

# HYDE PARK

Got something to share with fellow Democrats?  
Now's the time and here's the place!

Submit contributions to [wayne@looking4light.com](mailto:wayne@looking4light.com).

Occasional Virtual Soap Box

November 12, 2021

**WHAT DID VOLUSIA'S REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON SAY WHEN THEY VOTED ON THE PRESIDENT'S "TAX THE RICH TO STRENGTHEN AMERICA" BIARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE BILL? YOU'LL NEVER GUESS!**



*Li'l Marco Rubio*



*Rosleratu Scott*



*Mikey Waltz*

**AND WHAT WILL WE SAY WHEN THEY TRY TO CLAIM CREDIT ONCE THE PROJECTS START, THE HIRING BEGINS, AND WE VOTE IN 2022?**

**HELL NO,  
BOZOS!**

Wayne's blog: <https://looking4light.com/scarab/>.

Back issues of *Hyde Park* can be found there.

## Note

The content of this newsletter has not been approved by the Volusia County D.E.C. Each item is the responsibility of its author. Questions and comments are welcome. Direct them to [wayne@looking4light.com](mailto:wayne@looking4light.com).

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# Editorial

## Reality in today's America is a nightmare.

**Wayne Dickson**

Some years back I saw a short video featuring a Scottish comedian complaining about how he hated hearing other people tell him about their dreams. I'm not going to do that to you—beyond saying what the dreams were about, that is. But I am going to speculate about the significance of my dreams.

Guests on late night TV shows often introduce clips of a movie in which they've acted by saying something like, "Let me set this up for you." The other night my wife Jewel reminded me that my memories never involve triumphs or successes. They always involve failures or moments when I've treated others or been treated myself with what I considered great injustice.

For example, I never remember scoring a winning goal or catching a touchdown pass. Instead, I remember something like that time when I grabbed a rebound, middle of the keyhole, 4 feet from the basket...choked and missed the final shot, right at the buzzer, losing the game for the faculty intramural team. (True story!)

When I opened my email today, the first message I received was a petition from *Change.org*. A 15-year-old girl attending a school in North Carolina called *Hawthorne Academy* had been raped by a classmate. She reported the incident to the police, who investigated. The boy confessed to what he had done. So how did the school respond? They exonerated the boy; suspended the girl; and forced her to take

a course titled "Sexual Assault Is Preventable." The boy raped a girl, but the school authorities are treating him as a victim and her as guilty.

The Kyle Rittenhouse trial is on the front pages. The 17 year-old bought a semi-automatic rifle illegally (because "it looked cool," he said), took it to another city in another state, killed two men and left a third with a lifetime disability. He's being treated as a victim and a hero, not just by the right-wing nut caucus, but by the judge himself! The boy murdered two men (in my opinion), but the judicial authority is treating him as a victim and the men he killed as guilty.

Perhaps not totally coincidentally (call me cynical!), Tim Mak's book *Misfire: Inside the Downfall of the NRA* was published this week. One of his first sections deals with the horror at *Columbine High* where two teenage students bought guns illegally; took them to school; and killed 12 fellow students, 1 teacher, and themselves.



The *NRA* leadership held an emergency conference and decided not to express sympathy, not to offer assistance, but instead to tell the world, “F... you!” How? Within days they held their annual conference just a few miles away in *Denver*. This was where *NRA* President Charleton Heston gave the speech Michael Moore made infamous. You know, the one where the actor who had played the voice of God, Jesus, Moses, and Ben Hur held up a rifle and said that if authorities wanted it, they’d have to take it out of his “cold, dead hand.”

Right this minute (@4:15 p.m. on Thursday afternoon) Nicole Wallace said something like, “We begin this segment with stories about threats to kill members of *Congress* and school boards, thugs wearing masks and body armor attending local board meetings, and school boards wanting to burn books.” A.G. Garland

seems to be allowing Steve Bannon to get away with defying a subpoena and giving the middle finger to the federal government. Earlier this week we had stories about how *Florida’s* governor is suing President Biden for trying to keep *Floridians* from killing themselves or others. *Florida’s Surgeon General* is a *QAnon* conspiracy theorist who treats his fellow human beings with utter contempt.

So what have I been dreaming about? Waking up feeling trapped, gasping for breath, feeling deep despair? Yeah. I dream about incidents of terror, innocent people (including those I know) suffering unjustly...and being utterly, entirely incapable of making even the slightest difference in protecting others, seeing justice done, and most of all saving our fast vanishing democracy.



*The Miami Herald’s Editorial Board:*

“New state Surgeon General Joseph Ladapo represents the pompousness, the wackiness and the disregard for life and community that have become the hallmarks of Florida’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

He’s shown here with colleagues from the wack-a-doodle group calling themselves “America’s Frontline Doctors.”

