

Newsletter 49 Am I “woke? Are you?” September 1, 2026

The upcoming midterms are as critical or more so than any in the past at least that I can recall. Why is that? For two reasons---the gap to be bridged between the extremes of both parties who will have been very instrumental in determining the nominated candidates---and, while the cost of living which is at or near the top voter issue is a concern, there are so many other issues that over the first two years of the Trump administration have lowered our rating as the leader of the free world, to the point where we are no longer envied nor trusted.

Up until now, it seems that we had always managed to rise above our shortcomings, e.g. high levels of wealth inequality, limited access to health care, limited access to affordable housing, and high rate of gun deaths---and still maintain the respect of the world based on the strength of our military and economy, our universities and other research institutions, our welcome and treatment of immigrants, our humanitarian aid, and our reputation for leading the salvation of the western democracies in World War II. Trump, however, has managed to trip us over the edge with his Tariffs, the Iran war with its depletion of our missile inventory to the point that today we couldn't convincingly win a war on any of the fronts---western Europe, the middle east, China/Taiwan---waning support for South Korea---denigration of NATO---lack of support for Ukraine---are the Baltics next?---depletion of our scientific research capabilities---diminishing USAID, detention and deportation of immigrants without due process---attacks on the sovereignty of Greenland---robbing funds from, for example the department of the Interior parks and forest, to pay for the gilding of

Washington. ---and now a trade war with our closest friend and ally, the dumbest trade war in history according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

And so, since the current Congress does not have the courage to impeach or in most cases even oppose Trump, we now have no other good choice than voting his loyal supporters out of Congress.

Cost of living still appears to be the top priority among voters in general, simply because the Democrats let it be. I don't see the Republican party building any believable platform aimed at lowering the costs. While there isn't a great deal that can be done about reducing the cost of living in the short term, the actions related to cost of living that Republican officials support are actually raising the cost of living, i.e. the tariffs and the Iran war. But the Democrats offer no compelling positive platform for reducing living costs in the short run either. Right now, it's pretty much a stalemate and likely to remain so right up until midterms.

That aside, speaking as a registered Independent, it seems to me that many, if not most, Independents, Democrats, Republicans, and unaffiliateds are more alike on the issues than the party committees would have us believe. The platform of the Democratic party boils down to opposing anything that Trump represents---the platform of the Republican party opposes anything "woke" that it claims defines the Democrats. Neither platform is very compelling nor inspirational.

"Woke" hmm! I, like many of us, hate the term because from the day it was introduced to our daily political discussions, it has been significantly misinterpreted. The definition is "aware of and actively attentive to important facts and issues (especially issues of racial and social Justice)." Recently it is interpreted to also have an alertness to gender and LGBTQ issues.

When I ask my Trump supporting friends for their reasons for supporting him, disdain for the woke is paramount and the first issue they address is transgender women.

Sure, most liberals seem to be generally in favor of equal rights for transgender women, but most of them also oppose transgender female athletes participating in strength related women's competition and using bathrooms designated for women. Plenty of conservatives are also in favor of equal rights for transgenders, but with the same exceptions. Who's woke? Shouldn't we all be "woke" ---aware of these issues---not necessarily taking either or neither side.

Of course, the transgender women issue is very important for those involved, but hardly of significant universal concern across the entire population when compared with, for example, our defense capabilities.

Other woke related issues that concern the Republican party, but shouldn't, are some of the extremes promoted by Democratic Socialists--- "defund the police" now pretty much walked back by these previous proponents, and Medicare for all, itself financially impossible, misused as a label for any future universal healthcare plan that we all need. Then, there are the nuisance woke items, for example the pronoun issue that really has little effect on the standard of living for any of us.

On the other side, the previously mentioned issues that concern most, if not all, of us, liberals and conservatives alike, can all be reversed simply by voting out any Republican Senators or Representatives who have demonstrated a history of voting solely based on loyalty to Trump in lieu of their own conscience and traditional Republican ideology.

Obviously, all voters should continue to address cost of living, if not for themselves, at least for those who can't put bread on the table or pay

their health care and energy bills and/or are forced to dip into their savings. But, again, these aren't automatically resolved regardless of who controls Congress. There are no simple answer to these, whereas the above non-cost of living items, will be headed toward resolution when the Democrats take control.

As we campaign or talk with others about the elections and eventually go into go into the booth, we can't say, "I don't like Trump, but he'll be gone in two years." He won't be gone unless his power is eroded for the rest of his term. A vote for most of the Republican Senators or Representatives is a vote for everything Trump supports, merciless treatment of immigrants, hours and dollars applied gilding the capital as a monument to himself, further depleting our missile inventory in the Iran war, and unhinged restitution against all who oppose or have opposed him.

There's a significant chance that a Republican can still win in 2028 and will not, or in many cases cannot, undo much of the then unresolved damage. In that case our neighbors, tradespersons, local factory workers, farmers, and nursing home caregivers will still be subject to ICE roaming their streets and taking action historically unheard of in conventional American town and city policing. Their misconduct will not be accounted for, e.g., those who shot Renee Good and Alex Pretti still will not be investigated.

We will still not receive an explanation for \$50,000 that Tom Homan received.

The victims in the Epstein scandals will remain exposed but a great many of those involved as recipients of Epstein's largesse or colleagues with knowledge of his trafficking endeavors will not be exposed.

The tech powers will continue to build data centers in our back yard non-stop without consulting us.

Where is the “consent of the governed” about which Thomas Jefferson wrote? Unfortunately, we can’t all get to Trump as big money can, or to the Supreme Court to address our grievances as Trump can. We can’t impeach Trump now because the required consent of two thirds of the Senate is out of reach. Our only recourse is to vote his supporters out of office in the upcoming midterms and take control of one or both houses of Congress.

And this can be accomplished if those 35% of us who traditionally don’t vote will get off the sidelines and into the booth, and those of the 65% who do vote, but are undecided, be they Independents, unaffiliateds, or unhappy Republicans, vote for the Democrats--- as indicated above, we will end up with most of what we want without supporting the sycophants in Congress who back a corrupt administration and a President devoid of character. We will be doing our part to rebuild the American image in the eyes of the world.

In closing, a reminder from deputy editor Robert Guest in *The Economist*: Many in Trumpworld see immigrants as a threat to American culture. This is exactly backwards. The essence of American culture is dynamism and creativity, fed by a steady influx of newcomers with fresh perspectives and a mighty yearning to improve their lives. Mr Trump’s vision of a fortress America is profoundly unAmerican.

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