The Fortnightly Rant

The Countdown to... What?

We face another 354 days of gridlock by the fifth. Even the best outcome will bring a mixture of relief and dread.

Two-thirds of the country will sigh with relief if #45 fails to mutate into #47. Then they’ll hold their breath as the remaining third—armed, angry, and impervious to norms—will debate what it’s going to do about it.

If they were Democrats they would argue amongst themselves then splinter into factions. That is a law as inexorable as gravity.

Not this crowd, though. These are rough and ready Republicans, eager to follow a strong, inspiring leader, right into the Gates of Hell!

There will be no shortage of applicants for the position. This, too, is a law. Appropriately enough, it’s market-based—the law of supply and demand.

The gold rushes of you have all petered out, but with the right wing forever standing there to be fleeced, would-be demagogues will be scrambling to grab the shears.

To appreciate the scope of this market, just turn on your car radio: “Prepare for the future with Patriot-ic Survival Food.” “Protect yourself from the Loonism that is social disaster. Invest in a Gold IRA.”

“Say you just shot somebody? No sweat—so long as you bought that insurance policy Sean Hannity spoke.” The gold rushes of yore have all petered out, but with the right wing forever standing there to be fleeced, would-be demagogues will be scrambling to grab the shears.

We’re going to need a leader, and it’s going to be tough. The choice will be driven by what the market determines—our political landscape manages to accomplish what it’s clearly trying to accomplish. [checks notes... Um... don’t know quite how to put this, but...]

are you ready for a fascist dictator-ship?

We are emboldened to put this matter so bluntly because it is now an approved journalistic practice to report on “not the odds, but the stakes.”

The foremost proponent of this fresh approach is Jay Rosen, a professor at NYU. He argues that the “organizing principle we most need from journalists covering the 2024 election is not who has what chances of winning, but the consequences for our democracy.”

As the nation’s senior news organization, we have done this instinctively since taking over the paper. It’s reassuring to see others catching up.

Having thus calmed and fortified our editorial selves, perhaps we can now confront recent events.

Former President Donald Trump, taking time out from his many court appearances in which he has been answering a long list of felony charges, appeared in Claremont, New Hampshire on Veterans Day, as part of his campaign to regain the White House.

“We pledge to you,” he told his followers, “that we will root out the communists, fascists, and the radical left thugs that live like vermin within the confines of our country.”... “Because we did not watch the video, we cannot say if he was wearing an armband as he spoke. The New York Times clearly did not get Jay Rosen’s memo. In his headline read, “Trump Takes Veterans Day Speech in a Very Different Direction.”

The Washington Post was less cir-cumspect. Its headline read, “Trump calls political enemies ‘vermin,’ echoing dictators Hitler, Mussolini.” The Post quoted Columbia University’s Timothy Naftali saying, “When you dehumanize an opponent, you strip them of their constitutional rights to participate securely in a democracy because you’re saying they’re not human. That’s what dictators do.”

NYU historian Ben-Giat told the Post, “calling people ‘vermin’ was used effectively by Hitler and Mussolini to dehumanize people and encourage their followers to engage in violence.”

With resources to spare, the Post took time to offer the Trump campaign an opportunity to respond. “[T]hose who try to make that ridiculous assertion,” said spokesman Steven Cheung, “are clearly snowflakes grasping for anything because they are suffering from Trump De-irritant Syndrome and their entire existence will be crushed when President Trump returns to the White House.”

“Cheung later clarified,” accorded to the Post, “that he meant to say their ‘salvage, miserable existence’ instead of their ‘entire existence.’”

Well, that’s certainly much better.

A hundred years ago last week, Adolf Hitler and two thousand of his fascist followers attempted a violent coup in Munich. It failed, but they persisted.

Less than ten years later Hitler was elected Chancellor. Over the course of 20 months, through a series of ten acts passed in the Reichstag, Germany went from being a democratic parliamentary republic to Nazi totalitarianism.

