



*Fostering Accurate Communication Throughout Society*

**FACTS**

*by*

*Making Accountability & Truth-Telling Everyone's  
Responsibility*

**MATTER**

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## Introduction

19th century French diplomat and political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville has oft been quoted as stating “*America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.*”

Never before have these words been more relevant. Today America faces an era of unprecedented polarization and political division, and while these issues stem from a multitude of sources one prevailing theme that is becoming ever more common is the distortion and manipulation of facts presented to the public. With the advent of social media and increased access to mainstream news outlets, the average individual has at their fingertips access to more information than ever before. Despite this, it has become increasingly more difficult to verify the trustworthiness of news and information. Nowhere is this phenomenon more glaring than in the political occurrences of recent years.

The cornerstones of American democracy have always been (1) an informed populace, (2) an engaged citizenry, and (3) the ability to honestly and openly debate issues<sup>1</sup>. As Thomas Jefferson once stated “*wherever the people are well informed they can be trusted with their own government*”<sup>2</sup>, and while we have come a long way in terms of public education on political matters it cannot be denied that a large portion of the population does not have access to the information necessary for them to make informed decisions on political matters. Surveys show that as many as two-thirds of Americans do not know who their representative is in Congress, and half do not know whether that person is a Republican or a Democrat<sup>3</sup>. People are far less likely to participate in government when uninformed, especially younger individuals as was pointed out by a survey conducted at New York University in 2007 which discovered that twenty percent of students polled would trade their vote for an iPod touch<sup>4</sup>.

While it is clear that lack of information has always, and remains to be an issue, it has become increasingly evident that misinformation and manipulation of facts poses an equal or greater threat to American democracy. Over the past few decades, the national news outlets have not only become disturbingly biased but have also failed in their primary purpose which is to serve as a “watchdog” for the people of America<sup>5</sup>. Historically, journalists and mainstream news organizations have functioned to expose information being withheld from the population, as they did in illuminating the dishonesty behind the Vietnam war, exposing the criminal actions of the Nixon administration, and countless other instances throughout America’s past. More recently however, many news outlets have abandoned this prime directive, instead allowing themselves to

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<sup>1</sup>Virginia Organizing Project (*Your Democracy*)

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jefferson Thomas Jefferson to Richard Price. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2, 2021, from <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/60.html>

<sup>3</sup>Who’s in control? Many don’t know or care. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <http://www.drugsense.org/tfy/trust2.htm>

<sup>4</sup>Top news, LATEST headlines, latest news, world News & U.S News. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2021, from [http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Quirks/2007/11/15/poll\\_nyu\\_students\\_would\\_give\\_up\\_votes/6319/](http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Quirks/2007/11/15/poll_nyu_students_would_give_up_votes/6319/)

<sup>5</sup> Parry, R. (n.d.). Consortiumnews.com. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <http://www.consortiumnews.com/2009/030209.html>

become the tools of political entities set on warping the perspectives of the citizenry. This coordinated attack on public education, the news, and the truth has had a devastating effect on the socio-political integrity of the country. Loss of faith in national news outlets, disbelief in science, and the increased polarization and aggression of political parties has contributed greatly to the growing divide among the American people. Now more than ever easy access to verifiable information and journalistic integrity is desperately required to move past the difficulties of recent years and secure a more unified nation.

## The Problem

As previously stated, we have reached a point in our democracy where (1) disinformation and lies are rampant, (2) science and fact are rejected by a large segment of the population, (3) debate and compromise have given way to unbending ideology and a rejection of opposing viewpoints, (4) political divide has deepened due to (1), (2), and (3) and split the nation, and (5) there no longer is a common starting place of agreed-on facts from which differing opinions about these facts can be debated and, through compromise, public policy can be crafted without running into the obstacles of (1), (2), and (3) and "gotcha politics."

