

Atlanta Urban Debate League

Environmental Justice [Middle School JV]

SY 2021 - 2022



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Environmental Justice 1AC (Argument Overview)

Summary

The Environmental Justice Affirmative contains five parts: a plan, Inherency, Solvency, an Environmental Justice Advantage, and a Rural Communities. The purpose of the Affirmative is to remove pollutants like lead, a toxic substance, from drinking water. The plan calls for the United States federal government to fully fund a program that removes harmful pollutants from drinking water.

Inherency: Inherency is the problem in the status quo (the current state of things) that the affirmative plan will help to alleviate/fix and proof that the plan is not already being done. In this 1AC, Snider evidence concludes that the bipartisan Senate infrastructure deal will not spend enough money to protect the drinking water of low-income communities. In particular, the author argues that the \$15 billion spent by the Senate deal is much less than the \$60 billion plus required to solve the problem.

Solvency: Solvency is proof of why the proposed plan will work and solve the harms/problems that would happen without the plan. In this 1AC, the Filippelli evidence makes two arguments. First, lead pipes are dangerous and a key source of lead poisoning in children. Second, the cost of removing and replacing lead pipes in Flint, Michigan proves that the full cost of solving the problem is much greater than current estimates. In fact, the number of lead pipes could be much larger than expected, since many cities do not have maps of where lead pipes are.

Advantage (Environmental Justice): An advantage explains the benefits gained from doing the plan and is sometimes called “Harms” because the plan avoids something harmful that would happen in the status quo. Advantages end with an **Impact**.

In this 1AC, the Environmental Justice Advantage makes two claims. First, the Khazan evidence concludes that the Flint water crisis was not unique. In fact, over 5 million Americans currently drink contaminated water, causing a serious public health crisis. Second, the Kalala evidence concludes that lead poisoning is fundamentally immoral because it unequally affects children of color. In particular, lead poisoning traps people of color in a cycle of poverty by greatly increasing the risk of arrest and lowering academic success. As a result, the judge has a moral obligation to fight racism and vote for the plan.

Advantage (Rural Communities): An advantage explains the benefits gained from doing the plan and is sometimes called “Harms” because the plan avoids something harmful that would happen in the status quo. Advantages end with an **Impact**.

In this 1AC, the Rural Communities Advantage makes two claims. First, the Condon evidence proves that rural America is in a water crisis. In particular, the author claims that outdated water infrastructure has exposed nearly 21 million people to unsafe drinking water. As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates it will take billions of dollars in long-term investment to solve the problem. Second, the Jones and Atkin evidence cites multiple studies

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to prove that unsafe drinking water exposes millions of Americans to the risk of long-term health problems, including potentially fatal diseases.



Spending Disadvantage (Argument Overview)

Summary

The Spending Disadvantage contains three parts: Unique-Link, Internal Link, and Impact. A Disadvantage argues that the costs of the Affirmative plan are more important than (outweigh) the potential benefits (advantages). In particular, the Spending Disadvantage argues that, by spending money not funded by taxes (deficit spending), the plan lowers the value of the dollar (inflation) and harms the economy.

Uniqueness / Link: Uniqueness is the argument that the status quo (current state of things) is good now but could take a turn for the worse if the plan were to happen. A link is the negative change to the status quo made by the Affirmative plan. The Egan evidence is a Unique-Link, which makes both a uniqueness argument and a link argument. In particular, the author cites a report by Moody's Analytics, which says President Biden's agenda will boost the economy by investing in infrastructure and the social safety net. However, the report concludes that new deficit spending (government spending not funded by taxes) could lower the value of the dollar (inflation).

Internal Link: An Internal Link is the series of events that takes place between the change made by the plan (Link) and the ultimate negative consequence of that change (Impact). In the Spending Disadvantage, the Cox evidence cites historical examples like pre-World War II Germany and Zimbabwe to prove that extremely high rates of inflation (hyperinflation) will destroy the economy. In essence, governments that spend money they do not have are forced to print more money to pay off their debt.

Impact: An Impact is the ultimate negative consequence of the change to the status quo made by the plan. In the Spending Disadvantage, the Liu evidence argues that economic decline leads to hatred of minority groups and foreign countries. As a result, economic decline risks war, as countries scapegoat (blame) other countries for their problems.

Federalism Disadvantage (Argument Overview)

Summary

The Federalism Disadvantage contains four parts: Uniqueness, Link, Internal Link, and Impact. A Disadvantage argues that the costs of the Affirmative plan are more important than (outweigh) the potential benefits (advantages). In particular, the Federalism Disadvantage argues that the plan, by expanding federal authority over water policy, undermines federalism, the system of government in the United States that divides power between the local, state, and federal government.

Uniqueness: Uniqueness is the argument that the status quo (current state of things) is good now but could take a turn for the worse if the plan were to happen. In the Federalism Disadvantage, the Segall evidence argues that the federal and state governments are currently cooperating on water policy. As a result, unilateral federal action would disrupt the current cooperation.

Link: A link is the negative change to the status quo made by the Affirmative plan. In the Federalism Disadvantage, the Peterson and Lastra-Anadon evidence argues that federal grants are a unique threat to federalism because they give the federal government financial leverage with which they can manipulate the states. In other words, when the federal government takes financial control of state programs, the states lose the independence to make their own decisions.

Internal Link: An Internal Link is the series of events that takes place between the change made by the plan (Link) and the ultimate negative consequence of that change (Impact). In the Federalism Disadvantage, the Barnes evidence argues that the Biden-Harris administration must build on the current era of climate federalism to successfully tackle climate change. In particular, the author cites the U.S. Climate Alliance, a group of thirty-four states with climate action plans, as an example of how state-level climate policy can have international benefits.

Impact: An Impact is the ultimate negative consequence of the change to the status quo made by the plan. In the Federalism Disadvantage, the Torres evidence cites expert evidence, including the results of scientific studies and conclusions reached by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to prove that climate change will have widespread negative effects that will undermine the foundation of life on planet Earth.

Environmental Justice Affirmative (1AC Shell)

Environmental Justice 1AC — 1/6

Greetings! My partner and I propose the following plan:

The United States federal government should substantially increase its protection of water resources in the United States by fully funding a program to remove harmful pollutants from drinking water.

Contention One is Inherency:

The infrastructure deal isn't enough. Full funding is necessary to protect the drinking water of low-income communities

Snider 8/2 – Journalist For Politico

(Annie, Journalist For Politico. Biden Says Bipartisan Deal Will Solve The Country's Lead Problem. It Won't. Politico. August 2, 2021.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/02/biden-lead-problem-502149>)

President Joe Biden vows that the bipartisan infrastructure deal would eliminate lead from the nation's drinking water systems, particularly in low-income and communities of color that disproportionately suffer exposure to the potent neurotoxin. **But the \$1 trillion legislation** unveiled Sunday evening **won't come close** to fulfilling that promise. **The bill** unveiled by Senate negotiators **tags just \$15 billion for the lead removal initiative** — a fraction of the \$45 billion that the White House initially called for to accomplish its signature goal, and **far less than the \$60 billion that the drinking water industry says it would take. And half of the money** provided by the bill **would come in** the form of **loans** that communities have to repay, **putting a large share** of the funding **beyond the reach of many** of the **communities** that need it most. "What's needed is at least \$45 billion to solve the problem of lead service lines. That, absolutely, is going to be necessary to resolve this issue," said Erik Olson, head of the Natural Resources Defense Council's health program. But the White House maintains the deal will be enough to get the job done, arguing that in addition to the \$15 billion, another \$11 billion other funds in the bill could be put toward the goal: "The bipartisan agreement will eliminate all lead drinking water pipes and service lines in the United States with this unprecedented funding — full stop," Deputy White House Press Secretary Andrew Bates said in a statement to POLITICO. In a statement last week ahead of the bill's release, Biden said the deal "will put plumbers and pipefitters to work replacing all of the nation's lead water pipes so every child and every American can turn on the faucet at home or school and drink clean water — including in low-income communities and communities of color that have been disproportionately affected by dangerous lead pipes." Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon, a founding member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, called the president's claim laughable. "We're seeing a lot of spin out of the White House, which is just unbelievable," he said on a call with reporters last week, noting that the \$15 billion senators had said was tagged for lead removal "of course would not replace all the lead pipes." DeFazio shepherded a major transportation and water bill, H.R. 3684 (117), through the House last month that would provide the White House's full \$45 billion request for lead. Public health advocates hope the bipartisan bill's funding is just a down payment for additional dollars that could come from a second, Democrats-only reconciliation bill being prepared by Senate leaders. But it is unclear if the political impetus will be there since progressives are focused on advancing climate goals in a second measure — and because Biden and the White House are declaring that the first bill solves the lead problem.

EPA estimates there are 6 million to 10 million lead service lines across the country but since many communities don't have maps of which lines are made of which materials, **the extent of the lead problem — and the cost of fixing it — could be far higher. Without full funding,** advocates say **the low-income communities where lead lines are more likely to be present are apt to end up on the short end of the stick.**

Contention Two is Solvency:

Fully investing in water infrastructure is critical to fight lead poisoning. The plan is a key step to avoid future crises

Filippelli 5/4 – Director of the Center for Urban Health

(Gabriel, Director of the Center For Urban Health At Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Biden's Infrastructure Plan Targets Lead Pipes That Threaten Public Health Across The U.S. Public Broadcasting Service. May 4, 2021.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/bidens-infrastructure-plan-targets-lead-pipes-that-threaten-public-health-across-the-us>)

President Joe Biden's infrastructure plan includes a proposal to upgrade the U.S. drinking water distribution system by removing and replacing dangerous lead pipes.

