

#1382 Progressive Policies Are Good Politics

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left podcast in which we shall learn about the results of the election beyond the presidency and find that progressive policies did quite well, which should be a lesson to Democrats currently looking to find their bearings and choose a direction forward. Clips today are from Jim Hightower's Radio Lowdown, Start Making Sense, The Bradcast, an episode of Check Your Blind Spot, Democracy. Now, The Brian Lehrer Show and The Mother Jones podcast.

Finding hope in America's progressive core - Jim Hightower's Radio Lowdown - Air Date 11-12-20

JIM HIGHTOWER - HOST, THE HIGHTOWER LOWDOWN: [00:00:32] Good grief, cry many progressives – how has America turned so right-wing that a flabby, narcissistic, wannabe-dictator like Trump was even in the running?

But wait, aside from a minority of racist, xenophobic, misogynistic voters, plus a bunch of uber-wealthy corporate profiteers making a killing from his rich-man's agenda, most of Trump's rank-and-file voters are not right-wingers at all. To see evidence of this, look at the multitude of overtly progressive ballot issues that won majority support on Tuesday, even in so-called "Trump Country."

53 percent of Arizona voters said yes to a tax surcharge on incomes above \$250,000 a year, specifically to raise teacher pay and recruit more teachers.

A whopping 78 percent of Oregon voters approved a populist proposition to put strict controls on the corrupting power of big-money corporate donations in elections.

61 percent of Floridians voted to raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 an hour, a working class advance vehemently opposed by corporate giants and right-wing groups.

57 percent voted yes on a Colorado provision requiring corporations to let employees earn paid time-off for medical and family needs.

Between 53 and 69 percent of voters in six states, including in such supposedly conservative bastions as Arizona, Mississippi, and South Dakota, approved initiatives liberalizing and even legalizing marijuana and other drug use.

Plus, there were some big symbolic victories, such as Mississippi replacing a Confederate symbol on its state flag with a magnolia blossom.

This is Jim Hightower saying, the hope that resides in these progressive policy positions is the prospect that a truly great American majority might yet be forged, not around some mega-politician, but around our people's basic values, of fairness and justice for all.

Mike Davis: Biden's Big Mistake - Start Making Sense - Air Date 11-11-20

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:02:32] The postmortems in the mainstream media have focused on the way the Democrats, and Biden in particular, failed to get significant returns from the Latino vote. It's dawning on the mainstream media that the category Latino is actually complex, that Cubans in Florida, Puerto Rican's in New Jersey, Mexicans in Southern California are actually quite distinct groups that don't vote alike.

But the most startling thing to me was the reports from Texas, from the Rio Grande Valley, that the Mexican American communities there voted for Trump. This was a huge surprise to Biden too, what's your understanding of what's going on in Texas?

MIKE DAVIS: [00:03:17] Well, first of all, Texas is the great prize —the key to the future of American politics. It's the powerhouse of the Republican party and to a large extent, it offsets California's huge vote and electoral college delegation. Texas Democrats have pleaded, scream for years, for more involvement and investment from the national Democrats. The 2018 election where Beto O'Rourke came within a couple points unseating Cruz was powerful ammunition for the cause of making Texas a battleground.

At the end of the day, it was Bloomberg and another democratic billionaire who finally, late in the race, pumped a lot of money in, and that money was all targeted on nine or ten Texas House legislative seats. And the reason this was seen as so important is because one way that the Republicans have been fighting and trying to prevent the translation of demographic change into a democratic majority has been their ability to gerrymander the state. Texas, of course, is now majority minority, and it has been for 12 or 14 years. So seeing if they could win nine of those seats, then the Democrats would have control of the legislature and they could prevent a new gerrymander. In fact, they lost all of those seats.

Now an odd thing is about this, that almost every veteran campaign manager and political consultant in Texas will say, it's not the suburbs. Texas Observer, by the way, pointed out that this clearly reveals there is a ceiling to Democratic progress in the suburbs. It's not the suburbs that are the key, it's South Texas with its huge reservoir of non-voting people who are Democrats or should be the Democrats. And Perez, the head of the DNC (Democratic National Committee), acknowledged this. He and Kamala Harris made this last minute visit two or three days before the election to South Texas. South Texas is the key to Texas and to national politics.

But in fact, the Democrats did hardly anything to bring out the vote in South Texas, believing this was a captive, safe, Democratic area. And I'm actually talking, not so much about San Antonio, which has of course a well-organized political machine run by the Castro brothers, but the seven major border counties. Now Clinton won those by 40%, Biden only won them by 15%. And in one poor 80% Latino county – Val Verde County, that's the McAllen, Texas area, big NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) corridor – the Republicans took this. And this has been interpreted in different ways. Some people say, well Texanos are more conservative than Chicanos, too many of them work for ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), or it's the Catholic "Right to Life" folk down there.

But these kinds of explanations don't stand up to the fact that Bernie Sanders was hugely successful in the border areas in South Texas. He won all the populous counties from San Antonio South. Now he had 200 young Latino organizers full-time on his national staff. He was able to put considerable resources and create that strong impression that he was listening and understood the needs of the community. So it's not so much that Latinos,

Texas in South Texas, had turned to the right, but the ones who turned to the left had so little motivation to vote for Biden.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:07:16] Also, I want to talk about the Rust Belt, which you did that wonderful research on in the Jacobin piece about the 2016 election where you focused on places that had been organized by the CIO in the 30s and followed what happened to them politically over the last decade. Just remind us what your methodology is there and what you're finding now.

MIKE DAVIS: [00:07:38] Well, what I did in 2016 is I just looked at county returns in 15 cases of small or medium size industrial cities that had voted twice for Obama. And then I went back and I read through the local press in each area. And I've found examples of significant job losses, new plant closures, which seemed to correlate to the fact that Trump seemed to speak more directly to these issues than Clinton did.

So I've just revisited this and of course the statistics are still somewhat provisional, but what they show is that Biden was able to reclaim a couple of areas, most significantly Erie, Pennsylvania – a major industrial center, which has had recently big losses from its largest plant, which is the GE plant that makes a locomotive engines – but on the other hand, Trump won Mahoning County, which was Youngstown area. And overall Biden's progress in the counties he won is only about a two or two and a half percent improvement over Clinton. And only one case, Rock Island County, Illinois – which is part of this quad city area – did he actually repair the damage of the 2016 election.