There are many reasons that we have reached this point. Chief among them are the rollback of the Fairness Doctrine, the growth and prevalence of right-wing media which have fostered tribal thinking that not only rejects but demonizes groups and viewpoints outside the tribe, and a social media environment through which anyone can say almost anything without repercussion or consequence. Jefferson's call for an educated and engaged populous contrasts starkly with what we see happening in America today. As Frank Luntz states in "Words that Work"<sup>6</sup>:

- Only 23 percent of American teenagers know that there are one hundred U.S. Senators
- Only 40 percent know that the first three words of the Constitution are "We the People."
- Twenty-four percent cannot name even *one* of the three branches of government. Only 42 percent of teens can name all three.
- Fewer than 10 percent know that the Supreme Court case that found separate but equal treatment of blacks and whites in public schools unconstitutional was *Brown V. Board of Education*.
- Only 25 percent know even one provision of the Fifth Amendment.
- Only 26 percent know that the Constitution was written in Philadelphia.

These statistics reveal a shocking failure of the education system which has not gone unnoticed by groups hoping to use the ignorance of the people to their own advantage. As these abuses have grown and festered, we have failed as a society to put guardrails in place to not just allow open and free expression, but to ensure an acknowledgement and adherence to the truth and

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<sup>6</sup>Luntz, F. I. (2007). *Words that work: It's not what you say, it's what people hear*. New York: Hyperion.

known and provable facts. As a result, one infraction after another has been allowed to go by and accumulate without consequence, thus fostering an environment in which subsequent infractions are emboldened to go even further across the line of reasonable and respectful dialog.

During the Trump presidency, the manipulation of truth became disturbingly commonplace in the media with the term “Fake News” being used to discredit any facts which did not align with the party’s goals. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen, director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism was quoted as saying: *“There is no question that the fact that the President of the United States is using this term to attack independent media gives an element of license to other politicians elsewhere”*<sup>7</sup>. This method of attack on unfavorable information will undoubtedly have lasting effects that will be noticeable far into the future. As pointed out by one New York Times article, the Trump presidency, having been defined by dishonesty and “alternative facts”, has eroded the public confidence in the very establishment of democracy<sup>8</sup>.

This pattern continued through the president’s last days in office, culminating in the assertion that the election had been “rigged”. The manipulation of facts and rampant conspiracy theories promoted by misguided citizens ultimately paved the way for the disastrous events of January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, which saw fanatical Trump supporters storm the United States capital in Washington DC in protest of what they considered to be a stolen election.

These beliefs had been growing for months with the president repeatedly claiming that the election process was plagued by corruption and fraud and that the only way he could lose was if the Democrats rigged the election results<sup>9</sup>. The attack was largely condemned by people at all ends of the political spectrum; however, it was not long before some Republican leaders began once again warping the facts to shift blame and downplay the unprecedented act of violence.

The idea that the protests were organized by left wing groups such as Black Lives Matter and Antifa in order to discredit Trump quickly became prominent among his supporters, despite statements from law enforcement asserting that there was no evidence of such an occurrence<sup>10</sup>. This example of misdirection clearly shows the dangers that accompany a lack of verifiable facts, something which the Trump administration was became adept at exploiting.

While the Trump presidency is a prime example of the issue at hand, it was a symptom not the cause of the crisis which is facing America. We cannot expect the political strategies used by Trump and his followers to dissipate, nor are we observing a renewal of trust in government and

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<sup>7</sup> Mackintosh, A. (2020, October 25). *Analysis: No matter who wins the US election, the WORLD'S 'fake news' problem is here to stay*. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/25/world/trump-fake-news-legacy-intl/>

<sup>8</sup> Baker, P. (2020, November 01). *Dishonesty has defined the trump presidency. the consequences could be lasting*. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/01/us/politics/trump-presidency-dishonesty.html?referringSource=articleShare>

<sup>9</sup> *Truth, lies, and insurrection. how falsehood shakes democracy*. (2021, January 15). Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2021/0115/Truth-lies-and-insurrection.-How-falsehood-shakes-democracy>

<sup>10</sup> Herndon, A. (2021, January 17). *How Republicans are warping reality around the Capitol Attack*. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/17/us/politics/Capitol-conspiracy-theories-blm-antifa.html?referringSource=articleShare>

national news outlets following the end of his presidency. Just one of the lasting precedents established in recent years is a dangerous mistrust in science and medical advice which has become evident in the public's response to the COVID 19 pandemic. Conspiracy theories surrounding mask regulations, vaccinations, and measures to slow the spread of the virus have all contributed to America's insufficient response to the pandemic.