As a [geochemist and environmental health researcher](#) who has studied the heartbreaking impacts of lead poisoning in children for decades, I am happy to see due attention paid to this silent killer, which [disproportionately affects poor communities of color](#). Biden's proposal [includes US\\$45 billion](#) to eliminate all lead pipes and service lines nationwide. The funding would go to [programs administered](#) by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This effort would affect an estimated [6 million to 10 million homes](#), along with [400,000 schools and child care facilities](#). I see it as one of the nation's best chances to finally get the lead out of the nation's drinking water, and its children. Lead poisoning does permanent damage. Lead poisoning is a major public health problem, because lead has permanent impacts on the brain, particularly in children. Young brains are [still actively forming](#) the amazing network of neurons that comprise their hardware. Neurons are designed to use calcium, the most abundant mineral in the human body, as a transmitter to rapidly pass signals. Lead is able to penetrate the brain because lead molecules look a lot like calcium molecules. If lead is present in a child's body, it can impair neuron development and cause permanent neural damage. Children with lead poisoning have lower IQs, poor memory recall, high rates of attention deficit disorder and low impulse control. They tend to [perform poorly at school](#), which reduces their earning potential as adults. They also face increased risk of [kidney disease, stroke and hypertension](#) as they age. Research has found strong connections between lead poisoning and [incarceration for violent crimes](#). The prevalence of childhood lead poisoning has [declined significantly in the U.S.](#) over the past 50 years. That's largely due to the elimination of leaded gasoline in the 1980s and the banning of most lead-based paints. In the 1970s, nearly 90% of children in the U.S. ages 1 to 5 had blood lead levels [above 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood](#), which then was the "level of concern" under federal health guidelines. Today, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials, [roughly 2% of U.S. children](#) have elevated blood lead levels. This decline is a public health success story – but researchers estimate that [about 500,000 U.S. children](#) still have elevated blood lead levels. In 2012 the CDC adopted a new blood lead "reference value" of [5 micrograms per deciliter or above](#), which identifies children in the highest 2.5% of those tested for lead in their blood. Health experts widely agree that there is [no known "safe" blood lead concentration](#). And as long as lead water pipes remain in service, children and families are vulnerable. No maps of lead service lines. Like many U.S. bridges, roads and ports, America's water systems are old. Much of the drinking water infrastructure in older cities was [built before 1950](#), before researchers started to grapple with the toxicity of lead. Most American cities have countless miles of lead service lines buried beneath streets and sidewalks and feeding into people's homes. Utilities don't know where many of these aging lines are and don't have enough data to map them. Replacing them will require significant analysis, modeling, data and some guesswork. Old service lines have repeatedly caused lead poisoning outbreaks in places like Washington, D.C.; [Flint, Michigan](#); and [Newark, New Jersey](#). [The chemistry is a bit different](#) in each case. Lead service lines typically develop a protective "plaque" of minerals on their inside walls after a short time, which effectively separates the toxic lead pipe from the water flowing through it. This coating, which is called scale, remains stable if the chemistry of the water coursing through it doesn't change. But if that chemistry is altered, disaster can ensue. In 2002, Washington, D.C., shifted from chlorine to chloramine for treating its water supply. Chloramine is a more modern disinfectant that does not [form dangerous reactive chlorinated byproducts](#) as chlorine can. This rapidly corroded the protective plaque lining the city's pipes, flushing highly absorbable lead into homes. [Tens of thousands of children were exposed](#) over two years before the problem was adequately identified and fixed. In Flint, state-appointed managers decided to save money during a fiscal crisis in 2014 by switching from Detroit water to water from the Flint River. Flint river water has completely different corrosivity than Detroit water, but officials [did not require enough chemical analysis](#) to determine what additives should be used to maintain the pipe plaque. One egregious and ultimately toxic decision was to forgo the typical step of adding phosphate, which binds chemically with lead and prevents it from leaching out of pipes, in order to save [about \\$100 per day](#). Corrosion chemistry is well controlled in

many U.S. cities, but it is not a perfect science. And utilities don't always have detection systems that adequately alert water suppliers to dangers at the tap. That's why **removing lead pipes is the only sure way to avoid the threat of more water crises.** Cities will need to innovate **While \$45 billion is a huge investment**, in my view **it probably isn't enough to replace all lead pipes nationwide. Take Flint** as an example. **The estimated cost of replacing all of the city's lead service lines is about \$50 million.** As a rough calculation, then, for \$45 billion, the nation theoretically could remedy slightly fewer than 1,000 Flints. **But there are literally thousands of U.S. cities to fix. Some** are smaller than Flint and thus likely cheaper to remediate, but others **are much larger.** My own city, **Indianapolis, has a population of about 850,000. That's roughly 10 times as big as Flint, which means 10 times as many households and water distribution end points. What's more, officials have only a rough idea of where to find the city's lead service lines. There are ways to statistically model the likelihood that a given portion of the water system has lead service lines,** using information such as water main sizes, locations and construction dates, **but they are imperfect.** Cities will need to get creative to make whatever funds they get go as far as possible. As one example, I am working with colleagues to develop a citizen science project that will provide thousands of tests for lead at taps around Indianapolis. This effort, a partnership with the University of Notre Dame funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, may augment modeling with real data on levels of lead in homes, and will increase public awareness of this issue. Lead water pipes are ticking time bombs in cities across the U.S. Other important sources of lead exposure, such as [soil and dust contamination](#), also require urgent attention. But I believe **fixing water systems is a critical step toward protecting children from the lifelong burdens of lead poisoning.**

Advantage One is Environmental Justice:

First, the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan was not unique. Millions of Americans are drinking unsafe, contaminated water. It's a public health disaster

Khazan 2019 – Staff Writer at *The Atlantic*

(Olga, Staff Writer At The Atlantic. The Trouble With America's Water. The Atlantic. September 11, 2019.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2019/09/millions-american-homes-have-lead-water/597826/>)

The city of **Newark**, New Jersey, **is racing to replace** all of **its lead pipes** after a public outcry over the high levels of lead in its water. After exceeding a federal lead limit **three times in a row**, the city began to provide water filters to certain residents in 2018. But some of the filters were found to be ineffective, and as of the end of last month, thousands of the city's residents were still advised to drink bottled water. **The situation** is said to have **"echoes"** of **the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan**, a few years ago. As in Flint, a change in the chemical composition of Newark's water allowed the lead contamination to occur. And like Flint, Newark is predominantly populated by people of color. Officials in Newark initially denied there was a lead problem in the water, according to reports from The New York Times, even after high lead levels were found in half the city's schools. A sample of Newark children under the age of 6 tested in 2016 found that about a quarter had measurable levels of lead in their blood. The following year, more than 22 percent of drinking-water samples tested in the city were found to have levels of lead exceeding the federal standard. Newark's mayor, Ras Baraka, defends the city's response. "We gave out filters as soon as we got the report," he told me. "We never denied there was lead in the water." He said the children's blood-lead levels were elevated due to lead paint, not lead in water. The city is now replacing all of its lead service lines, including in parts of the city that weren't affected by the lead problem. **Newark is far from the only city that has struggled to keep its drinking water free from lead.** Drinking water in the United States is **mostly safe**, but **between 2015 and 2018, about 5.5 million Americans** in communities around the nation **got their water from systems that exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's lead action level** of 15 parts per billion, according to a **report** from the Natural Resources Defense Council. **The widespread presence of lead** in water in certain areas **points to** what advocates call **a serious failure to upgrade water infrastructure** in recent decades. "The U.S. has not been investing in its drinking-water infrastructure for generations," says Erik Olson, the senior director for health programs at NRDC, which filed a lawsuit against Newark last year. **A lot of our pipes are 50 or 100 years old or more, and many are lead.** And water-treatment plants are still using World War I-era technology for treatment. **Few substances threaten public health** quite **like lead**. **In adults, lead can cause heart and kidney disease; in children, it can permanently lower IQ and lead to behavioral problems.** **Lead's damage to the body is difficult to reverse and can last a lifetime.** **When researchers examined fertility before and after Flint's lead crisis, they found** what they **called** a **"horribly large" increase in fetal deaths and miscarriages.**

Second, the impact is environmental justice. Lead poisoning traps people of color in a cycle of poverty. You have a moral obligation to fight racism and vote for the plan

Kalala 2019 – Student at Macalester College

(Honor, Undergraduate Student At Macalester College Studying Sociology And Psychology. Environmental Injustice: High Lead Levels In Children Can Have Devastating Effects. Minnesota Post. May 3, 2019.

<https://www.minnpost.com/community-voices/2019/05/environmental-injustice-high-lead-levels-in-children-can-have-devastating-effects/>)

