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Mary L Trump, Patti LuPone Hold Press Conference

Our Broken Government: Restoring Faith in America's Institutions

How Donald Trump Undermined Society & What Needs to be Done to Fix It

NEW YORK, N.Y. – Today, Mary L. Trump gathered experts and stakeholders from various sectors of society to discuss the impact that Donald Trump is having on our most treasured institutions, ranging from the law to arts to healthcare – and more.

“In 2016 many Americans voted for a candidate who pledged to shake up the system in Washington D.C. as only an ‘outsider’ could. Instead of breaking up big lobbyists or special interests, however, the current administration has systematically dismantled our trust and faith in all aspects of society and the institutions of which it is comprised. We have lost faith in the justice system, in healthcare, in the safety of a potential COVID vaccine, in the post office, and, in many instances, in our leaders and in each other,” said Dr. Mary L. Trump, a clinical psychologist. “At first, it is easy to disregard small slights, but as they accumulate over time, we become numb to them until we reach the point of no return. We are here today to explain the impact of these degradations to the American people and to point out why it’s so important for us to reverse course.”

The Arts

During the 2018-2019 Broadway Season, [shows earned \\$1.83 billion](#); this year Broadway is shuttered and not slated to open until next year. Tens of thousands are out of work in New York alone, plus more across theaters nationally. Even some Republicans in the Senate see the urgency in some kind of relief package, but there’s no end in sight because of Donald Trump’s disdain for those in a field who have criticized his politics.

Broadway and film legend Patti LuPone said, “COVID-19 has had a huge impact on all parts of American life, and one of the most disregarded is the toll it has taken on our arts communities. Across the country stages are dark, theaters are empty, and audiences aren’t coming back anytime soon. Nearly two-thirds of arts workers in the U.S. have lost their job due to this pandemic and the Trump administration has done absolutely nothing to protect one of our nation’s most precious assets and the people who bring it to life. I cannot stand idly by as Donald Trump allows more lives and more institutions to be ignored. If we don’t do something now and stop his belittling of the arts, we risk losing them forever.”

Mental Health of our Nation

Americans are stressed and anxious more than ever. Compared to the year prior, [three times more people today are experiencing symptoms of anxiety disorder](#) and four times as many people are experiencing a depressive disorder. About 10% more people started or increased substance use

because of COVID-19 and in 2020, twice the number of people reported seriously considering suicide in the past 30 days compared to 2018.

Kate Szymanski Ph.D. said, "Metaphorically one can conceptualize our society as a family unit. When a malevolent head of a family (on a societal level, the president) imposes -for his own needs - a warped version of reality on his family members, such trauma often results in their sense of confusion and powerlessness. This lack of agency is often expressed by proverbial "children" (society members at large) as aggression toward each other. Such reaction gives them an illusion of control and perpetuates a further disintegration and split within a family. This psychological contagion leads to a gradual deterioration of a family system. When, under those circumstances, there is a real external threat/trauma to a family, these distractive internal dynamics are exasperated, and "children" experience more internal chaos, more helplessness, and more overt rage toward each other, and the family unit continues its fragmentation. That's what the reality of pandemic brought up on a societal level. What can restore a family's (society's) sense of cohesion and integration under those circumstances? A new family head who steps in to ameliorate these traumatic dynamics by restoring a sense of safety, trust and validation, thus containing chaos and bringing a sense of connection within the family unit. This necessarily simplified interpretation of the current societal trauma shows an urgency to restore our endangered national family."

Denise Hien. Ph.D. said, "As a nation, we are only just beginning to understand the full impact on our collective mental health from the damaging/failed policies and practices of the current administration on coronavirus, immigration, race relations and more. Psychological trauma occurs when we are unable to cope with a distressing event or series of events that threaten to overwhelm our sense of self and ability to function. We know that millions of Americans are at risk for the "long haul" of trauma; manifestations include substance use and other behavioral addictions, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions."

Susan Opatow Ph.D. said, "It is a tragic asymmetry that societies can slip more quickly into harsh and wider-scale exclusionary policies than to reverse course to become increasingly inclusionary. Though inclusion can be a slow and fragile process, our democratic elections give us the opportunity to change course and embark on a hopeful, if challenging, project -- to work together to build a society that is more inclusionary and just."

Journalism

Anne Champion, First Amendment Lawyer said, "From Sean Spicer's lies about inauguration crowd sizes to the death of the White House press briefing under Sarah Sanders, to Kayleigh McEnany's immediately broken promise never to lie to the press, the White House Press Office is a microcosm of the dysfunction of the Trump Administration, perverting its vital mission to keep the public informed about the workings of government into a platform to abuse the press and spread propaganda."

Criminal Justice

Rosa Brooks said, "Despite his claims to be the "law and order" candidate, President Trump has encouraged the kind of brutal policing that destroys community trust and undermines public safety. Fortunately, most modern police leaders understand that American policing needs to change: we need police officers who work collaboratively with communities to foster meaningful public safety."

Maya Wiley said, "Justice is protection for the people, not the plaything of the powerful. The Department of Justice, once the nation's protector of rights and prosecutor of those in power, has become Donald Trump's personal defense department. From trying to protect him from the defamation lawsuit of a woman who has said he raped her, to endangering the lives of people protesting against police violence in Lafayette Park so he could have a photo op, to arguing that the government could deny immigrant children basic humane conditions — even toothpaste and soap — in its custody. As things stand, Trump demands a coronation and he is having the Justice Department roll out the red carpet."

Healthcare

COVID-19 cases are spiking across the country as Americans prepare for a difficult winter. 41% of Americans still do not believe masks will help prevent spread of COVID-19 despite numerous scientific articles that demonstrate otherwise. Leadership has failed to equip Americans with the information they need to stay safe.

Kavita Patel said, "The devastation to the American people is obvious by our rising cases and deaths with COVID-19 along with staggering levels of unemployment and food insecurity, but the attacks on medicine and science will undermine us for generations to come unless change happens imminently."

Journalist Laurie Garrett said, "Donald Trump's primary mission has been to destroy what right-wing Republicans call 'the administrative and regulatory State.' They have stacked the courts with judges that aim to strike down Executive Branch rule-making and regulatory activity, and the White House has slashed budgets on agencies and programs that oversee things like sales of salmonella-contaminated lettuce, distribution of substandard drugs and medicines, spread of disease inside meat-packing plants. While the goal is essentially to allow businesses to cut costs by no longer having to comply with federal rules and regulations, the result is to imperil the health and safety of the American people. By hacking away at the jobs and activities of agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration the Trump Administration has rendered millions vulnerable to COVID-19 and other diseases, and left the Nation to fend off a pandemic without any national plan, limited federal workforce and ineptitude. The result: Officially, 226,864 Americans have died of COVID-19. The undercount is of some 80,000 excess deaths, bringing the likely total to about 300,000 deceased. The Epidemic is out of control in nearly every State in the Nation."

National Security and Foreign Policy

Mieke Eoyang said, "President Trump has presided over the steepest decline in American international leadership in our nation's history. His mismanagement of our nation's security has left us less trusted at home and abroad, politicized our military, and weakened our alliances. America cannot take four more years of his incompetence."

Ruth Ben-Ghiat said, "Donald Trump's goals for a second term are to continue to destroy American democracy so he may maintain himself and his family in power indefinitely, avoiding prosecution for his crimes. It is vital that we understand the costs of re-electing this dangerous and destructive individual."