The one way to look at this is when Biden speaks about employment and the future of work in the country, he constantly talks about millions of jobs created by green energy. Those millions of jobs are an empty abstraction on the dinner tables of these areas when people are sitting down looking at their bills. And because so many of them were former Obama supporters, you can easily connect their votes for Trump to racism. But the point is the Democratic Party has had a generation to answer the simple question of what are you going to do to increase employment opportunity and economic stability in Erie or Laredo or Warren, Ohio, I mean, you can go on, and the Democrats have had no answer.

That's not just an American problem. What you've seen in Western Europe where hardcore industrial bastions of the left, the European equivalents to the Rust Belt, North of England, North of France, Eastern Germany, and so on, is that Labor and Social Democratic Parties haven't provided those answers either. The answers have to consist, I think, of geographically targeted public investment controls over capital flight, financial outflows, and most of all, the real solution to the jobs question is a massive expansion of public employment.

And of course, apart from the actual Social Democrats in Congress, "The Squad" and the people who've been newly elected, no Democrat is prepared to go down that road. Democrats just cower in front of the kind of villainous attacks on government and the public sector since the Reagan era began. So, you know, you have kind of stasis there.

Trump didn't make any gains. He made gains that can be entirely attributed to people who voted for the Libertarian Party in 2016 now voted for him. So there's no real change at all.

Criminal justice reform won big, with guest Daniel Nichanian of The Appeal - The BradCast - Air Date 11-12-20

BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST: [00:11:14] It seems like we saw a lot of that. A lot of the, well, it's sort of a lot of things that might come under the rubric of "defund the police". And I know that's freaked out a lot of Democrats. Oh, you should've never said defund the police. But whether they should say it or not, it seems like that is what is happening in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis that sparked protests, you point out an outrage in the middle of this presidential election. You report in cities nationwide, from Philadelphia to Columbus, Ohio to San Diego, the voters were asked about plans to create police oversight boards, expand the powers of existing oversight bodies, and yes, divest from law enforcement, also known as "defund the police" and impose requirements such as body cameras and so forth. How did those measures fair across the country this year? Daniel?

DANIEL NICHANIAN: [00:12:12] Yeah, that's there were many different types of measures put on the ballot over the summer by city councils, who kind of responding to the wave of protests over the summer. Many of them, the majority of these measures this year were about creating oversight boards with the authority to do independent investigations that compel police officers from participating. As far as I'm aware, every measure that I had on my list before the election passed, with oversight boards and a few other issues.

And what's interesting, Brad, going forward is that the police unions in places like Columbus, Ohio, and Portland, Oregon have already had effectively shown their hand that they want to either file suits against the measures or that they're saying that the measures, the oversight board that has been constructed, goes against the contract that they have with the city, that form of oversight, breaks there. Right. So that's going to be a battle, a major battle going forward, in these cities as to how to implement this. And what broadly, maybe I think what we're seeing, what we've seen in the elections, other law enforcement election, is the conversation has shifted from the question of how to do things differently, to in some cases, how to do fewer things, how to prosecute fewer types of behavior, how to get fewer people in the system, how to reduce the number of interactions overall with law enforcement and that, and that's the question of shrinking, reducing is something that is the result of a lot of activism organizing not just the summer, but also over the past two years of course.

BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST: [00:13:50] And in fact, in here in Los Angeles, voters approved measure J, that's a county-level ballot initiative, that redirects 10% of unrestricted county funds toward community investments specifically.

And you know, when we hear the phrase, "defund the police", Republicans have made it a thing and Democrats are now worried about it, but it really is a matter of taking funding away from things that police should not be doing, that they are not very good at doing. Do we actually have data Daniel yet to understand if any of that is, is true, that, this defund the police idea actually did hurt Democrats?

If it's the phrase itself that freaks out voters versus something, you know, more accurate like, Oh, "move funds that we're giving the police for stuff that they shouldn't be doing, and aren't good at it and give it to other groups and individuals who are not quite as snappy". Uh, but I guess it's a bit less scary is, do we have evidence one way or another as to how the voters are actually responding? Because when we see measures on the ballot that are doing exactly that they seem to be very popular.

DANIEL NICHANIAN: [00:15:04] Yeah. You know, it's, it's going to be a conversation that's going to happen. As for national Democrats because they're already having it for the past week, I'm sure we've all, we've all heard it. I think what's important to remember is that independently of that debate, the organizers and activists who are trying to, who have really pushed in places like Minneapolis, LA, New York, DC, were trying to push their city councils who have really been very resistant to shrinking of the police, and steering funds elsewhere. So the very blue drift sections we're talking about have not been very friendly to that sort of argument in any way.

And certainly in recent years, especially with the arguments about the need for increased policing, increased criminalization. And so the, the organizing in those places have been very successful in at least changing the conversation, changing the terms of debate, and opening the door to these new policies that have to do with shrinking of the criminal legal system and law enforcement.

And that's why, and that's really what the goal of the, of demands and movement have been.

So now there's a separate question of how maybe this has impacted national Democrats as a whole. And I think it's a bit early to have a full analysis of that. But I think when we see a place like San Francisco, voters voted to end the mandate to have to have a minimal size of the police force, 'cause that was in the city charter.

And so the voters were asked whether they want it to repeal it, which wouldn't automatically do anything, but we'll open the door to potentially shrinking the police force below what was the minimum level, and that passed as well.

So there's interesting conversations that were just not really thinkable at the level of actual adoption a year ago, five years ago, or certainly prior to that, where there were waves of protest around these issues.

BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST: [00:16:57] You also described prosecutors who ran on a platform of fighting mass incarceration, that they seem to have won a number of key races in Austin, Orlando, Oakland, Tucson. Is that largely a blue city thing? Or do we see evidence in Republican-leaning locales as well? Yet for that, given that the Trump administration and some Republicans are at least acting like they were in favor of ending mass incarceration and oversentencing. Has that worked its way into the not-blue controlled areas yet? At a prosecutor level?

