

What are internal America's problems?

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You get acquainted with 100 problems of America in this report has carried off in below References (B) , these problems show us that America has gone out from current of spirituality and social usefulness science , and in this present time , it needs to internal and all criterion reforms and these problems will not be dissolved by the way of external policies , therefore , the most of these problems have concluded consequence of internal and social behaviors and also every reflections of external policies it is null and void , perhaps increase of exists problems doubtless, anyway , this report is a speech benevolently from whom is LongLife Learning(LL) , interdisciplinary experts and professional in framework of usefulness science .

A. 100 Problems with America:

1. Old- fashioned in education, in ethics, in religion, in social systems ...
2. the most emigrations that caused to decrease spiritual values of activities
3. No Respect for the Rest of the World
4. Collapsing of national resolution by the way of sex fun and fun houses
5. Drugs: Heroin, LSD, Coke, acid, marijuana, guns, bombs, muzzles, etc.
6. Yet 88,000 people die yearly from drinking alcohol
7. 480,000 die yearly smoking cigarettes

8. There are many gaps between riches and poor and it made the vertical society in America
9. There are false data and deficit of information's truth interpreters about these matters
10. Robots were appeased instead of face to face logical negotiations and were neglected the customizations and employerization for well-being relation between works, economy, and producing of wealth.
11. People with no insurance justly
12. The media is a huge problem in this country
13. Woman has no talents or anything notable to be famous for, but she will do ANYTHING for money & fame, then they will publicize her sex life, boob jobs, ass jobs.
14. a lot of gaming – houses that students be detained from truth education.
15. Bullying actions in almost actions instead human-greatness
16. Bullying makes kids skip school, on average over 10 percent of victims have skipped school specifically to avoid being bullied, over 160,000 students per year.
17. I get that terrorism is a HUGE problem; they're just destroying our Earth slowly and slowly. (America must not support of terrorists in the world)
18. No Respect for Those Older Than Us.
19. Corruption: Corruption and a stupid political agenda will be the end of the US.
20. Anti-Patriotism: Patriotism is blind mob mentality ignorance. Why is anti-patriotism a bad thing
21. Rape: They sexually abuse our children

22. Gay Rights: Ten percent of the population is gay; Most of them say that it ruins families.( America should protect their families from sprinkle)
23. This is a "free" country. Unfortunately, not only do they want gay marriage banned, but also immigration, Halloween, etc.
24. Violence; Violence is the reason that people are afraid to walk amongst the streets that they call home.
25. Bad Music: Not knowing us really just protecting ourselves, WE ENTERTAINERS, of course this it's affecting our sales.
26. Obesity- so much fat as illness: Insanity Obesity, food abuse while being inactivity is very critical in American health, Sports are dying off and more people should participate in them.
27. School Bullies: Kids become to terrified to come to school and I think there should be an end put to it People have bullied for years and I say its I hate bullies they just try to tear you down – hope lady on A big problem for the youth of America.
28. Racism: Racism is terrible it hurts us and puts the people in a bad position
29. Destroying the Environment: Cutting down all these trees to build houses and other things is doing nothing but lowering air and oxygen pollution!
30. Murder: More than 30 people are murdered in the U.S. everyday which leads up to thousands each year.
31. Taxes: No more taxes who cares about them
32. Primary heavy industry: dirty, unskilled" labor
33. The several problems of education and training
34. lack of distributive – justice
35. Interest rate on the U.S. Credit Card

36. Some inequalities existed for positive reasons (property and wealth, for example), but took great care to point out the fair opportunity of all citizens to gain such things, if wanted.

37. Always Upward: Tocqueville found even the poorest citizens actively and ardently engaged in a quest for a better life. And though they may have been removed from the top of the pyramid by several degrees of wealth and power, they didn't seem to consider themselves as made of lesser stuff. In the national mind, there was no such thing as "not rich" without the optimistic caveat of "not rich yet".

38. Making of Real Enmity instead real friendship

39. POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: The classic problem with democracy is the asymmetry between the privileges afforded and the "infinity of details" that overwhelm the mind of the average citizen. There are simply too many moving parts for us to do them remote justice.

40. Backlashing of social tranquility instead to quiet it

41. CIVIC UNITY: Building on the previous point, Tocqueville noted a certain genius in how Americans went about associating together locally — both in political and social contexts.

42. Being decreased of PERSONAL ETHICS in America

43. Making walls instead friendly relations with other nations

44. The Missing Ingredient and dearth of effective activity

45. The DNA of "Americanism" no other nations

46. Is that possible? America's future hangs on it (in this trend)

47. The biggest problem the US faces right now must be that the US seems to be less and less able to address its problems. Whatever you think the most important problems are, the US government seems to be hamstrung in solving them

48.Obamacare (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act): along with numerous other reforms, created an individual mandate which requires everyone to get Health Insurance.

49. High unemployment

50.Terrorism in America: Terrorists and criminals will continue to be able to obtain

51.The context of immigration policy not suitable for America

52. A national ID card system would not solve the problem that is inspiring it.

53. An ID card system will lead to a slippery slope of surveillance and monitoring of citizens.

54. High Lavishment in America (from companies' stores to houses stores)

55.Bad Consumerism and harm foods and drinks

56. A national ID card system would require creation of a database of all Americans only

57. ID cards would function as "internal passports" that monitor citizens' movements only

58. ID cards would foster new forms of discrimination and harassment

59.The statistics and data are false: The statistics are as astounding as they are ignored

60. Depending on how you count, gun violence in America kills hundreds or thousands of times more people than extremist attacks on U.S. soil.

61. When you look at polls of the top 10 fears of the American people

62.“Are we focused on the right bad guys?

63.“Our theory of the case is the bad guys are out there, trying to come here. ... How are we going to deal with that? We're going to find them and fix them, in a military sense, abroad.

64. Oldness of American's law and making of improvement its law necessity

65. Nationality fanatically

66. External indebted nearly 20 trillion USD

67. The fundamental problems are four interconnected issues combining to threaten a breakdown of effective democratic government in the United States

68. The lack of a national identity from bad democracy in America

69. In other areas of American life, remain debated. Explanations offered include the growth of television and then of the Internet, replacing face-to-face communication and the growth of many narrowly partisan TV channels at the expense of a few broad-public channels.

70. There are many reasons hold germs of truth

71. There are increasing restrictions on the right to vote

72. A third contributor to the growing breakdown of democracy is our growing gap between rich and poor. Among our most cherished core values is our belief that the United States is a "land of opportunity" and that we uniquely offer to our citizens the potential for rising from "rags to riches" provided that citizens have the necessary ability and work hard

73. that is bad for our economy, because it means that we are failing to develop a large fraction of our intellectual capital. It is also bad for our political stability, because poor parents who correctly perceive that their children are not being given the opportunity to succeed may express their resulting frustration in violence.

74. All those facts raise a paradox in America

75. The economic problems that America faces are fairly clear, but all the possible solutions are unpalatable.

76. America at international confidence edge

77. The National Debt.

78. Unjustly Taxes.
79. Social Security not enough
80. Pension Funds not enough
81. Medicare not enough
82. War instead Defense.
83. There isn't the same speaking and empathy in America
84. Coming into existence the difference cultures in America and having diversity of opinions parallaxes
85. America as country is in a bad captured in several affairs
86. The tops of American having worries of themselves future
87. The Republican Party and the Democratic Party, each one rival together for itself advantages, not exaltation of America, any discrepancy of parties in any country be altered for selecting of the best objectives even targets, indeed, verily that blue ocean is settling instead the red (bloody) ocean in global markets, the unity of parties in the country, removing of contrarities and paradoxes.
87. Dissatisfaction whit government
88. Increasing of Poverty and rising of slaves
89. The danger international security from America
90. guns/gun control
91. Increasing of nation's worry in America
92. crime/violence
93. The danger of Dahesh for America
94. And although the same is better than getting worse, it shows Americans aren't expecting many improvements.

95. Increasing of social expenditures, because it getting of quarrel between races in America
96. Neglect of truly living and contenting of crust of life
97. Increasing of flatter- psychology instead win- psychology
98. Being weakened basis and advantages of religion in America
99. Being weakened rules of reciprocal rights in America
100. America is being unable to do , from showing the right way in the world

## B. References

Top 10 Problems with America

[www.thetoptens.com/problems-with-america/](http://www.thetoptens.com/problems-with-america/)

Wow, where to start? **Drugs, violence, corruption, war, the Jonas brothers, education system**, my fellow Americans, we're in a pretty crappy spot :( What is our biggest issue today, and what can we do to solve it? We have a thousand issues, so I wanna see a thousand issues on here too!

### 1. No Respect for the Rest of the World

**This is very true about Americans.** Every other country except for themselves is portrayed negatively and incorrectly in their films and T.V. showsM+79

I agree. [Germany](#), for examples, still depicted as the villains of most shows, or even Vietnam. - TheRegular1227

Ya, we're some pretty arrogant a\*\*holes aren't we?

Within the last few years, no one had internet. No one could reach, out if they could. Now we are everywhere, we can talk too many, at one time. People do not have respect here in America, how can they have respect to anyone else? Have you ever read an old social studies book 20 30' eras? Things are passed down through generations, not just recipes, they pass down bias and hate, so each person teaches there generation the hate, If you was to ask why they probably would not know. (It



was passed down). My husband and I, have an orphanage in Africa, we run it with my daughter Olivia. The love those people give, amazing. We have stop spreading hate and bias stuff about people, people of different color. Sometimes I can still see the lynch mobs, the ones that gathered a criminal in middle of the square and hung him there. How some people are treated, how fast they can go from sweet to evil in one sentence. That was not that long ago, but it happened. Have we only progressed in technology? ...more

## The world is evil

### 2. The Education System

If the people were educated properly, with a full unfiltered understanding of history, with no bias-ism, over half of these problems would diminish and there would be such a thing again as 'common sense'.