In an article in The Washington Post titled, [“Freddie Gray’s life a study on the effects of lead paint on poor blacks.”](#) Terrence McCoy writes that **lead poisoning can “diminish cognitive function, increase aggression and ultimately exacerbate the cycle of poverty”** that is already exceedingly difficult to break.” As a child, he reports, Gray was put into special education classes and started running into trouble with the law early. These symptoms, of aggression and difficulty in traditional schooling, are ones that our society associates with “problem students” — a term too often coded to mean black and brown students. **The unequal exposure to lead** (primarily from lead containing paint) **for poor and black communities is an environmental injustice because it perpetuates some of the worst issues these communities face.** Gray’s case highlights an important intersection between the environmental justice movement and the rising Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Lives Matter movement was created out of outrage over the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the man who killed Trayvon Martin in 2013. Since then, it has evolved to refer mainly to the unfair and harmful treatment of black men by the police. **Because there is an over-representation of police in communities of color** and an already strained relationship between the community and law enforcement, **lead poisoning** doesn’t only pose a health risk cognitively, but it **can also be the trigger for increased police brutality.** Too often punished, kicked out of school Thousands of poor, primarily black, children are now growing up with this reality of undiagnosed or unrecognized lead poisoning, and are expected to develop at the same rates as their healthy peers. And then these sick children are punished, kicked out of school, and too often incarcerated shortly after, when they fail to do so. **A child’s life and chances of success can be vastly decreased if they are poisoned with lead. They are,** wrote McCoy in the Post article on Gray, “... **seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.”** [The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) describes this school-to-prison pipeline](#) as a “national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems.” Because the lead poisoning epidemic has been so ignored in inner cities, **lead-poisoned students** who display a difficulty focusing, aggression, and poor decision-making **are criminalized as opposed to treated with accommodations** for the disabilities they now have. **This** introduction to the criminal justice and law enforcement system at a young age only **increases recidivism and perpetuates this cycle of violence and crime,** which could have been avoided if people like Freddie Gray had gotten the help they needed as children. [Freddie Gray was arrested](#) on April 12, 2015, after he “fled unprovoked” from officers. He was accused of possessing an illegal switchblade. Gray was shackled and placed in the back of a police van. Forty-five minutes later he was found unconscious and unresponsive, his spinal cord nearly severed. He died one week later, on April 19, in the hospital. His death, and **the larger issue of lead poisoning in black and low-income communities, is an injustice greater than any individual act of racism or prejudice.** [Information about the number of children and young adults affected by lead poisoning is accessible.](#) Examples like Gray testing far above the “elevated” lead level as a young child are available. **Lack of action or concrete solutions** to this epidemic **is a conscious disregard for the health, safety, and livelihood of low income, minority communities.** This needs to be an issue that is at the top of many more people’s concerns. Therefore, I urge all those reading this to think about this epidemic and its implications when deciding who will earn your political support in both local elections and the upcoming 2020 presidential election.

Environmental Justice 1AC – 5/6

Advantage Two is Rural Communities:

First, rural America is in a water crisis; twenty-one million people have been exposed to unhealthy drinking water. Federal funding is key to solve

Condon 2019 — Fellow At New York University School of Law

(Madison, Fellow at New York University School of Law. Rural America's Drinking Water Crisis. Human Rights Magazine, Vol. 44, No. 2: Housing. American Bar Association. October 9, 2019.

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsi/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/vol-44--no-2--housing/rural-america-s-drinking-water-crisis/)

While Flint, Michigan, rightfully captures headlines, another water crisis affecting millions of Americans **continues to go largely unnoticed. All across rural America, small community water systems are failing** to protect public health due to a perfect storm of forces. Poor regulation of agricultural waste and other pollutants, shrinking populations, and aging infrastructure all contribute to the

increasing incidents of water quality violations dotting the rural landscape. **There are nearly 60 thousand community water systems in the United States** and 93 percent of them serve populations of fewer than 10,000 people—**67 percent serve populations of fewer than 500 people. In 2015, 9 percent** of all water systems **had a documented violation of water quality standards, exposing 21 million people to unhealthy drinking water. These violations were more likely to occur in rural areas**, where communities often have trouble finding the funds to maintain their systems. **Many** water supply **systems were** designed and **built decades ago**, and old systems are susceptible to a variety of failures. **Corroding pipes can leach lead and copper directly into the drinking supply. Some need technological updates to keep pace with stricter pollutant standards** that reflect our evolving scientific understanding of risk exposure. Pollutant levels

are also just much higher than they used to be. Water supplies in farming communities often have harmfully high levels of nitrates, which seep into the groundwater from fertilizer and manure. Yet, 85 percent of the communities with nitrate violations have no treatment systems for removing the chemical. The costs of compliance can be huge. Systems that can handle the treatment of nitrate range from the hundreds of thousands to several million dollars. The town of Pretty Prairie, Kansas, population 650, was recently forced to build a water treatment system to address nitrate levels, at a cost of \$2.4

million. This cost of roughly \$3,600 per resident is a substantial burden in a town with a median income of \$33,000. **The Environmental Protection Agency**

(EPA) estimates that updating rural America's water infrastructure (just those systems serving populations of less than 10,000) **would require \$190 billion of investment in the coming decades.** Where this funding will come from has

been left unanswered. Water infrastructure is typically paid for by the rates charged to individual users. **But regional economic changes** and demographic shifts **mean that decades old water systems** in need of repair sometimes **now serve rate-paying populations just a fraction of the size they were initially built to serve.** Some communities have a hard time simply finding a qualified technician to

oversee the water treatment process. The job requires training and certification, yet pays part-time hours in towns often populated mainly by retirees. Some, including President Trump, have proposed utility privatization, or public-private partnerships, as a funding solution, but this strategy still requires water rates paid by consumers to fund projects over the long term. In tiny communities with average incomes well below the national average, it's not clear if users will be able to shoulder the tripling or quadrupling of water rates necessary to entice private investors. Further, because they require a profit margin not sought by public operators, private utilities charge households 59 percent more on average than local governments for drinking water service. For some communities, regionalization might be a more palatable alternative to privatization. Under this scheme, water utilities are consolidated across communities, spreading operation costs across a broader population and enabling towns to reap the advantages of the same economies of scale that private operators are able to facilitate. For the residents of O'Brien, Texas, a regionalization agreement with a neighboring town was a welcome alternative to privatizing—the town leadership just had to put aside their longstanding football rivalry in order to come to the table. Rather than attracting investors to build a new treatment facility, O'Brien's population of just over a hundred people now receive water from its neighbors and share some of the operation costs. Regionalization is not a panacea, however. Some communities are too isolated to make cost-sharing economical. And others have conflicts far more complicated than high school sports that prevent political cooperation. In Delaware, for example, many rural communities are unincorporated and not part of any organized town or city government. This means that they are often not included in the closest town's centralized municipal water or sewer system. While the most cost-effective solution

might be to extend a town's water and sewer lines to its rural neighbors, only town citizens can vote on whether to do this. **Those living outside the towns,** who for historical reasons **are disproportionately poor and people of color,** are unable to vote on their own access to clean water. While federal

funding can help pay for the expansion, it cannot directly address this representational challenge. **Present levels of federal funding are woefully inadequate** to address America's mounting drinking water crisis. **In 2019, just \$2.8 billion was allocated** through appropriations for all

water infrastructure projects nationwide—**less than one half of a percent of the amount of investment the EPA estimates is needed.** Not only are water quality violations more likely to occur with water systems that service minority or low-income populations, but oft-discussed solutions to

America's rural drinking water crisis, such as privatization and regionalization, fail to address the unique barriers that poor communities and communities of color face. **In the end, a massive influx of government funding is needed to make sure that millions of Americans are not left exposed to health-harming pollutants put in their drinking water** by under-regulated industries.

Environmental Justice 1AC – 6/6

Second, contaminated drinking water is a public health crisis with fatal consequences. Millions of rural Americans are at risk

Jones and Atkin 2018— Journalists

(Sarah, Staff Writer at *New York Magazine*. Emily, Contributing Editor to *The New Republic*. Rural America's Drinking-Water Crisis. *The New Republic*. February 12, 2018. <https://newrepublic.com/article/147011/rural-americas-drinking-water-crisis>)

