

Comments regarding the urgent need for a more unified opposition to the Trump agenda before it is too late

Some of you may be familiar with my prior criticism of Trump and calls for civil disobedience (see below for links to my articles and cable programs covering Trump's mental state, those complicit in his agenda, and organized civil disobedience to Dobbs).

Here are updated, specific comments as to how those concerned about the fate of US democracy can be much more effective as organizations and individuals...because it may soon be too late.

I wish I had more confidence in **the American people**, but clearly the majority either supports or finds acceptable Trump's character, proclamations, crimes, and plans for the country, something I have been warning about for years – see **“Complicit”** (article and cable episode) <https://phsj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/complicit-social-medicine.pdf>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eer4TTmPXvs>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKDLlvKsYEG> (the last **regarding Trump being mentally unfit for office**, with psychiatrist Bandy Lee). Clearly Trump is a narcissistic sociopath with middle stage dementia (and yes, Biden has dementia too....any second-year med student can recognize the clinical clues).

Regrettably, I am equally if not more disappointed that until recently, **health care professionals, their organizations, and their flagship publications** have failed to directly decry Trump's mental deficiencies and immoral policies and specifically describe the associated dangers they present, instead publishing tepid, dry, statistical research studies and policy papers which seem too often to call for “more study” rather than specific actions. This was evident especially during the Covid pandemic, when Trump's policies led to so many excess and unnecessary deaths while top-level appointees, many highly regarded in our fields, protested much too little (the Lancet Commission estimated that 40% of deaths were avoidable and unnecessary – see

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)32545-9/abstract](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32545-9/abstract) .

While many have decried the dangers of the rise of pseudoscience, xenophobia, racism, and environmental destruction, there has not been enough concerted pushback from the most influential **health care-related groups, meaning professional organizations, educational institutions, licensing boards**, etc. Yes, many have praised pockets of resistance and supported individuals and small groups of courageous individuals trying to effect change and incorporate workarounds to improve the lot of some, but they need the active, day-to-day support of those in charge of training the next generation of providers. This is key given the high stakes, especially in light of the push for increased coverage of social medicine issues in required courses.

The response to **Dobbs** has been particularly disheartening. I wrote a piece calling for **civil disobedience by academic medicine to de facto overturn Dobbs** over a year ago and submitted it to a number of widely read publications (including AJPH), all of whom rejected it (they also had rejected my critique of Trump earlier). Fortunately, it was accepted by Social Medicine, a wonderful forum for progressive ideas – see <https://www.medicinasocial.info/index.php/socialmedicine/article/view/1477/2627>. Meanwhile, all the major **journals** have published loads of papers discussing the legal and ethical issues surrounding Dobbs, the health and welfare consequences, the unnecessary suffering and death, but none have suggested the sort of civil disobedience that is necessary to return women’s reproductive rights to them quickly, something the legislature and courts will not do for decades. I applaud those who have been very active in saving lives through improving access to abortion, but their work is not enough, and they need our support. I floated my suggestion by many very progressive members of the American Public Health Association, leaders of organized medicine/obgyn/public health, etc., and basically all I got was “it won’t work.”

The same sort of civil disobedience will be necessary to avoid unnecessary suffering and death due to legal initiatives such as **Texas' Executive Order GA-46**, which mandates the collection and reporting of patient citizenship status during intake. Active civil disobedience, i.e., all major hospitals (perhaps again lead by academic institutions) should immediately refuse to follow this order, which not only will harm patients (and even citizens' health and welfare), but destroy the bond of trust engendered between practitioners and patients consequent to privacy protections which have been built up over generations and which form the core of the doctor-patient relationship.

Medicine and public health are on a precipice, and what we do in the next few years will affect an entire generation and corrupt the training of innumerable new doctors, nurses, social workers, etc., as well as cause immense moral injury to those forced to act in opposition to fundamental tenets of professionalism and caring.

Now, what other entities and individuals can do.

Universities, traditional bastions of free speech and inquiry, have capitulated too much to the administration's mafia-like shakedowns.....the presidents of all the major universities should convene a news conference at the jail where Mahmoud Khalil, Rümeyssa Öztürk, or others being held for the "crime" of free speech are being held and demand their release. If the goal is to show that students have a safe space at university, this is how you do that (in loco parentis!). Really, when will they speak up – when a teacher is arrested, when a whole class is corralled by DHS and disappeared, when a department chair or dean is taken away – it is long past time for them to stop showing fear and start displaying courage and leadership.