Playing into their stereotyped image, Germans have a word for this process. Among electrical engineers, Gleichschaltung means “all on the same circuit.” For historians of the Third Reich, Gleichschaltung connotes “coordination.”

In American English, it’s Project 2025—a 920-page blueprint published by the Heritage Foundation. It may be named for the year when the Foundation’s funders hope that #45 will become #47. Many of its hundreds of authors were officials in his administration.

On the other hand—since there is a chance that by that time, #45’s presidential designation may be superseded by an eight-digit ID from the Bureau of Prisons—2025 may just be the last year our ruling class intends to put up with democracy. They know they can always find an ay-yet undiscovered figurehead.

Whatever the details of its origin story, Project 2025 is ready to go. An elaborate plan to coordinate a broad swath of objectives—tearing down the wall between church and state, eliminating the IRS, gutting Social Security, tightening voting restric-tions—to create an explicitly reac-tionary state.

We had better be ready.

The Alleged News®

Seeing Through the Economic Bait and Switch

Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, recently issued a scathing statement about the shameful state of the United Nations’ economy. On October 31, 2023, De Schutter called out several top private employers in the U.S., Amazon, Walmart, and DoorDash for “systematically trapping their workers in a cycle of poverty.”

He said, “Jobs are supposed to provide a pathway out of poverty, yet in all three companies the business model seems to be to shift operating costs onto the public by relying on government benefits to supplement miserably low wages.”

In a related letter to the U.S. government, De Schutter wrote, “Despite being among the wealthiest countries in the world, the United States has a high rate of poverty among workers.”

Such representations by the representative of a top international body ought to be a mark of shame for the U.S., which has historical-ly marked its progress by the fact that its economy provides a path where people’s dreams come true.

In contrast to De Schutter’s rhetoric, corporate media has been quite content, relying increasingly on the word “resilient” as a popular de-scriptor for the economy as a whole. According to The Financial Times, “The stirring resilience in the U.S. economy to date has stemmed from one primary force: consumer spend-
The story we are expected to internalize, in direct conflict with our own financial worries, is that we must be content with the nation’s financial status quo because stocks are performing well and corporate balance sheets look good.

There is another story, one that is consistent with individual bottom lines. “International human rights law recognizes a right to a living wage,” wrote De Schutter. “Workers should be provided, at a minimum, with a ‘living wage,’ regularly adapted in accordance with costs of living.”

De Schutter’s assertion that Americans have the right to earn a living wage is one that rarely enters mainstream U.S. discourse. When people are denied their rights, they will rise up to claim them, and the recent surge in union activity and strikes is an indicator that growing numbers of people are seeing through the economic bait and switch.

The changing narrative on wealth inequality, wage stagnation, and economic health is reflected in the simple and direct message that United Auto Workers (UAW) president Shawn Fain regularly displays on his “Eat the Rich” shirt. UAW members are voting on major wage gains that their union won from the Big Three automakers after weeks of militant strike activity grounded in an entirely different set of values than those that frame a rosy economic outlook.

The phrase “Eat the Rich” has its origins in the French Revolution and the anger of the poor aimed at 18th-century aristocracy. The quote, “When the people shall have nothing more to eat, they will eat the rich,” is attributed to French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Its popularity in contemporary U.S. society is a warning to those in the media and the halls of government against selling the lie that corporate values are equivalent to people’s values.

Congress and the White House could easily thwart the growing popular tide by adopting any number of simple and direct policy changes. Echoing progressive recommendations, De Schutter made several suggestions in his letter to the government: if the minimum wage is too low, raise the federal minimum wage and build in cost-of-living increases. If unions are too weak, close the loopholes that allow corporate employers to undermine union activity.

One can understand why the Biden administration wants to cheer on the state of the U.S. economy. In spite of congressional gridlock and, especially, Republican roadblocks to commence economic legislation, economic stability is one of the central responsibilities that government is charged with, and achieving success in this realm is key to Biden’s reelection efforts in 2024. So, his administration is putting a happy face on the economy and papering over the contradictions between stock values and real wages.