DANIEL NICHANIAN: [00:17:39] Right, right. A very important question. And I have a two-part answer. One is we have seen some suburban, more swingy or more purple areas, kind of starting embracing for electing people who have ran on criminal justice reform as very core to their campaign. Colorado, one state this year, where we saw a couple of a suburban jurisdictions, kind of flipped from Republican control to Democratic control in DA offices

with, with some such messaging. We saw Virginia last year elect the wave of prosecutors who ran on with foreign platforms in suburban areas. So that's umbrella number one. But I also want to say that the incarceration crisis in this country, which is not a new crisis, it's a very longstanding problem of toughing crime norms and sentencing. That is not a conservative state issue only, that is not just a red county issue, not particularly. They're not different enough in the bluer areas and progressive cities, places like LA, which you mentioned earlier that just elected a new DA who really ran on incarceration issues and decreasing incarceration. Places like New Orleans, these places are going Democratic, certainly in every election. But the fight within the Democratic party, because people who have represented very punitive policies and very punitive laws, and people who really went within the Democratic party on breaking that, has been very, very important. And that's where we see a lot of change, which should not be minimized just because it's a Democratic, area is like LA, just because of the history of incarceration there and the history of that racism of law enforcement.

BRAD FRIEDMAN - HOST, THE BRADCAST: [00:19:21] And we had a long-time Republican sheriffs, county sheriffs with the strong pro ICE records, essentially anti-immigrant records, you say that, we saw a number of those sheriffs being ousted around the country, including Georgia and South Carolina, really?

DANIEL NICHANIAN: [00:19:40] Yeah. So that's very interesting. And actually, actually, maybe it shouldn't be a surprise because the one big story in 2018, which I talked about a lot at the time, was a wave of sheriff in North Carolina specifically, there were five sheriffs who were in the biggest counties, all on the platform of cutting ties with ICE or curtailing ties with ICE. And now we saw the organizing around immigrant rights advocacy happen in Georgia, happen in South Carolina, happen also in other states like Florida and Texas, where candidates who ran on this were less successful.

But so in some of the biggest counties in Georgia and South Carolina, candidates who ran on breaking contracts with ICE or no longer contracting with ICE to help them arrest people locally, keep people in jail locally on immigration grounds. And that was a successful message.

Check Your Blindspot 11-20-20

ANNOUNCER: [00:20:37] It's time once again, to play America's favorite political game show!

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:20:44] Check! Your! Blindspot!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:20:53] That's right. It's Check Your Blindspot, brought to you and powered by our sponsor, the Ground News app, the first ever news comparison platform that provides readers with objective data about the underlying political bias in all published news stories. The Ground News app features the Blindspot, which highlights news stories that just aren't being covered by one end of the political spectrum or the other. So I use the Blindspot to quiz contestants on theirs. With us today is our reigning champion, Amanda from Boston. Welcome back to the show.

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:21:25] [Cheers]

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:21:25] Thank you, hello! Aw!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:21:28] They're excited to have you back. See if you can keep them on your side. They are a famously fickle bunch. Yeah. So I'm going to tell you about news stories and you're going to tell me which side of the political spectrum is blind to them.

Are you ready?

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:21:43] Ready!

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:21:44] All right. Let's dive right in to round one. In whose political blind spot is this story: Biden says advocate of federal hate speech law would oversee government media transition. So this is in reference to Richard Stengel the agency review team lead for the US Agency for Global Media, which is in charge of the Voice of America and similar outlets.

He wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post a while ago, titled "Why America needs a hate speech law". He says that while advocating for the value of free speech around the world, he found that the US's first amendment is an outlier and was designed during a different era when there was a reasonable belief that truth could win out in the marketplace of ideas.

Now that social media and the Internet has shown that to no longer be the case, if it ever was, he has come to see the lack of a hate speech law as a design flaw.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:22:46] I'm going to guess this is in the left's blind spot because I could see the right, getting really nervous about free speech issues.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:23:00] That is absolutely correct. And, and your reasoning is spot on. I, I have nothing to add to that.

Let's move on to round two. In whose political blind spot is this story: congresswoman-elect Cory Bush attended a new member orientation at the Capitol wearing a Breonna Taylor face mask and says that several of her Republican colleagues greeted her and addressed her as Breonna.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:23:31] Yeah. Um, I caught wind of this. So I'm going to guess that it's in the right's blind spot.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:23:41] Indeed. It is unsurprising, but as she has been going around saying, and I'll just reiterate it is, is such perfect evidence of how we are living in different worlds.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:23:54] We're in bubbles. Right.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:23:56] And her concern is like, how can we even expect to work together on issues to address what we care so much about, if you don't even know what we're talking about.

All right. Two for two. Well done. Let's move on to round three.

In whose political blind spot is this story: here's all the facts of this story. So Biden's cancer charity. It's spent approximately \$3.7 million in salaries. It facilitated about \$400 million in

cancer research funding from partner organizations. And it was shuttered after Biden left the organization to begin his presidential campaign.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:24:40] Hmm. I actually haven't heard anything about this. Um, so I'm going to guess it's in the left blind spot because the right was so obsessed with Clinton's foundation. I would expect them to be also obsessed with Biden's foundation.

ANNOUNCER: [00:24:57] Correct!

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:24:58] Ah, no one's obsessed with Trump's foundation though, just to be clear.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:25:02] Which doesn't exist anymore because it committed such crimes that it was shut down. So, so this was one of these things that if I had read you the headline, it wouldn't have been fair from the get go. So I had to read you facts instead.

So the headlines coming from the right, this is pretty representative one: "Biden's cancer charity raked in millions, but spent nothing on medical research, tax filings show".

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:25:29] But that's not actually the case.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:25:31] It is technically true because they didn't take in the money and distribute the funds directly. They facilitated the donations from partner organizations to fund --

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:25:46] Right. They're just not funneling the money to the right places.

But

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:25:50] they weren't the ones doing the funneling. They were facilitating meetings and encouraging partner organizations like corporations to donate money directly to cancer funding that was not funneled through Biden's charity.

And so their tax filings show that they spent \$3.7 million on salaries. And didn't give any money to charity because that is technically true, but wildly misleading. Right? So it's this perfect example of how you can tell the truth and be intentionally wildly misleading. And so almost none of the stories with headlines like this include mention of how they facilitated \$400 million in cancer funding.

