

# Our Democracy is in Crisis

Byron K. Ward

This article expresses concerns about the state of democracy in the United States. It is being weakened and dismantled by a number of inter-related phenomena, among them – minority rule; the specific threat and reality of violence endemic to the MAGA movement; the propagation of the big lie; alt-right and related ideologies – white supremacy, Christian nationalism, fascism, racism, authoritarianism. Will our democracy survive with any semblance to a government of, by and for the people? Will majority rule return to undergird legislation and regulation?

A philosophy has been coalescing over time to create a coalition of conservatives, religious fundamentalists, para-military, white nationalists, racists, authoritarians, and fascists. This coalition was effectively ushered into the highest office in the land with the election of Donald J. Trump; and then, like a cancer, it metastasized during his time in office. Trump's followers became even more emboldened after his defeat for reelection, as the big lie of fraud in the 2020 election took root and they answered his call to arms, resulting in the January 6 insurrection.

Donald Trump is the figurehead of this movement, emboldening this philosophy through his thuggish, gangster-like, sociopathic, bullying, criminal behavior. His repeated accusations of voter fraud, perpetuation of the big lie, and baseless claims of victimhood continue to fan the flames. Death threats have surged, aimed not only at elected officials, but also election workers, judges and medical personnel.

This movement is guided by the false and dangerous belief that, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, "The Alternative Right, commonly known as the 'alt-right,' is a set of far-right ideologies, groups, and individuals whose core belief is that 'white identity' is under attack by multicultural forces using 'political correctness' and 'social justice' to undermine white people and 'their' civilization." "The Alternative Right is characterized by heavy use of social media and online memes. Alt-righters eschew 'establishment' conservatism, skew young, and embrace white ethnonationalism as a fundamental value."

This is a clear and present danger to us all. This is, in my opinion, the greatest challenge to our democracy and any kind of American way of life that professes to live by the rule of law and the Constitution up to this point. What are we going to do about it locally and nationally, if necessary? How do we alert and equip our young people for advocacy to counter this threat?

Supporters of Community Advocacy Coalition and its advocacy committees while discussing this situation have suggested that action from our local community is warranted. The issue, it is suggested, requires education and dialog to frame it in a proper context that will move current generations to progressive action. Proactive advocacy is crucial to counter this great threat to our democratic experiment.