Universities are under unprecedented threat. Already students, professors, and administrators have been cowed into submission, Columbia has lost \$400 million in federal funding, University of Michigan, Brown, Princeton, Cornell, and Northwestern are losing

significant funding, and others are losing loads of research grant money, but really all the universities are going down, so it is best to stop the juggernaut now and face the consequences of defunding together rather than wait until they all go down with a whimper...with each passing day they lose their credibility, moral standing, and future students and trainees who will, when possible, go elsewhere or leave the US (for Canada, the EU, and other countries which will welcome them). Inaction is particularly galling at institutions with large endowments). Endowments should be spent down and universities focus on their core mission of producing and disseminating knowledge – see <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/14/opinion/trump-higher-education.html>.)

Teach-ins would help and **schools at all levels** should NOT remove any DEI content from their curriculums. Kudos to California and ten other states who are keeping their DEI curriculums; unfortunately, at least 16 states will be complying with the ordered removal. **Libraries** should not remove any “banned” books. Thomas Jefferson stated that “information is the currency of democracy,” and without a strong educational system and media (see below) to disseminate (true) information, democracy itself is at risk.

Researchers should protect all data before leaving office and make it widely available along with bullet points for the general public to understand what has gone missing and its significance – thankfully, there are groups doing this already...**Health care professionals** should be clear about the consequences to public health and to patients’ future care of the administrations’ unqualified and dangerous appointees and their unscientific policies (e.g., epidemics, fewer new anti-cancer drugs and trained oncologists to prescribe them, etc.). Kudos to Harvard’s AAUP for suing the federal government over the potential loss of \$9 billion in funding and to its president for finally announcing it would not acquiesce to Trump’s demands.

Law firms should stop acquiescing to Trump's threats of litigation and loss of contracts by cutting deals to support his agenda, which thereby compromises their independence and credibility.

The media should more directly call out the fascism/authoritarianism/Nazi propaganda being spread by the administration. Stop going to the White House briefings, which have become forums to spread Trump's message and opportunities for Bible Camp Barbie (White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, adorned in a gold and diamond encrusted cross – see <https://phsj.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/Symbols-of-Love-HRQ-pdf.pdf> for why these elements are bad) to promulgate a message that is completely antithetical to that espoused by Christ in the Gospels while mocking the intelligent questions asked by seasoned reporters, thus providing material for right wing social media influencers to repost as examples of “owning the liberal media.”

Stop interviewing guests who repeat false talking points while insulting their hosts and do not normalize there being two sides to some issues which are simply unethical/immoral. The nightly network news programs should contain one minute summarizing Trump's major statements of the day (accompanied by onscreen annotations for all lies) and should not even show him talking, unless it is to illustrate his ignorance/hatred in full (i.e., the entire 7 and ½ or so minute meeting with Zelensky beginning with toady JD Vance's bullying, so that the public can see how events transpired). Most of the clips that really illustrate Trump's profound ignorance/early dementia/hate-speech are only shown on late night talk shows, thus missing a large audience.

The media could also have a “Trump death counter” showing clearly the number of deaths caused by his policies (estimates for this were published previously by the Lancet Commission for his first term's weak covid response as noted above....there are other data available showing how many deaths would occur consequent to loss of USAID funding; overturning major environmental rulings covering pollution, coal ash, or

mercury; conflict-related deaths in Ukraine and Palestine; etc. The Impact Metrics Dashboard is already at 62,000 adult and 130,000 child deaths as of 4/14/25 [a spectacular rise of 10,000/27,000 deaths just over the last 13 days], or over 100 unnecessary deaths per hour (see <https://www.impactcounter.com/dashboard?view=table&sort=title&order=asc>). One-year projections run into the high hundreds of thousands, with millions of additional cases of diseases like malaria and over 2 million additional deaths from tuberculosis by 2030). Of course, many of the unnecessary infectious disease cases and deaths will be seen in all countries, as the average TB patient (for instance) infects 10 to 15 other people, thus expect worldwide epidemics. Same for AIDS, as withdrawal of USAID funding means that 1,400 additional infants are now being infected daily with HIV. The total number of deaths including all policies would likely be in the tens of millions per my quick guesstimate, making Trump one of the largest mass murderers in human history.

Furthermore, like many other dictators throughout history who have amassed fortunes by stealing from their own governments, perhaps the DOGE/Musk/tech bro access to everyone's data and to the Treasury Department database/money is part of a plan to steal hundreds of millions from the US Treasury.....5 or 10 million here, a few million there, and without data to adequately track where the money is going, it gets shuttled into crypto/overseas accounts, some to Trump and Musk (because narcissists can never really have enough money), some to Trump's children, etc. and we could all be victims of what could be the largest "heist" in the history of the world, potentially without even knowing it. A similar heist may have already occurred due to stock market manipulation with the recent on-again/off-again tariffs creating market chaos.