Less than half of the US population follows the recommendation to wear a mask when in public, and a similar proportion have stated that they have no intention to be vaccinated<sup>11</sup>. This startling lack of confidence in the scientific community can be attributed to the politicization of science and a general lack of scientific literacy<sup>12</sup>. The effects of anti-science rhetoric and lack of information have had a significant affect on the ability of the America to manage the virus, as can be shown by the fact that while the US contains only about 4% of the global population, it has accounted for 20% of all COVID 19 deaths<sup>13</sup>. The issue of scientific literacy once again shows the importance of public education. In a study which surveyed 9654 US adults, 48% of those who had a high school education or less believed there was some truth to the conspiracy theory that COVID-19 was planned while only 15% among those with some postgraduate education thought this to be true<sup>14</sup>.

A common theme among these issues we now face is the spread of misinformation not only from major news sources but also from social media. The ability of anyone to post unverified facts contributes to the belief in falsehoods which can be exploited by those wishing to profit off the public's lack of true information. When asked about his opinion on the use of social media by president Trump, former president Obama stated:

*“is a creature of his, but he did not create it. He may be an accelerant of it, but it preceded him and will outlast him. I am deeply troubled by how we address it... If you can perpetrate crazy lies and conspiracy theories just with texts, imagine what you can do when you can make it look like you or me saying anything on video. We're pretty close to that now”<sup>15</sup>.*

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<sup>11</sup>Warren Cornwall Jun. 30, 2., Daniel Clery Feb. 11, 2., Sofia Moutinho Feb. 4, 2., Sofia Moutinho Feb. 3, 2., Sofia Moutinho Jan. 29, 2., & Sofia Moutinho Jan. 28, 2. (2020, July 01). Just 50% of AMERICANS plan to get A COVID-19 vaccine. Here's how to win over the rest. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/06/just-50-americans-plan-get-covid-19-vaccine-here-s-how-win-over-rest>

<sup>12</sup>Bruce L. Miller, M. (2020, December 08). Science denial and covid conspiracy theories-lessons from clinical disease about possible neurophysiological mechanisms. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2772693>

<sup>13</sup>Alyssa Bilinski, M. (2020, November 24). COVID-19 and Excess all-cause mortality in the US and 18 Comparison Countries. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2771841>

<sup>14</sup>Schaeffer, K. (2020, August 18). A look at the Americans who believe there is some truth to the conspiracy theory THAT covid-19 was planned. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/07/24/a-look-at-the-americans-who-believe-there-is-some-truth-to-the-conspiracy-theory-that-covid-19-was-planned/>

<sup>15</sup>Ecarma, C., Klein, C., & Lutz, E. (n.d.). Obama: Misinformation might just kill off democracy. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from [https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/11/obama-facebook-misinformation-killing-democracy?mbid=social\\_twitter&utm\\_brand=vf&utm\\_social-type=owned](https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/11/obama-facebook-misinformation-killing-democracy?mbid=social_twitter&utm_brand=vf&utm_social-type=owned)

This highlights the prevailing question; how do we address the spread of misinformation in a world where anyone can share facts to millions of people regardless of their validity? Beyond the issue of social media, it is evident that action must be taken in order to rebuild the trustworthiness of mainstream news sources. We have now reached a point where the words "United We Stand, Divided We Fall" are more relevant than ever. If these problems are to be solved America must now come together to preserve the integrity of information which is presented to the public.

## **The Solution: Fostering Accurate Communication Throughout Society (FACTS) by Making Accountability & Truth-Telling Everyone's Responsibility (MATTER)**

The FACTS MATTER initiative proposes a series of undertakings which would address the aforementioned issues regarding misinformation and the effects thereof. All food, medications, health supplements and other products that we legally take into our bodies require labels listing their ingredients. This requirement has been put into place to protect our health. We feel it is just as important to label all of the communications that we receive through print, social media, advertising (including political advertising), speeches, etc. with their "ingredients". This is important not only to the health of individual communications with family, neighbors, and other members of society, but also to the health of our communities, institutions, and democracy.