One can also understand why the corporate media cheer on economic indicators that are important to the wealthy. Media companies are cutthroat from the same commercial cloth as Amazon, Walmart, and DoorDash, the corporations that De Schutter singled out for exploitative treatment of their workers.

What is less understandable is why the public has accepted the bait and switch in economic values for so long.


The Healthy Families Act would, Carolître in badgering O’Brien, Sand- ers used his allotted time in-...
Influential Crackpots

According to the all-seeing, all-knowing Wikipedia, "Vance Muse [1890, Moran, Texas–1950, Houston, Texas] was an American businessman and conservative lobbyist." This was an "aha moment" for our alleged editor. Barely off the turnip truck—this being the late 1970s—he first learned about Right to Work laws from a couple of public relations flacks working for Hill & Knowlton. Their immaculately-dressed presence in the offices of newspapers like the Alleged News® put Southern Conservatism on the map.

"Baby Steps Will Not Avert Climate Catastrophe, UN Warns" by Jessica Corbett

The world is failing to get a grip on the climate crisis.

That's how United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres began his Tuesday remarks about a new U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) report on nationally determined contributions (NDCs), or countries' plans to meet the goals of the Paris agreement, including its 1.5°C temperature target. The UNFCCC analysis "provides yet more evidence that the world remains massively off track to limiting global warming to 1.5°C and avoiding the worst of climate catastrophe," said Guterres. "As the report shows, global ambition stagnated over the past year and national climate plans are strikingly misaligned with the science." Under current NDCs from the 195 Paris agreement parties, global greenhouse gas emissions are set to rise by nearly 9 percent by 2030, compared with 2010 levels, according to the analysis. While that's a slight improvement on the 10.6 percent increase from last year's assessment, it's still nowhere near the cuts that experts say are needed.

The analysis of NDCs comes as scientists project that 2023 will be the hottest year in 125,000 years and just over two weeks before the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, a summit controversially led by Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

"As the reality of climate chaos pounds communities around the world—with ever fiercer floods, fires, and droughts—the chasm between need and action is more menacing than ever," Guterres declared. "COP28 must be the place to urgently close the climate ambition gap."

U.N. Climate Change Executive-Secretary Simon Stiell echoed Guterres' call to action, stressing in a statement that the new assessment makes clear governments are merely "taking baby steps to avert the climate crisis."

"It shows why governments must make bold strides forward at COP28 in Dubai, to get on track," Stiell said. "This means COP28 must be a clear turning point. Governments must not only agree what stronger climate actions will be taken but also start showing exactly how to deliver them."

The UNFCCC document was released on the same day as State of Climate Action 2023, which its creators called "the world's most influential crackpot."
What we know now about our increasing demand for workforce to address climate change, is that it is a global issue, and we must act now.

Given the current political climate, it is clear that the need for such a workforce is urgent. The President's recent executive order on climate action is a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done.

As we look to the future, it is important that we prioritize the development of a skilled workforce that can address the challenges of climate change. This will require investment in education and training programs, as well as support for businesses that are innovating solutions.

The urgency of the situation cannot be overstated, and we must act quickly to prepare our workforce for the challenges ahead.

#ClimateAction #WorkforceDevelopment #ClimateChange
He also believes God ordained his becoming Speaker. He does not believe in the separation of church and state outlined in the First Amendment.

Every Republican in the House, apparently comfortable with these views and bowing to Trump, voted for Johnson as Speaker. Johnson in that important leadership role, and being second in the line of succession should the presidency is a chilling thought—almost as frightening as Trump being president again.

What has happened to the Grand Old Party?

Cynthia Muse
Rye, N.H.
Cynthia:
Not to put too fine a point on it, the GOP went to Hell, and is trying to drag us with it.