Ok, I'm gonna go on a full out rant on this. First of all, education has really gone down in our country. And yes, if you look at my profile, I live in Massachusetts. But, now you're probably thinking "Massachusetts has an awesome education system! “ But, my school, not so much. In my English class (ELA) we didn't do much work. We ate food, threw the food, played on our tablets, and some got pretty bullied. The reason it was that bad was because the teacher was too nice. His punishment for students misbehaving was banishing them to the hallway! And plus, we took quizzes and tests, and never got many back. Since I'm out of that school and going to middle school, I'm missing 7-8 quizzes AND tests that I was supposed to get back! In science, we didn't do much either. We read the chapter, and then did a worksheet nobody really finished. Why? BECAUSE STUDENTS WOULD FOOL AROUND AND BE DUMB. Then, there's Social Studies class (Geography or History). We would learn political and ...more - kaitlynrad11M+6

Although we may touch on it, Americans don't really learn about other cultures at all, even rarer in a positive way. This is the main spark to the racism, and the lack of respect that the States uphold due to lack of and false information.M+60

## Education system should be creative

### 3. Drugs

Drugs are taking over our country

Okay for starters I will agree drugs can be harmful to you such as Heroin, LSD, Coke, acid, etc..... But if you think for one minute the marijuana is like any of these drugs then you need to get your facts straight. There are so many people out there that bash marijuana because it's a drug, yet it's used in hospitals and it helps people. Yet 88,000 people die yearly from drinking alcohol, 480,000 die yearly smoking cigarettes. No one has ever overdosed on cannabis, and if there is any deaths from marijuana its obviously won't be anywhere near those numbers. So they legalize cancer, and poison but are having difficulties legalizing medical marijuana? My theory on why they won't legalize it is simple. They have to control the population so they have to have alcohol and cancer to kill us off so we don't overpopulate, which I guess I can't blame them because if we overpopulated there would be fewer jobs and so on. So I get why that's all illegal because it's at your own risk, it's your ...more

It is due to drugs that today we are facing these problems such as: negligence (a father, who drinks never, looks after his family we'll. Also, a student who takes drugs has high chances of failing than a student who does not.

**Drugs are no different here than anywhere else, the difference is America has enough money to buy drugs**

4. Vote of Barack Obama Barack Hussein Obama II is the 44th president of the United States of America. He was elected in 2008 after serving in the Senate from 2005-08, beating John McCain and becoming the first African-American to be elected President of the United States. He was elected again in 2012, beating Mitt Romney.

Obama is being blamed for Bush's screw ups!

**Actually, it's not Obama. We just have a very corrupt congress. A lot of people think that the President has all the power and can do whatever he wants. That's not true.** The President actually can't do ANYTHING without getting approval from the Congress. Obama has wanted to do a ton for this country, but it's all been rejected because our Congress is currently filled with very corrupt greedy people who do not care about anyone's wellbeing, especially the financially struggling.

They are all rich political figures that ONLY care about making more money, and they won't approve any decision from the President unless it makes them more money.

Obama's policies passed THROUGH congress are screwing up America. We were already in trouble before he comes, and then he lies to America again and again.

**Change Congress, you may change the world.** I looked back in History like when Blue Shield got started; there have been many Presidents that tried to pass a health insurance. If anyone has, been in a hospital in emergency room you will see it is mostly, **people with no insurance**. Waiting hours can be for 3 hours and up. This new insurance, will help this problem because, those people most of them will never pay, their bill to emergency room. But yet you have insurance on your automobiles and pets and your house. Are you worth something? Because without your life you, would not have any of these things. He is wrong for wanting to help you? Have you ever had an Illness like heart attack, do you know how much one of those cost with no insurance, when most of the people in America is high risk of one. Most Countries have health insurance. We are supposed to be the best country. I think we loosing, that first place status, not due to our President. People listen to Social Media. Everyone had a ...more

**Screw him, go trump**

## 5. The Media

"Reality" T.V. shows that focus on top models, dancing stars, fashion faux pas, "real" housewives, and swamp people are completely dumbing down our population. There is no focus on solving real problems of government overspending, personal dependency, radical is lamists, and general decline of morality. **Shame.**

The media is a huge problem in this country, particularly the way they are covering this election. I just watched the Republican debate, and every other question was about terrorism. They are doing their best to spread fear, which they hope will translate into votes. The media is cherry picking the polls they report, trying to cast Hillary Clinton in as bad a light as possible. Bernie Sanders is wonderful and is doing well but you can tell the Republicans don't view him as a threat. He wasn't

even mentioned at the GOP debate, but they sure took after Clinton and Obama. The media, too, is all but ignoring Sanders unless they can use him to make Hillary look bad. Republicans aren't criticizing Sanders because they will go after his supporters if he doesn't get the nomination. If you truly support Bernie and the things he stands for, you have much more in common with Hillary than with any Republican.

The media are constantly praising and focusing attention on non-talented bimbo's who are famous for no reason. There is no morality about the media what so ever. If you had 2 women the 1 woman was a very talented singer, song writer and played musical instruments but she respects her body so doesn't sell herself sexually by stripping and acting promiscuous all over the T.V. and the other woman has no talents or anything notable to be famous for, but she will do ANYTHING for money & fame IE) take her clothes off or do something disgusting & low to gain attention, fame and money; Which 1 will the media pick to shine the light on? They'll pick the woman with no morals & give her loads of media attention and turn her into a celebrity. Then they will publicize her sex life, boob jobs, ass jobs. The woman will date celebrity men and bed hop between them to keep her name in the papers. It is all just pointless really, because she doesn't deserve that kind of attention, where the woman who ...more.

No problem with it

## 6. Bullying

Some many people thing that bullying makes kids stronger. WRONG! Bullying makes kids skip school, on average over 10 percent of victims have skipped school specifically to avoid being bullied, over 160,000 students per year.

I am a thirteen year old girl who has been bullied her entire life and death is a thought that often finds its way to my head. My family and friends and my boyfriend is the only reason why I won't kill myself. The reason why I have just now decided to share this is because someone who is very important to me is going through what I have went through my entire life. The people who bully think that because they feel bad they have to make others feel bad but they don't and if they would be nice they would find someone who is willing to love them so they don't

need to hurt others or their selves. Because I will love them if they need me to or want me to.

You have still stayed strong after all your abuse. That is an ability most people don't have. I hope you don't kill yourself, because there is always someone who would be absolutely devastated if you did. Think about the people you love. They want you to live, so do it for them. – BlueTopazIceVanilla

Bullying tears kid's down inside and out. It's terrible. Kids are skipping school, staying away from people, and even to the extent of killing themselves. This is NOT how our next generation should be acting. Adults also treat each other poorly. Some people are so immature that they have to tear down other people to make they feel better. I think it's so stupid. Some kids bully other kids because their parents do the same things. This is not how the world should be acting. We should be working together to build each other up, not tear them down. So a shout out to those bullies out there, stop doing it! You are so much better than that! It won't make you feel any better to make someone else feel terrible.

**I think we need to stop bullying**

## 7. Terrorists

Though we do have a lot of problems to solve, terrorism is by far the worst! Many of our problems would be solved if we could just get rid of it.

I get that terrorism is a HUGE problem. There isn't a lot we can do about it. One thing we can do is start securing our borders and making sure NO ONE gets past security or anything without being checked for drugs, guns, bombs, etc. There are so many idiotic people out there who are drunk, drugged, mentally insane, or just violent. We need to do our best to protect our country.

All these terrorist attacks will continue to go on forever and ever. We won't see peace in all nations in a long time. They're just destroying our Earth slowly and slowly. Peace is the only solution but it's hard to preach it when our heroes who do preach are being silenced for doing the right thing.

**Take muzzles away**

## 8. No Respect for Those Older Than Us.

While it is true that many kids do not respect their elders, it is also equally true that not all elders deserve respect in that age does not necessarily dictate maturity.

I opened a door for an old person, he did not say thank you.

Our elders are wiser and most kids and teens treat them with absolutely no respect

People didn't choose to be older than us and we didn't choose to be younger, it is not our fault, if we should respect our elders, our elders should respect younger people too.

## 9. Corruption

**Corruption and a stupid political agenda will be the end of the US.** Other countries and foreign investors basically own us with all the debt that we've compiled. So what does the government do to stop this from continuing? They cut a few billion dollars from the budget and then propose a healthcare reform costing over a trillion dollars. The only radical change we need right now is in our spending and materialism. In my opinion, this category is the most dangerous internal threat to America.

Corruption is a massive issue facing America. This is no longer a democracy that serves the people, but one that serves the interests of corporations and big businesses. How can we pride ourselves as a free country when our congress is enslaved to corporations that offer huge payouts, probably taxpayer money, to get them to betray and go against what's best for America and its citizens? Corruption should be outlawed.

Corruption is just a person thinking he's against the world by himself and trusts no one but a person who trusts everyone gets corrupted because he does what others tell him or her what to do and it will destroy not just the us but the world

**Literally most every other problem stems from corruption.**

## 10. Anti-Patriotism

If you are living in America and have no respect for the people that have died to ensure that you even have the freedom in the first place to go on sites like this and say rude and disrespectful things, and then please, I beg you, LEAVE! Why would you stay here with your toxic attitude? Some of us actually care about our country and know people who have died trying to make sure you have the freedom to be the little parasite to American society that you are. It is an absolute shame when people refuse to stand up and say the pledge! It's even worse when parents don't think it matters.

We live in such a free, wonderful and diverse country in the world. This is the secret to why the USA is such a Great nation but it is also why there is such division today, and until every citizen and or visitor can put aside our differences and all reach for the same goals, backing each other and loving our Country and Flag first, then this country will implode from within. Take Pride in Our Country and stand together side by side as one nation. One People, One Nation. I want to be the first member of the No Race, Race! You are me and I am you. We are all the same. If you don't love your country then ask yourself why that is. And What You could do to change that. God bless America and all its citizens.