It's just that their tax filings make no mention of it because they didn't, they never touched the money. Right. But what I think is the real scandal here is that the Biden foundation had to shutter when he and Jill left. Right. Because for ethics concerns, they didn't want to be involved in the charity at the same time as they were running for president, which is fine, but why did it have to shutter after they left? Because the partner organizations who were previously willing to give \$400 million to cure cancer were no longer willing to give any money if Joe Biden wasn't there to thank them for it. It's all about PR right? Joe Biden was able to raise \$400 million because then Joe Biden would go give speeches saying, look at this

great organization, this great corporation, giving money to cancer research. If they couldn't get that PR hit and they weren't going to give them money.

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:27:41] Ah. Layers. As usual.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:27:42] That's the real story here in my perspective.

Well, once again, excellent job! Winner and still champion, Amanda from Boston.

Thank you for playing.

STUDIO AUDIENCE: [00:27:54] Yay!

AMANDA FROM BOSTON: [00:27:54] Thank you! They love me. They love me.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, CHECK YOUR BLINDSPOT: [00:27:56] That wraps it up for today.

It's important to mention, of course, that all of today's commentary and analysis is ours alone, and definitely not that of these staunchly unopinionated Ground News. If you'd like to try their service, get a discount on their premium features and let them know we sent you, go to ground.news/best and as always weather for traffic safety or media literacy, never forget to

Bree Newsome & Prof. Eddie Glaude The Black Lives Matter Movement Helped the Democrats Defeat Trump - Democracy Now! - Air Date 11-9-20

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW: [00:28:21] We're going to turn right now to a comment that is brewing part of the debate that's happening right now about the direction of the Democratic party. This is house majority whip, James Clyburn of South Carolina, who went on several Sunday talk shows to criticize calls to defund the police, arguing the phrase hurts Democratic congressional candidates. Here he is on NBC's Meet the Press citing the defeat of Jaime Harrison in South Carolina against incumbent Republican Senator Lindsey Graham.

REP. JAMES CLYBURN: [00:28:59] Jaime Harrison started to plateau with "defund the police," showed up with a caption on TV right across his head. That stuff hurt Jaime. And that's why I spoke out against it a long time ago. I have always said that these headlines can kill a political effort.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW: [00:29:23] That's Congressman Clyburn speaking on the Sunday talk shows. Clyburn is credited with really Joe Biden winning the Democratic primaries, having endorsed him right before the South Carolina primary, which then launched him to victory. I wanted to first go to Bree Newsome Bass. You're in the Carolinas, but you're in the other one: You're in North Carolina. Can you talk about this major debate, this debate for the soul of the Democratic Party right now, Bree?

BREE NEWSOME BASS: [00:29:59] Yeah, certainly. Well, I mean, first of all, to this argument that is being made so fiercely right now, you know, attacking the “defund the police” effort, I mean, I have yet to see anyone provide any concrete data that supports that claim, other than people making this conjecture. I mean, I live in the Carolinas. I have seen all of the ads that have been running. I mean, they were also running a lot of ads trying to tie Jaime Harrison to Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi. So, I mean, unless someone is showing data that can really show that one or the other is what led to Jaime Harrison specifically plateauing in South Carolina, which is a deeply red state, you know, was an uphill battle against Lindsey Graham to begin with, I frankly don’t give that a whole lot of weight.

And I think, again, we cannot gloss over the racial aspect of this whole situation. So, we’re talking about a situation where the Democratic leadership is making the claim — simultaneously making the claim that we need to reach across the aisle, we need to engage in bipartisanship with the party that is not acknowledging the election results; the party that just tried to prevent us from having a free and fair election; the party that engaged in rampant voter suppression, disenfranchisement and intimidation, and particularly in communities of color; the party that, you know, is completely opposed to the idea of our existence; the party that is essentially advocating a form of genocide through medical neglect, that has been ravaging our communities. And so, we can’t just gloss over when people are saying that the path forward is to build with Republicans and at the same time to essentially demonize, make a boogeyman of Black activism and Black causes.

Ro Khanna is exactly correct. It is the organizers, the same exact people who have been organizing Black communities around issues that impact us, that mobilized those voters for the Biden-Harris win. You know, I’ve also seen people making reference to progressives as being the ones who are being divisive or, you know, ending the truce within the Democratic Party. And it’s quite the opposite. You had a situation where you have a significant segment of people who either traditionally vote Democrat, a lot of people who are completely disengaged from the electoral process completely because they feel that regardless of who is in power, their needs are not met; regardless of who is in power, the police continue to kill us; regardless of who is in power, we do not have access to proper healthcare, we do not have access to housing. So, you had a lot of organizers who had to do a lot of heavy lifting to convince folks that it was worthwhile simply to get Trump out, to mobilize behind Biden and Harris. And that’s why you got Georgia turning out as it did. That’s why you got Arizona turning out as it did.

So, in my view, for anyone to look at the election results and for the takeaway to be we need to figure out how to appeal to the Lindsey Graham voters, you know, and the deeply red districts, as opposed to recognizing that there’s an entire electorate that is younger, that represents where the electorate is going — it’s younger, it’s more diverse, it can win you states in the South — this is the argument that Stacey Abrams has been making for quite some time — instead of looking at things and saying, “How can we invest more in Black and Indigenous and people of color organizing? How can we really look at those issues?” — this is again going to what Ro Khanna was saying — I mean, politically, that makes a lot more sense than saying, “How do we tap into the electorate that lost the presidential election, the electorate that is shrinking, and then, morally, the electorate that opposes democracy?” because they are more committed to racism than they are to the idea of a democracy that allows everyone to participate. So, you know, again, I just think that we cannot — we cannot gloss over.

Yes, I recognize, of course, that James Clyburn is a long-standing politician from South Carolina. He is Black. And I don't — you know, I'm sure that he recognizes what the political landscape is like in South Carolina. But if we're looking at the bigger picture, they're going to cost themselves the Senate race in Georgia if the case that they're making is that we're going to try to lean more towards Republican than making it clear to people that unless they turn folks out for those Senate seats in Georgia, you're not going to have access to the things that you need, like healthcare and all these other things. So, if they embrace a more centrist or Republican agenda, then the takeaway from folks is going to be, again, that it doesn't matter whether they turn out to vote or not. So I think it's just like the complete opposite.

