



# **COLAB SAN LUIS OBISPO WEEK OF APRIL 8 - 14, 2018**

## **THIS WEEK**

**NO BOS MEETING THIS WEEK**

## **LAST WEEK**

**SLOCOG PLAN LEANING TOWARD STACK AND  
PACK & NEW TAX MEASURE**

**PARTIAL PENSION BOND DEBT PAYOFF  
APPROVED**

**BETTER LOT SPLIT REGULATION ADOPTED**

**SLO COLAB IN DEPTH  
SEE PAGE 8**

**GAS-TAX REPEAL GETS CLOSER TO VOTE AS  
TRAIN SPOTLIGHTS STATE'S MISPLACED  
PRIORITIES**

**By Steven Greenhut**

**LEFTISTS VERSUS THE PEOPLE**

**By Jeffrey Folks**

## THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, April 10, 2018 (Not Scheduled)

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, April 3, 2018 (Completed)

**Item 1 - Request to approve the employment agreement with Daniel Colt Esenwein as the Director of Public Works.** The contract was approved unanimously. The Board has appointed Esenwein at a salary of \$181,000 per year to start. He has considerable engineering and management experience in the public sector.

**Item 3 - Request to authorize a budget adjustment in the amount of \$45,557,745 in the Pension Obligation Bond (POB) Debt Service Fund to pay off the balance of the 2009 Series A Pension Obligation Bonds using the POB Debt Service Designation and transfers from the Teeter Fund and Tax Loss Reserve Funds as the funding sources by 4/5 vote.** The Board approved the item unanimously and with praise to the Auditor Controller.

**Background:** Back in 2003 the County issued pension obligation bonds because the pension system was underfunded. It was believed that by issuing tax-exempt bonds (say 4%), the pension debt could be paid off, and if the pension system achieved its 8% interest rate assumption, the County would not have to make as large annual pension contributions and would thereby save money. The write-up below states that the County process “resulted in a net savings to the County.” This needs further explanation, perhaps in tabular form. Currently the unfunded pension liability is somewhere around \$550 million.

*In 2003, the County issued three series of Pension Obligation Bonds (POBs) totaling \$137.2 million to reduce the balance owed to the San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust (SLOCPT) for unfunded pension liability. The bonds were issued at rates below the SLOCPT's assumed earnings rate in place at the time. The difference in the earnings rate of the SLOCPT and the POB interest rates resulted in net savings to the County.*

For whatever reason (probably IRS rules) a portion of the original issue included a mix of taxable and tax exempt bonds. This issue was refinanced in 2009. These were interest only and

resulted in a balloon payment of \$42.5 million due in 2019. As noted in the table below, the County has been pulling money out of various savings accounts to build up the necessary amounts.

Pension Obligation Bond Debt Prefunding Schedule  
March 31, 2018

Description	Transfer Date	From Fund	Amount
Beginning Balance-Desig POB Debt Svc			\$9,760,771
Designation-POB Obligation	July 1, 2016	General Fund	9,688,657
Scheduled Transfer	July 1, 2016	Tax Loss Reserve Fund (TLRF)	2,054,317
Scheduled Transfer	July 1, 2016	Teeter Fund	7,668,176
Final Budget Action FY 2016-17	September 14, 2016	POB FBA	1,188,755
Scheduled Transfer	July 1, 2017	TLRF	2,054,317
Scheduled Transfer	July 1, 2017	Teeter Fund	2,410,042
Final Budget Action FY 2017-18	September 13, 2017	General Fund/POB FBA	3,158,166
Cumulative Balance as of March 31, 2018			\$37,983,201
Scheduled Future Transfers Per May 2016 Financing Plan			\$8,928,720

How does the ultimate \$269.3 million in principal and interest add up to a savings? Remember, there is still \$124.7 million to go on these payments after the \$42.5 million. And then the direct annual payments to the pension system are escalating as well.

**Item 20 - Vacation Rental Appeal – Cabrillo Estates, Los Osos.** The item was continued. Perhaps someone woke up and will attempt to work out the situation.

**Background:** This is a classic case in which the homeowner has appealed denial of a permit to allow his residence to be used as a vacation rental. The appeal is complicated by the fact that the County did approve some additions and a small guesthouse with some conditions to which the applicant is also objecting.