Indeed so. Standing up to pledge to our nation I look around and no fellow classmates join in but for a moment maybe. They immediately sit when asked for a moment of silence to the flags. They when asked have no idea the actual whole song/pledge... Other people from other countries are allowed not to pledge? Bull if they worked so hard to come in to this country the least they could do is pledge loyalty to it America offers so much in freedoms yet it's stomped on and abused

**Patriotism is blind mob mentality ignorance. Why is anti-patriotism a bad thing.**

## **11. Rape**

**They sexually abuse our children**

I was sexually abused as a child, and I know a lot of people in my hometown who were victims as well. What is saddening about this issue is that no justice is brought to most victims.

This is a very important social issue. We need to stop this.



I agree let's stop talking about it & go back to ignoring it all together – kenikaobrien

Let's make America great again!

## 12. Gay Rights

I think it is crazy that this is something that has to be talked about. It's crazy that some people are forced to not be themselves due to other people's judgement. The USA, along with every other country, should allow gay people to have the same rights as any other person. There should be no differences in how a gay or straight person is treated. **Ten percent of the population is gay**, so just because the majority of people are straight does not mean you can team up on somebody that is different. We should learn to embrace the differences inside the human race instead of out when anything is different.

It's not the homosexuals themselves, it's the people who want it banned. Most of them say that it ruins families. But ironically, most of them are divorced. Also, **this is a "free" country. Unfortunately, not only do they want gay marriage banned, but also immigration, Halloween, etc.** Hell, even some people want atheism banned as well. Donald Trump will only make it worse. If only I had enough to move to Europe.

The USA is a free country. Would you like it if you were in a dictatorship that didn't allow any freedom? Think about it: What if you weren't allowed any freedom at all? I think it can be legal, but what we think of it (and our choice to do it or not) is up to us to decide. – Ethanmeister

Gay people should not be treated the same as straight new

## 13. Violence

**Violence is the reason that people are afraid to walk amongst the streets that they call home. Being uncomfortable isn't a way to live when you want to just live life the way YOU want to.**

Why can't this world be a happy place? By this big list of Violences



I have a brother that is fairly violent when he doesn't get what he wants. He is older than me and I think it is sad to see how much violence is in our world now.

Fighting hate with hate doesn't solve hate, high hate with love!

#### 14. Bad Music

How is this problem? This is an opinion not something that is damaging the country.

The problem is not music itself. I believe the problem people see with "music" is how it can influence our thought process which in turn can change the views on how you see yourself and others which creates a mindset that is not of your own. This will affect your actions. But only if you let it.

Eminem-Sing for the Moment "They say music can alter moods and talk to you. Can it load up a gun and cock it too? Well is it can and the next time you assault a dude, just tell the judge it was my fault and I'll get sued. See what these kids do is Hear about us totem pistols so they want to get one cause they think the it's cool. **Not knowing us really just protecting ourselves, WE ENTERTAINERS, of course this it's affecting our sales.** But MUSIC IS JUST REFLECTION OF SELF, we just explain it, and then we get our checks in the mail"

This is an opinion. I will not hate a whole country just because they don't share your same music preferences. This list item makes no sense and should be removed. People are just looking for reasons to hate this country other than "It's overrated". – BlueTopazIceVanilla

**This is stupid. This is NOT a problem. Whoever put this on this website should take this off. No offense. This is JUST AN OPINION.**

#### **15. Obesity**

Kids are just not worried about their health anymore, snacks and junk foods are being pushed a lot more.

If only there were positive examples in the media and even from their parents showing them that it's a good thing to eat fruits and vegetables. There has to be

something done to encourage more farmers in America to give up growing corn, corn, and more corn. The farmers are only growing what's needed to make High Fructose Corn Syrup (and other things that will go straight into the junk food that's currently being mass produced and consumed in America) because they will receive subsidies, they need to start growing actual fruits and vegetables so the supply is higher and the prices will go down, making healthier food more affordable to lower-income families and really every family in America.

**Insanity Obesity, food abuse while being inactivity is very critical in American health.**

Sports are dying off and more people should participate in them.

## **\_16. School Bullies**

School bullies need to leave people alone because someone I love is being bullied at school and I don't think it is right. I have been dealing with this since kindergarten and it still has not went away and they think they do this to make kids tougher but it does not work I cannot tell you how many hurtful things have been said to me. I have survived through a lot of thing. I have endured more that kids my age should have to deal with. For the record I am thirteen. I lost my father at the of five years old, my grandfather at the age of four, my best friend at the age of 13. I lost my cousin a few months ago. I go to school every day and it is always the same people the same stupid comments and you want to know what I don't care anymore it is different when someone says that to me but when it happens to someone I love then that is different. It makes me so mad to know that none of those people have the courage to do that to someone who wouldn't take it. I would like some of those ...more.

Kids become to terrified to come to school and I think there should be an end put to it People have bullied for years and I say its I hate bullies they just try to tear you down – hope lady on A big problem for the youth of America.

## **\_17. Racism**

Racism is not good. It should come to an end. God wanted different nationalities for a reason. He wanted all of us to get along and love each other, not hate because

of what happened in the past. Let's not bring back the past. Just because your white doesn't mean you are better than people who are black. Everyone is the same. We just have to learn how to love each other for which we are not what we look like. I'm only 12 and I hope when I grow up Racism isn't a problem anymore. You shouldn't treat anyone differently. The golden rule for socializing for me is "Treat people how you want to be treated". I really want to grow up in a non-racist community. I live in Hawaii and there is already a problem with homeless. I don't want to see a bunch of racist people in the world. When I grow up I want to go somewhere where racism isn't a problem. Thank that is all.

Yeah I hate Racism in the USA, so what if your Black and I'm white we're both humans but with different skin color? So what? I really don't see why the 1 race should think they are better than the other race. I never get white supremacy it's stupid and retarded. The Racists that really nark me are The Americans who are racist then claim to be Christian. If they were true then they would see GOD just wants us to all live as 1. Jesus told us to love each other not Hate, Criticize or Judge each other he condemned all those things. The answer is to Love each other always we are all Brothers and sisters in God's eyes and we should ALL live in peace & Unity regardless of Skin color or ethnicity.

Racism needs to end because they are just people with a different skin color than you! That does not change anything at all! It just proves how nasty some Americans really are!

**Racism is terrible it hurts us and puts the people in a bad position**

## **18. Destroying the Environment**

Protecting the drinking water

We have more indulgent people than we have the resources to support our way of life. **Cutting down all these trees to build houses and other things is doing nothing but lowering air and oxygen pollution!**

**God would not like that**

## **19. Murder**

People should not be murdered. If you have a problem with someone, then you ignore them and push them out of your mind. Don't kill them! Also don't kill people because you don't like their race, or you don't like who they are married to, just let it all go from your mind, because in the long run, they are probably nicer than you.

More than 30 people are murdered in the U.S. everyday which leads up to thousands each year.

I think that no one has a reason to murder and the fact that it is a sin. God would not wish for you to murder his creation.

I wish it was legal in this world so I can kill Sunny Leone.

## 20 .Taxes

Not a problem. If you like milk, not paying \$7/gallon for gas, and having a military to protect us, then you want taxes. The government also pays your social security and disability when you stop working... think about that. This is why we as Americans need to realize how much better Trump will benefit us more than Hillary. Although these may not be the best two people for an election; but Trump will lower taxes to 15% and Hillary will raise it. Also, Trump has a more moral standard than the Hills.

No more taxes who cares about them

What are the biggest problems facing the United States of America?

<https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-biggest-problems-facing-the-United-States-of-A>

**Keith Shannon**

Updated 26 Mar 2014

I will endeavor, as Chris Resro did, to be as unbiased as possible...

- **Stagnation and decline of "primary heavy industry"**. These are industries such as mining, manufacturing, chemical production, timber, and other industries producing raw material or intermediate or finished goods, which are generally perceived as both "dirty" and as perpetuating demand for

often-stigmatized "unskilled" labor. Many Americans honestly believe that the ideal is for as many Americans as possible to be "knowledge workers", making money with their brains instead of their hands, and various policymakers since the '50s have worked to transition the U.S. towards exactly that type of economy by emphasizing the importance of so-called "STEM" subjects in schools. However, that's also increased our overall trade deficit and thus our national debt; Americans still want things that we are no longer producing or have never produced inside our borders, and the value of our knowledge-based products that we "export" isn't keeping pace (for a variety of reasons, one of them being vastly different world views on "intellectual property").

- **Over-standardization of education.** I'm not saying a standardized education, in which you make sure that every graduating student has demonstrated mastery of a set of core subjects, is necessarily a bad thing. I am saying that the structure of the Western education system, which has developed as a result of emphasizing this core curriculum, is now working at cross-purposes to its stated goals. We have, for the past 20 years or so, trained our children primarily to be test takers, because students', teachers' and schools' performance is rated by those test scores, so there's pressure at every level to "teach to the test" to maximize those scores, and to learn specifically how to take a test. As a result, students graduate high school, and even college, knowing relatively little about \*why\* they learned all the things they did, other than that it was on a test they had to pass. This problem is compounded by the pace of the human race's acquisition of knowledge; every day, 24 more hours of history happens, and that history will inevitably include the discovery of knowledge or the development of creative works like art, literature and music, which will be of interest to every other subject. But, the average school year is still only 9 months long (though it's gotten slightly longer each year); I have never read or been tested on the last 150 pages or so of any history book I've ever bought or been issued for a class.
- **Impending Baby Boomer retirement, aka "Retiremageddon".** The generation conceived between the end of WWII (with all the young soldiers

coming home to start their lives) and the early 60s (with the rise of the birth control pill) is the United States' single largest homegrown population boom. Those born in 1950, the approximate peak year of the "baby boom", will turn 65 in 2015, becoming eligible for the majority of government retiree entitlement programs. For the next 15 years thereafter, more people will be retiring each year than at virtually any point since the creation of Social Security. With average life expectancy the highest it's ever been in recorded history, and with the recent market crash followed by falling bond prices severely depleting many retirees' pension and retirement funds, it is expected that many retirees' savings will not be sufficient to last them the rest of their lives, and will either require additional government assistance, increasing either taxes or national debt, or will move in to their children's homes, decreasing their ability to save for their own retirement.