In those small areas, who is going to raise hell except for the people affected and maybe the local paper? Put all these systems together, however, and **rural America's drinking-water situation constitutes a crisis of a magnitude greater than Flint**, or any individual city. From Appalachian Kentucky to the Texas borderlands, **millions of rural Americans are subject to unhealthy and sometimes illegal levels of contaminants in their drinking water**, whether from agriculture, or coal, or plain old bad pipes. And as the economic gap separating rural America from its urban and suburban counterparts continues to grow, this basic inequality is set to become more entrenched—and possibly more dangerous, as sickness seeps into rural America. Often, the very industries that provide a community its economic backbone are what's damaging or even poisoning its water supply. In Martin County and other communities across Appalachia, that industry is mining. "A lot of people in Kentucky actually get their water from wells that are sunk into flooded, abandoned mines," explained Erik Olson, a policy analyst for the Natural Resource Defense Council. "That water quality is horrific because the mines are loaded with heavy metals." Other communities, from West Virginia to North Carolina, trace their water problems to the waste produced from burning coal, which is often stored in liquid ponds that have [a tendency to spill and leak](#). In West Virginia, some say accidents affecting the water supply have become a fact of life. "Seems like whenever something happens, we just shrug our shoulders and go about our business," wrote Dustin White, a self-described "11th generation Appalachian native" raised in Boone County who is now an organizer for the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition. "Local media may talk about it for a day or two, then it just seems to disappear." **Toxic water may disappear from the headlines, but not from the bodies of local residents**. Some research [links mountaintop-removal mining to carcinogens in local groundwater](#) that **can lead to cancer, heart disease, and birth defects, which means thousands of families, especially those who rely on well water, live with constant anxiety about long-term health problems**. Unsafe water takes a kind of shorter-term psychic toll as well. Hannah Bowen, an 18-year-old student at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, has lived in Martin County her whole life and has suffered from severe acne. A common teenage problem, she thought—until she moved away for college and it cleared up. "Every time I visit home and use the water, I notice my face breaking out again," she said. In towns with water issues, every illness seems mysterious, leaving most people with a kind of free-floating fear. **Large-scale agriculture is the contamination culprit in many other rural areas: Nitrogen-based fertilizer slides off of farmlands and into the nation's freshwater** systems. The tap water in Pretty Prairie, Kansas, for example, "has exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's legal limit" for nitrate for more than 20 years, the Environmental Working Group [reported in 2017](#). As a result, the town's 672 residents have [imbibed carcinogens for decades](#). The Environmental Working Group reports, "**Studies by the National Cancer Institute have found that drinking water with just 5 [parts per million] of nitrate increases the risk of colon, kidney, ovarian and bladder cancers.**" Agriculture's unsavory side-effects also plague the Mississippi River Valley. Colin Wellenkamp, the executive director of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative, said that communities in Arkansas down to the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico face the most serious nitrate issues, due to bioaccumulation of the nutrients in their water source. (While most nutrient pollution is released farther north, contaminants tend to travel south, where they accumulate and sit near the mouth of the Gulf.) Often, water-treatment facilities are too old to adequately filter out the chemicals. "Some of my cities are facing serious infrastructure issues because that stuff's been neglected for so long," Wellenkamp said. He West Coast isn't spared, either. "In some parts of California, like the Central Valley, you see both a combination of water-scarcity and water-quality problems, because of over-pumping or because of drought," Olson said. "They often, unfortunately, go hand in hand, so even if you have water, it's not fit to drink." Farther south, colonias—which are unincorporated settlements near the Mexican border—in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico also frequently [lack running water or sewer access](#). According to the Rural Community Assistance Partnership, approximately 30 percent of residents in colonias didn't have safe drinking water in 2015. Mary Gonzales, a Texas state representative, said the problem is compounded by inadequate wastewater infrastructure for the 253 colonias in her district. "If you can't flush your toilet and the septic system isn't an adequate one, the raw sewage comes out onto the street," she explained. "That's literally what happens." She added that current immigration rhetoric has complicated efforts to develop colonias, even though most of these communities are decades old and most residents are citizens. Fixing rural water problems can be a costly prospect, but finding the money is often more a matter of political will. In Texas, one colonia needs \$32 million to build basic wastewater infrastructure, which Gonzales says is not an insurmountable sum. Nevertheless, help has not been forthcoming. In 2017, Texas Governor Greg Abbott [used the line-item veto](#) to defund the state's Colonia Initiatives Program. The state legislature also failed to renew the Economically Distressed Areas Program, which provided funding for infrastructure development. Gonzales introduced a House Joint Resolution that would have created a constitutional amendment to fund the program through joint-obligation bonds. [The bill failed](#). "When I'm advocating funding for colonias, sometimes people don't even know there are thousands of communities who don't even have running water," Gonzales added. "These communities have been invisible for a long time." Colonias have long been subject to environmental injustice, but the rest of rural America's water problems are largely invisible, too—not least to the government bodies responsible for solving them. A few months after President Donald Trump's inauguration, Kentuckians from Martin County were dealing with contamination—but, they [told NPR](#), they were hopeful for new federal spending that could help rebuild their water systems and their trust in government. Their hopes are echoed in other suffering communities. Many of the contamination problems facing rural America can be traced to old, broken, unreliable infrastructure like leaky pipes, clunky filtration systems, and backed-up sewers. Trump, of course, has promised to fix America's aging infrastructure: His plan is set to be [released Monday](#). If Trump really wants to help rural America, he'd have to confront two facts. The first is that white, blue-collar workers aren't the only rural Americans who need assistance. Immigrant and Latino communities are also at the front lines of this crisis. The second is that rural water travails can't be solved without public funding: *new* public funding. "If you're going to put out a \$200 billion infrastructure plan, and the \$200 billion is coming from cuts or elimination of other domestic programs we depend on, it's not going to help anybody," Wellenkamp said. Wellenkamp fears that Trump will choose to zero out community-development block grants, or water-pollution-control grant programs, in order to fund his bill. That fear makes sense: In 2017, Trump introduced a budget proposal that would [entirely defund](#) the USDA's water and wastewater loan and grant program. Though his administration later rescinded that proposal, it indicated an apparent lack of interest in or familiarity with the program's work. And though Trump's much-vaunted infrastructure proposal will reportedly set aside [\\$50 billion for rural development](#), a [leaked draft of the forthcoming plan](#) makes clear that it may be nothing more than a boon for backers of privatization. "The [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) (CWSRF) will be open for business for private firms to both manage and repair water infrastructure at taxpayer's expense," Michelle Chen recently [explained at The Nation](#). "In addition, a credit scheme under the [Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act](#) would provide more opportunity to private investors, by eliminating existing requirements that WIFIA funds be used for 'Community Water Systems.'" The private sector, with its success strictly tied to profit-making, should not be involved in utilities at all. But certainly when public water money doesn't even require those private water businesses to use it for, well, community water systems, then the chances those systems will improve is close to nil. Perhaps unsurprisingly, [The Washington Post has reported](#) that the White House's business-friendly infrastructure policy is being guided by a group of outside investors led by one of Trump's billionaire friends, the developer Richard LeFrak. This is consistent with the Trump administration's other business-policy priorities, like the Department of Labor's proposed [tip-pooling rule](#), which would allow restaurant owners to plunder their workers' tips because owners know best how to distribute that money: In other words, Trump's definition of economic progress is to grow the bank accounts of wealthy interests on the backs of everyday Americans and, yes, let it trickle down. Given that there isn't much profit in running water to sparsely populated, low-income areas—indeed, water boards in rural communities [are already raising rates](#) to try to make ends meet—it's unclear how blindly funding the private sector would incentivize the massive rebuilding projects these communities desperately need. Why give out tips or vast government checks when you can "reinvest" in yourself? It's only too easy to doubt Trump's commitment to clean water. In addition to the above, the administration is openly hostile to the EPA, a stance that presents still more obstacles to drinkable water, and it at one point declared war on the USDA's water-infrastructure funds, which advocates aren't convinced the administration has really abandoned. "It would not stun me if they tried to take another crack at cutting substantially or even eliminating that funding," Olson said. "It's kind of ironic that the administration that purportedly wants to protect rural citizens has proposed eliminating one of the most important programs that helps rural communities have safe water."

America's failure to provide basic necessities to its rural citizens punches significant holes in the exceptionalist narrative favored by the Trump administration. **It's** also **a potentially life-threatening oversight.**

Environmental Justice Affirmative (2AC)

2AC Case (Solvency)

Drinking water is a key source of lead poisoning

Schmit and Hall 2016 – Investigative Journalists

(Silke / Dee, Journalists At The Wisconsin Center For Investigative Journalism. Lead In Drinking Water Remains A Danger. Post Crescent. January 31, 2016. <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/investigations/2016/01/31/lead-drinking-water-remains-danger/79462854/>)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acknowledged the contribution of water to the nation's lead exposure in 1991 when it **estimated** that **drinking water accounts for about 20 percent of average lead exposure, but as much as 85 percent of exposure for infants** consuming formula made with tap water. Because of the dangers of lead, the United States started **phasing out leaded gasoline** in 1973 until it was virtually eliminated in 1988. The use of lead-based paints **steadily decreased after 1950** until the additive was banned from the market in 1978. The use of lead for plumbing was outlawed in 1986, although until January 2014, "lead-free" indoor plumbing components could legally contain up to 8 percent lead. Officials at the nation's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and **Wisconsin's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program** attribute childhood lead exposure almost exclusively to deteriorating lead-based paint and lead dust in older homes. But lead paint is not the only hazard of old housing stock. **For decades** beginning in the late 1800s, **lead was a commonly used material in the pipes that carry drinking water** from the water main to individual homes, also known as lead service lines. There are an estimated 176,000 such lead pipes in Wisconsin, where greatly elevated levels of lead of at least 100 parts per billion — or more than six times the federal safety level — have been detected in public water systems in 24 of the 72 counties. **Recognizing the danger posed by lead in water, some scientists have argued** for years **that the focus of health officials on lead-contaminated paint and dust as the cause of childhood lead poisoning is too narrow and that water should be investigated as another significant exposure source.** Yanna Lambrinidou, a researcher and instructor at Virginia Tech, said **the CDC and public health community are "doing tremendous damage" by failing to require testing for lead in drinking water when a child is lead poisoned. "It's putting generations of kids in harm's way for absolutely no good reason,"** she said.

Lead-contaminated water is a key source of lead poisoning. Studies prove

Schmit and Hall 2016 — Investigative Journalists

(Silke / Dee, Journalists At The Wisconsin Center For Investigative Journalism. Lead In Drinking Water Remains A Danger. Post Crescent. January 31, 2016. <https://www.postcrescent.com/story/news/investigations/2016/01/31/lead-drinking-water-remains-danger/79462854/>)

Lead in water, blood linked Some of the **strongest evidence linking lead-contaminated water with children's blood lead levels has come from studies** directed by Edwards in two cities: Washington, D.C., in the early 2000s, and Flint, Michigan, beginning last summer. Edwards and colleagues **demonstrated in 2004** that **lead increases in the water of thousands of D.C. households** were triggered by a change in the water utility's disinfectant protocol. In a 2009 **study**, he then showed the change **caused a more than four-fold increase in the number of children under 16 months with blood lead levels exceeding 10 micrograms per deciliter.** Edwards and many other scientists have continued to evaluate, and confirm, a strong relationship between lead in water and blood since then. **A 2012 federally funded study** by Edwards **found that while lead poisoning among children had decreased thanks to reduced lead exposure from gasoline, paint and other sources, the relative importance of water had increased. A 2014 Canadian**

Environmental Justice (Middle School JV)

SY 2021 – 2022 (Atlanta Urban Debate League)



government-funded **study** that examined paint, dust and tap water as exposure sources **concluded** that **drinking water**

was “a persistent significant contributor to children’s blood lead levels.” Another Canadian [study](#) from 2015 estimated that an increase of 1 ppb of lead in water “would result in an increase of 35 percent of blood lead (in young children) after 150 days of exposure,” and concluded that “water lead concentrations well under the current drinking water guidelines in Canada (10 ppb) and the United States (15 ppb) could have an impact on blood lead levels of young children after long-term exposure.”

Even if lead levels are declining, lead poisoning still uniquely affects low-income people of color

Lui et al. 2020 – Medical Researcher at the University of Hong Kong

(Kelvin, Member of the Department of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. Man-Fung Tsoi, University of Hong Kong. Tommy Tsang Cheung, University of Hong Kong. Ching-Lung Cheung, University of Hong Kong. Bernard MY Cheung, Department of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. Are Blood Lead Levels In the United States Still Declining? The US National Health Nutrition and Examination Survey (NHANES) 1999-2016. Research Square. March 17, 2020. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-17481/v1>. Note: This evidence has been modified for clarity.)

