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Don't give up on democracy: 7 suggestions to help reclaim our country

[Robert Reich](#) July 6, 2018 Updated: July 6, 2018 2:42 p.m.
Opinion // Robert Reich



Kate Schatz brought her daughter Ivy Pontius (left), 9, and her friend Annea Berggren-Briggs, 9, to a demonstration in front of the ICE field office in San Francisco on June 19, 2018.
Photo: Paul Chinn / The Chronicle

My friends, this is a dark hour. Intolerance, cruelty, racism, misogyny, xenophobia and environmental destruction have been let loose across the land.

Donald Trump controls the Republican Party, the Republican Party controls the House and Senate, and Trump may soon control the Supreme Court.

But here's the thing. Only 27 percent of Americans identify themselves as Republicans, according to a Gallup poll.

Moreover, the vast majority of Americans disapprove of Trump. He lost the popular vote in 2016 by more than 2.8 million. Since then, his approval rating hasn't exceeded 45 percent.

The GOP itself is no longer a political party, anyway. It is now little more than Donald Trump, Fox News, a handful of billionaire funders, and right-wing Christians who oppose a woman's right to choose, same-sex marriage, and the Constitution's separation of church and state.

Yet Trump is about to make the second Supreme Court nomination of his presidency. And that second nominee — like Trump's first, Neil Gorsuch — is likely to be young enough to remain on the court for the next 40 years.

If confirmed, Trump's new justice would join four other Republican-appointed justices to form a majority that will interpret the U.S. Constitution and laws in ways inimical to the values of a majority of Americans.

For example, Trump's new justice is all but certain to join the four other Republican-appointed justices in overturning *Roe vs. Wade*, a 1973 compromise on abortion that still has the support of two-thirds of Americans.

Trump's new justice is likely to do the same in revoking same-sex marriage, also now supported by about two-thirds of Americans. I don't have to remind you that all this comes after Republicans essentially stole a Supreme Court seat by refusing to consider President Barack Obama's nominee, Merrick Garland.

In addition to everything I've noted above, Republicans also now control both chambers in 32 states (33 if you count Nebraska, with its single legislative chamber) and 33 governorships. In many of these states, they are entrenching their power by gerrymandering and arranging to suppress votes.

Enough. The question is: What are we — the vast majority of Americans — going to do about this?

I have seven modest suggestions.

(1) Do not give up. That's what they would like us to do. Then they'd have no opposition at all. Powerlessness is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Please do not succumb to it.

(2) Contact your senators and urge them to oppose Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court.

If your state has a Republican senator, you might mobilize and organize your friends and neighbors to do whatever they can to get that senator to reject the court nominee. Or, at the least, postpone consideration of that nominee until after the midterm elections, so there's a chance to change the composition of the Senate.

(3) Make a ruckus. Demonstrate. Engage in nonviolent civil disobedience. Fight lies with truth. Join the resistance.

Many grassroots organizations are doing great work, and could use your help. Among them are: @IndivisibleTeam, @swingleleft, @UpRiseDotOrg, @MoveOn, @Sister_District, and @flippable_org. I'm sure I've left out many others. Check with your friends, and check online.

(4) Don't engage in divisive incrimination over "who lost" the 2016 election. There's no point in Hillary Clinton loyalists, Bernie Sanders supporters, Jill Stein voters and others turning on one another and blaming each other for the outcome. We must be united.

(5) Vote this Nov. 6 for people who will stand up to the Trump Republicans' rampage. Mobilize and organize others to do so, too. If you

live in a blue state, contact friends and relatives in red states and urge them to do the same.

(6) Help lay the groundwork for the 2020 presidential election so that even if Trump survives Robert Mueller's investigation and a possible impeachment proceeding, he will not be re-elected.

(7) Bear in mind that this fight will be long and hard. It will require our patience, our courage and our resolve.

Yet the stakes could not be higher. We're talking about the future of our democracy, and the well-being of our children and our children's children.

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Robert Reich, a former U.S. secretary of labor, is a professor of public policy at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. To comment, submit your letter to the editor at [SFChronicle.com/letters](https://www.sfchronicle.com/letters).