**Item 29 - Hearing to consider a request by the County of San Luis Obispo to amend the County Real Property Division Ordinance, Title 21 of the County Code, to allow for administrative approval of proposed lot line adjustments that are deemed "minor" based on specified eligibility criteria.** This item is an improvement to the permitting process and allows staff to approve lot line adjustments under certain circumstances. It eliminates the need for costly “minor use” permits and is an example of permit streamlining (up to a max of 4 parcels). The item was approved unanimously.

## Specific Criteria

- No parcel is located within the Coastal Zone of the county;
- The adjustment is not being processed in conjunction with any land use permit application;
- No parcel is completely relocated;
- For existing parcels that do not meet minimum parcel size, resulting parcels shall not be reduced in size by more than 10 percent;

### San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments (SLOCOG) Meeting of Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 8:30 AM (Completed)

**Item A-8: 2019 RTP - Status Update.** The item provides an excellent and comprehensive review of the status of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and should be read by everyone in government or anyone who claims to be interested in civic affairs on the central coast and especially San Luis Obispo County. Even if you don't agree with some of the substantive ideas (like "smart growth"), it is an important and useful document, which actually contains planning concepts.

#### Some Highlights:

##### ***2050 REGIONAL GROWTH FORECAST (adopted June 2017)***

*The 2050 Regional Growth Forecast (2050 RGF) projected needs by 2045 (relative to 2015) of:*

- Population: 41,600 new people*
- Housing: 18,000 new homes*
- Employment: 18,200 new jobs*

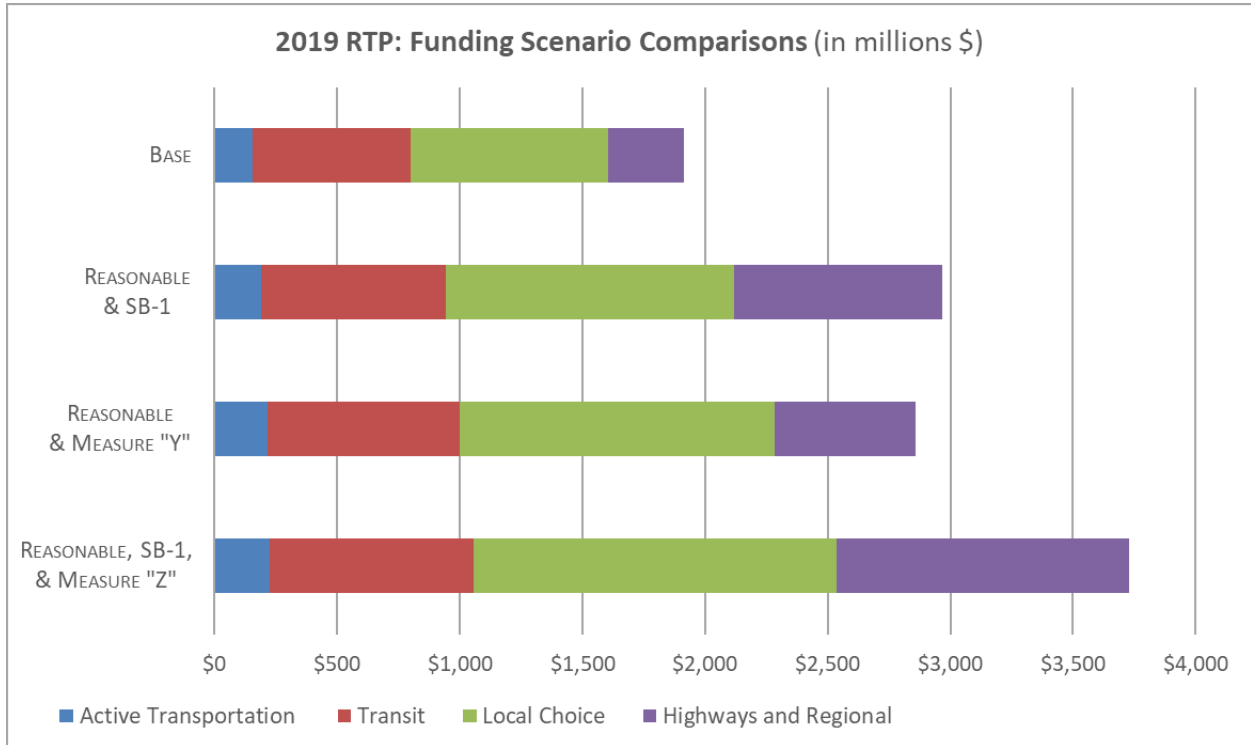
##### ***2019 RTP: INITIAL OUTREACH SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY***

- 1. Water supply, housing affordability, and loss of open space were the top three land use issues.*
- 2. 73% of respondents feel that proximity (for new growth) to bus services is either very important or somewhat important.*
- 3. 92% of respondents desire job and housing growth in close proximity.*

4. 47% of all respondents support a balanced, intermodal funding approach; 24% favored roads and highways; 23% favor transit, bike, and pedestrian improvements.