Florida’s taxpayers will pay this guy a salary of \$437,000 a year.

# Feature

## Title

## Author



Famously, Sigmund Freud once **said**,

The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not yet been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is “What does a woman want?”

Non-famously, I have often asked—both of myself and in print—“What does a *Republican* want?” Meaning a person living in 2021 America, and calling herself or himself a *Republican*. Same for a person calling herself or himself a *Democrat*. A few probabilities:

Republican	Democrat
COVID = Hoax	COVID = Real
Anti-Vax	Pro-Vax
Anti-Mask	Pro-Mask
Climate Change = Hoax	Climate Change = Real
Fossil Fuel = Good	Fossil Fuel = Bad
Clean Energy = Bad	Clean Energy = Good
Tax the Rich = Bad	Tax the Rich = Good
Labor Unions = Bad	Labor Unions = Good
Affordable College = Bad	Affordable College = Good
All Races/Ethnicities ≠	All Races/Ethnicities =

Considering that and similar stuff, the following should come as no surprise:

Ken Langone, a billionaire investor and longtime donor to *Republican* campaigns, told *CNBC* Wednesday that he plans to have “one of the biggest fundraisers I’ve ever had” for Manchin in light of the senator’s refusal to support the original *Build Back Better Act*.

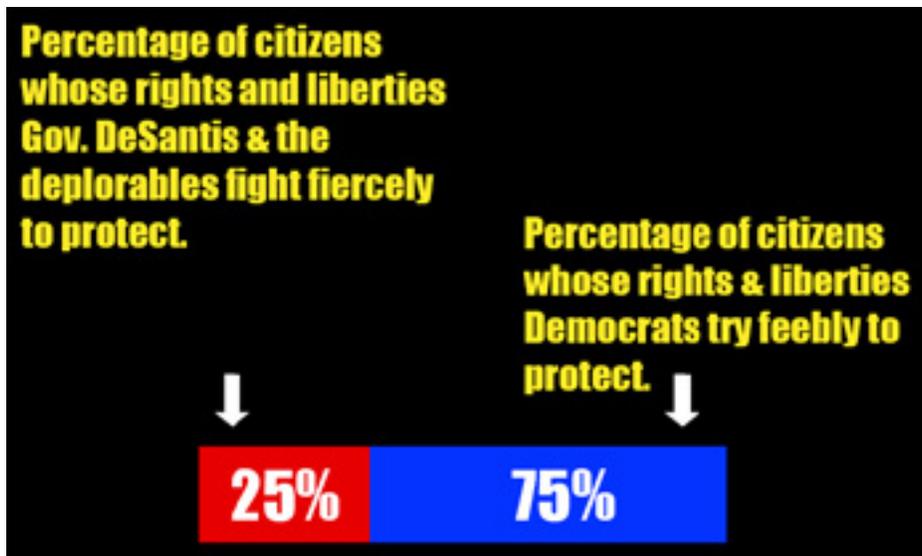
Langone called Manchin a “great American” and praised his “guts and courage” in torpedoing his own party’s effort to pass the legislation, a 10-year investment in social spending that originally included broadly popular provisions including an expansion of *Medicare* benefits, paid family and medical leave, and tuition-free community college.

*Democrats* are still debating the package, which is expected to change further before the *Senate* votes on it. Late last month, the proposal was cut from \$3.5 trillion to \$1.75 trillion, with numerous programs to

help lower- and middle-income households removed or severely weakened as a result of obstruction by Manchin and other right-wing *Democrats*.



Langone also applauded Manchin’s so-called “leadership,” which has come in the form of his refusal to back the *Clean Energy Performance Program (CEPP)*, which would work to replace the nation’s coal- and gas-fired power plants with solar and wind power infrastructure. Contrary to Langone’s claim that Manchin—whose family profits from coal sales in West Virginia—is “leading” the nation with his opposition to the bill, numerous studies have shown that job opportunities are growing in clean energy sectors as oil, coal, and natural gas see losses or stagnation.



# Feature

## Wealth Tax: Why and How

Wayne Dickson

### Background.

Later we'll see a video where Robert Reich explains the necessity for a wealth tax. Before then, however, I'd like to provide a little background in order to set it up.

First, Ann Richardson, then governor of Texas, said of George W. Bush, "He was born on third-base, but grew up thinking he had hit a triple." (It's a common expression, of course, but that was the first time I'd heard it.)

That little incident includes two themes one should keep in mind in considering the issues we'll be considering here. One, if you think about life as a sort of race toward some objective, we don't all start from the same place. Some competitors are given a huge lead before the starter's gun is fired.

Two, those privileged competitors usually insist, certainly to others and often I'm convinced to themselves as well, that they were given no head start but legitimately earned everything they have. Not always, no doubt, but more often than not.

