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The Threat from Trump

Dear Friend,

I've never been more worried about the fate of our democracy than I am today. And I'm sure you're worried, too.

Because Donald Trump is the closest thing we've ever had to an authoritarian – or maybe even a fascist -- in the Oval Office.

His scapegoating of immigrants and refugees ... his hyper-nationalism ... his blatant lying ... his disregard for the Constitution ... his disdain for the press ... his elevation of ultra-rightist Steve Bannon ... his corporatist Cabinet ... his clinical narcissism ... These all are very bad signs.

And so even though most of the work we do at the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign remains centered on cleaning up politics right here at home in Wisconsin, I've been spending a good deal of my time lately writing about and talking about the risks that Trump poses.

I've been to Cross Plains and Elkhorn and New Glarus and Oregon, and I'm heading up to Waupaca and Ashland in the next couple of months to talk to as many people as possible about this urgent situation. I always try to provide hope, and I always give people some suggestions about what they can do. (See next page.)

If you'd like me to come speak in your community, please email me at rothschild@wisdc.org.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Matt

1941 Dr Seuss cartoon illustrating the U.S. stance denying Jews safe haven from the Nazis. Notice the slogan on the shirt. Sound familiar?

... and the Wolf chewed up the children and spit out their bones ...
But those were Foreign Children and it really didn't matter."



12 Things You Can Do to Resist Trump and Defend Democracy

1. Protest nonviolently. The women's marches and the spontaneous rallies at the airports were great examples. Be creative and visual: Greenpeace's "Resist" sign behind the White House is a good example.

2. Join organizations that are under assault. Planned Parenthood. Council on American-Islamic Relations. Standing Rock protesters. Labor unions. Environmental groups. Immigrant rights groups.

3. Join organizations that are strategizing on how to resist. ACLU, Voces de la Frontera, Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, interfaith groups, and others.

4. Sign petitions against hate and pledge solidarity and nonviolent resistance. Sign a petition that pledges you to nonviolently resist Trump's assaults on our democratic rights and to offer solidarity to groups that are challenging him and support to individuals in his cross-hairs. At the very least, if you're in Wisconsin, sign a petition against hate at www.ResistHateWI.com.

5. If you're religious, involve your church or temple in the efforts to confront Trump. Almost everyone has a social justice branch that you can climb on to.

6. Contact your own legislators, especially if they are Republican. See Indivisibleguide.com on how to do this most effectively.

7. Write letters to the editor. Make one point clearly, without too much anger.

8. Talk to reasonable people who voted for Trump but now may regret it or at least have an open mind. Remember: Not all of them have Confederate flags on their bumpers. Many Trump voters are decent people who felt jilted by the system and wanted to register a protest vote against it.

9. Engage in, or support, art and music and poetry of resistance. Sometimes you can reach a lot more people this way.

10. Watch "Democracy Now!" or go to robertreich.org or other progressive media outlets to keep informed. Do not watch a lot of politics on Cable TV! (It will only depress you.)

11. Study Fascism and share information widely — on social media and in person. Read Robert Paxton's "The Anatomy of Fascism." Read Erich Fromm's

"Escape from Freedom." Re-read "1984."

12. Protest with friends! It's crucial to do this political work with people you like, people who are kind and funny, people who know how to relax and have a good time on top of doing the protest work. They will sustain you. But if it's just a lonely chore, you'll burn out—and that's no good for you, and no good for the world. Take heed of this great advice from the historian Howard Zinn: "To live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory." So let's defy all that is bad around us, and affirm all that is good.



Unrig the Maps!

On Jan. 27, a panel of federal judges ordered the Wisconsin legislature to redraw the district maps of the state. The court gave the legislature and the governor until Nov. 1 of this year to get the job done.

The court was right to stress that "the people of Wisconsin already have endured several elections under an unconstitutional reapportionment scheme."

But the court put too much faith in the ability of the Republican leaders in the legislature to devise new maps that will pass constitutional muster. The judges said that the record in this case "contains no evidence of the malice or intransigence" that would justify the unusual remedy of taking the map-drawing out of the legislature's hands.