5. 75% of respondents identified the need for more compact housing (includes single family detached small lot).

**Financial Summary**



Note the references to a new ballot measure for a hypothetical countywide sales tax in combination with other sources (measure x or y).

The Sustainable Communities Strategies (the State’s stack-and-pack doctrine) is still part of the plan.

**DEVELOPING THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES STRATEGIES (SCS)**

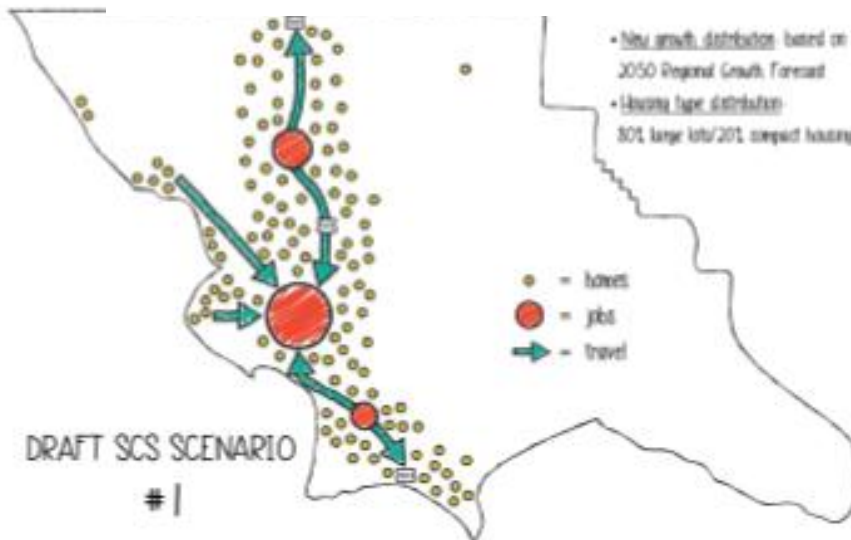
*The SCS is a required element of the RTP. The SCS identifies a forecasted development pattern for the region, which is informed by the inventory of existing land use throughout the region, along with the identification of sites where future development can be located, while still reducing VMT and GHG emissions. SB 375 establishes an approach to ensure that cities, counties, and the public are involved in the development of regional plans to achieve targets set by the ARB for reducing GHG emissions from passenger vehicles and light-duty vehicles. An SCS must also be consistent with other plans prepared by local, state, and federal agencies. Consistency can be described as a balance and reconciliation between different policies,*

programs, and plans. To collect background information to prepare land use scenarios, staff reviewed local jurisdictions' general plans, zoning, and pending and approved specific plans.

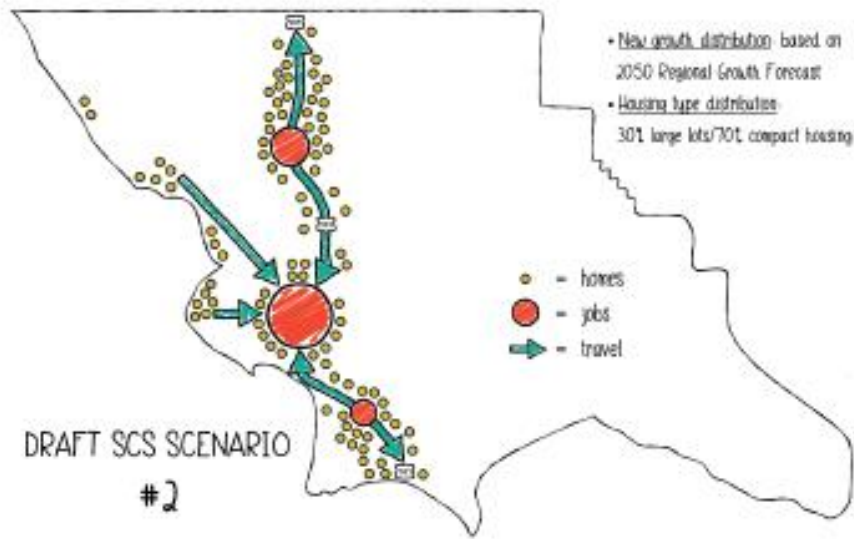
Different overall theoretical density patterns were hypothesized in the SLOCOG diagrams below:

Note that the home type pictures are provided as illustrations by COLAB, not SLOCOG.