The media should also better illustrate the lifesaving benefits of vaccines with repeated, easy to understand visuals, and educate the public about RFK the Lesser's involvement in the Samoan measles epidemic and his contribution to dozens of unnecessary deaths there. When the CDC

instructs its employees to withhold important flu vaccine information, as they recently did, they should leak the info to the press if they are unable to defy the order by releasing it directly.

The Democrats need promulgate a clear agenda and oppose any Republican bills which will harm people and/or the environment...there is no need for them to be a party to the downfall of the US. Until just two weeks ago, Kamala Harris (who lost by just a little over one percentage point) and Barrack Obama were regrettably silent, and Clinton and Bush continue to remain tight-lipped. The few democrats (e.g., AOC) and independents (e.g., Sanders) who have been the most vocal have drawn the largest crowds and greatest support for a unified opposition to Trump.

A better **protest during the state of the union address** would have been for each democrat to have had a 3x3 ft poster under their coats with a brief fact to display when that individual's "turn" came when Trump concocted a specific lie (with a few hundred democrats in attendance, there could have been enough signs to counter most of the expected lies) and to alert the media at the last moment who had which sign and the media could then in real time offer fact-checking/a real democratic response...otherwise, they should not have attended or rather attended and stated in unison that they were not going to support the destruction of the United States and the principles for which it allegedly stands – as an aside, we know it never really has in so many ways, but these are very dangerous times requiring immediate action given the national and global consequences)

Those who are tasked with carrying out mass firings, removal of website data, changing signs on buildings, etc. should refuse to cooperate; otherwise, they are complicit.

Soldiers should disobey illegal, unethical or immoral orders (as indeed they are so obligated by the Uniform Code of Military Justice). None should participate in, for instance, a takeover of Canada or Greenland

(some may laugh at such invasions as being preposterous, but with what has happened a limited invasion during the next four years would not be too surprising).

Churches, particularly many so-called Christian churches, have lost their way by supporting Trump's agenda, which (as I discuss in the "Complicit" article noted above) is completely antithetical to the teachings of Christ. **Priests and ministers**, please re-read the Gospels and reflect upon the message of love and support for those in need that Jesus states repeatedly.

Thus, universities, educators, health care organizations, the media, researchers, students, churches, civil organizations, soldiers, and our elected officials need to band together and be much more vocal and active – it is very hard for an individual citizen, be that a student/teacher/abortion provider/researcher/tech expert/etc. to practice civil disobedience solo by disobeying immoral rules, since they have lots to lose, including their salaries, their freedom of movement, their life in the US, etc., but when we act together, there are not enough courts or attorneys to prosecute a well-supported opposition nor enough prisons to hold them....universities, hospitals, the research enterprise, public libraries, progressive churches, and even those with green cards are all going to be ensnared and punished eventually...already, **ICE agents**, who should be refusing to cooperate with illegal deportations, are picking up individuals in unmarked vehicles, failing to provide the media with an accurate accounts of charges (and in some cases fabrication charges), and flying detainees to the most dangerous prison on the planet in El Salvador (only 10% of the most recent "shipment" of Venezuelans to there had any criminal record; only a few had committed serious felonies). When individuals have been mistakenly deported to prisons outside the country, the Department of Justice has simply refused to follow judges' rulings to facilitate their return or even verify the location of these individuals. Really, none of us are safe, especially with DOGE's attempts to merge personal information from multiple

government agencies to create a “one-stop deportation, surveillance, and harassment stop” for everyone.

The longer we wait, the more people will be affected, the worse it will be, and the longer any possible recovery might take.

Oh, and while protesting Musk and his companies (which are benefitting greatly from his association with Trump), please stop burning Teslas....fires can hurt or kill people, increase pollution, and do not help our cause.

One day we will all have to look in the mirror, face God, tell our children and grandchildren what we did, and otherwise be held accountable for what we did during the death of US democracy....If you are silent, you are complicit....if you are not active, you are a co-conspirator. In the meantime, records should be kept of all who cooperated with Trump’s agenda, for the day that will hopefully come when they will be held accountable for their actions....as after WW II, “just following orders” will not serve as a valid excuse.

I will conclude with Pastor Niemoller’s poem....feel free to add additional stanzas including researchers, students, librarians, or any other group currently under attack

*First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a socialist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.*

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

I welcome comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,
Martin

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Public Health and Social Justice Website:

<http://www.publichealthandsocialjustice.org> or <http://www.phsj.org>

Prescription for Justice Television/Podcast:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJt34I9c5vT2RpZtkg6Im2A/video>

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<https://www.kboo.fm/program/prescription-justice>

Public Health and Social Justice Reader (Jossey Bass/Wiley, 2013):

<https://phsj.org/public-health-and-social-justice-reader/>