And the fact that the focus in the immediate aftermath of the election, when we are still dealing with the situation of a president who does not acknowledge the election results, we've got him stoking violence among white supremacists who are threatening violence against sitting governors, who have threatened to blow up ballot-counting centers, that folks would pick defunding the police as the target, as the threat, as the danger, when you're talking about communities that are still being killed by police and still turning out to support this party in spite of that, complete opposite direction of where they should be going.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW: [00:35:52] That brings us to professor Eddie Glaude. Professor, you tweeted this quote from James Baldwin: "It has always seemed much easier to murder than to change. And this is really the choice with which we are confronted now." Explain.

PROF. EDDIE GLAUDE: [00:36:08] Well, you know, there's a sense in which the reckoning that we find ourselves involves the question of whether or not we're going to fundamentally embrace the idea that we are a multiracial democracy. And the history of the country suggests that we constantly, when faced with that question, will double down on violence, that white America will choose violence to defend its way of life, to defend those noxious assumptions, that have, in some ways, led to the organization of our way of life predicated upon this idea that white people ought to be valued more than others, that they will in fact exact a certain kind of violence to defend that view. And so, Baldwin, in this moment, is kind of marking this, right? That America is always talking about it changing, but it never changes, right?

And so, what's so interesting about the conversation around the Democratic Party is that it's actually insane — right? — that we would think that the way to respond to the scale of problems that we confront as a nation is to harken back to an older form of politics that is DLC, "Third Way" Democratic-oriented — you know, Democratic politics, that seems to try to triangulate and appeal to this Reagan Democrat that they are so obsessed with as a way of responding to this problem. It makes no sense that we would go back to the politics that actually produced Trumpism in the first place. That's the first point. The second — or the second point.

The third point is this: We can't allow these folk to disentangle Trumpism from the Republican Party. I think this is what Bree Newsome Bass is trying to suggest to us. We can't allow them to disentangle these two things. They are one and the same. So what are you asking for when you talk about reaching across the aisle? What are you asking us to do when you talk about reaching across the aisle in unity? We won't do that again. That's not going to happen this time.

And then, lastly, we need to get beyond, I think, these narrow labels. The politics is much more muddled. Right? We need to get beyond these narrow labels. We need to get beyond big government and small government and smart government and get to transformational government. We need to understand what “defund the police” means. Budget your values. Budget your values. That’s what it means at the heart of it, right? Why are you spending 60, 70% of your municipal budgets on policing, when you have education, social services and the like? Stop lying. Stop lying.

And then what we need to pay attention to, lastly — I’ll say this really quickly — we need to pay attention to who Biden appoints as his secretary of treasury. If we get another Rubinite, if we see someone in that tradition, we know what we got. And so, remember, we celebrate yesterday and the day before, but today begins the hard work. The problems of this nation require us to break from the old frames. And we will not allow Clyburn, we will not allow Kamala Harris’s symbolic and significance. We will not allow the threat of Donald Trump to get us from seeing that that is the issue we have to break the political frame that got us in this mess in the first place.

Immigration Advocates Have Ideas for the Biden Administration - The Brian Lehrer Show - Air Date 11-10-20

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:39:20] So, the thing that primarily got Donald Trump elected the first time, in the first place, the only time, was his stand on immigration. His false assertion that Mexican immigrants tended to be criminals, the proposals to build the border wall and mount a deportation force that came with it and his proposal to ban all Muslims from entering the United States were the centerpieces of the 2016 campaign. In office, he's gone as far as politics and the courts have allowed him to go to stop immigration, legal as well as illegal, in its tracks.

So, with Joe Biden preparing to govern, how much Trump policy can or should he reverse with the stroke of a pen? How much does he want to, and how much further can Biden go on the unresolved immigration issues that he needs Congress for that got us here in the first place, what the George Bush, John McCain, and even Lindsay Graham Republicans plus the Democrats used to call comprehensive immigration reform?

Let's get an immigration advocate's take and see what advocates are prioritizing and think is possible. With us now is Anu Joshi, vice-president of policy for the New York Immigration Coalition. Anu, great to have you on again. Welcome back to WNYC.

ANU JOSHI: [00:40:35] Thanks so much, Brian. Let's talk about today.

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:40:37] So what can Joe Biden do on day one?

ANU JOSHI: [00:40:40] Well, there are a number of things that he can do. I mean, I think, first and foremost is rolling back all of the horrible anti-immigrant policy changes that, some of what you just mentioned, that the Trump administration has spent four years implementing. You know, like, we expect on day one that, President Biden will immediately

reinstate full deferred action for childhood arrivals or DACA, that he will immediately reinstate the temporary protected status program TPS, for the close to 350,000 people living in this country who are currently at risk.

And we also expect that he will immediately institute a moratorium on immigration enforcement. You know, for the last four years, and frankly for the last 30 years, we've seen just increasing amounts of money and influence given to immigration enforcement agencies like ICE and customs and border protection, and we need a reset. We need to really look at, you know, how these agencies have really just gone out of control, become rogue agencies that terrorize American families. And we expect Biden to really institute an immediate moratorium on immigration enforcement activity.

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:41:59] When you say a moratorium on immigration enforcement activity, that sounds so sweeping. And of course, the Republicans run against the Democrats by saying, Oh, you elect Joe Biden or other Democrats. They're going to have open borders. What's the difference between open borders and no immigration enforcement?

ANU JOSHI: [00:42:18] So, there's a big difference, I think. One: and, you know, what I do want to say is that I think this election was a repudiation of Trump's anti-immigrant policy -- so, people might say that, but voters clearly spoke and said, no, this is not what we want in the leaders that are making decisions for our country. But two: I think what we've seen over the last four years is how our immigration enforcement agencies, rather than trying to keep Americans safe, are actually really trying to terrorize what are American families. So, this could look like immediately putting a pause on all deportations because we know right now people are being deported without access to attorneys, without access to real due process. People who have been New Yorkers who have lived here for decades, who have families here and are not able to really make their case in Immigration Court, and they're being deported. And we also know that people are being held in immigration detention for months and years for no reason, that they are being stripped from their families and held in this detention vast, under-resourced criminal detention system where COVID is spreading, for no reason.