- **Interest rate on the U.S. Credit Card.** In the past 6 years, the U.S. National Debt has grown by more than 50%, due primarily to government bailout and stimulus spending in response to the fallout of the debt market collapse. That debt was financed via T-bills at historically low interest rates, arrived at through a combination of US debt being the best-looking horse in the glue factory, and Fed policies keeping interest rates on other types of debt very low to affect a recovery. At the worst of it, U.S. 10-year T-notes sold by the Treasury in early '09 were bought by the market at an effective interest rate of just over 2%. However, with an end in sight to the Fed's stimulus bond-buying and no end in sight to the government deficit, when the U.S rolls over the approximately \$6 trillion it has spent and/or rolled over during this period of low interest in a better economy with higher interest rates, the interest rate it will begin paying on that amount is expected to almost double. That will make "discretionary spending" (basically everything except entitlement programs and the national debt interest; arguably, discretionary spending is what the government *should* be spending taxes on) less than 25% of total government spending by 2025; the U.S. government will be spending the majority of current monies on payments to past obligations, while there will be no reduction in

expectations of current citizens as far as the level of services and infrastructure provided by "discretionary spending".

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**Jeremy Arnold**, Tocqueville, if he were Canadian and less impressive.

Updated 30 Nov

**180 years ago, a plucky European aristocrat decided to visit the upstart American nation to see if he could figure out what made it tick.**

The conclusions he came to in Democracy in America still carry tremendous relevance to the state of things today.

We can summarize Tocqueville's findings about American greatness into four broad categories, each of which is deeply instructive.

We'll examine each individually, grounding ourselves in the past so as to take a better look at the choices that will define the future.

### **#1: FUNDAMENTAL EQUALITY**

While he had measured concerns that would fit well with modern ideas of human rights, Tocqueville was nonetheless astounded with the common dignity afforded to the average 19th-century American.



He noted approvingly that **some inequalities existed for positive reasons (property and wealth, for example), but took great care to point out the fair opportunity of all citizens to gain such things, if wanted.**

With similar nuance, he sympathized with the reality of women often being victims of "extreme dependence", while also reasoning that the general superiority of their station in America was the country's "most significant national quality" and the "chief cause of their extraordinary prosperity and growing power".

While he wasn't blind to the plight of natives, slaves, or other disenfranchised minorities, he was amazed at the absence of the equivalent of a European "peasant class". He went so far as to suggest that Americans "have no concept of the class of persons such a term would denote".

### **Always Upward**

**Tocqueville found even the poorest citizens actively and ardently engaged in a quest for a better life. And though they may have been removed from the top of the pyramid by several degrees of wealth and power, they didn't seem to consider themselves as made of lesser stuff. In the national mind, there was no such thing as "not rich" without the optimistic caveat of "not rich yet".**

But this is where the problem comes in. In describing their universal sense of potential, he also noted the general groundedness of their ambitions. The average farmer simply wasn't setting his benchmark against the Rothschilds of the world.

No Americans are devoid of a yearning desire to rise, but hardly any appear to entertain hopes of great magnitude or to pursue very lofty aims.

What astonishes me in the United States is not so much the marvelous grandeur of some undertakings, as the innumerable multitude of small ones.

This dynamic held for the better part of US history (with contextual exceptions). Even as recently as the post-WWII period, the average middle-class family was content with a bungalow and a white-picket fence.

### **The Real Enemy**



It wasn't that a 1% class didn't exist back then. It always has. And it's always held its allure. But those in the middle traditionally didn't feel like climbing that ladder *all the way* was particularly worth the expenditure. Gatsby existed, but they were rare enough to be novel.

Today, we're unprecedentedly indulgent in our ambitions. Our appetite has lost proportion. We obsess over comparative greatness more than we do any reasonable standard of contentment.

Identifying the root of this problem is tricky. But there's a strong argument to be made that a lot of it owes to our relational poverty. Like Gatsby, our chase of wealth and status is often a proxy for the human connections we hope riches will afford us.

It wasn't always so. The America that Tocqueville visited was dominated by strong social ties. The hierarchies were like the skyscrapers of Manhattan — varied in height, but far surpassed by what they shared in width and common ground.

The real trouble with inequality isn't that some people have more money than others. That's been true in the best of societies. The real problem is that we've confused happiness with joy, and we've gone about filling our voids in all the wrong ways.

(Note: Tocqueville was resolutely against slavery on a personal level, but found it prudent to mute those views in his then-public writings. We see it in his letters instead. But he was always clear that racial inequality was a blind-spot that was going to interfere with America's growth trajectory, soon or late.)

## **#2: POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**

The classic problem with democracy is the asymmetry between the privileges afforded and the "infinity of details" that overwhelm the mind of the average citizen. There are simply too many moving parts for us to do them remote justice.

With this in mind, Tocqueville marveled that the average American of his day had an almost ravenous appetite for such trivialities. They engaged with them vigorously and heartily, inspiring him to suggest that "the people reign over the American political world as God rules over the universe."

"The New Englander is attached to his township because it is strong and independent; he has an interest in it because he shares in its management; he loves it because he has no reason to complain of his lot; he invests his ambition and his future in it; in the restricted sphere within his scope, he learns to rule society; he gets to know those formalities without which freedom can advance only through revolutions, and becoming imbued with their spirit, develops a taste for order, understands the harmony of powers, and in the end accumulates clear, practical ideas about the nature of his duties and the extent of his rights."

The advantages that this commitment produces for civic life are nearly impossible to understate.

### **What Changed?**

While America has certainly not lost her fondness for political dialogue, there's been a real drop in the kinds of civic engagement that really make a difference.

This problem is multi-faceted. One could point to:

1. Increased working hours and competing extra-curricular commitments.
2. A general spirit of complacency and disillusionment re: local political bodies.
3. The proliferation of bureaucratic structures that impede volunteer efficacy.
4. The general drift from community work to online "critical activism".
5. Fewer young families planting deep roots in a fixed community given modern relocation realities.

What can be done? David Cameron had the right idea with his "Big Society" measures in the UK (i.e., returning local responsibilities to the people). Sadly, his was a poorly-executed, somewhat Orwellian one-way bargain. If the US can accomplish the same goals via more pragmatic and unified means, there may be hope ahead.

### **#3: CIVIC UNITY**

Building on the previous point, Tocqueville noted a certain genius in how Americans went about associating together locally — both in political and social contexts.

He observed that "[the] knowledge of how to associate together is the mother of all other forms of knowledge; on its progress depends that of all others."

This isn't exactly a patent sociological discovery, but its practical importance can be easy to overlook. When people form personal bonds, good things happen. When they maintain an "otherness" to each other, bad things enter in.

Americans combine to celebrate occasions, to found seminaries, to build churches, to distribute books, and to send off missionaries. [...] In every case, at the head of any new undertaking, where in France you would find the government, or in England some territorial authority, in the United States you are sure to find a [voluntary civic] association. I have come across several varieties of association in America of which, I confess, I had not the slightest previous conception; and I have come to admire the extreme skill they show in proposing a common object for the exertions of the many and in inducing all to voluntarily pursue them.

### **Walls Make Bad Neighbors**

Togetherness cures many ills. Sadly, this isn't a common quality in the US today. Racial minorities tend to be ghettoized in geographical terms. Like stays with like. It's fine for a YMCA and a mosque to occupy the same block, but you don't see many joint fundraising BBQs being hosted.

In more progressive centers, this is a lesser concern. For example, I doubt that religion or ethnicity would carry much weight in Palo Alto. That said, wealth inequalities might. It's hard to read an article about San Francisco these days that doesn't allude to a growing us vs. them divide between the new tech elite and the "rest".

Strong social ties require certain predicates. Among the most historically common, we see religious communities, common civic values, forced daily interactions, etc.

Sadly, with the disintegration of Christianity in America, along with the loss of a coherent meta-narrative that most of the population could and would subscribe to,

we see a sense of nativism (of various stripes) drowning out the proud togetherness that made American citizenship such an incredible thing in the first place.

#### **#4: PERSONAL ETHICS**

We often refer to the "Puritan" (or sometimes "Protestant") work ethic as a shorthand way of pointing to a very old and very noble bit of heritage that has infused itself into the central ethos of American character.

Without trying to pin all the credit on one historical group, it's safe to affirm that Americans have always been incredibly good at keeping themselves busy. The challenge, of course, has been ensuring that one's stays busy with the right things.

In older times, work days were long, and the evenings were full of town hall meetings, local lectures, fireside reading, and other productive functions. The average citizen was informed about the world, and deeply obligated to seeing good come to their local bit of it.

Undergirding this commitment was a national ideal of self-reliance. Americans believed that they were great — and that this greatness was earned daily. As such, they left little time for mischief (with some noticeable exceptions).

This thirst for progress lit the way for a litany of incredible accomplishments. Well before the rise of "the American Century", Tocqueville was forced to admire the uniqueness of American industry, suggesting that, in view of their upstart qualities, "No natural boundary seems to be set [...] what is not yet done is only what he has not yet attempted to do."

#### **The Missing Ingredient**

What was the root of this ideal? In the mind of both Toqueville and most other historical commentators, it all stemmed from religion.

As a caveat, we must note that as with most educated Europeans (and nearly all the Founding Fathers), Tocqueville was a Deist, not an Evangelical Christian. He wasn't terribly concerned with religion in a doctrinal or theological sense — but very much so as it pertained to morals and ethical ideals.

(One needs to see this with some nuance. For individuals, he suggested that the self-identified legitimacy of their beliefs was of utmost importance in securing their ongoing loyalty, for broader societies, he was more concerned that each citizen "profess a religion" with "the particular tenets" thereof being "of very little importance to the state's interests".)

So, while it didn't seem important to him that anyone adopt any one specific religion, Deist Christianity (a somewhat unique American hybrid) was held to be the preferred choice — not because of its particular contents, but because of how the spirit of those contents was approached.

