



**RESISTING THE REPUBLICAN RECALL:
NOT CONFUSING NEED WITH ANGER AT NEWSOM**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

WHATEVER ISSUES DEMOCRATS, PROGRESSIVES, liberals, independents and others have with Gov. Gavin Newsom, they should not confuse or conflate it with the urgent and essential need to resist, reject and defeat the Republican recall. For it is indeed a right-wing Republican effort regardless of the many ways they might nickname the truth, and repackage and present social callousness and cold political calculation as genuine concern for the welfare and future of sunny California. Their appeal is not only to the gullible and short-sighted, but also those who are prone to experience and express personal pique as real politics, tossing aside the critical issues at stake and the long view of politics and struggle.

These Republican masters of manipulation, misinformation, duplicity and deceit strive to reverse the will of the majority who elected Newsom by using and abusing an outdated referendum system which, if Newsom doesn't get enough *No Recall* votes, gives the governorship to the candidate with the highest vote, regardless of how low the number, and regardless of whether Newsom has a higher number of votes than this person. Some lawyers are challenging this system as unconstitutional in its nullifying the majority will, but this will no doubt take longer than the election which is on the 14th of September. *Thus, there is an urgent need to get up, stand up and go vote.*

Clearly, the Republicans – active Trumpites and silent and submissive supporters – have decided they cannot win in regular ways, which on special occasions they concede are constitutional and democratic. So, they have, in California and across the country, developed ways to prevent the vote, steal or nullify the vote, and frighten and penalize the voters, creating a chilling effect on the voting process and practice. By their action, they have dismissed the importance of voting in a democracy, for in fact, the hero of the recallers has embraced and

expressed a commitment to self-serving autocracy. In this system and scenario, it's not the people, but the person who counts, not promotion of the general welfare, but of autocrat and corporate well-being through perpetual power-grabbing and profit-making at all costs, including the lives and livelihoods of the people.

They also target people who are angry about their lives, the limitations imposed by the pandemic, the loss of income, security, social exchange, and the sense of possibilities. And they direct their anger toward those in power, in this case a progressive governor, who promised and have not miraculously or meaningfully delivered according to their quick and simplistic calculations. In this regard, we must note that there are so many unreflective Americans and Californians who want and demand immediate gratification, quick results, and simple solutions for complex long-term problems. They want to make war without casualties on their side, withdraw immediately without inevitable consequences, and defy health restrictions and requirements without infection, illness or death of their loved ones, associates or themselves.

These and others like them offer a panderer's paradise for episodic personal anger that is misdirected and destructive of real space and pathways to achieve good, real and lasting things of value. One cannot miss the concentrated stench of hypocrisy and double standards in all of this. That is to say, tolerating and explaining and joking away Trump and trashing Newsom and Biden for lesser failures, mistakes and missed opportunities. But deny the right-wing what you will, they do not, like the liberals, find more fault with their representatives and leaders than their opponents. And they don't give up offices easily, even when they lose.

Witness the pathetic wilderness howling and hustling of Trump, clinging to cobweb-thin shreds of hope of reversing his loss to President Biden and brazenly inciting the insurrection at

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the Capitol to stop the count and approval and reverse reality. Remember too all the outright lies and attempts of grand larceny, of theft of office on state and national levels. And recall (no pun intended) the prior attempts to steal the election by shutting down postal machines, removing mailboxes, reducing polling places, pressuring state officials, and calling for recounts and decertifications of results. Then recall all the laws being proposed and put in place to deny the right and responsibility of Black people and other people of color to vote, to elect their representatives, to address and pursue issues important to them, and to build cooperatively with others the just, equitable and good society we all want and deserve to live in.

Thus, we cannot talk about this Republican recall in isolation from the continuing history of vote and voter suppression. In other words, we cannot talk about or engage this recall rightly without placing it squarely within the framework and context of what has been the Republicans' strategy all along and all across the country. It is to remove us from the political map by hook and crook, by all means legal and illegal, immoral and undemocratic that they can devise and get away with. And the same and similar policies and practices are applied to other communities of color.

Indeed, these right-wing Republicans are still reeling and hyperventilating from Black people's critical role in choosing and electing the president and vice-president, putting the first Black and Jewish senators from Georgia in office, and ending the tyranny of racist and anti-progressive policies and practices of the Republican-controlled Senate, and thus opening up new space for progressive possibilities in this country and the world. It drove Trump and his faithful followers and feckless enablers racistly mad and made them swing into gut-

level gear to halt and reverse this transformative thrust forward.

Moreover, the strategy of the Republican recall is also to win California and other soft target and susceptible states, introduce and pass more democracy-disabling legislation, and prepare and pave the way for a Trumpian triumphant return in 2024. In addition, there is the declared intention to reverse progressive gains and policies and prevent the realization of initiatives in the areas of climate change, labor relations and practices, healthcare and housing, women's rights, just immigration policies and race relations, among others.

Of concern also to progressives is the potential negative and disruptive effect of a Republican governor having the power to appoint someone to replace Sen. Dianne Feinstein now 88, if she retires or to block replacement of Supreme Court Justice Breyer now 83, if he retires. Both of these would change the national political and judicial landscape in ways that not only undermine our electoral gains, but give Republicans the capacity to block, not only progressive legislation, but also the appointment of a replacement of a justice until they realize their hope to regain the presidency. No one sane, serious or honest can deny the disruptive disaster Trump was and continues to foster. And to stay home and not come out to vote or mail in "No" on the recall is to enable a similar disruptive disaster in the state.

IT IS EASY TO TEAR DOWN YEARS OF GAINS, but who is conscious, committed, bold and strong enough to build even when we don't get all we want when we want and need it? We talk of creating a new, just and good society, but we cannot build or achieve it by episodic engagement, brushing aside in the heat of the moment gains we've made, the needs of the people, and the demands of a long, difficult and ultimately rewarding struggle. ▲

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