The judges underestimate the maliciousness and intransigence of the Republican leadership, which has now given a blank check to two expensive law firms to appeal the judges' ruling that the original maps were unconstitutional.

Special Interest Follies

Diapers Full of Cash

Republican Gov. Scott Walker accepted \$42,500 last October from five first-time donors who are owners and executives of a Michigan company that won a contract in 2016 with the state of Wisconsin worth \$6.2 million a year.

The company, J & B Medical Supply, of Wixom, Mich., has supplied diapers for children and adults enrolled in the state's Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus programs since 2010. J & B's latest contract agreed to in 2016 runs through 2018 with two one-year renewals that could extend it through 2020.

The contributions to Walker last Oct. 18 came from four members of the Shaya family and a company executive, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign found. Charlene Shaya, Mary Shaya and Abu Sheikh each contributed \$12,500 to Walker – the governor's largest individual contributions during the last four months of 2016. Two others, Julian Shaya and Stephen Shaya, contributed \$3,000 and \$2,000, respectively, to the governor.

Walker's campaign report, which covered the last four months of 2016, did not identify any of the five contributors as being with J & B Medical Supply because campaign finance laws were changed in 2015 to provide less information to the public about big campaign donors. Previous state law required candidates to identify the employers and occupations of individuals who contributed more than \$100 annually. Now, candidates only have to identify a large contributor's occupation.

Walker's report identified Charlene and Mary Shaya each as an "MD," Sheikh as a "CFO," and Stephen Shaya as a "Physician." Julian Shaya, whose last name was incorrectly spelled "Shaga" in Walker's report, was



identified as a "VP."

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign is urging the legislature to restore the requirement that donors list their employers.

Betsy DeVos in Wisconsin

Trump's new Secretary of Education is no stranger to Wisconsin. In fact, Betsy DeVos donated \$79,000 to mostly Republican and conservative legislative candidates in this state since 2000.

Far more influential than her direct contributions, however, have been the phony issue ads run by her group, the American Federation for Children. She co-founded the group and chaired it, and it has spent a whopping \$6.4 million in Wisconsin since 2010. She herself donated \$125,000 to the federation's work in Wisconsin just last October.

One of the leaders of the American Federation for Children is none other than Scott Jensen, the former Republican Speaker of the Assembly, who was disgraced during the Caucus Scandal of 2001. Jensen and the American Federation for Children have pushed school privatization and the voucher program in Wisconsin very successfully. State spending on the voucher program has ballooned from less than \$1 million in 1990 to more than \$270 million in 2016-17.

In 1997, DeVos told the Capitol Hill newspaper *Roll Call*: "I have decided ... to stop taking offense at the suggestion that we are buying influence. Now, I simply concede the point."



Mark Your Calendar

Our **annual meeting** is **Mon., May 22**, at the same place as last year: The Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Rd, just south of the Beltline in rural Madison. The event goes from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. Featured speakers this year include Kevin Kennedy, the retired director and general counsel of the Government Accountability Board, and Kimberlee Wright, the executive director of Midwest Environmental Advocates. Program details to follow. We look forward to seeing you there.

Make Your Voice Heard— Share Big with The Big Share on March 7th!



The Democracy Campaign, as a proud member of Community Shares of Wisconsin, will be one of more than 60 nonprofits participating in the **Tuesday, March 7th** online day of giving—***The Big Share***.

Whether you give to your favorite cause, or share your support for social and environmental justice on social media, The Big Share gives everyone the chance to build a community where all of our neighbors can thrive. Now more than ever, The Big Share gives you the tools for making your voice heard.

Become a Groundbreaker for *The Big Share*. Give now and WDC will share your image and testimonial on social media ([#CSWBigShare](#)) as a way of encouraging other donors to give. Or, **designate in advance your donation as a matching gift**. If you appreciate the work we do—exposing and chronicling the role of money in Wisconsin politics, campaigning for clean government, and now sounding the alarms about Trump’s threat to our democracy—your matching gift will motivate others to give more. Email speer@wisdc.org for more information. **Find us on The Big Share — bit.ly/TheBigShare WisDC**



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