

Trump Is the Symptom, the Republican Party Is the Disease

Michael K. Cantwell

Just as a deep, localized skin infection erupts to form a boil, Donald Trump is a manifestation of the underlying disease that is the modern Republican Party. Donald Trump has not “taken over” the Republican Party any more than the Republican Party has taken over Donald Trump.

Trump’s unapologetic racism embarrasses the Republican establishment, but only because he says out loud what Republican candidates have been whispering since Richard Nixon unveiled his “Southern Strategy.” Since then, Republicans have unashamedly used “dog whistle” appeals to racism to dupe white working class Democrats into voting against their economic interests.

Reagan wooed them with concocted claims of “strapping young bucks” using food stamps to buy T-bone steaks and “welfare queens” driving around in Cadillacs. Bush senior’s path to the White House was paved with the Willie Horton ads. Trump traded the dog whistles for a bullhorn, labeling Mexican immigrants as “animals, rapists, and drug dealers.”

Republicans may be embarrassed by Trump’s naked racism, incessant lies, manifest unfitness for any public office, and most recently his shockingly inhumane punishment of innocent children. At the same time, however, they appreciate that his daily outrages divert public attention from their decades-old war on ordinary Americans. And like a compliant child, he has meekly done their bidding in that war.

Cheered on by crypto fascists like Mitch McConnell, Paul Ryan, and Mike Pence, Trump has stacked the federal courts with rightwing judicial activists and eliminated

federal regulations that protect consumers, workers, and the environment. Last but not far from least was his signature on his sole legislative achievement, the Orwellian-titled “Tax Reform” bill that rewarded the oligarchs who fund the Republican party with yet another massive transfer of wealth from ordinary Americans to the obscenely wealthy.

The bill remained in the news for a cycle or two last December as it was being debated, but they’ve largely passed from public view. Here are the dirty details:

Over the lifetime of the bill,

- over 80% of the tax cuts go to the top 1%,
- over 60% goes to the top 0.1%,
- and here’s the kicker – some of the tax cuts expire in 2025, and anyone earning less than \$75,000 ends up with a tax increase.

The bill also adds \$1.9 trillion to the federal debt, which Republicans are already using as an excuse to cut your Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

Finally, the bill repealed the Individual Mandate, thus causing insurance rates to spike and ensuring that 3 million Americans will be unable to afford health insurance next year (rising to 13 million by 2027). This in turn will result in tens of thousands of premature and unnecessary deaths.

The irony is that many of the whose lives are cut short will have voted for Trump in 2016. It’s one thing to vote against your economic interests, it’s another to vote against your very life. If you know any Trump supporters, explain that to them.