Despite the substantial decline in BLLs [blood lead levels], disparities between different income and ethnic groups remain. From our analysis, we found in NHANES 2015-2016, for the first time, that there was no longer a disparity between high- and low-income families in the proportion of children aged 1 to 5 years with EBLLs. This is a very encouraging finding. Lead affects neurocognitive development in children and BLL may partly lead to a poverty trap in which children from poor families will remain poor when they grow up. The elimination of income disparity in EBLLs is likely to be a result of targeted screening in high-risk children. Until 2014, black children (below age of 18) were twice as likely to live in poverty as white children [30]. Black children in poverty are also more likely to live in substandard housing and hence, at a higher risk of exposure to lead paint at home and lead pollutants from nearby factories [31, 32]. **The racial and income disparity has been historically important in blood lead monitoring.** In 1982, Mahaffey and colleagues first reported higher BLLs in young children who were black and from low-income families in a national estimate (NHANES II, 1976-1980) [33]. Since then, the observation was confirmed in numerous studies and the disparities persisted over the past four decades [22–4, 27, 33–36]. **In 2013-2014, the mean BLLs in black children was still 36% higher than in white children [29].** Children at the age of 1-5 years that were non-Hispanic black, from a low-income family and living in housing built before 1950 were in the highest risk groups for lead poisoning [24, 34, 35]. **The black-white disparity in higher BLLs has been found to be independent of income level, housing quality and environmental conditions** [38]. Targeted prevention strategies have been implemented such as increased screening on these high-risk groups and identification of high-risk environment [17]. **the percentage of non-Hispanic black children with EBLL is still higher compared to other ethnicities, and so more efforts to reduce the environmental exposure to lead,** particularly by removing lead paint and lead plumbing in houses, **are necessary.**

2AC Case (Rural Communities)

Funding is key; old infrastructure is the root cause of the rural water crisis

Mizner 7/27 (Lynn, Journalist For The Aitkin Independent Age. Is There A Rural Water Crisis – And Who Is Responsible?. The Aitkin Independent Age. July 27, 2021.

https://www.messagemedia.co/aitkin/news/local/is-there-a-rural-water-crisis-and-who-is-responsible/article_0e1b7e9c-ef11-11eb-9821-a7f099e20d0b.html)

In her 2019 paper Rural America's Drinking Water Crisis, human rights attorney Madison Condon said that **the rural water crisis affecting millions of Americans “continues to go unnoticed.”** Condon found that poor regulation of agricultural waste and other pollutants, **shrinking** populations (and **tax bases**) and **aging infrastructure all contribute to the increasing incidence of water quality violations** dotting the rural landscape. **Decades-old water systems are susceptible to such failures** as corroding pipes that leach copper and lead directly into the drinking supply. There are nearly 60 thousand community water systems in the United States and 93% of them serve populations of fewer than 10,000 people – 67% serve populations of fewer than 500 people. **Often the tax base is not there to support the upgrades needed to bring aging rural water systems into compliance with modern water quality standards.** In addition, **there are ever more pollutants in the environment and they need to be addressed in upgraded water treatment systems.**

First, the Disadvantage is non-unique. Government spending is out of control

Cole 8/15 – Journalist for *The Gazette*

(Althea, Journalist For The Gazette. Federal Spending Is Out of Control Because We Allow It. The Gazette. August 15, 2021.

<https://www.thegazette.com/opinion/federal-spending-is-out-of-control-because-we-allow-it/>)

That's exactly what they did, though. **Last Tuesday, the U.S. Senate secured passage of a \$1 trillion "hard" infrastructure bill,** helped along with an "aye" from Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley. Sen. Joni Ernst voted no. **Less than 24 hours after** passing their "bipartisan" spending bill, **the Senate turned around and passed a resolution calling for even more spending — about \$3.5 trillion more.** That was not at all a bipartisan effort. Every single Republican voted no, including Grassley, who, although obviously capable of letting us down on occasion, hasn't (completely) abandoned the taxpayer. The second bill passed only with a tiebreaking vote from Vice President Kamala Harris. With the framework for the second spending bill in place, **Democrats can now start drafting formal plans to spend \$3.5 trillion dollars of money that we don't have** and do it with only a simple majority. Our government wants to spend money like we have it. But we don't have it. Not enough to satisfy the wants of these bills, anyway. **The budget plan** released in May by the White House **proposed a federal budget of \$6.011 trillion for the fiscal year 2022,** which begins on Oct. 1. **Despite that price tag, the government only expects to take in \$4.174 trillion in revenue. That creates a budget deficit of \$1.837 trillion.** When there's a budget deficit, the government borrows money to cover it, which affects the national debt. Currently, the national debt is about \$28.6 trillion. These numbers can be a bit bewildering, but I'd be lying if I said they were shocking. Many of us, myself included, have grown used to the idea that government spending is out of control, and has been for a long time. **In the last 52 years, the U.S. has had a budget surplus for only five of them,** the last being over two decades ago. **The spending is out of control** because we allow it. The infrastructure bill is a perfect example of how. "Infrastructure" is a beguiling word. It deceives us into giving politicians the OK to spend gobs of money on the promise of things like new roads and better bridges. Want for all of that blurs the line between the Democratic and Republican parties, one of which supposedly opposes reckless spending in favor of fiscal conservatism. (Or so it claims.)

Second, no link and turn. Deficit spending is key to economic growth

Seurkamp 4/21 (Danielle, Certified Financial Planner. When Should We Start Worrying About Deficit Spending?. Forbes. April 28, 2021.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielseurkamp/2021/04/28/when-should-we-start-worrying-about-deficit-spending/?sh=244eab035369>)

While we often think of deficits as a burden being laid at the feet of future generations, MMT argues that **periods of high deficits have correlated to subsequent increases in wealth and incomes for future generations. For example, the period after World War II represented a major growth period in our economy despite the high deficits** that were **incurred during the War.** Kelton attributes that to the fact that during WWII, the government focused on maximizing resources and output to make things like planes and guns and food, irrespective of the deficit (just as MMT would have us do now). **More recently, government stimulus helped the country (slowly) recover from the depths of the Great Recession** such that unemployment fell to historically low levels **without causing inflation.** **Many economists** including Kelton **believe that had the US done more deficit spending following the Great Recession, the recovery would have been even faster** and more effective. This is likely an influence on the current administration who has opted for larger government spending in hopes of accelerating the recovery.

Third, non-unique. Record inflation is happening now

Rugaber 8/11 — Journalist for the Associated Press

(Christopher, Journalist For The Associated Press. U.S. Consumer Prices Rose In July But At Slower Pace. Associated Press. August 11, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-prices-8123e0ab46f71bef25a41b16da626201>)

Excluding volatile energy and food prices, so-called **core inflation rose 4.3% in the past year**, down slightly from 4.5% in June — **the fastest pace since 1991. Americans continue to face higher costs, with the year-over-year inflation rate matching June's increase as the largest annual jump since 2008.** At the same time, some recent drivers of the inflation surge slowed last month. The price of used cars, which had soared over the past three months, ticked up just 0.2% in July. Airline fares, which had been spiking, actually declined 0.1% in July. "We believe June marked the peak in the annual rate of inflation," said Kathy Bostjancic, an economist at Oxford Economics. "That said, **price increases stemming from the reopening of the economy and ongoing supply chain bottlenecks will keep the rate of inflation elevated.**" **Rising inflation has emerged as the Achilles' heel of the economic recovery, erasing** much of the benefit to workers from higher pay and heightening pressure on the Federal Reserve's policymakers under Chair Jerome Powell, who face a mandate to maintain stable prices.

Fourth, no impact. Economic decline does not cause war. Expert evidence

Walt 2020 — Professor of International Relations at Harvard University

(Stephen M., Professor of International Relations At Harvard University. Will A Global Depression Trigger Another World War. Foreign Policy. May 13, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/13/coronavirus-pandemic-depression-economy-world-war/>)

On balance, however, **I do not think** that **even** the **extraordinary economic conditions** we are witnessing today are going to **have much impact on the likelihood of war.** Why? First of all, if depressions were a powerful cause of war, there would be a lot more of the latter. To take one example, **the United States has suffered 40 or more recessions since the country was founded, yet it has fought perhaps 20 interstate wars, most of them unrelated to the state of the economy.** To paraphrase the economist [Paul Samuelson's famous quip about the stock market](#), if recessions were a powerful cause of war, they would have predicted "nine out of the last five (or fewer)." Second, states do not start wars unless they believe they will win a quick and relatively cheap victory. As John Mearsheimer showed in his classic book [Conventional Deterrence](#), national leaders avoid war when they are convinced it will be long, bloody, costly, and uncertain. To choose war, political leaders have to convince themselves they can either win a quick, cheap, and decisive victory or achieve some limited objective at low cost. Europe went to war in 1914 with each side believing it would win a rapid and easy victory, and Nazi Germany developed the strategy of blitzkrieg in order to subdue its foes as quickly and cheaply as possible. Iraq attacked Iran in 1980 because Saddam believed the Islamic Republic was in disarray and would be easy to defeat, and George W. Bush invaded Iraq in 2003 convinced the war would be short, successful, and pay for itself. The fact that each of these leaders miscalculated badly does not alter the main point: No matter what a country's economic condition might be, its leaders will not go to war unless they think they can do so quickly, cheaply, and with a reasonable probability of success. Third, and most important, the primary motivation for most wars is the desire for security, not economic gain. For this reason, the odds of war increase when states believe the long-term balance of power may be shifting against them, when they are convinced that adversaries are unalterably hostile and cannot be accommodated, and when they are confident they can reverse the unfavorable trends and establish a secure position if they act now. The historian A.J.P. Taylor once observed that "every war between Great Powers [between 1848 and 1918] ... started as a preventive war, not as a war of conquest," and that remains true of most wars fought since then. **The bottom line: Economic conditions** (i.e., a depression) **may affect the** broader **political environment** in which decisions for war or peace are made, **but they are only one factor among many and rarely the most significant.** Even if the COVID-19 pandemic has large, lasting, and negative effects on the world economy—as seems quite likely—it is not likely to affect the probability of war very much, especially in the short term.