Lies, inaccuracies, disinformation, and the misrepresentation of facts and science undermine our democracy by undermining communication, understanding, and the ability to find points of agreement, craft compromises, reach agreement and formulate policy. These actions are hurtful at the least and disruptive and toxic at their worst to social discourse our democratic institutions. They lead to distrust and division allowing unfounded statements, urban legends and conspiracy theories to flourish. They leave America and Americans vulnerable to disinformation campaigns by foreign governments and bad actors, both domestic and foreign, who wish to sow division and distrust to undermine American democracy and its democratic institutions.

Hence, just as it is important to know the ingredients that are contained in the food we eat and the medications we take, and to require labels listing these ingredients, to avoid introducing something into our bodies which can damage or injure our bodies, so too is it important to know and understand the ingredients that are contained in the communications we receive.

One of the few sets of regulations to which most members of society do not object are the "rules of the road." Without traffic regulations, almost everyone acknowledges that there would be chaos. We therefore would like to propose some "rules of the road" for public communications. It must be stressed that such measures would not change the ability for everyone to say safely and publicly anything that is protected under the First Amendment.

What will change is that every communication will be required to be tagged (or labeled) accordingly so as to indicate the information's source. Examples could include "opinion only,"

"something I've heard," "personal commentary," "science-based data," "government source [named]," "news event reporting," etc. The default setting on all social media sites would be "opinion only" to which a second line would be added that says "may not be based on fact." This setting could be changed by selecting another tag/label via a drop-down menu.

However, if a person selects another tag/label, the post will go through an evaluation, similar to how Facebook and Google ads go through a review process before being posted, before the post with new label can be approved. If a person selects a tag/label that is determined to be deceptive (for example labeling a conspiracy theory as fact) then the default setting "opinion only" would remain but the second line would read "attempted deceitful tagging."

For infractions, any media outlet, social media site, and other communications vehicle that is regulated by the FCC would be sanctioned by at first being warned, and if infractions continue, suspended first by 30 days then 60 days and, finally, for ongoing infractions lose its license. For infractions by individuals on social media accounts, suspensions would be for one day, one week, one month and, finally, removal of the account.

Once communication based on fact become the "rules of the road," the national can conduct more meaningful dialogs and come to consensus on public policies, climate change, health, etc. Since every discussion/debate will be required to start from a common guidepost/fact, while opinions may vary widely, there will be the opportunity for discussion, compromise, and negotiation in order for a public policy to be crafted.

There will of course be a loud outcry from right wing media outlets, talk radio, purveyors of conspiracy theories, and the people who have migrated enmasse to social networking services such as Parler where they can spread lies and distortions. Many people are wary of any regulation of communication for fear of being censored. In order to dispel these concerns it should be clarified that if it can be proven that a communication is based on fact, or an individual is willing to have their communications tagged with the default label, as "opinion only - may not be based on fact," then any objection could come only from the desire to pass off opinion or conjecture as fact. Under these guidelines all people would be treated the same as every other individual and media outlet in the nation.

Everyone would be freely able to express any opinion they wish which is protected by the First Amendment (but not to incite violence or destruction or property, which is not protected speech). All that is being asked is that every person abide by these "rules of the road" that are based on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Individuals or institutions who fight against having their communications labeled his opinion or without sources are suspect. There's something wrong if they are unwilling to admit that their communication is without sources and it's only a matter of opinion. Everyone is free to pass on this information, lie, or perpetuate conspiracy theories and try to misdirect people. The only difference would be that such communications will have to be labeled as either opinion, unfounded, or possible conspiracy theory. This, to protect the integrity of our democracy, and to ensure that everyone has guideposts for interpreting and excepting or not excepting the communications they receive.

Individuals and entities that oppose the FACTS MATTER Act, who are afraid of or wish to deny facts and science, want to advance conspiracy theories, or disseminate lies and disinformation to advance agendas that may or may not be in the public good, and are unwilling to have their statements and sources questioned or revealed as inaccurate, are a threat to democracy and the health of public discourse, and should be revealed as such. In all cases, one thing that continually must be stressed to those who would object to this proposal is that **YOUR RIGHTS STOP WHERE MINE BEGIN**, i.e., no individual has the right to do or say anything that places another person or institution in jeopardy (such as wearing masks during the pandemic). Research shows that both Republicans and Democrats can agree on many factual questions, even when their partisan views are challenged, when the information comes from reliable sources<sup>16</sup>. The proposed implementations would allow for more constructive discourse to take place which would go a long way towards repairing the divide in America.