# 1 – 80% large lots – defined as greater than 6,000 sq. ft.

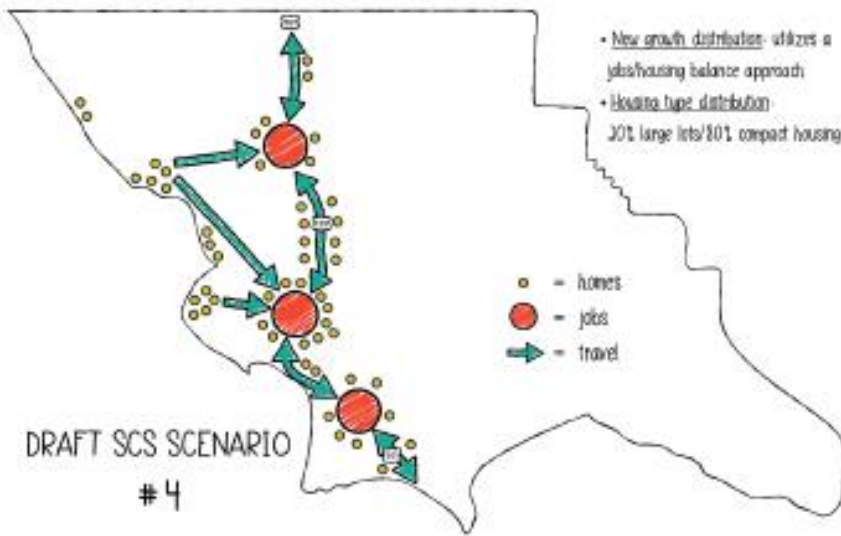
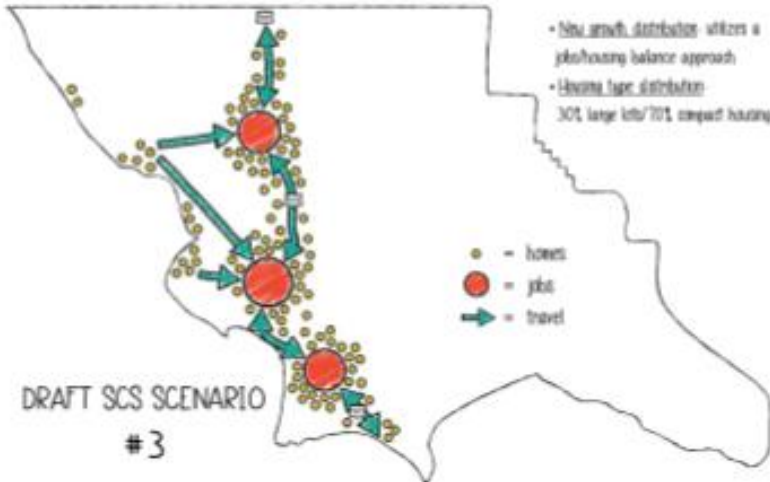


# 2 would be 30% large lots and 70% higher densities.





# 3 would be 30% large lots and 70% higher densities near transportation: bus lines, highways, perhaps commuter rail someday.



# 4 would be 20% large lots, 80% compact density near transportation.



**Next Steps:** The SLOCOG staff will be showing these concepts (not the pictures) to various community groups, business groups, and other “stakeholders” to help it ascertain public opinion as to the preferable development pattern. All this will come to a head in October 2018, when it will be necessary for the SLOCOG Board to approve a new Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to comply with the State mandated deadline. Staff emphasized the point that the RTP must be “compliant” with State land use, energy, climate change, and myriad other policies.

**At the Meeting:** The report was received by a vote of 10 for, 1 no (Arnold), 1 abstention (Peschong). Compton voted yes but complained strongly about items on the agenda promoting the retention of SB-1, stating that voters ought to decide and that SLOCOG should not be using public funds to campaign for various transportation measures.