### **The DNA of “Americanism”**

Having observed the behavior of this particular group, he noted that their "conviction does not spring from that barren traditional faith which seems to vegetate in the soul rather than produce life."

*In other words, it was good because it worked.*

It was especially effective because it also happened to be widely shared. While there was some degree of tension between Deists and Evangelicals, most people found themselves agreeing in principle on practical matters of what ought to be done.

The loss of this common understanding has been quietly devastating. For while one could argue that today's educated classes are enlightened and progressive to an unprecedented degree, their views are not universally shared across the country on almost any issue.

This, to me, seems the most dangerous problem of all. Without a common framework to pull from or a common meeting place to discuss ideas, it's difficult for people to feel the sense of unity that's required for each to truly give their best to a common cause.

As an aside, it's also worth noting that the loss of an authoritative centrist media presence has only compounded the issues. Given how partisan most daily news consumption is, we're only getting further apart.

There are deep chasms between various social groups and intense amounts of cognitive dissonance within them. Until that gets healed, progress is unlikely.

For that to get healed, we're going to have to get back to a common table and project enough goodwill to allow for real, progressive dialogue.

### **Is that possible? America's future hangs on it.**

"The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults."  
- Tocqueville

"There is nothing wrong with America that can't be solved by what's right with America."  
- Bill Clinton

Let's hope they were right.

I'm cheering, personally.

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**Peter Schachte**, Expatriate American

Written 18 May 2015

The biggest problem the US faces right now must be that the US seems to be less and less able to address its problems. Whatever you think the most important problems are, the US government seems to be hamstrung in solving them. I don't think the reason for the gridlock is that the legislative and executive branches are held by different parties. That has often been the case in the past, yet many past governments have been able to function despite their differences. I think the real underlying problem is the effects of big money on politics. This has been bad for a long time, but has become much worse since the Supreme Court's decision in the Citizens United v. FEC case. The cost of running an election campaign is now obscene. Spending on 2012 election campaigns reached about \$7 Billion (see 2012 US presidential campaign cost \$7 billion - election commission and The Money Behind the Elections). Some elected representatives spend most of their time raising money, and all must raise a huge sum to be

elected.

Some of that money is donated because the donor likes the candidate's policies, and some is donated to buy influence with the candidate once elected (some donors give to both mainstream candidates in a district). Either way, in 2012, the candidate with the most Money Won the Presidency and 9 of 10 Congressional Races. Moving from "one person, one vote" to "one dollar, one vote", has been disastrous.

So until the corrupting influence of big money is removed from politics, there will continue to be important problems that cannot be solved, simply because it's worth too much money to some people for them not to be solved. Watch Lawrence Lessing's brilliant TED talk We the People, and the Republic we must reclaim for a more complete argument.

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**Chris Resro**, Speculator

Updated 21 Jun 2012

The answer to this question is going to be different based on the political orientation of the answerer, but I'll do my best to provide a balanced answer. Anyway, the Obama Administration passed two major bills that are the subject of great debate. Republicans generally want to repeal or reform these bills, Democrats generally support them:

- Obamacare (Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act): along with numerous other reforms, created an individual mandate which requires everyone to get Health Insurance.
- Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act: created new agencies to regulate Wall Street. This came in reaction to the 2008 Financial Crisis that helped cause the current Late-2000s Recession.

I think most people would agree that the following are also major issues:

- Rising spending on healthcare and Social Security. As the Baby Boomers retire, Medicare and Social Security will become more expensive



to finance, and we will have fewer workers to pay taxes to finance these programs. This leads to concerns about ...

- the U.S. Federal Budget Deficit and the resultant U.S. Public Debt. The US currently runs budget deficits of over \$1 trillion per year.
- 12 million illegal immigrants living in the US. Both sides probably agree that how to deal with them is a major question in politics at the moment, although some see this as a bigger problem than do others.
- Ending the War in Afghanistan (2001–present). We've set a withdrawal date for December 2014, but even if things go well in Afghanistan, this is still a major challenge for the country to face.
- Climate Change. A long-term problem that the world faces, and that much of America doesn't believe in.
- Iran's Nuclear Program. This was seemingly a bigger problem a few months ago when they threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz (thereby cutting off a major part of the world's oil supply), but Iran and its effort to obtain nuclear weapons is still a major headache to the US.
- Income and wealth inequality. Many argue that the top 1 percent are gaining disproportionate power and wealth in America. Others argue that this isn't an issue at all.
- Culture Wars. While this doesn't seem to be as big of an issue as it was a few years ago, there continues to be major debates about Homosexuality, Abortion, Cannabis, Gun Control in the United States of America, Euthanasia, etc.
- There seems to be a general agreement that our Education System could be better.
- There's a debate about Campaign Finance Reform..

And all of these problems are compounded by:



- The Late-2000s Recession. High unemployment, low consumer confidence, etc. This could arguably get even worse if Europe suffers an economic crash. The economy is probably the largest challenge the US faces at the moment.
- Competition between the two major (and only relevant) political parties in the US. To give an example, the two parties failed to agree to raise the Debt Ceiling until the last minute. Many expected a failure to raise the debt ceiling would lead to a major shock to the US economy, possibly even provoking an economic depression.

There's a million other issues that I haven't mentioned, and I'll probably be criticized for including and/or not including certain issues, but oh well.

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**Charles Tips**, USA, citizen of

Updated 28 May 2015

**Q:** Charles, what are the biggest problems facing the United States of America?

**CT:** We have a single overarching problem in the United States; we have not been faithful to our charter.

**Q:** By *charter*, may we assume you mean our Constitution?

**CT:** Yes, together with our other founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, as well as the early precedents of our political class.

**Q:** But even going back more than a century to Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, our top elected leaders have been decrying our Constitution as antiquated, as inadequate to the demands of modern statecraft.

**CT:** And there started our problem. We inherited the most radically empowering political arrangement in the history of mankind. We are guaranteed bottom-up government, that is, republicanism. At both the state and federal levels, we are sovereign citizens endowed with rights that enable us to go about our private and civic business freely. In those efforts, we are to be supported by governments of limited powers--not sovereign and able to control us.

**Q:** And the benefit to that is...?

**CT:** That arrangement enables robust commerce and civil action by the people without government hindrance, that is, people able to address problems and opportunities on their own initiative, locally, with the best local solutions rolling upward to higher levels--bottom-up government.

**Q:** So, this is the old libertarian argument against having any government regulation, back to the days when the plutocrat capitalists called the shots?

**CT:** Not at all. There are levels of regulation that are absolutely crucial, for example, keeping markets free of frauds, counterfeits, collusions and sharp practices of all types. Standardized weights and measures. Disclosure requirements. Where would we be without the standardized definitions and procedures outlined in the Uniform Commercial Code? All such regulation keeps markets honest and fair for businesses and consumers alike.

**Q:** What do you not like about regulation then?

**CT:** When it goes beyond what I just outlined into such areas as substituting the judgment of politicians for those of the businesses trying to make the market work, interfering with wage and price decisions, increasing compliance costs, helping those first in "the tree house" to "pull up the ladder" behind them. Some four-fifths of regulation is unnecessary to detrimental.

**Q:** And the consequence of this is?

**CT:** Regulatory uncertainty together with legislative and monetary uncertainty, all of which stem from our political class, represents the biggest holdback to the productivity cycle that unleashes all innovation and all improvement in standard of living.

**Q:** And the impact of that?

**CT:** I created a spreadsheet last year... what if GDP had been two percent higher every year since my birth [ed note: 1949]? That's not two whole points, just two percent. That wouldn't even take us up to the 3.5 percent level of growth year-to-year many economists claim we should be able to sustain with more sensible regulation. But the outcome, given that GDP compounds, was a 2014 total output of \$58T rather than \$17T. That equates roughly to an average salary of \$200K rather than \$54K. Wouldn't that be sweet? Taking the political dampers off business could easily produce that kind of prosperity for all. What we've experienced instead is tantamount to being robbed without even the robber gaining anything... just foolhardiness.

**Q:** Foolhardiness? Do you see a lot of that in government?

**CT:** Sure. Just look at what we've done with public employment. We now have one person in five getting paid out of tax revenue, a four-fold growth over the one in nineteen back in 1960 when the first true unions formed for the public sector. Not only that but back then they made 80 percent of an average private worker; now it's 144 percent.

**Q:** Those are still jobs. We need those jobs. Why would that be foolhardy?

**CT:** Because the only true taxpayers are in the private sector. Public workers feel the tax pinch, yes, but they are paying their taxes out of tax revenues. No new money enters the system. That means the private-to-public ratio is critical. Back in the sixties we had several large-scale programs--the interstate highway system, putting a man on the moon, an arms race, a war in Asia, a war on poverty--all with just a little debt. Now we can't afford any large-scale programs, and we are spiraling into debt hell.

**Q:** You're blaming our growing debt on government employment?

**CT:** A ship needs ballast, a public sector, every bit as much as it needs sail, the private sector. However, we've become all-ballast and little sail and so have lost headway. Worse, our public sector has become a mandarin class, people, overwhelmingly of one political ideology, who feel entitled to slots where they do not have to work for profit, indeed, who look upon commerce as near-criminal. And so, once in their positions, rather than support the private sector as they are supposed to do, they are adversarial. Not only are there too many of them, they are intent on causing harm.

**Q:** So that's it in your mind? Too many public employees who do not see themselves as handmaidens to business?

**CT:** There're plenty of other problems. For example, Congress exempted the federal government from standard accounting practices. So, for instance, it's very hard to tell how much of our federal budget goes to labor costs. Also, the way we calculate such critical measures as inflation or unemployment have been altered so that they look much less concerning. We need to make the measurement of government performance independent of politicians themselves. The way we judge politicians is under the control of politicians. The way we compensate politicians is under the control of politicians. The way we elect politicians is under the control of politicians. We've lost control.