The Editor

Defense Dept. Affirms Climate Change

To the Editor:

Back in 2016, Pentagon leadership called on military services to assess “the effects of climate change on the DoD mission” and act where necessary to overcome “risks that develop as a result of climate change” (DoD Directive 4715.21, January 14, 2016).

The military identified climate-change-related risks, including extreme weather events, flooding, fires, drought and biodiversity issues, as threats to national security and military operations. The U.S. military has more than 1,000 military bases, which are vulnerable to climate-related vulnerabilities.

The Editor

Donald and the Mini-Chumps

Dear Editor,

Don’t it seem incredible to you that the more breadth and depth of the former President’s mischief is exposed in the courts, the more wildly popular he gets in the polls?

Not only that, but his followers insist even more loudly that they stand on the moral high ground above all others. Trump has monstrously done God’s work by swaying the Supreme Court over the anti-abortion side, and that’s all MAGA Christians really need to know about him.

These MAGA Americans devoted to Julius Trump, or Donald Chump (take your pick), have two additional propositions they would like the rest of us godless Americans to consider:

First, we must champion the idea that the more the breadth and depth of the former President’s mischief is exposed in the courts, the more wildly popular he gets in the polls.

Second, a politician who is charged with many counts of penal crime, and very likely will be convicted of some of them before the next election, should still be able to stand for re-election to the office that supervises the highest department of criminal justice in the land.

Placing the fox in charge of the chicken coop just makes perfect sense to MAGA folks, Kimball Shinkosley

Woods Cross, Utah

Kimball:

Those Mini-Chumps are salivating because they mistakenly believe that they’re the ones who will be getting all them tasty chicken.

The Editor

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The Editor

Matt Stacy, Hate Mail, et al.

Masochistic support for the kind of megalomaniacal demagogue who is President Donald Trump is contributing to the downfall of American democracy. Those who support Trump for reasons of ideology, policy, or personality are aiding and abetting his crimes.

The Editor

There’s also a roadside historical marker noting the practice of the Lee family by “an Indian war party” in 1782. No explanation why they were at war. No context. Just those savages.

I don’t look very savage in this photo. I’m even smiling. It’s a sunny day. I’m probably anticipating having fun. It was a long time ago, but I remember Mrs. Weaver. She was nice.

W.D. Ehhrath

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Pappas Votes to Censure Tlaib

To the Editor:

The recent censure vote of Rep. Rashida Tlaib [D-Mich.] approved by the U.S. Congress is one of the most hypocritical ever. Americans can now be assured that our rights to speak out against tyranny at home and abroad has been officially dismissed and our 1st Amendment rights to free speech should be damned. The insidious march of intolerance of American citizens’ efforts to shout down infamy, bigotry, inhumanity, and even genocide will not be accepted unless of course you support the government position or be silent. Politicians in both parties, including New Hampshire representative...
Chris Pappas voted with “strings attached” to censor a meritorious vote of Congress, stating the obvious. We are “obviously” now all victims of future censures of our previously constitutionally granted right to free speech. Thanks Mr. Pappas, and may your pockets be full while we work toward marching you out of office.

Daniel Del Carlo
Warner, N.H.

Daniel: Great. Another hat-trick issue, another vote about the same issue in a precociously-balancing ruised district.

[See letter from William Trently, above.]

Sometimes some Democrats seem no more rational than your average Republican. You wrote as a letter. Did you write Pappas?

The Editor

The GOP is Coming for Grant’s Grob to The Editor:

As Congress struggles to fund our government, Republicans are preparing to sneak into the next government funding bill the “Fiscal Stability Act” that is intended to destroy Social Security and Medicare. The Fiscal Stability Act is legislation that would establish a Commission to “strengthen America’s fiscal health and stabilize our debt,” according to its sponsors. Both bill’s sponsors have a long, consistent history of trying to diminish or eliminate Social Security and Medicare by making false and misleading claims. This legislation should never be introduced or considered by Congress.

