AMERICAN AMNESIA

HOW THE WAR ON GOVERNMENT LED US TO FORGET WHAT MADE AMERICA PROSPER
AMERICAN AMNESIA

HOW THE WAR ON GOVERNMENT LED US TO FORGET WHAT MADE AMERICA PROSPER
## Biggest Winners of Clean Air Act

By reducing particulate pollution, the Clean Air Act added years to the lives of Americans.

### Calculated gain in life expectancy, metro areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Gain (years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weirton, W. Va.</td>
<td>+5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita, Kan.</td>
<td>+4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoenix</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Castle, Pa.</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile, Ala.</td>
<td>+3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown, Ohio</td>
<td>+3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattanooga, Tenn.</td>
<td>+3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pueblo, Colo.</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsport, Tenn.</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham, Ala.</td>
<td>+2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimates of three life-years saved per 100 microgram decrease of total suspended particles per cubic meter.

Michael Greenstone; E.P.A.
Average Life Expectancy

Year (1550-2015)

USA

UK
US education by birth cohort, 1876-1982

Source: Goldin and Katz (2007) and additional data from Lawrence Katz.
“He who receives an idea from me, receives instruction himself without lessening mine; as he who lights his taper at mine, receives light without darkening me.” – Thomas Jefferson
Adult* per capita cigarette consumption and major smoking and health events, United States, 1900–2012

1964 Surgeon General’s report on smoking and health
1986 Surgeon General’s report on secondhand smoke
Federal cigarette tax doubles
Federal $0.62 tax increase
2006 Surgeon General’s report on secondhand smoke (an update)
Synar Amendment enacted
Nicotine medications available over-the-counter
Master Settlement Agreement
Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act
FDA proposed rule

Confluence of evidence linking smoking and cancer
Broadcast ad ban
Year
Per capita number of cigarettes smoked per year
0
1,000
2,000
3,000
4,000
5,000

A timeline of lead reduction

1970
CDC sets acceptable blood-lead level of 40 µg/dL

1973
EPA mandates a phaseout of leaded gasoline

1978
CPSC bans residential lead paint

1991
CDC sets acceptable blood-lead level of 10 µg/dL

1996
EPA eliminates lead from all U.S. motor fuel

2012
CDC describes blood-lead level of >5 µg/dL as elevated
Life expectancy vs. health expenditure over time (1970-2014)

Health spending measures the consumption of health care goods and services, including personal health care (curative care, rehabilitative care, long-term care, ancillary services and medical goods) and collective services (prevention and public health services as well as health administration), but excluding spending on investments. Shown is total health expenditure (financed by public and private sources).

Data source: Health expenditure from the OECD; Life expectancy from the World Bank. Licensed under CC-BY-SA by the author Max Roser. The data visualization is available at OurWorldInData.org and there you find more research and visualizations on this topic.
Probability of Surviving to Age 50: The US is Falling Behind

Source: Authors’ calculations using data from The Human Mortality Database (www.mortality.org/), updating an earlier analysis performed by Barney Cohen at the National Academies.
On the Rise

Death rates have been climbing for middle-age white Americans, which experts attribute to drug abuse, alcoholism and suicide.

Mortality rates, 45 to 54 age group, per 100,000 people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>U.S. white</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>U.S. Hispanic</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mortality by cause for white non-Hispanics, 45 to 54 age group, per 100,000 people

- Drug/alcohol overdoses
- Lung cancer
- Suicides
- Chronic liver diseases
- Diabetes

Source: Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the U.S.A.
The United States’ once-strong lead in middle class incomes is shrinking.
YADDA YADDA YADDA: “Declaration of Independence” and “Articles of Confederation” in English-language books (as Share of All Trigrams), 1800-2000

Source: Google Ngram Viewer (http://books.google.com/ngrams)
In the commencement of a revolution which received its birth from the usurpations of tyranny, nothing was more natural than that the public mind should be influenced by an extreme spirit of jealousy…. The zeal for liberty became predominant and excessive… The object certainly was a valuable one, and deserved our utmost attention. But, sir, there is another object equally important and which our enthusiasm rendered us little capable of regarding; I mean a principle of strength and stability in the organization of our government, and vigor in its operations.

—Alexander Hamilton
In the commencement of a revolution which received its birth from the usurpations of tyranny, nothing was more natural than that the public mind should be influenced by an extreme spirit of jealousy.... The zeal for liberty became predominant and excessive... The object certainly was a valuable one, and deserved our utmost attention. But, sir, there is another object equally important and which our enthusiasm rendered us little capable of regarding; I mean a principle of strength and stability in the organization of our government, and vigor in its operations.

—Lin-Manuel Miranda

Trust the federal government to do what is right just about always/most of the time ...
A tectonic shift away from the center

Average conservative ideology score of House Republicans and milestones in John Boehner’s political career.

Source: Voteview.com
Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974
Clean Air Act
Massive Expansion of Social Security
Interstate Highway System
Creation of Federal Aid to Education
Creation of NASA
Massive Increase in Aid for Higher Education
Hiked Minimum Wage
Americans with Disabilities Act
Ban on Cigarette Advertising
Water Quality Improvement Act
Creation of Amtrak
Consumer Product Safety Act
“Rugged individualism” is “nothing but a political banner to cover up greed.”