Speaking of inflation, starting with Nixon, a Keynesian, we pulled support for the dollar, making it a floating fiat currency. With a solid currency, wealth is produced through productive activity. With a fiat currency, there is always the danger that "wealth" comes via being close to the printing presses--that is, cronyism. Naturally, that undesirable state of affairs is enabled by phony accounting.

Immigration is another area. We are a nation of immigrants, and the overwhelming majority of Americans prize that. However, we've always been a nation of immigrants seeking the American Dream. For whatever reason, the current administration is preferring to import those whose values are at odds with ours, who perform clitorectormies on their daughters or are intolerant of other faiths. That is a formula for chaos--maybe votes and chaos--but chaos for sure.

The sublist is long and most unfortunate. Not only that, most of the items on it are self-inflicted, arising because we no longer exert the kind of control over the political process our Constitution affords us as sovereign citizens.

## **5 PROBLEMS WITH NATIONAL ID CARDS**

The terrorist attacks of September 11 have revived proposals for a national identity card system as a way to verify the identity of airline passengers and prevent terrorists from entering the country. For example, the Chairman and CEO of Oracle Corp., Larry Ellison, recently called for the creation of a national ID system and offered to provide the software for it without charge.

The newest calls for a national ID are only the latest in a long series of proposals that have cropped up repeatedly over the past decade, usually in **the context of immigration policy**, but also in connection with gun control or health care reform. But **the creation of a national I.D. card remains a misplaced, superficial "quick fix."** It offers only a false sense of security and will not enhance our security - but will pose serious threats to our civil liberties and civil rights. A National ID will not keep us safe or free.

**Reason #1: A national ID card system would not solve the problem that is inspiring it.**

A national ID card system will not prevent terrorism. It would not have thwarted the September 11 hijackers, for example, many of whom reportedly had identification documents on them, and were in the country legally.

**Terrorists and criminals will continue to be able to obtain** -- by legal and illegal means -- the documents needed to get a government ID, such as birth certificates. Yes, these new documents will have data like digital fingerprints on them, but that won't prove real identity - just that the carrier has obtained what could easily be a fraudulent document.

And their creation would not justify the cost to American taxpayers, which according to the Social Security Administration would be at least \$4 billion. It is an impractical and ineffective proposal - a simplistic and naïve attempt to use gee-whiz technology to solve complex social and economic problems.

**Reason #2: An ID card system will lead to a slippery slope of surveillance and monitoring of citizens.**

A national ID card system would not protect us from terrorism, but it would create a system of internal passports that would significantly diminish the freedom and privacy of law-abiding citizens. Once put in place, it is exceedingly unlikely that such a system would be restricted to its original purpose. Social Security numbers, for example, were originally intended to be used only to administer the retirement program. But that limit has been routinely ignored and steadily abandoned over the past 50 years. **A national ID system would threaten the privacy that Americans have always enjoyed and gradually increase the control that government and business wields over everyday citizens.**

**Reason #3: A national ID card system would require creation of a database of all Americans**

**What happens when an ID card is stolen?** What proof is used to decide who gets a card? A national ID would require a governmental database of every person in the U.S. containing continually updated identifying information. It would likely contain many errors, any one of which could render someone unemployable and possibly much worse until they get their ""file"" straightened out. And once that database was created, its use would almost certainly expand. Law enforcement and

other government agencies would soon ask to link into it, while employers, landlords, credit agencies, mortgage brokers, direct mailers, landlords, private investigators, civil litigants, and a long list of other parties would begin seeking access, further eroding the privacy that Americans have always expected in their personal lives.

#### **Reason #4: ID cards would function as "internal passports" that monitor citizens' movements**

Americans have long had a visceral aversion to building a society in which the authorities could act like totalitarian sentries and demand ""your papers please!"" And that everyday intrusiveness would be conjoined with the full power of modern computer and database technology. When a police officer or security guard scans your ID card with his pocket bar-code reader, for example, will a permanent record be created of that check, including the time and your location? How long before office buildings, doctors' offices, gas stations, highway tolls, subways and buses incorporate the ID card into their security or payment systems for greater efficiency? The end result could be a nation where citizens' movements inside their own country are monitored and recorded through these ""internal passports.""

#### **Reason #5: ID cards would foster new forms of discrimination and harassment**

Rather than eliminating discrimination, as some have claimed, a national identity card would foster new forms of discrimination and harassment of anyone perceived as looking or sounding "foreign. "That is what happened after Congress passed the Employer Sanctions provision of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1985: widespread discrimination against foreign-looking American workers, especially Asians and Hispanics. A 1990 General Accounting Office study found almost 20 percent of employers engaged in such practices. A national ID card would have the same effect on a massive scale, as Latinos, Asians, Caribbeans and other minorities became subject to ceaseless status and identity checks from police, banks, merchants and others. Failure to carry a national I.D. card would likely come to be viewed as a reason for search, detention or arrest of minorities. The stigma and humiliation of constantly having to prove that they are Americans or legal immigrants would weigh heavily on such groups.

## Related Links

- [Coalition letter to President Bush Urging Him to Reject National ID Card\(02/11/2002\)](#)
- [Speech by Barry Steinhardt Concerning the Use of Uniform Driver's Licenses as a National ID\(02/10/2002\)](#)
- [Testimony of ACLU Legislative Counsel Katie Corrigan on the Establishment of a National ID Card System\(11/16/2001\)](#)
- [Statement of the ACLU's Gregory T. Nojeim on the Impact of National ID Cards on Civil Liberties \(09/17/1998\)](#)

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## What If the Terrorists Are Already Here?

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**The statistics are as astounding as they are ignored:** Americans are about as likely to be killed by their own furniture as by terrorists. Noncommunicable conditions like cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes are responsible for vastly more American deaths than terrorism. **Depending on how you count, gun violence in America kills hundreds or thousands of times more people than extremist attacks on U.S. soil.**

“We spent over a trillion dollars and passed countless laws and devote entire agencies to preventing terrorist attacks on our soil,” President Obama observed after a mass shooting in 2015, in lamenting the lack of government action to address the far deadlier problem of gun violence.



It was a rare instance of a political leader seeking to place the terrorist threat in proper perspective. A *very* rare instance. When it comes to security issues, there are “a bunch of things that ought to be said that can’t be said in public,” noted *Foreign Policy*’s David Rothkopf during a session on homeland security at the Aspen Ideas Festival, which is co-hosted by the Aspen Institute and *The Atlantic*. “If a politician were to stand up and say, ‘Terrorism’s a problem, but it’s not such a huge problem,’ they’d be done.”

### **Dispatches from the Aspen Ideas Festival/Spotlight Health**

“Every once in a while, we ought to let facts guide what our fears are,” Rothkopf said. “**When you look at polls of the top 10 fears of the American people**, it tends to be things like public speaking, flying, things that will never kill anybody, when it really should be sugar.”

**“Are we focused on the right bad guys?** ... Are we too guided by what dominates the headlines?” Rothkopf asked Jane Holl Lute, the former deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

“I think we’re way, way too dominated by a national-security mindset,” she responded. “And I think we need to understand the difference between looking at these issues with a national-security mindset as opposed to a homeland-security mindset. National security is strategic, it’s centralized, it’s top-driven. Homeland security is transactional, it’s decentralized, and it’s bottom-driven — driven by the states and localities of this country.”

“What’s been our theory of the case for 12 or 15 years following 9/11?” Lute asked. **“Our theory of the case is the bad guys are out there, trying to come here. ... How are we going to deal with that? We’re going to find them and fix them, in a military sense, abroad.** We have three tools: We have an intelligence tool, considerable. Our military, best in the world. And we have our security partnerships with NATO and with other countries bilaterally.”

“That’s great,” she continued. “What if [the bad guys are] here? What if they’re already here? What terrorist strike can succeed in this country unless there is already a basis of support [for the terrorist group in question]? How good is our intelligence capability going to serve us? Is the military deployed domestically?”



The Brits? NATO? Not really. So we need to think about the questions that you're rising ... from the perspective of homeland security."

"When you look at the top fears of Americans, they tend to be things that will never kill anybody, when it really should be sugar."

"We know, in Europe, that they're there," said Wolfgang Ischinger, a former German diplomat and the chairman of the Munich Security Conference. "It's much easier for [terrorists] to come into our countries because it's, for all practical purposes, not possible to completely control these many, many different borders. It's a little easier for the United States with only two neighbors and the open sea on both sides." Ischinger suggested creating an FBI-like organization for the European Union to help coordinate intelligence and homeland-security efforts—to "hunt a terrorist from Sicily to Norway and back."

Such calls to reorient contemporary counterterrorism toward the homegrown terrorist threat—to, in Lute's words, prioritize homeland security over national security—are a rejection of the logic that inspired Donald Trump's proposed ban on Muslim immigration to the United States. They're also more reflective of reality. Belgian and French citizens perpetrated the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels; American citizens were behind the carnage in San Bernardino and Orlando. U.S. citizens have been involved in 80 percent of the post-9/11 U.S. terrorism cases tracked by **the** New America Foundation.

Still, the question remains whether U.S. and European governments are excessively focused on the very real threat of terrorism, wherever it is originating from, and neglecting graver threats.

"Leadership, it seems to me, is sometimes about saying, 'This is what we should be focused on. This is where the real risk lies,' Rothkopf said. "There are some countries where there have been multiple terrorist attacks, where they're able to manage them and digest it and handle it a little bit better. And it causes less terror as a consequence."

It was a last attempt to steer the security conversation away from the vortex of terrorism. But the vortex prevailed. During the nearly hour-long session, the panelists rarely strayed from the topic. Sugar wasn't mentioned again.

## How to talk about terrorism today—and how to stop talking about it

### Four threats to American democracy

Jared Diamond | February 18, 2014

*Jared Diamond is professor of geography and environmental health sciences at UCLA. His best-selling books include "The Third Chimpanzee; Guns, Germs, and Steel," which received the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction; "Why Is Sex Fun?"; "Collapse"; and, most recently, "The World until Yesterday" (Viking, 2012). This commentary appeared in [Governance](#) on Feb. 15, 2014.*

The U.S. government has spent the last two years wrestling with a series of crises over the federal budget and debt ceiling. I do not deny that our national debt and the prospect of a government shutdown pose real problems. But they are not our fundamental problems, although they are symptoms of them. Instead, our fundamental problems are four interconnected issues combining to threaten a breakdown of effective democratic government in the United States.