Download the full report here. It’s a little clumsy because SLOCOG has made its website overcomplicated and too layered. You have to control click and then follow the instructions to download it. It’s slow.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/d3nl4jr2qzbqsi6/AABx5YVeIb5EkTnLTDkwV7mqa/April%202018/Agendas%20%26%20Reports?dl=0&preview=A-8+2019+RTP+Status+Update.pdf>

Please see the related article, **GAS-TAX REPEAL GETS CLOSER TO VOTE AS TRAIN SPOTLIGHTS STATE’S MISPLACED PRIORITIES** by Steve Greenhut on page 8 immediately below.

## **COLAB IN DEPTH**

**IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES AND FORCES**

### **Gas-tax repeal gets closer to vote as train spotlights state’s misplaced priorities**

**By Steven Greenhut**



Almost everyone agrees that California's infrastructure is shockingly decrepit, yet public anger over a 12-cent-a-gallon gas tax to address that problem has not subsided. Although an effort by GOP gubernatorial candidate Travis Allen to repeal the tax never got traction, a separate effort led by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, former San Diego Councilman Carl DeMaio and GOP gubernatorial candidate John Cox is close to qualifying for the November ballot.

Gov. Jerry Brown, who led the push for last year's transportation tax hikes, has vowed a spirited and well-funded campaign against the rollback – and has expressed concern that repealing the tax would endanger \$5 billion annually in much-needed road and freeway improvements. Various polls suggest it's a close call whether voters will heed his warning.

The repeal effort already has collected the 585,000 signatures required to place it on the November ballot. DeMaio and other repeal backers are trying to gather another 250,000 signatures to provide a cushion against duplicates, improper signatures and any disputes with county registrars, who are tasked with qualifying signatures to place the measure on the ballot.

“Polling shows that as soon as voters know what it is, it's 65 percent to 30 percent in favor of repeal,” DeMaio told me. “They'll outspend us by as much as 10 to one, but there aren't many undecided voters. People are angry and it's going to be hard to change minds on this.”

Are the repeal's supporters being shortsighted, given the pressing infrastructure needs? Not at all. No doubt, the governor and his union allies will be suggesting as much when they try to derail the repeal vote. DeMaio jokes that their “no” commercials “will say that the repeal kills kittens.” Democrats also are trying to forestall a June recall election of Sen. Josh Newman, D-Orange County. Republicans are targeting the freshman senator because of his deciding vote on the gas-tax hike. The recall has become a statewide battleground and is shaping up to be a tight race, especially during an expected Democratic surge year.

Another recent news story helps explain why many Californians – including plenty of Democratic and “No Party Preference” voters – may be eager to repeal the new taxes, even though they realize the extent of the state's infrastructure needs. That story involves the governor's plan to build a high-speed-rail line that connects San Francisco to Los Angeles. The controversial project has become even more controversial as the latest price tag for it has soared.

The California High Speed Rail Authority last week released its latest plan, which increases the projected cost from \$63 billion to \$77 billion and delays the expected opening by four years to 2033. That's an astounding setback given that the system is facing soaring costs and delays even as the authority builds the easiest part of the route – through the flat Central Valley. Just wait until engineers try to build over or through the Tehachapi and San Gabriel mountains.

Speaking to a group of union officials last week, Brown unleashed a tirade. He called talk of overruns and delays “bullshit,” and said he is “so tired of all the nonsense that I read in the paper and you hear

from other politicians.” Brown said the state can build the rail project if “we don’t let these small-minded people intimidate us into lowering our expectations.” But Californians’ low expectations are primarily the result of the state’s unrealistic projections, and constantly shifting rail alignments and cost estimates. The public’s skepticism has nothing to do with small mindedness. The latest disappointments come not from skeptics, but from the governor’s own high-speed rail authority, which says the final number could top \$100 billion.

How does this relate to higher gas taxes? No funds from the estimated \$5 billion a year raised by the new taxes are earmarked for the bullet train, although around \$750 million go toward transit in general. But the main issue involves priorities. State officials can’t cry poormouth about road, bridge and freeway funding when they are busy squandering \$77 billion or more on an unnecessary rail project.