For example, I remember a moment during the 2012 presidential campaign when Mitt Romney's wife, Ann, said, "They resent us because of our success!" Earlier in the campaign her husband had said, "If young people would just borrow \$1 or \$2 million from their families, start their own business, and work very hard, they too could become successful."

I commented at the time that Ann Romney was wrong. No one resented the success Mitt and Ann enjoyed, though admittedly some did resent their refusal to acknowledge the head start they had been given. And most resented what they had done to achieve their success. (Remember that Romney earned his fortune as a "corporate raider" and "vulture capitalist.")

Second, Reich will compare the current period in American history to that of the late 19th century, "The Gilded Age." The name comes from the title of a novel published in partnership by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner.

One feature of the element gold, *Au*, is that it's extremely malleable. That is, it can be hammered out until it's very, very thin, yet still retain all its other qualities. When it's beaten out this way, it's called "gold leaf." "Gilding" is the process of gluing gold leaf to cover other, less valuable materials.



Since we're talking politics, I'll cite as an example the dome of *Georgia's* legislative building in *Atlanta*. It's gilded with gold mined in the area close to *Dahlonega* in the western part of the state. The gold was hammered to leaf just 1/5000th of an inch thick. The capitols of ten other states are also gilded, by the way.

Below the gilding is blah concrete. And beneath the dome meets a body of corrupt persons passing rotten legislation. The relevant comparison is seen in the *Christian New Testament*:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful

outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. *Matthew 23:27, KJV*.

In this case the sepulcher is not merely whitewashed, but gilded. Nevertheless, what lies within is the same festering, disintegrating corruption.

Third, the nerds among you will observe that what Reich says here is based on research by the French economist Thomas Piketty. I've read Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (2013), and believe me.... For a non-economist like me, watching Reich's video is a lot more fun than slogging through Piketty's dense prose!



[Click image to watch video.]

# Feature

## Another perspective on income vs. wealth.

### Wayne Dickson

**More thoughts** on the important distinction between reported income and accumulated wealth. This involves family financial assistance included as part of the COVID relief provided by President Biden.

*Congress* used a simple filter to determine who was eligible for assistance: The full \$1,200 was limited to single taxpayers who'd reported \$75,000 a year or less in income on their previous tax return. Married couples got \$2,400 if they had reported less than \$150,000 in income. Money was sent automatically to those who qualified.

The key word there is “automatically.” That’s what caused the problem. For example,

Ira Rennert, worth \$3.7 billion according to *Forbes*, did not appear to need the cash infusion offered by the CARES Act. After all, his 62,000-square-foot Hamptons home is one of the largest in the country, so he was unlikely to get cabin fever during lockdown, let alone have trouble buying food. Nevertheless, Rennert, who made his fortune as a corporate raider in the '80s and '90s, got a \$2,400 check from the government.

George Soros, the prominent hedge fund manager and philanthropist who's worth \$8.6 billion, didn't need the CARES cash, either. Neither did his son, Robert, himself worth hundreds of millions. But they, too,

both got checks. (Both returned the checks, according to their representatives.)

You're aware, I know, that Soros is the bogeyman to the far right who contributes generously to liberal causes.

The wealthy taxpayers who received the stimulus checks got them because they came in under the government's income threshold. In fact, they reported way less taxable income than that — even hundreds of millions less — after they used business write-offs to wipe out their gains.

*ProPublica* found 270 taxpayers who collectively disclosed \$5.7 billion in income, according to their previous tax return, but who were able to deploy deductions at such a massive scale that they qualified for stimulus checks. ***All listed negative net incomes on tax returns.*** [Emphasis mine.]