“Dogmatic ideological parties tend to splinter the political and social fabric of a nation, lead to governmental crises and deadlocks, and stymie the compromises so often necessary to preserve freedom and achieve progress.”
“We the people, acting through our government, protect and strengthen our natural resources, human and material; lift up the standards of health, education, and welfare for ourselves and our children at all levels of individual income; mitigate individual misfortune; and execute projects not appropriate to private action.”

-Paul Hoffman, CEO of Studebaker and head of Committee on Economic Development
Share of Campaign Contributions in Federal Elections from top 0.1 Percent, 1980-2012

SHOW ME THE MONEY
5/13/07: Mylan announces purchase of Merck’s generics unit, including EpiPen

SOURCE: Truven Health Analytics

Supplemental Slides
“There are 47 percent of the people... who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you-name-it...

“It would be popular for me to stand up and say I’m going to give you government money to pay for your college, but I’m not going to promise that [applause]...And don’t expect the government to forgive the debt that you take on.”
Healthcare Spending per capita vs. Average Life Expectancy Among OECD Countries

Average Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)

Total Expenditure on Health per capita in USD

Linear Trend line

USA

Japan

S. Korea

UK

Mexico

Hungary
THE RICH AND THE MEGARICH

Since 1980, the average real income of the 1 percent has shot up more than 175 percent, while the bottom 90 percent's real income didn't budge. But as this chart shows, the vast majority of gains have gone to the tippy-top.

Share of Occupations in Top 0.1 Percent (incl. Capital Gains), 2004

- Non-Finance Executives: 40.8%
- Financial Executives: 18.4%
- Not Working or Deceased: 6.3%
- Lawyers: 6.2%
- Real Estate: 4.7%
- Medical: 4.4%
- Arts, Media, Sports: 3.1%
- Computers, Math, Engineering, Technical: 3.0%
- Professors and Scientists: 1.1%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>% Wealthy in Favor</th>
<th>% General Public in Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government must see that no one is without food, clothing or shelter</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum wage high enough so that no family with a full-time worker falls below official poverty line</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government in Washington ought to see to it that everyone who wants to work can find a job</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) should be increased rather than decreased or kept the same</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The federal government should provide jobs for everyone able and willing to work who cannot find a job in private employment</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1972-2011 Average: 8.7% of GDP

Discretionary spending with caps only

Discretionary spending with caps and sequesters
Lobbying Expenditures In 2009 by Industry

- General Business
- Health
- Finance/Insurance/Real Estate
- Energy/Natural Resources
- Communications/Electronics
- Other
- Transportation
- Ideological/Single-Issue
- Defense
- Agribusiness
- Construction
- Labor
- Lawyers/Lobbyists
How often market is described as free relative to how often government is described as free

Source: Searches of American Historical Newspapers, Proquest, and New York Times online archives; George, Rhetoric of the Right.
How often managers described as creative relative to how often workers described so

Source: Searches of New York Times online archives; George, Rhetoric of the Right.
Google “Ngrams”: “capitalists,” “entrepreneurs,” and “business owners”
The Business of America is...Lobbying
(Expenditures in Billions of Real Dollars)
“Countervailing Power Ratio”

(combined business lobbying divided by combined diffuse-interest and labor lobbying)

Source: Drutman, *The Business of America is Lobbying*
1st Edition (1948)
No longer is modern man able to believe "that government governs best which governs least." …[W]here the complex economic conditions of life necessitate social coordination and planning, there can sensible men of good will be expected to invoke the… government.”

4th Edition (1958)
“No longer does modern man seem to act as if he believed: “That government governs best which governs least”... [rest is the same]

9th Edition (1973)
Cut entirely.
How often *regulation* is described favorably relative to how often it is described unfavorably

Source: Searches of *New York Times* online archives; George, *Rhetoric of the Right*,
How often *business* is described as *big* relative to how often *government* is described as *big*.
Google “Ngrams” in English-Language Books: “free market” versus “free government”
Relative frequency of capitalist, entrepreneur, and business owner

Source: Searches of New York Times online archives; George, Rhetoric of the Right.
My idea of a perfect government is one guy who sits in a small room at a desk, and the only thing he's allowed to decide is who to nuke.
THE RICH AND THE MEGARICH

Since 1980, the average real income of the 1 percent has shot up more than 175 percent, while the bottom 90 percent’s real income didn’t budge. But as this chart shows, the vast majority of gains have gone to the tippy-top.

Share of Occupations in Top 0.1 Percent (incl. Capital Gains), 2004

- Non-Finance Executives: 40.8%
- Financial Executives: 18.4%
- Not Working or Deceased: 6.3%
- Lawyers: 6.2%
- Real Estate: 4.7%
- Medical: 4.4%
- Arts, Media, Sports: 3.1%
- Computers, Math, Engineering, Technical: 3.0%
- Professors and Scientists: 1.1%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>% Wealthy in Favor</th>
<th>% General Public in Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government must see that no one is without food, clothing or shelter</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum wage high enough so that no family with a full-time worker falls below official poverty line</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government in Washington ought to see to it that everyone who wants to work can find a job</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) should be increased rather than decreased or kept the same</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The federal government should provide jobs for everyone able and willing to work who cannot find a job in private employment</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>