## **Qualifications to Seek Public Office**

All major professions require that one have education or training and be licensed or certified. Politicians don't have this requirement. Every person running for office should be required to demonstrate that they understand the requirements at the office and the rules and regulations which are the basis of that office and which that office is required to enforce and carry up. Every person running for office also should demonstrate a knowledge of the constitution, US history, and civics.

Individuals seeking public office and senior positions in public agencies must be held to the same standards as plumbers, electricians, mechanics, and beauticians -- i.e., they must pass tests showing their proficiency and knowledge of the positions they wish to assume and the requirements that go along with these positions. That is not to suggesting that we go as far as requiring that these individuals be licensed prior to seeking public office, as is required for the professions mentioned above, however the same concept can be applied.

If an individual has not demonstrated knowledge of the history, duties, and requirements of the office, and cannot pass the same test that immigrants seeking U.S. citizenship must pass, they should not be allowed to seek that office. We have far too many ideologues in local, state and federal public offices and agencies who do not know what they are doing and, as a consequence, are wreaking havoc and undermining our democracy. Hence, we would like to suggest that a set of qualifications, and a battery of tests, be established that are administrated by a non-political institution within the jurisdiction in which a person is seeking office or appointment to a public agency as a prerequisite.

To be eligible to run for public office, one would have to score at least a "B", i.e., 80% or more, on said tests in order to file to be placed on a ballot. If seeking appointment as a senior executive in a public agency, the same requirements would apply, including scoring 80% or more, and would

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<sup>16</sup>Berinsky, A., Brock, T., JT. Cacioppo, R., A. Campbell, P., E. Carmines, J., WG. Cochran, G., . . . Zaller, J. (1970, January 01). *The elusive BACKFIRE Effect: Mass Attitudes' Steadfast FACTUAL ADHERENCE*. Retrieved February 15, 2021, from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11109-018-9443-y>



be a prerequisite of being able to be nominated for an appointment. With these guidelines acting as a foundation on which further regulations could be developed, a strong set of prerequisites could be formulated which would allow the citizenry to fully trust in the abilities of elected officials to better serve the people

Everyone has the right to vote and should not only be encouraged to vote but every effort should be made to allow all people the opportunity to vote. Any effort to suppress the vote or to disenfranchise should be met with criminal penalties and fines and if carried out by elected offices require their removal from Office. Voting districts should be based on geographical, county, and metropolitan boundaries with an average of 750,000 to 1 million people per Congressional district (331 million divided by 435 Congressional districts) so that they are truly representative of their districts without disenfranchising any group or giving more power or a larger voice to any group.

## **Critical Thinking**

There has been a concerted effort to spread propaganda, not just through many broadcast outlets and social media, but from the pulpits of our churches and the leaders of our social groups. Not surprisingly, far too many people have been taken in by this propaganda and have adopted it as the basis of their belief systems. This has occurred in large part because we have not been taught to question, fact check, and consider opposing viewpoints prior to accepting something that is being communicated to us as fact. Any democracy requires an educated public, and as such any effort to undermine or distort the flow of accurate information is an attack on our democracy.

The American educational system has failed us in this regard because it does not teach valuable critical thinking skills. Hence, we are proposing that critical thinking techniques be added to all elementary, middle school, and high school curricula. Jefferson was correct in asserting that one must have an educated public in order for democracy to thrive. This should be a national priority and should be a priority for the incoming Secretary of Education. All institutions should exist for the public good, and should be managed and governed to advance and protect the public good, without being undermined by political polarization or ideology, without favoring one group of sets of beliefs over another, and without excluding, suppressing, or disadvantaging any group or sector of society.

There is more than ample evidence to show why this is important, not only from the lessons that history provides in how populations in other countries have been, and are being, manipulated through disinformation and propaganda, but from similar lessons in this country such as the lead up to the election of 1860, the McCarthy era, and now conspiracy theories such as Q-Anon, lies, Russian interference, and fact/science denial undermining social discourse and eating away at our democracy.