**Why should we care?** Let's remind ourselves of the oft-forgotten reasons why democracy is a superior form of government (provided that it works), and hence why its deterioration is very worrisome. (Of course, I acknowledge that there are many countries in which democracy does not work, because of the lack of a national identity, of an informed electorate, or of both). The advantages of democracy include the following:

- In a democracy, one can propose and discuss virtually any idea, even if it is initially unpalatable to the government. Debate may reveal the idea to be the best solution, whereas in a dictatorship the idea would not have gotten debated, and its virtues would not have been discovered.
- In a democracy, citizens and their ideas get heard. Hence, without democracy, people are more likely to feel unheard and frustrated and to resort to violence.
- Compromise is essential to a democracy. It enables us to avoid tyranny by the majority or (conversely) paralysis of government through vetoes exercised by a frustrated minority.

- In modern democracies, all citizens can vote. Hence, government is motivated to invest in all citizens, who thereby receive the opportunity to become productive, rather than just a small dictatorial elite receiving that opportunity.

Why should we Americans keep reminding ourselves of those fundamental advantages of democracies? I would answer: not only in order to motivate ourselves to defend our democratic processes, but also because increasing numbers of Americans today are falling into the trap of envying the supposed efficiency of China's dictatorship. Yes, it is true that dictatorships, by closing debate, can sometimes implement good policies faster than can the United States, as has China in quickly converting to lead-free gasoline and building a high-speed rail network. But dictatorships suffer from a fatal disadvantage. No one, in the 5,400 years of history of centralized government on all the continents, has figured out how to ensure that a dictatorship will embrace *only* good policies. Dictatorships also prevent the public debate that helps to avert catastrophic policies unparalleled in any large modern First World democracy — such as China's quickly abolishing its educational system, sending its teachers out into the fields, and creating the world's worst air pollution.

That is why democracy, given the prerequisites of an informed electorate and a basic sense of common interest, is the best form of government — at least, better than all the alternatives that have been tried, as Winston Churchill quipped. Our form of government is a big part of the explanation why the United States has become the richest and most powerful country in the world. Hence, an undermining of democratic processes in the United States means throwing away one of our biggest advantages. Unfortunately, that is what we are now doing, in four ways.

First, political compromise has been deteriorating in recent decades, and especially in the last five years. That deterioration can be measured as the increase in Senate rejections of presidential nominees whose approvals used to be routine, the increasing use of filibusters by the minority party, the majority party's response of abolishing filibusters for certain types of votes, and the decline in number of laws passed by Congress to the lowest level of recent history. The reasons for this

breakdown in political compromise, which seems to parallel increasing levels of nastiness in other areas of American life, remain debated. Explanations offered include the growth of television and then of the Internet, replacing face-to-face communication and the growth of many narrowly partisan TV channels at the expense of a few broad-public channels. Even if these reasons hold a germ of truth, they leave open the question why these same trends operating in Canada and in Europe have not led to similar deterioration of political compromise in those countries as well.

Second, there are increasing restrictions on the right to vote, weighing disproportionately on voters for one party and implemented at the state level by the other party. Those obstacles include making registration to vote difficult and demanding that registered voters show documentation of citizenship when they present themselves at the polls. Of course, the United States has had a long history of denying voting rights to blacks, women and other groups. But access to voting had been increasing in the last 50 years, so the recent proliferation of restrictions reverses that long positive trend. In addition to those obstacles preventing voter registration, the United States has by far the lowest election turnout among large First World democracies: fewer than 60 percent of registered voters in most presidential elections, 40 percent for congressional elections, and 20 percent for the recent election for mayor of my city of Los Angeles. (A source of numbers for this and other comparisons that I shall cite is an excellent recent book by Howard Steven Friedman, *The Measure of a Nation*). And, while we are talking about elections, let's not forget the astronomical recent increase in costs and durations of election campaigns, their funding by wealthy interests, and the shift in campaign pitches to sound bites. Those trends, unpatrolled in other large First World democracies, undermine the democratic prerequisite of a well-informed electorate.

A third contributor to the growing breakdown of democracy is our growing gap between rich and poor. Among our most cherished core values is our belief that the United States is a "land of opportunity" and that we uniquely offer to our citizens the potential for rising from "rags to riches" provided that citizens have the necessary ability and work hard. This is a myth. Income and wealth disparity in the United States (as measured by the Gini index of equality/inequality, and in other ways) is much higher in the United States than in any other large First World

democracy. So is hereditary socioeconomic immobility, that is, the probability that a son's relative income will just mirror his father's relative income, and that sons of poor fathers will not become wealthy. Part of the reason for those depressing facts is inequality of educational opportunities. Children of rich Americans tend to receive much better educations than children of poor Americans.

That is bad for our economy, because it means that we are failing to develop a large fraction of our intellectual capital. It is also bad for our political stability, because poor parents who correctly perceive that their children are not being given the opportunity to succeed may express their resulting frustration in violence. Twice during my 47 years of residence in Los Angeles, in 1964 and 1993, frustration in poor areas of Los Angeles erupted into violence, lootings, and killings. In the 1993 riots, when police feared that rioters would spill into the wealthy suburb of Beverly Hills, all that the outnumbered police could do to protect Beverly Hills was to string yellow plastic police tape across major streets. As it turned out, the rioters did not try to invade Beverly Hills in 1993. But if present trends causing frustration continue, there will be more riots in Los Angeles and other American cities, and yellow plastic police tape will not suffice to contain the rioters.

The remaining contributor to the decline of American democracy is the decline of government investment in public purposes, such as education, infrastructure, and nonmilitary research and development. Large segments of the American populace deride government investment as "socialism." But it is not socialism. On the contrary, it is one of the longest established functions of government. Ever since the rise of the first governments 5,400 years ago, governments have served two main functions: to maintain internal peace by monopolizing force, settling disputes, and forbidding citizens to resort to violence in order to settle disputes themselves; and to redistribute individual wealth for investing in larger aims — in the worst cases, enriching the elite; in the best cases, promoting the good of society as a whole. Of course, some investment is private, by wealthy individuals and companies expecting to profit from their investments. But many potential payoffs cannot attract private investment, either because the payoff is so far off in the future (such as the payoff from universal primary school education), or because the payoff is diffused over all of society rather than concentrated in areas profitable to

the private investor (such as diffused benefits of municipal fire departments, roads, and broad education). Even the most passionate American supporters of small government do not decry as socialism the funding of fire departments, interstate highways, and public schools.

The result is that the United States is losing its former competitive advantage that rested on an educated workforce, science, and technology. Several decades ago, the United States led the world in average years of schooling of its citizens; now, we rank near the bottom of large First World democracies in that respect. Our teachers receive the lowest relative pay among our competitor countries. (German and South Korean teachers receive the highest relative pay). The performance of our students in reading, math, and science is now below the average of that for our competitor countries. American universities and American science output still lead the world, but the margin of our lead is dropping.

**All those facts raise a paradox.** The United States is the world's richest country. Where, then, is our money going, if it is not being invested by our government in our own future? Part of the answer is: it stays in taxpayers' pockets. Our tax burden is modest by First World standards. The other part of the answer is: toward government expenditure on prisons, military purposes, and health. In all three of those categories, our expenditures far exceed those of other First World democracies. No one could claim that our prisons, which emphasize punishment and deterrence rather than rehabilitation and retraining, constitute investments in our future. Granted, our military expenditures do constitute investments in our future: but why do we spend so much more on our military than does the European Union, whose population is nearly double ours, but whose costs of military protection to ensure its future are shouldered disproportionately by us? As for our expenditures for health, it would seem natural to consider that they represent investments in our future — until one examines their uses and outcomes. In health outcomes the United States ranks below other First World democracies, by measures such as life expectancy and infant and maternal mortality. That is because the United States has especially high health-related expenditures for purposes not leading to healthy outcomes: such as high prescription drug costs, high insurance premiums charged by our for-profit health insurance companies, high costs of medical malpractice insurance and defensive medicine, and expensive



emergency room care for our large uninsured population that cannot afford nonemergency care.

What is going to happen to the United States? That will depend upon the choices that we make. On the one hand, our nation enjoys enormous advantages that include much of the world's most productive farmland, the world's largest or second largest reserves of most important minerals, long sea coasts, a large population, the world's largest economy, the highest per capita income among large countries, 230 years of uninterrupted democratic government, and our federal system of 50 states that provide 50 independent opportunities for experimenting with policy innovations. On the other hand, we are presently squandering our advantages, in the ways that I have discussed. Other countries have previously faced acute or else slowly unfolding national crises similar to our current one. Some of those countries, such as Japan in the Meiji era and Britain after World War II, succeeded in painfully adopting big changes that eventually solved their crises. It remains to be seen what we Americans shall do.

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## [ECONOMY & POLICY](#)

### **The Six Daunting Financial Problems Facing America**

Solutions to the economic problems that the U.S. faces are unpalatable, and there's a dangerous temptation to avoid dealing with fundamental issues.

By [Michael Sivy @MFSivy](#) Aug. 21, 2012



Getty Images

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The choice of Paul Ryan as the presumptive Republican candidate for Vice President has ensured that budgetary arithmetic will be a central issue in the election campaign. But it's important to remember, as the [Mock Turtle says in Alice in Wonderland](#), that arithmetic consists of four basic operations – Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision. Of these, Distraction is likely to be the tactic employed most frequently this election season. **The economic problems that America faces are fairly clear, but all the possible solutions are unpalatable.** So the candidates will probably try to avoid getting too specific or, alternatively, divert discussions into debates over technicalities. But even where technical questions are important, basic decisions about policy — and values — have to be made first. To see this in practical terms, it's worth taking a quick look at six of the most daunting financial issues that need to be dealt with.