In 2008, voters approved Proposition 1A, which provided \$9.95 billion in initial bond funding for a project that was sold as a sleek and fast system modeled after those gee-whiz bullet trains in Europe and Japan. To win public support, the initiative included some supposed guarantees. The train would travel from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2 hours and 40 minutes. Construction on the initial 300-mile segment would not proceed until all the funding for that segment was identified. There would be no operating subsidies. The ticket costs would be low.

All those promises went by the wayside. A superior court judge initially halted the first bond sale because those funding sources weren’t identified, but higher courts allowed it proceed despite that failure. Now the Prop. 1A promises are mere suggestions.

The rail authority revised its plan by creating a cost-saving “blended route” in which the bullet train will share tracks with commuter trains in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Los Angeles basin, thus turning the promised travel times into a fantasy. A train can’t zoom along at high speeds if it’s running beside commuter trains. Private funding never materialized. Operating subsidies now seem like a given. Can you blame Californians for being skeptical?

During his recent talk, Brown offered this new funding plan: “I’ll tell you how we’re going to fund the railroad. We’re going to take back the Congress and then a Democratic Congress is going to put the high-speed rail in the infrastructure bill and then we’ll get those trillion dollars and we’ll put America back to work.” Instead of identifying real funding sources, Brown and his fellow rail supporters have embraced a political pipedream based on the iffy promise of a widespread change in the national political scene. Good luck taking that one to the bank.

No wonder former Sen. Quentin Kopp, an author of the 2008 initiative and so-called “father” of California high-speed rail, has subsequently denounced the plan. “There won’t be enough riders paying fares to cover operational costs,” he wrote in a letter to the *Sacramento Bee* last year. “The 2008 ballot measure prohibits taxpayer subsidy of this now-planned track to nowhere. As the ‘father’ of true high-speed rail, I regret its ‘horizon’ isn’t now bright, unless the governor (restores) 2008 promises to taxpayers.” Yet the governor won’t be dissuaded.

That stubborn insistence on making rail the priority – while claiming that there's no money available for upgrading our system of roads – is why so many Californians are angry about the gas-tax increases. Instead of focusing on rebuilding California's crumbling infrastructure, Brown and Democratic lawmakers want to build a rail system that doesn't conform to the promises made in the 2008 statewide initiative that authorized it and may cost 20 times what the new gas tax raises each year.

Californians already have a quick and cost-effective means to travel up and down the state (Southwest Airlines). They desperately want their everyday transportation system to be upgraded, but question the state's strange priorities. After all, when a homeowner is out of money and the roof is leaking, he doesn't take a loan to put in a new hot tub. Given this simmering anger, there's a high likelihood that the gas-tax increase will be repealed in November.

*Steven Greenhut is contributing editor to the California Policy Center. He is Western region director for the R Street Institute. Write to him at [sgreenhut@rstreet.org](mailto:sgreenhut@rstreet.org). This article first appeared on the California Policy Center articles page on March 25, 2018. The California Policy Center is an educational non-profit focused on public policies that aim to improve California's democracy and economy.*

## **Leftists versus the People**

**By Jeffrey Folks**

Do they really hate ordinary people that much?

Yes, they do. For liberals, the distinction between the "dumb masses" and their enlightened selves renders life meaningful. Disdain for ordinary folks is not just an ancillary trait of liberalism. It is fundamental to its nature.

At its heart, liberalism is a gnostic religion, and the essence of that religion is the believer's faith that he possesses the means of changing the world for the better. The belief that the world must be changed requires there to be a mass of individuals whose lives are in need of change. Following this logic, it is the liberal, not those deplorables in need of change, who knows what must be changed. For liberals, there *must* be a mass of people in need of this knowledge for life to make sense.

Above all, liberalism is a hubristic faith. Its followers share the fatal flaw of pride in their own intellectual capacity. This is why liberalism appeals so strongly to those in the knowledge trades: teachers, journalists, writers, psychologists, and social workers. The sense of "knowing more than others" is its strongest attraction – particularly to the young, who otherwise know so little. Liberalism confers, or seems to confer, almost immediate power and authority to those who embrace it.

The left's obsession with superior knowledge runs through its entire history. As Woodrow Wilson remarked, the "instrument" of political science "is insight. A nice understanding of subtle, unformulated conditions." Lyndon B. Johnson thought "a president's hardest task" is "to know what is right." And the most hubristic of all is Obama's "We are the ones we've been waiting for." Yes, we are wonderfully bright, and we've been waiting eons for ourselves to appear.