*Ira Rennert's modest home.*

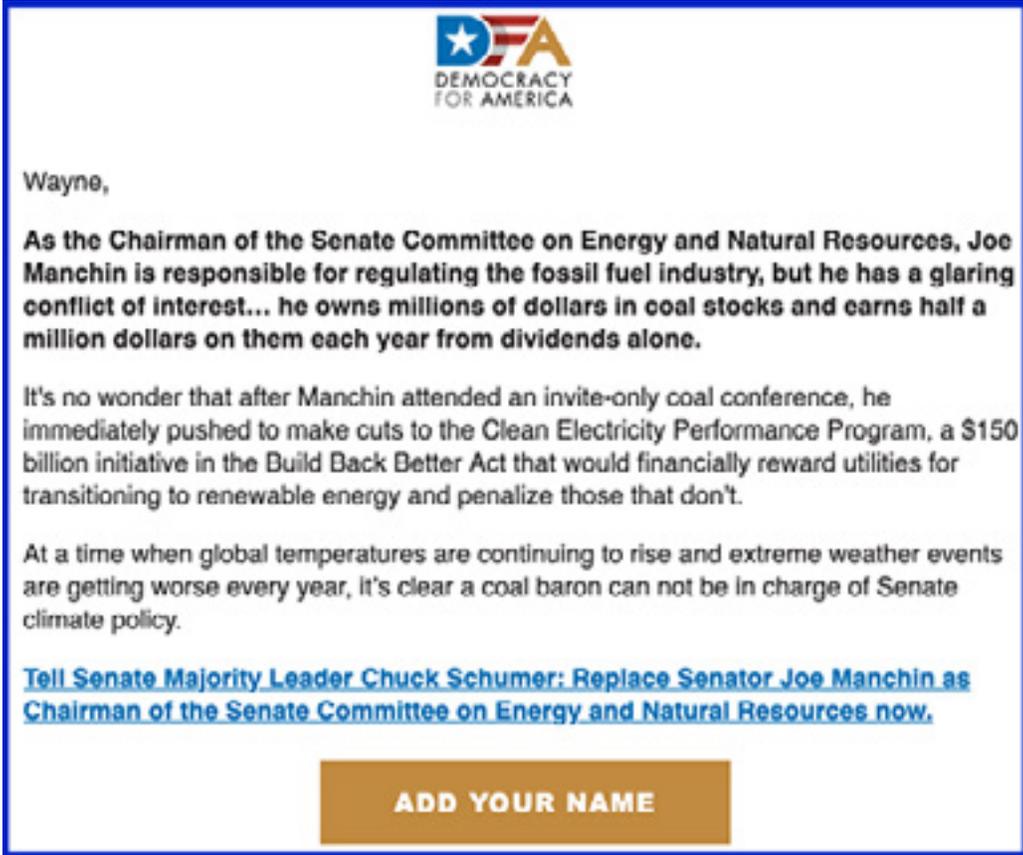
# Feature

## Re Joe Manchin: DFA Petition

Wayne Dickson

Coal Baron Joe Manchin should not be chairing the committee charged with regulating coal

barons! Here's the **DFA petition**. Beneath it is the comment I added in signing it.



The screenshot shows a petition from Democracy for America. At the top is the DFA logo, which consists of a blue square with a white star and the letters 'DFA' in red and blue, with the text 'DEMOCRACY FOR AMERICA' below it. The text of the petition reads: 'Wayne, As the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Joe Manchin is responsible for regulating the fossil fuel industry, but he has a glaring conflict of interest... he owns millions of dollars in coal stocks and earns half a million dollars on them each year from dividends alone. It's no wonder that after Manchin attended an invite-only coal conference, he immediately pushed to make cuts to the Clean Electricity Performance Program, a \$150 billion initiative in the Build Back Better Act that would financially reward utilities for transitioning to renewable energy and penalize those that don't. At a time when global temperatures are continuing to rise and extreme weather events are getting worse every year, it's clear a coal baron can not be in charge of Senate climate policy. [Tell Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer: Replace Senator Joe Manchin as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources now.](#)' At the bottom of the petition is a blue button with the text 'ADD YOUR NAME'.

For a member of Congress to have a financial interest in an entity she or he is charged with regulating isn't just "bad optics," as the politicians' euphemism would phrase it. It's a flat out, stone obvious profound conflict of interest. Just ask the *Federal* investigators hot on the trail of insider-trading Richard Burr of NC (R, of course) and his brother-in-law.

For such a member not just to serve on a committee specifically charged with overseeing the

entity in which she or he has a financial interest, but actually to chair the committee... Sheesh!

Come along, Leader Shumer. Get Manchin out of the chairmanship and off that committee. What's sauce for a *GQP* goose like Burr must also be sauce for a *Democratic* gander like Manchin.

Such manifest conflicts of interest should not be permitted by *Congressional* rules. Indeed, they should not be permitted by the laws of the *United States*.

# Feature

## Free calendar from Ricardo Levins Morales

**2021**  
**noviembre**  
**November**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur, jailed on a false murder charge, escapes prison and is welcomed in Cuba, 1975.	3	4	5	6
7 Enslaved African people overpower crew of slave ship The Creole and navigate to Bahamas, where they gain freedom, 1841.	8	9	10	11 The Haymarket Martyrs, activists blamed on riot changes, are hanged in Chicago, 1887 (see also: www.assatawatch.com).	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Japanese American citizens begin general strike at Foston Relocation Center in Arizona, with support of local tribal council, 1942.	20 Transgender Day of Remembrance is founded by trans activist Gwendolyn Ann Smith, 1990.
21	22	23 Employees demonstrate at 8,000+ Walmart stores across the US - all carry bottles of the poisonous tear gas water, 2012.	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Mass protests and direct actions challenge and shut down the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle, 1999.	<b>RICARDO LEVINS MORALES</b> <b>ART STUDIO</b>			

Go to [www.RLMArtStudio.com](http://www.RLMArtStudio.com) to download each month's free calendar page and sign up for RLM's periodic e-newsletter.

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