First, no internal link. State policy isn't key; Biden will take the lead on climate

McGrath 11/10 — Environmental Correspondent For The BBC

(Matt, Environmental Correspondent For The British Broadcasting Corporation. Joe Biden: How The President-elect Plans To Tackle Climate Change. November 10, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-54858638>)

Joe **Biden's plan to tackle climate change has been described as the most ambitious of any mainstream US presidential candidate** yet. Our environment correspondent Matt McGrath considers what he wants to do, and how he might get it done. **Much will be made about Joe Biden's pledge to re-join the Paris climate agreement**, the international pact designed to avoid dangerous warming of the Earth. President Trump pulled out of the deal after the Obama administration had signed up in 2016, and during the drawn-out election count, Mr Biden confirmed that reversing the decision would be one of his first acts as president. **But key to his credibility on the international stage will be his domestic policies** on cutting carbon emissions. More radical Democrats such as congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez have put forward a proposal called the [Green New Deal](#), which would eliminate carbon emissions from most sources over a decade. The [Biden climate plan](#) is more moderate. However, if enacted, it would still be the most progressive climate strategy the US has ever attempted. Net zero by 2050 Mr **Biden is proposing to make US electricity production carbon-free by 2035 and to have the country achieve net zero emissions by the middle of the century**. Reaching net zero requires that any carbon emissions are balanced by absorbing an equivalent amount from the atmosphere by, for example, planting trees. Once in office, Joe **Biden wants to spend \$2 trillion over four years to drive down emissions** by upgrading four million buildings to make them more energy efficient. He wants to spend heavily on public transport, to invest in electric vehicle manufacturing and charging points and give consumers financial incentives to trade up to cleaner cars. All of these options have one additional component apart from cutting carbon: they put people back to work. Andrew Light, a former senior climate official in the Obama administration, says Mr Biden is focused on what lowers emissions and increases jobs at the same time. "There will be a big push on electric vehicles, a big push on efficient buildings, both residential and offices, a big push on creating a new kind of civilian conservation corps and doing a lot of nature-based solutions on climate change. "You've got a really good menu to choose from in all of these different sectors." Mr Biden has also said he will not allow fracking on federal land. Fracking is a drilling process in which chemicals are injected into rocks to liberate natural gas and oil, and is controversial because of its environmental impact. However, since about 90% of it occurs on state or private land, the vast majority of fracking will be unaffected. Global temperature target 'within striking distance' The Paris deal sought to keep global temperatures "well below" 2.0C (3.6F), but in 2018 UN scientists [clarified how much of a difference it would make to limit the rise to 1.5C](#). The 1.5C target could prevent small island states from sinking beneath the waves, it could ensure that millions of people avoid the disasters of extreme weather, it could limit the chances of an ice-free Arctic in the Summer. Scientists say that Mr **Biden's goal of reaching net zero emissions by mid-century could have significant implications for the 1.5C target.**

Second, federalism is resilient. Two warrants:

A. It's not zero-sum

Rodriguez 2014 — Professor of Law At Yale Law School

(Cristina, Leighton Homer Surbeck Professor of Law At Yale Law School. Negotiating Conflict Through Federalism: Institutional And Popular Perspectives. Yale Law Journal. Vol. 124 (No. 6). <https://www.yalelawjournal.org/article/negotiating-conflict-through-federalism-institutional-and-popular-perspectives>)

Though pursuit of their interests by each player may often lead to conflict, particularly over which institutions should control any given policy domain, I argue that **the value of the system** common to all of its participants **is the framework it creates for the ongoing negotiation of disagreements large and small**—a value that requires regular attention by all participants to the integrity of federalism's institutions. It is in this sense that I think **federalism constitutes a framework for national integration**, in the spirit of this Feature. **It creates a multiplicity of institutions with lawmaking power through which to develop national consensus, while establishing a system of government that allows for meaningful expressions of disagreement** when consensus fractures or proves elusive—a value that transcends perspective. In what follows, I attempt to establish these conclusions by considering how the negotiations required by federalism have structured our national debates over a number of pressing social welfare issues, including immigration, marriage equality, drug policy, education and health care reform, and law enforcement. I focus on how **these debates play out in** what I call **the discretionary spaces of federalism**, which consist of the policy conversations and bureaucratic negotiations that actors within the system must have to figure out how to interact with one another both vertically and horizontally. Indeed, within existing legal constraints, state and local actors will have considerable room to maneuver, and the federal government considerable discretion to refrain from taking preemptive action. I highlight questions of administration and enforcement, because it is in these domains that the system's actors construct one another's powers and interests on an ongoing basis, based on the value they seek to derive from the system. In these discretionary spaces, **"winners" must sometimes emerge** from discrete conflicts, whether through judicial resolution or political concession, **and** the parameters set by courts and Congress obviously define the terrain of negotiation. **But the intergovernmental relationships and overlapping political communities the system creates are neither locked in zero-sum competition nor bound by fixed rules of engagement, precisely what makes federalism productive regardless of perspective** pg. 2097-2098

B. The pandemic

Tribe 2020 — Professor Emeritus of Law At Harvard University

(Laurence, Professor Emeritus of Law At Harvard. Don't Let Coronavirus Shake Your Faith In Federalism. The Boston Globe. April 29, 2020. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/04/27/opinion/not-learning-wrong-lessons-coronavirus/>)

In times as dark as these, **it can be tempting to wonder whether the American experiment has failed**. New York digs mass graves as though out of Boccaccio's most ashen imaginings; the president of the United States just recommended we all inject cleaning solvent. More than a crisis of the times, this episode feels like a calamitous failure of government. How is it that our national stockpiles were left to languish, our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was slashed and left to ossify, and our experts' wise counsel ignored, our alarm bells silenced? For some, this is symptomatic of a federal system already broken — "outdated," as Richard Krietner recently opined, an 18th-century dream more papier-mâché than proper governance. As Kreitner bewails, "Neither the paralyzed, sclerotic central government" nor our "arbitrarily determined States" have been able to tackle the crisis laid at our feet. He recommends a radical overhaul of the system — disintegration into loosely cooperative regional networks à la the failed Articles of Confederation — and, in effect, its abandonment altogether. Such radical solutions might be mere doomsayings, but their premise simply isn't true. **To misconstrue this** moment **as the death knell of federalism dangerously misunderstands how the pandemic has showcased federalism's versatility, resilience, and strength**. As these endless months have stretched on, **American federalism has flexed its institutional muscles not in a hapless rendering of Trump's ego projects, but squarely in the common defense**.

Third, no impact to climate change. Adaptation solves

Farquhar 2017 — Master's Degree In Physics From Oxford

(Sebastian, MS In Physics From The University of Oxford. Existential Risk: Diplomacy and Governance. Global Priorities Project. January 23, 2017.

<https://www.fhi.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Existential-Risks-2017-01-23.pdf>)

The most likely levels of global warming are very unlikely to cause human extinction.¹⁵ The existential risks of climate change instead stem from tail risk climate change – the low probability of extreme levels of warming – and interaction with other sources of risk. It is impossible to say with confidence at what point global warming would become severe enough to pose an existential threat. Research has suggested that warming of **11-12°C would render most of the planet uninhabitable**,¹⁶ and would completely devastate agriculture.¹⁷ This would pose an extreme threat to human civilisation as we know it.¹⁸ Warming of around 7°C or more could potentially produce conflict and instability on such a scale that the indirect effects could be an existential risk, although it is extremely uncertain how likely such scenarios are.¹⁹ **Moreover, the timescales over which such changes might happen could mean that humanity is able to adapt enough to avoid extinction in even very extreme scenarios.** The probability of these levels of warming depends on eventual greenhouse gas concentrations. According to some experts, [unless strong action is taken soon by major emitters](#), it is likely that [we will pursue a medium-high emissions pathway](#).²⁰ If we do, the chance of extreme warming is highly uncertain but appears non-negligible. Current concentrations of greenhouse gases are higher than they have been for hundreds of thousands of years,²¹ which means that there are significant unknown unknowns about how the climate system will respond. Particularly concerning is the risk of positive feedback loops, such as the release of vast amounts of methane from melting of the arctic permafrost, which would cause rapid and disastrous warming.²² The **economists** Gernot **Wagner and** Martin **Weitzman have used IPCC figures** (which do not include modelling of feedback loops such as those from melting permafrost) **to estimate that if we** continue to **pursue a medium-high emissions pathway, the probability of eventual warming of 6°C is around 10%,²³ and of 10°C is around 3%.²⁴ These estimates are of course highly uncertain. It is likely that the world will take action against climate change once it begins to impose large costs on human society, long before there is warming of 10°C.** Unfortunately, there is significant inertia in the climate system: there is a 25 to 50 year lag between CO2 emissions and eventual warming,²⁵ and it is expected that 40% of the peak concentration of CO2 will remain in the atmosphere 1,000 years after the peak is reached.²⁶ Consequently, it is impossible to reduce temperatures quickly by reducing CO2 emissions. If the world does start to face costly warming, the international community will therefore face strong incentives to find other ways to reduce global temperatures.