The problem for the liberal is that most people do not want to be transformed. They want life to be better but not qualitatively different. It is only the liberal, or the "progressive," as he prefers to be called today, who welcomes revolution and relishes the violent tactics necessary to bring it about. For the progressive, it is an article of faith that the masses will resist change and must be forced to swallow it.

This is a crucial difficulty, and it gives rise to all sorts of persuasion, nudging, compulsion, and outright violence. If the masses don't know what's good for them, they must be made to change. Every liberal in history, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Barack Obama, has adopted this course of action. The current liberal lions, Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, and their lion cubs – New Jersey's Sen. Cory Booker and California's Sen. Kamala Harris – appear to be even more radical.

Booker speaks repeatedly in favor of what he calls "the collective good." Apparently, he knows what that good is, and others do not. And he seems willing to use uncivil means to achieve that collectivist end, such as [lashing out](#) at DHS secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. His humiliation of Nielsen was not just embarrassing. As I saw it, it revealed a cold, vicious, Leninist temperament, a willingness to sacrifice individuals in the service of the collective and of his own political ambition.

Then there is Harris. "Loose regulations and lax enforcement ... That's abandoning the middle class," she says. What she seeks, apparently, is more government control with herself in charge.

Both of these über-liberals claim to know more than the rest of us, but what is it they know?

In a truth worthy of Wittgenstein, one could say that what they "know" is that they know, and nothing else. And what they oppose is any suggestion that they do not know.

In other words, liberalism is a temper, not a philosophy. It has no fixed content – it can be either communistic or fascistic, racially "progressive" or virulently anti-Semitic, pacifistic or militaristic – but in one respect, it never changes. It exerts control and demands obedience.

At its core, liberalism can be defined in gnostic terms as the human mind's idolizing of itself. In this sense, Obama's famous aphorism is spot on. The liberal mind really is what the liberal mind has been waiting for.

What it seeks is not, however, goodness, or security, or higher living standards, or even better health care. What it seeks is the celebration of its own brilliance. "Smug" is a small word that perfectly captures the nature of the progressive mind.

This gnostic trait is the source of all of the damage liberalism has wrought for more than 300 years. From the French Revolution to the Third Reich, from Stalinism to North Korea, liberalism has brought with it repression of liberty, death camps, and executions on a mass scale. What's often not well understood is the fact that violence and repression are inevitable

because liberalism seeks to change what does not wish to change – and it does so not for the purpose of making things better, but as an attempt to confirm the superiority of the liberal mind and its ability to manage society.

Most Americans find this conception of existence repulsive. They follow the true path of love, marriage, childbirth, hard work, and faith in God and country. Liberals actively seek to destroy this conception of existence because it rejects their mission of transforming society. It's either the true path or liberalism. Both cannot be true.

To succeed, liberalism must acquire and retain clients in need of change. It is not in the interest of the liberal to *solve* problems. What the liberal needs is continually to discover new problems and hold them up as in need of solution. The fate of the "DREAMers," held in limbo by generations of liberals, is one example. The "downtrodden," as they were once called, are indeed the pawns of liberal politicians.

There are fewer pawns lately, what with President Trump's determination to actually solve problems rather than exploit them. But as the 2018 and 2020 elections draw nearer, there will be an explosion of media accounts of victimization. It will be theater nonstop, and it will express perfectly the liberal's need to transform the world whether it wishes to be transformed or not.

There is a point at which liberalism's hubris turns into bloodlust. The act of exerting force becomes reflexive and then pleasurable. It is not likely that Stalin suffered any remorse on March 5, 1940 after signing the order for the Katyn massacre. Every smug theorist of liberalism has morphed into a vicious mass murderer – or, like Jean-Paul Sartre, an apologist for such. Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Pol Pot, Kim Il-sung – they were all brilliant theorists who grew to savor violence.

It is chilling to realize how imperiled we are in the USA. No country is now at greater risk than America, where the young have been warped by state education and the nation intentionally divided along lines of race, class, and sex.

Our task as conservatives is to speak out against liberalism, with its inevitable tendency toward compulsion and violence. It is to offer an alternative that is truer and more generous. The alternative of liberty and freedom is not the construct of the human mind, but the natural condition of mankind wrought by our Creator.

*Jeffrey Folks is the author of many books and articles on American culture including **Heartland of the Imagination** (2011). This article first appeared in the February 24, 2018 edition of *American Thinker*.*

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(Revised 2/2017)