 2018 election "The only way to escape [this] cycle is to break apart the hyperpartisan two-party duopoly that has kept Washington too divided, too dysfunctional and too directionless for too long."
- Leon Panetta, former Democratic congressman and Defense Secretary: "The budget process has not only collapsed, Congress is totally ignoring any semblance of fiscal discipline." Troiano says his Project's idea of 2-3 fiscally responsible independents who could slam the brakes in the U.S. Senate, where both parties seem unable to control deficits, sounds pretty good right about now.

- Vox breaks down some interesting new political science that shows: "Most voters aren't ideologues, and even accounting for that, most ideologues aren't particularly ideological." Those of us who, Triano deadpans, put ideology before party? Well, apparently, we're the weird ones.

The Centrist Project is one of many nodes in the emerging Transpartisan impulse network cropping up across the nation. It also includes other groups such as *No Labels, All Sides, The Mediators Foundation* and others of the more than 80 member Bridge Alliance working individually and together to transform the political terrain.

Individuals across the country, at every point on the political spectrum and around the political matrix create these and many other efforts—both inside and outside the organized political parties—to give voice to the roughly 70% of age eligible American voters dissatisfied with the direction of our country (Gallup) and the 57% that believe we need an alternative voice to both major political parties (Gallup).

*The transpartisan voice for more effective politics grows.*

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #76 • DECEMBER 11, 2017

## Gerrymandering: Michigan Citizens Launch Grassroots Challenge

Katie Fahey, dreading 2017 Thanksgiving with her Trump supporting Michigan family, prepared for the day by starting a Facebook political movement to challenge gerrymandering in Michigan. She told her story on [public radio](#) (at 08:30:47 of the recording) which featured a civil discourse discussion with examples of how folks from different political persuasions find ways to work together.

Katie's biggest surprise happened when her family joined her to take on Michigan gerrymandering. She found that when partisans focused on a nonpartisan solution they could talk again. Feeling that divisiveness in politics had reached a critical point following the 2016 election she started her group [Count MI Vote](#). She wants you to join her.

Count MI Vote has launched a group, Voters, Not Politicians, and a ballot initiative to create an Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) to be in charge of the Michigan redistricting process. The proposed Commission follows guidelines established in California and six other states. Arizona, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Hawaii and New Jersey, have forms of independent districting commissions.

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg collaborated

politically and financially to pass the California initiative. Read our note about their effort here. They also vowed to support gerrymandering reform efforts as they moved across the country.

In 2012, 71% of California voters supported that states Commission-created California Senate district maps when opponents sought to reject them by referendum. In June 2015, the United States Supreme Court upheld an Arizona initiative and ruled that independent redistricting commissions were permitted under the U.S. Constitution. Story [here](#).

The Michigan commission championed by Katie Fahey will be made up of 4 Democrats, 4 Republicans and 5 Independents with representation from across the state and no political insiders. Read more about the Commission selection process [here](#). Follow the referendum campaign [here](#).

Katie say, "The people of Michigan have been locked out of effective change-making opportunities, but we have the power, energy, and drive to create a solution that ends gerrymandering and reinvigorates the very spirit of our democracy."

Win, lose or draw now, Count MI Vote exemplifies local actions across the country that bridge partisan divides and reshape future politics. We call these actions Transpartisan.



Photo: National Archives / Wikimedia Commons.

TRANSPARTISAN NOTE #77 • DECEMBER 18, 2017

## Personal Engagement: Reagan Then, Us Now

We have often written about how personal engagement provides the path to transpartisan collaboration in all major political venues. It is true in state and national policy-making as well as in local, self-governing organizations such as schools and housing projects.

In reviewing celebrated, successful social service organizations serving the most 'difficult' populations, all operate around the same principle. All promote shared 'ownership' of public spaces, which engages even diverse populations to engage each other in common purpose.

Although personal engagement is widely understood to be essential to a positive, productive political environment, it is all but *invisible* in the current political debate. The current debate sees every issue as a mechanistic challenge. Governments work in 'the magic business' of producing different visions of 'machines'. Our politics argues about giant anti-personal, mechanistic system governments of markets that will solve everything. All, public government agencies and private corporate business, lack any subjective personal engagement.

It was not always this way. Ronald Reagan, both as Governor of California (1967-1975) and as President facing legislatures controlled by Democrats, understood that progress would depend on promoting *joint action*, with *credit shared by both parties*. As Governor, Reagan and House Speaker Bob Moretti planned the major reforms of both the state's public medical program and its welfare system. When they passed with strong bi-partisan support, Reagan and Moretti stood together on the steps of the state capitol and held their joined hands in the air in celebration.

An anecdote from that period reveals the *spirit of trust* that made this collaboration possible. In negotiations on the MediCal reform, Moretti and Health Secretary Earl Bryan were struggling on a single, final issue that seemed beyond agreement two dollar co-pay for every doctor visit. After endless hours of talking, Moretti came up with a solution. He proposed that he and Bryan engage in an arm-wrestling context, and the winner could decide the unresolved issue. (Moretti was confident he would win because he was a fitness buff, and Bryan seemed out of shape. What he didn't know was that Bryan was an accomplished tennis

player. Bryan won, and the Republicans got their way on that issue. But everyone shared in the glory of overall major reform.

As President, Reagan worked out the great tax reform bills (in 1981 and 1986) in active cooperation with Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the House. Reagan could never have accomplished these major tax reforms without active Democratic support.

What happened then? A symbol of the parties' movement apart was that Republicans started taking all the credit for the 'Reagan tax revolution' and reforms that were NOT a success of Reagan and Republicans alone. They were TRANSPARTISAN actions supported by both parties. By the end of Reagan's second term, the two parties were at war over Iran-Contra and other

issues. When Bill Clinton won the Presidential election in 1992, Newt Gingrich swept the mid-term Congressional elections with his Contract with America, and a war was raging.

Personal contact played an important role in Reagan's successes working with Democrats, who controlled legislatures most of Reagan's years in office. Major political, technological, and social changes fueled the loss of contact. We will review in future Notes the story of these influences, including active support from both political leaders and the mass media, which live off of conflict while pretending to abhor it. Understanding how the spirit of cooperation and trust was lost is important to find a path toward a more cooperative politics.

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