Environmental Justice Negative (1NC)

1NC Disadvantage (Spending) – 1/2

First is the Unique Link: Biden's agenda will strengthen the economy, but new deficit spending risks inflation

Egan 7/21 – Journalist for *CNN Business*

(Mark, Journalist For CNN Business. Biden's Sweeping Agenda Is Unlikely To Cause High Inflation, Moody's Analytics Says. CNN Business. July 21, 2021. <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/21/economy/inflation-biden-infrastructure/index.html>)

The bipartisan infrastructure plan and President Joe Biden's \$3.5 trillion proposal to widen the social safety net won't cause runaway inflation if passed by Congress, **according to a new report by Moody's Analytics**. "Worries that the plan will ignite undesirably high inflation and an overheating economy are overdone," Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, wrote in the report [released](#) Wednesday. The analysis, first reported by [Axios](#), pushes back on one of the main attack lines against Biden's ambitious agenda at a time when Americans are [getting hit by prices rising](#) at the [fastest pace since 2008](#). "This concern cannot be dismissed, but it is likely misplaced," Zandi wrote. Rather than inflame inflation, the analysts point out that new spending on items such as rental housing for low-income Americans, reducing prescription drug costs and making childcare more affordable is aimed at cooling prices off and easing shortages. **"Much of the additional fiscal support being considered is designed to lift the economy's long-term growth** potential and ease inflation pressures," Zandi wrote. Indeed, economists, including Zandi, have [told CNN Business](#) that **Biden's Build Back Better Agenda is unlikely to cause inflationary problems** because it is largely focused on adding much-needed supply, not boosting demand. **Crucially, Moody's Analytics notes that the Biden plan does not call for enormous deficit spending that could boost inflation. "The legislation is more-or-less paid for** on a dynamic basis **through higher taxes on multinational corporations and the well-to-do and a range of other pay-fors,**" Zandi wrote. Moody's Analytics said the proposals, if passed by Congress, will "strengthen long-term economic growth," with most of the benefits going to lower and middle-income Americans. Zandi, [like the White House](#) and [top Federal Reserve officials](#), has argued that **inflation is largely going to cool off as the economy reopens**. Yet some leaders on Wall Street, including BlackRock ([BLK](#)) CEO Larry Fink and JPMorgan Chase ([JPM](#)) boss Jamie Dimon, have warned recently that inflation may not be temporary.

Second is the Internal Link: Deficit spending like the plan risks hyperinflation and economic collapse. It's basic history

Cox 2019 – Journalist for *CNBC*

(Jeff, Journalist For CNBC. Fed Analysis Warns of 'Economic Ruin' When Governments Print Money To Pay Off Debt. CNBC. November 26, 2019. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/25/fed-economists-warn-of-inflation-and-economic-ruin-if-mmt-is-adopted.html>)

Federal Reserve economists warn that printing money to pay for deficit spending has been a disaster for other nations that have tried it. In a paper that discusses [the burgeoning U.S. fiscal debt](#), Fed experts note that high levels are not necessarily unsustainable so long as income is rising at a faster pace. They note that countries that have gotten into trouble and looked to central banks to bail them out haven't fared well. **"A solution some countries with high levels of unsustainable debt have tried is printing money. In this scenario, the government borrows money by issuing bonds and then orders the central bank to buy those bonds by creating (printing) money,"** wrote Scott A. Wolla and Kaitlyn Frerking. **"History has taught us, however, that this type of policy leads to extremely high rates of inflation (hyperinflation) and often ends in economic ruin."** They cite Weimar-era

Environmental Justice (Middle School JV)

SY 2021 – 2022 (Atlanta Urban Debate League)



Germany, Zimbabwe in the 2007-09 period and Venezuela currently. All three faced massive deficits that led to hyperinflation due to money printing.

Third is the Impact: Economic collapse risks global war

Liu 2018 – Economist

(Qian, Economist. From Economic Crisis To World War III. Project Syndicate. November 8, 2018.

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/economic-crisis-military-conflict-or-structural-reform-by-qian-liu-2018-11>)

EIJING – The next economic crisis is closer than you think. But what you should really worry about is what comes after: **in the current** social, political, and technological **landscape**, a **prolonged economic crisis**, combined with rising income inequality, **could** well **escalate into a major global military conflict**. **The 2008-09 global financial crisis almost** bankrupted governments and **caused systemic collapse**. Policymakers managed to pull the global economy back from the brink, using massive monetary stimulus, including quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates. But monetary stimulus is like an adrenaline shot to jump-start an arrested heart; it can revive the patient, but it does nothing to cure the disease. Treating a sick economy requires structural reforms, which can cover everything from financial and labor markets to tax systems, fertility patterns, and education policies. Policymakers have utterly failed to pursue such reforms, despite promising to do so. Instead, they have remained preoccupied with politics. From Italy to Germany, forming and sustaining governments now seems to take more time than actual governing. And Greece, for example, has relied on money from international creditors to keep its head (barely) above water, rather than genuinely reforming its pension system or improving its business environment. The lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented excess liquidity that central banks injected into their economies was not allocated to its most efficient uses. Instead, it raised global asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. In the United States, housing prices are now 8% **higher** than they were at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, according to the property website Zillow. The price-to-earnings (CAPE) ratio, which measures whether stock-market prices are within a reasonable range, is now **higher** than it was both in 2008 and at the start of the Great Depression in 1929. As monetary tightening reveals the vulnerabilities in the real economy, the collapse of asset-price bubbles will trigger another economic crisis – one that could be even more severe than the last, because we have built up a tolerance to our strongest macroeconomic medications. A decade of regular adrenaline shots, in the form of ultra-low interest rates and unconventional monetary policies, has severely depleted their power to stabilize and stimulate the economy. If history is any guide, the consequences of this mistake could extend far beyond the economy. **According to Harvard's Benjamin Friedman, prolonged periods of economic distress have been characterized also by public antipathy toward minority groups or foreign countries – attitudes that can help to fuel unrest, terrorism, or even war.** For example, during the Great Depression, US President Herbert Hoover signed the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, intended to protect American workers and farmers from foreign competition. In the subsequent five years, global trade shrank by two-thirds. Within a decade, World War II had begun. To be sure, WWII, like World War I, was caused by a multitude of factors; there is no standard path to war. But there is reason to believe that high levels of inequality can play a significant role in stoking conflict. According to **research** by the economist Thomas Piketty, a spike in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Income inequality then declines for a while, before rising again, until a new peak – and a new disaster. Though causality has yet to be proven, given the limited number of data points, this correlation should not be taken lightly, especially with wealth and income inequality at historically high levels. **This is all the more worrying in view of** the numerous **other factors stoking** social unrest and diplomatic **tension, including** technological disruption, a record-breaking migration crisis, anxiety over globalization, **political polarization, and rising nationalism**. All are symptoms of failed policies that could turn out to be trigger points for a future crisis. Voters have good reason to be frustrated, but the emotionally appealing populists to whom they are increasingly giving their support are offering ill-advised solutions that will only make matters worse. For example, despite the world's unprecedented interconnectedness, multilateralism is increasingly being eschewed, as countries – most notably, Donald Trump's US – pursue unilateral, isolationist policies. Meanwhile, proxy wars are raging in Syria and Yemen. **Against this background, we must take seriously the possibility that the next economic crisis could lead to a large-scale military confrontation.**

First is Uniqueness: Federal and state governments cooperate on water policy in the status quo. Unilateral action like the plan undermines federalism

Segall 3/12.— Assistant Chief Counsel for the California Air Resources Board

(Craig Holt, Assistant Chief Counsel For The California Air Resources Board. Networked Federalism: Subnational Governments In The Biden Era.

Networked Federalism: Subnational Governments In The Biden Era. Ecology Law Quarterly. March 12, 2021.

<https://www.ecologylawquarterly.org/currents/networkedfederalism/>)

As a result of the federal division of powers over water, the potential for “any unilateral legislative action” by the federal government is “necessarily . . . partial.”¹³⁶ Therefore, “[o]ver the years, a high degree of cooperation has evolved between various agencies of the federal government and the states in the formulation and administration of water plans.”¹³⁷ This is a fundamental, indeed, necessary adjunct of federalism, which is “consistent with any degree of common or cooperative or parallel action between the unit governments, provided it is in a substantial degree voluntary.”¹³⁸ Cooperation is not limited to water resources; instead, it happens, and happens frequently in many spheres of intergovernmental activity in the American and Australian federal systems. In Australia, for instance, “the increase in such [cooperative] activities . . . since 1928 has been as marked as the increase in direct Commonwealth power.”¹³⁹ A “Byzantine complexity”¹⁴⁰ characterizes the nature of the cooperative, flexible, or marble cake federalism with respect to water law in California and South Australia—and, indeed, in the water law of the whole of Australia and the southwestern United States. It is not our objective here to assess the whole of this law.¹⁴¹ Rather, we want, first, to provide an overview of a representative example of the nature of cooperative federalism drawn from each jurisdiction concerning their major water supply rivers—the Colorado and the Murray Rivers (watercourses not contained entirely within the relevant state’s boundaries). As we will see in the next two sections, a unique body of law in each jurisdiction seeks to achieve cooperative federalism for the provision of water supply. Having presented these representative examples, Part III provides an example of the sort of dispute to which this cooperative federalism can give rise—in the case of California, over the U.S.-California Central Valley Agreement, and in South Australia, over the National Water Initiative 2004 and the Water Act 2007

Second is the Link: Federal grants critically undermine federalism

Peterson and Lastra-Anadon 7/8 — Professors of Government and Public Affairs

(Paul, Professor of Government at Harvard University. Carlos, Assistant Professor of Global and Public Affairs At IE University. Wasteful Local Stimulus Funding Could Mark The End of Competitive Federalism. The Hill. July 8, 2021.