To attain this goal, newspapers and other news outlets must become more aggressive in the recording and their fact checking. They will no longer be able to serve the public interest if they use the shield of balanced reporting so that two different sides express their opinions without fact checking these opinions or sourcing them. As such, any public institution that does not act for the public good, or which breaks with its traditional role, can be challenged through the courts for

executive and legislative branch breaches, and through the legislative branch for judicial breaches. The findings from these challenges can be used to reverse decisions and actions that are not in the public good and can be used to require changes in the operation and/or management of the institution which is the subject of the challenge, including the removal of elected and judicially appointed officials (including judges with lifetime appointments) who are found to have caused the breaches of public faith through an administrative, civil, criminal, or impeachment process, as appropriate.

Balance reporting does not extend to giving one side that is fact/science-based coverage and then giving equal coverage to another side which dispute said facts without basis. Reporting should be based on verifiable information, not on giving two sides equal voice when one side is not using or disputing facts. Opinions of course have their own value and one can report on opinions so long as the information is clearly presented as such.

All communications should be held to these standards including public speakers, and preachers, especially when religious doctrines are used or interpreted by a religious leader to support a political or extreme view without distinguishing between the teachings and the speaker's interpretations or biases. While there are distinct differences between the world's many religions, they all share a genesis from divine inspiration, and their core guiding values of love, respect for the earth and each other, and compassion for the less fortunate.

These words have withstood the tests of time, inspiring, soothing, explaining, and giving meaning and purpose to human life and its trials and suffering. Yet our religions and religious beliefs also have been used to promote and justify tribalism, as wedges to divide, and as cudgels against others. As much as these words have comforted and soothed, they also have been the cause of wars and conflicts up to the present day, and have inflicted enormous pain, suffering, ostracism, and death.

Today, we can listen to and teach the words we have been given, and we can interpret them as best as we can, but we must recognize that they come from a time very different from our own, when humanity's understanding of the world and science were very different and much more limited. We must understand, too, that the words we read and hear today have been shaped and filtered through the interpretations they have been given, including those of our religious teachers, to which we must now apply our own interpretation and understanding.

All humans are born with the capacity for love and understanding, for cruelty and indifference, and an insatiable curiosity and creativity that has led to all of the advancements that have been and are being made. It is these advancements, balanced against the strife, suffering, and turmoil that we have caused, that lead us to ever greater endeavors and an ever greater understanding of each other and the universe, which we must aspire to consider and integrate into our beliefs. Where there are conflicts between the old teachings and the new, we must reconcile these conflicts, not through denial or rejection, but through discourse and a more expansive, informed understanding of our relationships to each other, the earth, and the universe.

## Conclusion

The First Amendment guarantees that everyone is entitled to express their own opinions in the manner in which they wish and believe in what they wish to believe. But, as with all of the freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution, the freedoms that are enjoyed by one individual stop where another's freedoms begin. No one is free to impinge upon another's freedoms. Each person also must accept the consequences of expressing their freedoms whether that be choosing to not wear a mask and therefor being refused service by a business exercising its right to not serve everyone, or their free expression of an idea through an art form resulting in fame and financial gain.

There is only one, effective way to ensure that everyone's freedom of expression is fully respected and not infringed while ensuring that the U.S. can have an educated public. A public that can distinguish fact from fiction, with accurate guideposts as the basis for social discourse and formulating policy, where lies and manipulations are not passed off as or confused with facts or science to the detriment of our society and our democracy. That is to label the "ingredients" of all communications just as the foods we eat and the medications and nutritional supplements we take must be labeled with their ingredients.

Communications, and their sources, that have been inaccurately labeled must be publicized, with repeat offenders having to carry warning labels and if their inaccurate labeling continues, being subject to sanctions. Strict guidelines and prerequisites must be established for those who wish to run for public office, so as to rekindle the trust of the American people in their elected officials. All sources of public information must be held to high standards so that critical fact-based discourse can occur.

Through the proposed guidelines it is possible for Americans to work together to cultivate a brighter tomorrow in which misinformation and conspiracies are mitigated. An America where policy and public opinion are driven by science and verifiable truths. An America where facts matter.