**The National Debt.** Federal government debt now stands at 73% of annual GDP, not counting money the government owes to itself, such as the Social Security Trust Fund. [If current spending and tax rates \(including the Bush tax cuts\) are extended](#), debt will reach 93% within a decade, and will go into the danger zone in 15 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. In 25 years, it will reach nearly 200%, at which point the Federal debt will be insupportable, unless it is devalued significantly through inflation.

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**Taxes.** Total federal taxes are around 18% of GDP today, roughly what they've been since the 1950s. State and local taxes, however, have increased substantially



over that period. [Total taxes from all sources](#) are now a bit more than 34% of GDP, up from a low of 26% in the mid-1950s, but below highs of more than 36% reached several times in the past 15 years. So by historical standards, total taxes are not especially low. On the other hand, there is room to raise taxes a bit without going into unprecedented territory. To have a substantial impact, however, tax increases would have to fall on the middle class as well as the affluent. Extending the Bush tax cuts for the middle class and allowing taxes to rise to Clinton-era levels only for households with incomes over \$250,000 (and singles over \$200,000) would raise enough money to cut the deficit by just around 10% over the coming decade.

**Social Security.** Benefits are paid mostly from current Social Security payroll taxes. The Trust Fund is largely an accounting device of money the government owes to itself. In any event, the Trust Fund will be exhausted in less than 25 years, well before today's youngest workers retire. Eventually [taxes will be sufficient to pay only 75% of the benefits](#) that are currently promised. Either benefits have to be cut, Social Security taxes have to be raised, or the growing gap between the two has to be paid for with revenue from other taxes. By tinkering with various formulas, the 25% gap could be closed without too much pain. But the burden will still have to be spread between more and less affluent people, current and future retirees, and taxpayers in general.

(MORE: [Why We Must Change the Way We Police Banks](#))

**Pension Funds.** Everyone knows that many pension funds for public-sector employees are in trouble. The shortfall between the amount that should have been saved to pay for future benefits and the amount that actually has been saved totals hundreds of billions of dollars. But even that is a massively understated figure – the real shortfall is probably more than five times as big, or more than \$4 trillion. The reason: [Pension funds are greatly overestimating their likely future investment returns](#). Many funds assume a 7% to 8% compound annual return, when in fact 5% to 6% would be more realistic.

**Medicare.** [The cost of Medicare and Medicaid](#) is projected to rise from 5.4% of GDP to 7.2% in a decade and to at least 9.6% of GDP in 25 years. The Affordable Care Act tries to prevent even faster growth partly by trying to make the American

health-care system more efficient. But it also shifts some costs to the states, which will not reduce the total tax burden over the long term. And it reduces payments to doctors and hospitals, which could lead to fewer doctors, longer waiting times or a two-tier system in which people who can pay cash receive significantly better care. Even if the positive aspects of the new health-care law succeed in containing costs as planned, Medicare and Medicaid are projected to consume more than 40% of Federal revenues in 25 years, substantially outpacing the growth of tax receipts even if all of the Bush tax cuts are allowed to expire — including those for the middle class.

**Defense.** Military spending was more than 10% of GDP in the 1950s and hit a low of 3.7% in 2000 before the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. Since then, the figure has more than doubled in dollar terms, after adjustment for inflation, and [now accounts for more than 5.5% of U.S. GDP](#). At \$900 billion a year, defense is a huge chunk of the Federal budget, and trimming it could lessen the need to raise taxes or cut social programs. But any consequential cuts to the defense budget would require a broad consensus for a significantly paired down U.S. defense mission and such consensus do not exist right now.

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While any of these specific figures can be debated, collectively they make three things clear, in my view. First, America's biggest challenges are not solely financial – they include the lack of clear objectives that are broadly supported by the electorate. Second, there are powerful political incentives to avoid facing the most fundamental problems – or to evade them with endless debates over minor policy changes. Third, if these problems are not dealt with seriously, the U.S. economy will slide along for a while with below-average growth and above-average unemployment until debt and other financial problems become insupportable. In the end, no amount of denial and evasion can overcome the power of basic arithmetic.

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What Will Be the Biggest Issues in 2016?

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**You can probably guess what tops America's list of worries at the moment.**

By [Lindsey Cook](#) | Data Editor Jan. 3, 2016, at 6:00 a.m.

GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump could soon lead a country that's concerned about a multitude of things. CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Going into the New Year, Americans say terrorism is the greatest problem facing the country. Dissatisfaction with the government, a popular problem in 2015 and also the [most popular problem](#) in 2014, is second on the list, [according to Gallup](#).

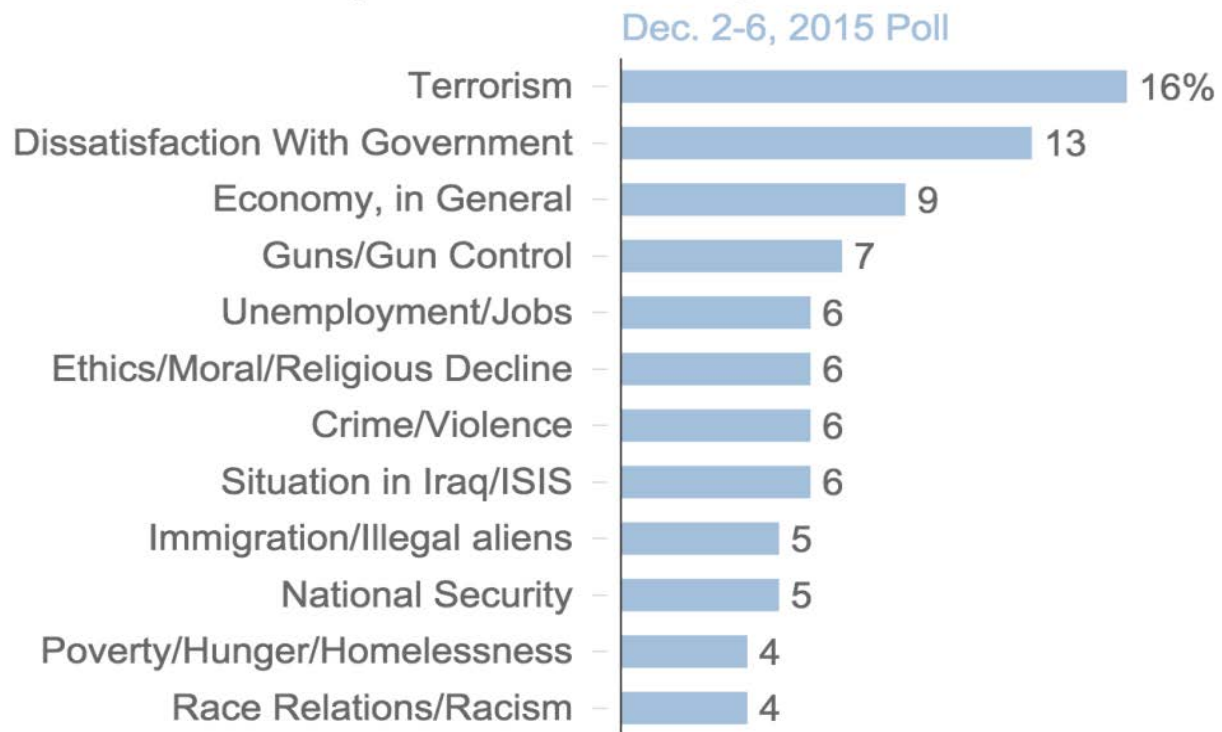
The **Republican** Party, commonly referred to as the **GOP** (abbreviation for Grand Old Party), is one of the two major contemporary political parties in the United States, the other being its historic rival, the Democratic Party.

[Republican Party \(United States\) - Wikipedia](#)

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## What Is the Most Important Problem Facing the U.S.?



Lindsey Cook for USN&WR

Data: Gallup

LINDSEY COOK FOR USN&WR; SOURCE: GALLUP

The early [December polling](#) followed the terrorist attacks in both Paris and San Bernardino, California. The ratio of roughly 1 in 6 Americans citing terrorism as the country's most important problem is the highest in a decade, though significantly lower than the 46 percent measurement after 9/11.

Along with the economy and unemployment, guns/gun control, crime/violence, the Islamic State group/the situation in Iraq and national security also topped the December list from Gallup. And in [another poll](#) by the Pew Research Center asking about the government's efforts to reduce terrorism, more people rated its performance negatively than positively for the first time since 9/11.

National security and terror-related issues will likely remain atop Americans' list of concerns into 2016 and through the presidential election season, especially if there are other high-profile attacks.

Meanwhile, concerns about dissatisfaction with the government have decreased in recent months, per Gallup, while Congress has increased its productivity this year, according to [Pew](#). Among its accomplishments this year, the Republican-controlled Congress passed [a replacement for No Child Left Behind](#), a [transportation funding bill](#) and the [USA Freedom Act](#), which curbed the NSA's surveillance capabilities.

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#### COURTESY PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Since September, Americans' concern about the umbrella category of economic problems has decreased from 35 percent to 21 percent, though the economy in general is still the third-most popular problem cited by Gallup respondents.

[According to Pew](#), more than half of Americans said they felt economic conditions a year from now will be about the same as they are now. **And although the same is better than getting worse, it shows Americans aren't expecting many improvements.**

All of this may mean good news for Republicans, as [Pew found](#) more Americans said Republicans are better equipped to deal with such threats. Additionally, the GOP led in terms of its members' ability to handle gun control – another top issue for Americans going into 2016. The party also had a slight edge on economic issues.

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Among the Republican presidential contenders, voters on the right say Donald Trump and Sen. Ted Cruz are the best suited to handle the Islamic State group, with 47 percent favoring Trump and 21 percent favoring Cruz, according to a [Dec. 17-21 poll from CNN](#).

Tags: [Gallup](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [terrorism](#)

[Lindsey Cook](#) DATA EDITOR

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[What are some of the problems in America today? - Answers](#)

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