

Twenty Twenty Vision for a Green 2020



A Serious Effort to Curb Global Warming and Produce Environmentally Neutral Energy

“In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments—there are consequences” Robert Green Ingersoll

The energy crisis of the 1970s should have been a wakeup call in terms of developing not only energy independence, but sources of energy that are less harmful to the environment. Had we initiated an energy “moonshot” at that time, we may have achieved these goals by now. This is an area that needs government investment similar to that when we put a man on the moon. One possibility is instead of off shore drilling for petroleum, we should be creating electrolysis platforms that use solar, wind, and tidal energy to generate electricity that can be used to electrolyze water. The captured hydrogen can then be used as a fuel source that produces water when burned which is environmentally neutral. Another possibility is to develop synthetic photosynthesis to produce hydrocarbons that have a higher energy content. Investigating other forms of biomimicry is another possibility. It is important not to emphasize the possibilities of environmental disaster. We are already aware of these and doom and gloom prognoses are counterproductive. Emphasize solutions only.

Alliance with the English Speaking World

Our foreign policy needs to be based on a primary alliance with the other English speaking countries with which we share common cultural similarities and then a secondary alliance with the countries of Western Europe. Relations with the other countries are important, but we will have a more stable foreign policy if we build it on a foundation of shared values.

Replace the Income Tax with a Graduated Consumption Tax

If we place such a high premium on work, why do we tax it? While there are environmental costs all along the production process, they ultimately end up in the consumption of the finished product. A **graduated** tax on consumption would mitigate these environmental costs. A tax on income is essentially a tax on work which does not have this advantage. It would also clean up all the complexities in the tax code which resulted from special interest rent seeking.

A Universal Basic Income

There is a constant focus on work and jobs in our political discourse which ignores the fact that our idea of work is contradictory. On the one hand we promote the “work ethic” even though we have been attempting to eradicate labor through labor saving devices, robotics, and artificial intelligence. This contradictory attitude toward work is exacerbated by the “free rider problem” which makes the notion of welfare and income redistribution so controversial in the U.S. We need to acknowledge these contradiction because it is now possible that machines will not only eliminate physical labor, but intellectual work as well. We can start to address this problem by making a distinction between the “work ethic” and ”ethical work”, and by decoupling a basic standard of living from work. (A citizen wage can be justified once citizens are liable for legislative service.) Funding for a universal basic income can be derived from holding corporations fully accountable for the true cost of their gross negligence and crime, and by not allowing high level executives to shield all their assets under the corporate veil. That is, when corporate gross negligence and crime result in harm to society in general instead of to a particular individual or entity, the compensatory damages and fines imposed should reflect that full cost. These damages and fines along with any punitive damages will be paid into a Citizens’ Compensation Fund. When the fund has sufficient assets to serve as principle, the interest earnings can be used to pay citizen dividends, a step toward a universal basic income to help reduce economic inequality.

End the War on Drugs

The war on drugs is a complete failure by any objective measure. Not only is it a waste of the resources it consumes, but it has had obvious blowback in the form of the criminal gangs it has created and the destabilization of the countries where the drug production originates. This, along with our support of dictatorships in these countries has contributed in no small part to our current immigration problem. It has also contributed to the high levels of incarceration and racism in this country. Applying these misallocated resources to treatment is simple common sense. Why is it in our interest to enrich the drug cartels? And why is it that we continue to support policies that are obvious failures? This is just one symptom of our broken political system.

Focus on Defense Not War

We have been in a state of permanent war that has little to do with national security and is extremely costly. This is a problem that arose out of the mobilization for World War II that resulted in the military industrial complex. Consequently we won the war but lost the peace. If we want to influence the rest of the world, we must do so through moral leadership and creating a democratic example at home that others may choose to emulate. Money saved here can be applied to the energy initiative which is a defense issue. It is also abhorrent to be supporting the regime in Saudi Arabia.