And that, on day one, President Biden could immediately order the release of immigrants being held in detention while they wait for their fair day in court. I think along the border, what we have seen is an out-of-control border patrol. We have laws in place that govern how people can enter this country, how people can apply for asylum in this country which is their right under multiple international and domestic laws. And those are completely being ignored and in some cases flouted, and so it's really just a return to upholding people's rights and ability to take . . . to really fully embrace those rights within our current system

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:44:32] The heart wrenching and outrageous practice of separating parents from children and children, from their parents at the Southern border, part of that, the so-called cages, goes back to the Obama Biden administration. If they just turn back the clock on that policy to the day before Trump, where would they actually be and how would you feel about it?

ANU JOSHI: [00:44:56] Not great. Right. We need more than just what was happening before Trump. We need a more expansive, morally just vision for what our immigration system could look like.

And we've heard President Biden, President-elect Biden on the campaign trail, talking about how they didn't get it right back then in 2014. When President Obama dramatically expanded family detention for immigrants in this country, it was a moral failure. We know that of course under President Trump, that program was quadrupled, exploited. Families were ripped apart. Kids were held in cages apart from their parents which was not happening under the Obama-Biden administration. We saw the implementation of the zero-tolerance policy at the southern border, which required the criminal prosecution of anyone attempting to seek asylum in the United States.

But we expect more. You're absolutely right. We don't want to just go back. We know that the Obama-Biden administration deported more people than any other presidential administration in history. And so, we expect more. We think that the American people expect more and have really made that clear.

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:46:15] I want to talk about comprehensive immigration reform. There's, wait, let me read something to you from the endorsement of Lindsay Graham for reelection last month by the South Carolina newspaper, *The Post and Courier*: "Mr. Graham was an early proponent of comprehensive immigration reform. He worked with a group of Democrats and Republicans that hammered out a plan to revamp the country's myriad immigration laws. The plan also included a strategy for border security and a reasonable path to citizenship not amnesty for the millions of immigrants already in the country. That effort should be revived as soon as possible." So, that's from a South Carolina newspaper endorsing Lindsay Graham. And I actually saw Lindsay Graham get criticized by Tucker Carlson on Fox last week on this basis. Carlson was asking, basically, do we now go back to Lindsey Graham amnesty? So, does a Biden White House and a McConnell-Graham Senate have a coalition for comprehensive immigration reform that you're interested in?

ANU JOSHI: [00:47:25] I don't think so, Brian. I think that the days of trying to negotiate with majority leader McConnell, who may not be majority leader next year, depending on the Georgia runoff, right, are long behind us. We have seen in this country three decades of just increasing seemingly never-ending funding for immigration enforcement, for border security, for ICE, for tearing apart families. And I think that the price that majority leader McConnell and the current iteration of Senator Lindsey Graham -- although who knows what iteration will be next year -- is too high high to pay. Our families have already paid such a high price. In this country, we spend \$25 billion a year on immigration enforcement, and that results -- directly results -- in the separating of families. And I don't think that that's something that our community here in New York, the immigrant community across the country, will be able to stomach. And I don't think it's something the American people would be able to stomach in exchange for some kind of limited legalization program. What we're demanding is we've already made this horrific downpayment on immigration enforcement, on border security. It's time for a real legalization plan that puts the 11 million undocumented immigrants and their family members on a real road to citizenship.

And unfortunately I think that the price that a McConnell would ask would be far too high.

Biden Time: Banking - Planet Money - Air Date

11-13-20

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:49:04] The show I'm doing is basically things -- economic things -- Biden can do without Congress. And you just wrote a nice listicle to that effect.

AARON KLEIN: [00:49:15] Thank you.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:49:16] And there was one sentence in particular that jumped out at me that I want to talk to you about.

AARON KLEIN: [00:49:21] Okay.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:49:22] That sentence is: All banks should be required to offer low-cost, no-overdraft, safe bank accounts. Can Biden make banks do that?

AARON KLEIN: [00:49:33] Yes.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:49:34] This declarative statement comes from Aaron Klein. He used to work at the Senate Banking Committee and at the Treasury Department. Now he is at the Brookings Institution, and he says, there is this problem in America. Millions of people don't have bank accounts. This is inconvenient. It's hard to pay bills. It's dangerous. Your money can get stolen. So why then don't more people have bank accounts?

AARON KLEIN: [00:49:55] The number one reason why unbanked people don't have bank accounts? Bank accounts are expensive if you don't have much money.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:50:04] You know, if you can't meet some minimum balance in a bank account, often you have to pay high fees just to keep the account open. And then there are more fees if you overdraw your account, if you take out more money than is in your account. So as a result, lots of people, especially people without a lot of money, go without bank accounts altogether. So like, describe for me this bank account that you think should -- that you think every bank should offer. Tell me about that account.

AARON KLEIN: [00:50:29] Right. So, first of all, that account does not have overdraft. So, if you run out of money, your transaction is declined. And so, you have a \$3 monthly maintenance fee. You get two free money orders a month. All of your checks can be deposited at the bank for free.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:50:48] Online bill pay, I assume?

AARON KLEIN: [00:50:51] Correct. Online and mobile banking, online bill pay, electronic checking, full ATM access, right? You don't get paper checks, but otherwise it would feel like a regular bank account in every other sense.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:51:06] So, that is account would look like, but the next question is how can Biden do this? And the simple answer is because as President he will appoint the people who regulate the banks. There is also a slightly less simple answer that I find super interesting. And that is this. So, in other industries, regulators do not get to order companies to sell certain products. Yeah, like, you know, Biden's trade regulators are not going to be able to order like Nike to issue cheaper Air Force Ones, or

something like that. But banks aren't like shoe companies, aren't really like any other business at all. Banks are really special. You know, they're kind of at the center of the economy. They hold federally insured deposits. They keep our money safe. And so, in order to be a bank, you actually have to get a special charter from the government. And that charter gives the government power over banks.

AARON KLEIN: [00:51:55] Banks have a duty to serve their community . . .

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:51:58] Like, a legal duty?

AARON KLEIN: [00:52:00] Correct.

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:52:00] Okay.

AARON KLEIN: [00:52:01] As part of getting a bank charter, you have a duty to serve your community. Why should the federal government tolerate banks doing things not in the best interest of society or their customers yet still get all the special benefits of being a bank?