With this legislation, the GOP is continuing its effort to gut these programs. Advocates will assert that the trust funds for these programs will run out at some near-future date—only true if Congress fails to act. They will claim that “entitlements are killing us.” Proponents will advance various methods that they say will “save” these programs, such as reducing benefits, raising the eligibility age, privatizing the programs, etc. Sponsors will not advocate for the obvious solution: raise the cap on FICA wages and raise the rate on Medicare deductions to cover the current cost of benefits and insure the long-term viability of Social Security and Medicare.

The trust funds for these programs do not hold cash; they hold U.S. Treasury securities. When securities must be cashed in to cover benefit payments, the U.S. Government must use tax dollars to buy back the securities. This is debt service, pure and simple. The U.S. Government is required to honor this debt; it is not an option. Legislation to establish a Commission to “study” ways to circumvent paying U.S. Government debt, and gut these long-standing social programs should never see the light of day.

Paul Colly
Dover, N.H.

Paul: The media can no more prevent politicians from flowing like a river. What they could have done, though—and should have done, in our view—it tell the truth about public lies.
The Gipper was so charming, though...and JFK before him. Use it or lose it, the saying goes. By the time New Gingrich came along, the media had correctly forgotten what a lie is. Republicans, in particular, saw an opportunity. Paul Colly, in his latest article, writes of the recent elections. However, make no mistake about it, the next election will be determined whether we keep that light of hope alive or take the path that will lead us to a headlong plummet to the dust of hope.

Rich DiPentima
Portsmouth, N.H.

Rich: It hardly seems possible, but hurring a well-documented medical emergency or a prompter-than-expected folly conviction, there’s a pretty good chance that a year from now the nation’s fate—and the world’s—will depend on whether some people outnumbers lunatics at the polls.
The Editor

Some Things Never Change, Part 1

Dear Editor:

Over 2,500 years ago the Greek philosopher Sophocles wrote, “The tyrant is a child of Pride / Who drinks from his sickening cup / Recklessness and vanity, / Until from his high crest headlong / He plummets to the dust of hope.” These words are just as applicable today as they were when first written. We are still dealing with tyrants whose pride, vanity, and recklessness put nations and the world at risk.

If Sophocles were alive today, he would not be surprised to see the likes of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, who, blinded by their own pride, vanity, and thirst for power, are prepared to destroy themselves and their nations. No matter how many years pass we remain plagued by the same flaws.

Donald Trump, who has been charged with 91 felonies, has committed enormous tax and bank fraud, and sexual assaults against women, remains the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 2024. Talk about plummeting headlong to the dust of hope!
The fate of the nation rests with us. Despite the efforts of the tyrant and his lieutenants to deny people the right to vote, distort the truth, create false narratives and enemies, deny reality, science, and truth, hope is still alive, as we see from the results of the recent elections. However, make no mistake about it, the next election will be determined whether we keep that light of hope alive or take the path that will lead us to a headlong plummet to the dust of hope.

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Dear Editor:

We are “obviously” now all victims of the recent elections. However, make no mistake about it, the next election will be determined whether we keep that light of hope alive or take the path that will lead us to a headlong plummet to the dust of hope.

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The Editor

Some Things Never Change, Part 2

Dear Editor:

Let me propose a metaphor suggesting some things never change: From Demagogue To Authoritarian.

Demagogue: from the Greek demos, people + agogos, leading.

A leader or orator who appeals to popular desires or prejudices to further personal interests, a racketeer (OED).

The Authoritarian, from “Char- acters,” by Greek philosopher Theophrastus (c. 370-287 BC).

“Of all the tyrants of whose pride, vanity, and recklessness put nations and the world at risk. If the tyrant were alive today, he would not be surprised to see the likes of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, who, blinded by their own pride, vanity, and thirst for power, are prepared to destroy themselves and their nations. No matter how many years pass we remain plagued by the same flaws.

