



Sisters and Brothers:

This country faces an unprecedented set of crises.

We have an economy in which we have a grotesque level of income and wealth inequality, where the middle class is being decimated, and more than half of our people continue to live paycheck to paycheck -- many for starvation wages.

We are the only major country on earth not to guarantee health care to all people as a right, 68,000 Americans die every year because they don't have access to the health care they desperately need and as you read this Republicans are trying to kick 13.7 million more people off of their insurance -- all to give tax cuts to some of the wealthiest people and corporations in the country.

The situation in Gaza is horrific, last year was the hottest year ever recorded, the assault on a woman's right to choose continues, gun deaths are at historic highs, and we have a corrupt campaign finance system that allows the billionaire class of this country the ability to buy our elections.

All of these issues, and others, are enormously important ... but, today, I'm not going to talk about any of them.

What I am going to talk about today is Trump's contempt for the Constitution and the rapid and unprecedented movement toward authoritarianism that his administration is pushing. And how we fight back.

Today in Washington, D.C., if you walk past the U.S. Department of Agriculture you will see a massive banner of Donald Trump hanging off the front of the building for all to see.

At this same time, he is planning to spend some \$45 million on a military parade to honor him on his birthday.

Like all authoritarians, he wants to make himself into the Great Leader -- someone bigger than life.

But that is not all.

The Trump administration is illegally usurping the constitutional powers of Congress. They have put a hold on appropriations that Congress has authorized and abolished agencies that Congress established. Elon Musk has illegally fired thousands of federal employees.

The Trump administration is threatening to impeach judges who rule against Trump's policies.

The Trump administration is openly defying Supreme Court orders.

The Trump administration is threatening to use the Department of Justice to take away ActBlue, the platform many Democratic campaigns, including our presidential campaigns, use to fundraise.

The Trump administration has extorted millions of dollars from major law firms that represented clients who opposed Trump or his interests.

The Trump administration has withheld funding from some of the leading universities in the country because their students and faculty hold views that Trump disagrees with.

The Trump administration has waged a fierce attack against the media. He has sued ABC, Meta and the Des Moines Register and threatened legal action against The New York Times. He is now attempting to extort billions from CBS for a 60 Minutes story he didn't like. He has called CNN and MSNBC "illegal." He is cutting funding from NPR and PBS.

So what do we do about it?

Our Fighting Oligarchy tour, 17 events in 12 states with over 265,000 in attendance, focused on the incredible economic and political power wielded by a handful of billionaires in our country.

And that's an effort, with your support, that we're going to continue. We are now planning major events in more and more states in the coming months.

But that is just a start.

To effectively oppose right-wing authoritarianism, we cannot simply go back to the failed status quo of the last several decades. In order to fight this trend, we need to strengthen the global coalition of progressive democrats.

While authoritarians promote division and hatred, we promote unity, inclusion, and an agenda based on economic, social, racial, and environmental justice.

We must take the opportunity to reconceptualize a genuinely progressive global community based on human solidarity, that recognizes that every person on this planet shares a common humanity, that we all want our children to grow up healthy, to have a good education, have decent jobs, drink clean water, breathe clean air, and live in peace.

Lastly, and most importantly, the American people, no matter what their political persuasion, must make it clear that American democracy will not be destroyed.

Our job now is to remind Trump and his allies what democracy is all about. Through our grassroots activism, we will defend President Lincoln's words at Gettysburg when he stated, 'that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'

Stand up. Fight back. Continue to get involved.

In solidarity,

Bernie Sanders