JACOB GOLDSTEIN - HOST, PLANET MONEY: [00:52:17] So, this is why bank regulators who are appointed by the President can force banks to offer everybody cheap, no-overdraft accounts. Now, this still may not happen. You know, banks are politically powerful. They're influential in Washington, etc., etc., and Biden himself has not been pushing this idea.

I got it from Aaron, not from Biden. But there is one last thing that Aaron mentioned that makes it seem like this could actually happen. And that is that last month, the head of the American Bankers Association, like, the big national trade group for banks, publicly suggested that every bank in the country offer accounts similar to the ones Aaron Klein is describing.

And it's unclear, frankly, exactly why this happened. You know, now, a couple of weeks ago, but a couple of things do seem relevant. One is some politicians have been calling for the government to offer cheap bank accounts, like, say, at the Post Office. And also the other thing is tech companies are starting to compete with banks by offering bank-like services, you know, think of Venmo. So, you have politics and profits starting to point in the same direction. And you know, maybe both of those things are pushing the banks to change.

Biden Won. Now He Needs to Save the Planet - The Mother Jones Podcast - Air Date 11-11-20

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:53:35] Last week, I think this was the buried news headline, but it was the official day Wednesday that the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement. As you said, Biden has promised day one to rejoin the agreement. So, there are some technicalities here. It takes 30 days to rejoin, so we can expect the United States to rejoin in February. And, fortunately, this is not a decision that is in the hands of the Senate. So, Biden can rejoin no matter who controls the Senate.

But it's not just a matter of signing a piece of paper that the United States is in now. What matters really is what we do about our carbon emissions. And that's where Biden has a lot of work to do because he not only has to convince foreign leaders that the US is both serious and committed, and another election won't simply reverse our policies yet again on climate change. But he also has to deliver on the carbon cuts, and that's where we can expect to see

him submitting a new pledge for where the United States carbon cuts will be by 2030. Now, there are a lot of numbers that have been thrown out here, but to deliver aggressive cuts that are in line with the science, Biden really has to hit the ground running by tackling climate change. So, I think there are a few games going on here where he has to re-establish his leadership on the foreign front, but he also has to do it domestically and restore science, restore regulations and really center climate change as a priority for his administration.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:55:16] News just broke on Monday that the Trump administration removed the scientist in charge of the National Climate Assessment. It's another sign that he's using these last few months in office to weaken the role of scientists in the government. What are some of the ways that you expect Biden to try to restore the EPA and bring science back into government?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:55:38] Biden has a lot of work ahead of him to restore the over hundred regulations that Trump has rolled back. But his first task is to really fill the ranks of the EPA again with people who are committed to science and committed to protecting public health through environmental regulation. Trump has tried to dismantle the agency both through staff cuts, through limiting science in regulations, and I think the first thing to watch for from Biden are a series of executive orders that send a clear signal that science is a priority.

So, the series of actions that I'd expect from Biden are: targeting methane emissions, targeting carbon from cars, from buildings, from the power plant sector, and then it's important to remember that climate action needs to go beyond the EPA, that if he's really going to take this seriously, he needs to look at this comprehensively at the Department of Energy, at the Department of Interior, at the Department of State. Climate is an issue that touches all sectors. So, while the EPA is really an important place to watch, I think if he's really going to deliver on those promises that he made in the campaign, he's going to have to insert climate change as a top issue throughout his government.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:57:03] Biden has promised to go beyond the Obama administration in fighting for environmental justice.

What are some of the ways he might do that?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:57:12] Right. This is such an interesting area because there's been so much progress made by Democrats, and in, honestly, just the last couple of years. Senator Harris joining the administration -- she really centered environmental justice in her campaigning originally for President. And we saw Biden, back this summer while COVID and Black Lives Matter protests were really the top of everyone's mind, he issued this environmental justice plan for how to fight environmental racism. I think all the signals point to his administration taking really bold action on environmental justice. He's made a lot of promises to really raise this as a priority for his EPA.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:58:05] Rebecca, you interviewed Kamala Harris last fall when she was running for President in the Democratic primaries. She was one of the first candidates to endorse the Green New Deal. In that interview, she called the Green New Deal ambitious and achievable:

Kamala Harris: [00:58:20] A Green New Deal means that we approach the climate crisis with a sense of urgency and that we have in place specific timelines that are ambitious and achievable, meaning some might call it ambitious, but I know it's achievable.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:58:39] What impact do you think having Kamala Harris as Vice President will have on the White House's climate agenda?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [00:58:45] Yeah, I'm really interested to see how visible of a role she takes on climate change in the administration, because, like you pointed out, she really campaigned around this issue and was maybe not the favorite pick of environmental activists like Sunrise Movement, but she did a lot to run actually to the left of Biden on issues like fracking and the Green New Deal. So, in my interview with her last year, she talked about how important it was to appoint officials throughout the government who will tackle climate change. Just this issue that we've been talking about here, that it's important to embed this issue throughout and not just isolated to the EPA. She's also talked a lot about tackling environmental justice and she's talked a lot about holding polluters accountable using the Department of Justice and perhaps looking at the legal possibilities of how to hold the big oil industry accountable.

So it'll be really interesting to see how much those ideas are incorporated into Biden's policy. I think he already has adopted some of these policies by talking about how to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable and how to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies. But it'll be interesting to see how much further that goes and if she really follows through on those promises she made in the campaign that she would push this issue in the White House.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:00:23] Rebecca, you and I also met and interviewed Bernie Sanders who ran in the primaries and has reportedly been very active in hammering out policy positions that pull Biden further to the left on climate impacts. What role do you think Bernie played overall?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:00:40] Yeah. I think it was a really interesting and strong role that Bernie Sanders and, honestly, the environmental activists who backed him, how much they pushed Biden on climate throughout the primary:

Bernie Sanders: [01:00:58] I'm talking about telling the fossil fuel industry that they are going to stop destroying this planet. No ifs, buts and maybes about it. I'm talking about speaking to .

Joe Biden: [01:01:08] So am I

Bernie Sanders: [01:01:09] Well, I'm not sure your proposal does that. Instead of spending \$1.8 trillion on weapons of destruction designed to kill each other, maybe we should pool our resources and fight our common enemy which is climate change. I know your heart is in the right place, but this requires dramatic, bold action. We've got to take on the fossil fuel industry. Your plan does not do that.