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The Editor

This lovely little space could be yours for a mere ten bucks. To learn how, call (603) 433-9989, or e-mail editors@nhgazette.com.
Sorrow, grief, and trouble sit tight on my psyche with manifest sadness.

by Jean Stimmell

A few years ago, I photographed five crows perched on a cold winter morning by spreading their wings toward the sun. I am using it to illustrate this rant. The title reflects how I feel. I can't get images of maimed and bloody bodies out of my mind, first in Ukraine and now doubling down in Israel and Palestine. They are broadcast nonstop on the news and haunt my dreams.

Especially disturbing are the corpses of dead babies. As I write this, 4704 children have been killed so far, just in Gaza, according to the United Nations. Seeing their bloody, lifeless bodies was the final straw that broke me, stacked, as they are, on top of a cacophony of other pre-existing existential threats and mind-numbing dysfunctions that we already face. Let me name a few:

Congress is fiddling as the world burns while Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene babbles about conspiracies like Israel using "state-of-the-art Jewish space lasers" to shoot down Santa Claus. Closer to home, our neighbors in Lewiston, Maine are burying their dead struck down by a rampaging mass shooter.

Note that New Hampshire has been a guiding light. Our "Live Free or Die" state is the New Hampshire way: We think he is the only one who can point the way forward, transformational changes across the board. If we are ever going to act, now is the time to pull our heads out of the sand, stand up, and demand change. After all, in so many areas, we, the people, are ahead of the politicians. And what we want most in our lives is for our children to prosper. Ayman Odeh wrote recently in the New York Times, "A nation is defined as a group of people with a common language, a common past and common dreams." By this definition, paraphrasing Odeh, any parent will tell you babies are children of a single nation, not a Trump or a Biden one.

But Odeh is not speaking about particular babies. As an Arab Palestinian citizen of Israel and a member of Israel's Knesset, he is talking about all babies. Due to his unique position, he is able to see a higher truth.

Babies, he says, "have a common language, a common past, common dreams. They speak the same, get angry and cry at the same things, laugh the same way... communicate effortlessly with other babies, no matter the language of the lullabies their parents sang them at night."

The entirety of this nation of infants—excluding those who are Jewish, Arab, Palestinian, Israeli, American, Ukrainian, and Russian—"will just one thing: to grow up to a good life. It's a simple dream. Our role as leaders is simple too: to make that possible."

For the sake of our babies—all our babies—let us wake up before it is too late.

Mike does.

Johnson piously cloaks himself in both the Christian gospel and libertarian myth of "free markets," yet he has consistently pushed government action to restrict competition and bring the rip-offs. But we 90-percenters don't control the revolving door…

Visit us @ www.newenglandfinearts.com
Admiral Fowell's Pisagua River Tidal Guide (Not for Navigation Purposes)

Sarah笼子, arguably the first town in this country not founded by a New Englander, is a town on the north and east of the Pisagua River. The river is not navigable, and the town is not a suitable place for navigation. In 1763, Sarah笼子 was granted as a town, but the grant was not recorded until 1768. The town was incorporated in 1774.

On Sunday, November 25

Winnie Ruth Judd, the Trunk Maker, was shot and killed in a fog in 1929. Judd was a well-known crook and was sentenced to death for tax evasion. She was executed in 1930.

On Monday, November 26

2005—Marines in Haditha murder 24 unarmed Iraqis, women, and children. This incident is known as the Haditha Massacre. It is the most tragic event in the Iraq War.

On Tuesday, November 27

2006—President George W. Bush signs a law that delays the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) by two years.

2007—The New Hampshire Gazette, a weekly newspaper, begins publication.

On Wednesday, November 28

2008—President George W. Bush signs the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

2009—President Barack Obama is inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States.

2010—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2011—The Affordable Care Act is upheld by the Supreme Court. The ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2012—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2013—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2014—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2015—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2016—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2017—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2018—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2019—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2020—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2021—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2022—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2023—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2024—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

2025—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

2026—The Affordable Care Act is challenged in court. The Supreme Court ruling allows the law to remain in place.

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2059—The Affordable Care Act is signed into law.

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