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:01:31] It's a good idea to look at Biden's policies as an evolution on this issue, because he started this campaign more promising to restore the Obama legacy on climate. And I think Bernie Sanders' competitiveness really pushed him further to have to detail his plans for climate, including

issuing policies like an environmental justice plan. But I think you see a lot of areas where Senator Sanders has had a major impact.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:02:02] Well, Biden won the Presidency. The Democratic Party did not flip the Senate. So that doesn't look good for the Green New Deal, right?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:02:12] I think with the Senate control still an open question, environmentalists have had to temper the expectations and hopes that Congress will have a very ambitious, comprehensive package under the Green New Deal framework to tackle climate change. But that doesn't mean that we won't have climate action. Beyond Congress, there's a lot that Biden can do on the executive front. He has a lot of powers as President. Just as we saw Trump reverse a lot of the Obama administration's policies, he can really marshal the power of the Presidency to cut emissions.

Of course, Congress is really important here, which is why the stakes of the Senate is so important to whether we have even bolder climate action, like a carbon tax or a huge economic package that invests in cleaner energy.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:03:11] And what about China? Do you think that having Biden in charge will bring the US-China collaboration over climate change established under Obama back as a priority or has too much damage already been done on that front?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:03:25] Yeah, I think this is one of the most challenging areas that Biden has ahead of him, of how to reestablish alliances that Trump has done everything in his power to damage. Obama issued an announcement during the Paris negotiations that the US would work with China to reach bolder climate action:

Barack Obama: [01:03:49] We continued to lead by example with our historic joint announcement with China two years ago where we put forward even more ambitious climate targets, and that achievement encouraged dozens of other countries to set more ambitious climate targets of their own. And that in turn paved the way for our success in Paris.

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:04:07] The US has to do a lot to restore those alliances and to show that it's a reliable partner for other countries. And I think that that's a big challenge to meet in just four years considering what Trump has done to destabilize global politics. But this was a big campaign talking point for Biden that he has the experience to restore those relationships. So, we'll have to see.

JAMILAH KING - HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:04:36] Final question. The clock is ticking on getting temperatures down. Allies must be relieved that they have someone back in the White House who actually wants change, but we are literally running out of time. When does too late really become too late for climate action?

REBECCA LEBER HOST, MOTHER JONES PODCAST: [01:04:53] Yeah. This is a tough question because, really, we shouldn't have wasted the last four years. This is a really critical time to bring down emissions because the next decade is really when the clock ticks down. Climate change and its effects really lag behind where our emissions are. So, the fact that we

continue to break records does not bode well for the next few decades. I think COVID really kind of threw a lot of expectations out on climate emissions because the economy has taken such a hit, um, including the coal industry and the gas industry have taken really deep hits.

Final comments on how Harmony Square can teach you about online manipulation

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:05:39] We've just heard clips today, starting with Jim Hightower, helping us remember to focus on the widespread progressive results of the election. Start Making Sense spoke with Mike Davis about the need for Democrats to embrace the working class again. The BradCast highlighted progress on criminal justice reform. You heard an episode of Check Your Blindspot. Democracy Now! had on Bree Newsome and Eddie Glaude Jr. to discuss the relationship between the Democratic party and Black voters. Those clips are what everyone heard, but members also heard a couple of bonus clips, including the Brian Lehrer Show discussing the need for changes to our immigration system going forward, and the Mother Jones Podcast looking at the road ahead for addressing climate change. For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes, so you can still find them if you want. But to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, which includes not just those bonus clips contain in episodes, but also full bonus episodes with discussions and conversation on a range of topics. To get that, sign up to support the show at BestoftheLeft.com/support, or request a financial hardship membership, because we don't make a lack of funds a barrier to hearing more information. Every request is granted, no questions asked.

And now we would usually be hearing from you. But frankly, we're just a little short on messages today, either voicemail or VoicedMail. Maybe we'll get some over the holiday, but I will move straight on to my final thoughts, which is, I want to tell you about something that came about because I've been thinking a lot about the variety of ways that the media, or the way we consume news I guess more specifically, is influenced by, you know, algorithms and filter bubbles, obviously the existence of fake news and how all of this comes together to sort of produce this hyperpolarization that we're experiencing. And so I've just been thinking about these things and, and reading various ideas about it. And something I came across that I thought was worth sharing is an online game that helps you understand the manipulation techniques that are often at the heart of total chaos that breaks out online. So it doesn't help you break out of filter bubbles, but it may help you recognize fake news. And it is maybe mostly focused on the hyperpolarization in that it's helping people recognize the paths that conversations take online that end up going in really unproductive directions.

So, it's focusing in on the techniques, like using a very highly emotionally charged language when it is not necessarily called for, and that is a technique to elicit emotional and otherwise thoughtless responses. It gets people highly engaged. It gets a lot of clicks, but it doesn't ever lead to thoughtful conversation.

So I just want to tell you about it. The game's called Harmony Square. You can find it at harmonysquare.game and it takes about 10 minutes to play through. I played it for the first time a couple of days ago and found it, first of all, genuinely amusing and actually informative. And the whole premise of it is that you play the part of a bad guy trying to cause chaos. And to do the best job possible of causing chaos, you have to learn the techniques to

cause chaos. And in doing so as the player, as you learn these techniques, you, as they describe it, which is very fitting for the day and age we're living in, you become sort of inoculated to them to some degree. The game itself acts as a bit of a fake news hyperpolarization vaccine. Because once you understand how the techniques work, you will see them in the real world and react to them differently because you understand what's going on.

So I just wanted to leave you with that a little bit more positivity in a relatively positive show compared to what we're used to. Again, it's harmonysquare.game, and you know, maybe it's something to encourage family members to play over Thanksgiving. Something like that.

We are going to be taking a break for the coming week. You'll be hearing rerun episodes as usual in the feed. Otherwise we will be back after the holiday. As always, you can keep comments coming in in the meantime. You can call us at (202) 999-3991. Or email me to Jay@BestoftheLeft.com.

That is going to be it for today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at BestoftheLeft.com/support. That is absolutely how the program survives. Of course, everyone can support the show just by telling everyone you know about it and leaving us glowing reviews on Apple Podcasts and Facebook to help others find the show. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all that information can always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device you're using to listen.

So coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay!, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors of the show from BestoftheLeft.com.