<https://thehill.com/opinion/white-house/562020-wasteful-local-stimulus-funding-could-mark-the-end-of-competitive>)

A fiscal flood of biblical proportions — [\\$1.3 trillion](#) — is descending upon state and local governments via four pieces of congressional legislation enacted in the name of COVID relief. No less than [\\$738 billion](#) is scheduled to be spent in the current fiscal year. The Biden administration and congressional progressives are promising [trillions more](#). **The vast transfer of funds to lower tiers of government threatens the U. S. federal system as we know it. Until now, state and local governments have relied mainly on their own fiscal resources.** Subject to constitutional and legal constraints, they can use their wherewithal to address community needs and desires. **Grants** received from Washington [grew from](#) 2 percent to 20 percent between 1957 and 2018, adjusting for inflation, but they **were still only one fifth of all local revenues. We denote these arrangements as “competitive federalism,” because each locality finds itself contending with its neighbors for needed resources.** The “business” of each local government, James Bryce, the English commentator, [said](#) a century ago, is “to mend the roads, ... clean out the village well, ... [and] to see that there is a place where straying beasts may be kept.” Competitive government is unusual. [Only 25](#) of the nearly two hundred sovereign nations in the world have been identified as federal systems, and only three — Canada, Switzerland, and the United States — give lower-tier governments broad powers to tax, spend, and issue regulations. Alexis De Tocqueville was the first to notice U. S. federalism’s exceptional qualities. “Americans love their towns,” [he said](#), “for much the same reasons that [Scottish] highlanders love their mountains.” In both cases, the “peculiar features” have a “more pronounced physiognomy than is found elsewhere.” De Tocqueville believed democracies marched toward tyranny: Ambitious politicians centralize power by promising bread and circuses, then suppress those who oppose them. Yet he admitted the United States, despite its democratic institutions, remained the cradle of liberty. Federalism explained the puzzle. Because politics was local, political ambition focused on minding fences and digging wells. Strong states and localities encouraged civic engagement, setting up hardy barriers to centralized power and liberty-crushing leaders. Federalism has taken a hit for its role in the defense of [slavery](#) and [segregation](#). Only after African Americans acquired the vote and were able to protect their interests did De Tocqueville’s insights ring true. By splitting power into pieces and focusing political attention on small but crucial matters of everyday life, competitive federalism gives every group, no matter how fragile, an opportunity to find a place in the political sphere. African Americans are now able to construct local centers of power that elevate their leaders to a national stage. So can a wide array of other groups, whether they be ethnic, material, identity, or religious. Federalism is no less important for the country’s economic prosperity. To attract productive citizens, state and local governments must tend to community needs. To keep up with their neighbors, localities collect garbage, build schools, dig sewage systems, pave roads, and construct aqueducts. America’s extraordinary economic growth across the centuries owes much to this set of arrangements. Though local efforts are uncoordinated, actions can be taken quickly. Unresolved national conflicts and centralized bureaucracies do not stultify innovation, as happens [in more centralized systems](#). Federalism abets the competitive spirit that transformed the United States into the world’s leading economic power by the end of the 19th Century and continues to propel it to ever greater heights in the 21st. Competitive federalism places important limits on what state and local governments can do with their own resources. If they tax the rich too much or give to the poor too generously, they repel those they most need to keep. Intergovernmental grants fund poverty programs (welfare, Medicaid, food stamps, compensatory education) necessary to serve needy populations. The “business” side has been mainly funded from state and local tax resources. If local governments do not use these monies well, property values decline, and government revenues fall. All this can happen quickly when [13 percent of all households move annually](#). At the extreme, bankruptcies loom. [Detroit’s school district](#), the municipal government in [Stockton, Calif.](#), and the [state of Illinois](#) have approached that dark hole. State and local governments once solved fiscal challenges and debt crises on their own. When New York City spent beyond its means in the early seventies, Washington sternly [refused a federal bailout](#). Today, Congress is acquiescing to local demands for COVID fiscal relief. We estimate [based on our calculations projecting [past state and local revenues](#) and [stimulus](#) into 2021] that in the 2021 fiscal year, the federal government will pay 35 percent of all state and local government costs, nearly doubling the percentage as recently as 2018. All this seems kind and generous. Certainly, many state and local politicians are delighted they have little financially to worry about. California’s Governor [Gavin Newsom](#) (D) is even able to send most California households [stimulus checks](#) on the eve of his [recall election](#). But **if the federal government pays the piper, it will soon call the tune. If states and localities lean on Washington to fund their basic operations, they will lose their autonomy. Competitive federalism, a system of government that protects American liberties and enhances their prosperity, is now at risk.**

Third is the Internal Link: Federalism is key to solve global warming

Barnes 11/14 — Senior Adviser On Climate Change

(Aimee, Senior Advisor On Climate Change To Former California Governor Jerry Brown. The Secret Weapon In Biden's Fight Against Climate Change. The Hill. November 14, 2020. <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/525939-the-secret-weapon-in-bidens-fight-against-climate-change>)

After running and winning on the most ambitious presidential [platform](#) on climate change in history, President-elect **Joe Biden is now faced with delivering on his commitments.** [Speculation](#) has already begun regarding how this can be achieved, particularly if Republicans maintain a majority in the Senate. **Yet most analyses** to date **have overlooked one of the most important tools** at their disposal: **building on the leadership of U.S. state and local governments in a new** unprecedented **era of climate federalism.** Over the past four years, **U.S. states and local governments have played a critical role in filling the leadership void left by the Trump administration. The U.S. Climate Alliance,** a bipartisan group of governors committed to meeting their share of the U.S. commitment under the Paris Agreement, **now includes 25 states and represents over half of the U.S. population and over a \$11 trillion-dollar collective economy. Over 3,000 states, cities and businesses signed on to the “We Are Still In” pledge in support of the Paris Agreement.** [States attorneys general](#) and [NGOs](#) have filed [over 100 lawsuits](#) against the Trump administration; the [EPA has been sued](#) more than any other government agency. According to this year’s [America’s Pledge](#) report — an initiative co-chaired by former New York City Mayor [Michael Bloomberg](#) and former California Gov. [Jerry Brown](#) to quantify the efforts of U.S. state and local climate action — it is possible to get within spitting distance of 50 percent emissions reductions below 2005 levels by 2030 with aggressive federal reengagement starting in 2021, that supports and buoys the actions of U.S. cities, states and businesses. Looking forward, one of the quickest and easiest things a Biden-Harris administration can do to support subnational climate action is to drop Trump-era actions against state policies, particularly those focused on Harris’s home state of California. These would include [challenges](#) to California’s carbon market, and restoring California’s [waiver](#) and ability to create more protective clean car standards. Instead, the Department of Justice (DOJ) under a Biden-Harris administration should partner with state attorneys general to advance climate action and hold polluters accountable for undermining climate action and environmental justice. **Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris should also look to build on subnational action as they reestablish U.S. participation in the Paris Agreement and its international standing on climate more generally.** On day one, a Biden-Harris administration could host a virtual convening of governors, mayors and tribal leaders from across the country in support of a new, more ambitious and science-aligned nationally determined contribution (NDC) — the commitment that countries must submit under the Paris Agreement. Participating governors and mayors would be expected to bring to the table their own clear, science-aligned targets and new commitments to action, in line with the administration’s 2050 net zero goal and ideally in support of an ambitious midterm target on the order of 50 percent by 2035. To ensure that the commitments and announcements are more than just talk, the White House could launch a process to meaningfully cooperate with state, local and tribal leaders, creating a virtuous cycle of enhanced ambition and positive competition amongst U.S. states and cities to see which can decarbonize mostly quickly. To support such a process, the [Climate Cabinet](#) that has been proposed within the White House should create a State and Local Action Task Force, and the Administration should hire senior staff with significant subnational experience and expertise. To support that process, a Biden-Harris administration — even with a Republican Senate — can and should create incentives for state and local climate leadership, as well as set policy floors for laggards. For example, the administration could provide funding to states to develop Climate Action Plans and reward state local and tribal governments that design and implement ambitious policies. Per Biden’s campaign commitment, 40 percent of such funding could be targeted to support disadvantaged communities. The Biden administration should also review and bolster other types of financial assistance to state, local and tribal governments to support climate action — including ensuring that federal transportation funds are disbursed in a way that supports the reduction of vehicle miles travelled. And, it can and should also consider innovative financing mechanisms to support subnational climate action — for example, setting up a pre-development fund to support community-led climate and resiliency-focused infrastructure projects. To solve the climate crisis, we will need all levels of government across the U.S. cooperating as actively and seamlessly as possible towards a climate-safe future. **State and local climate action can and should be seen as the Biden-Harris administration’s secret weapon in the fight against climate change.**

Fourth is the Impact: Warming causes extinction

Torres 2016 — Scholar At The Institute For Ethics & Emerging Technologies

(Phil, Affiliate Scholar At The Institute For Ethics And Emerging Technologies. Op-ed: Climate Change Is The Most Urgent Existential Risk. Future of Life Institute. July 22, 2016. <http://futureoflife.org/2016/07/22/climate-change-is-the-most-urgent-existential-risk/>)

For example, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the effects of climate change will be “severe,” “pervasive,” and “irreversible.” Or, as a 2016 study published in Nature and authored by over twenty scientists puts it, the consequences of climate change “will extend longer than the entire history of human civilization thus far.” Furthermore, a recent article in Science Advances confirms that humanity has already escorted the biosphere into the sixth mass extinction event in life's 3.8 billion year history on Earth. Yet another study suggests that we could be approaching a sudden, irreversible, catastrophic collapse of the global ecosystem. If this were to occur, it could result in “widespread social unrest, economic instability and loss of human life.” Given the potential for environmental degradation to elevate the likelihood of nuclear wars, nuclear terrorism, engineered pandemics, a superintelligence takeover, and perhaps even an impact winter, it ought to take precedence over all other risk concerns — at least in the near-term. Let's make sure we get our priorities straight.

The American Jobs Plan will replace 100% of lead water pipes

Chawaga 4/5 – Reporter for *Water Online*

(Peter, Reporter For Water Online. Biden Administration Proposes 100% Replacement of Lead Drinking Water Infrastructure. Water Online. April 5, 2021. <https://www.wateronline.com/doc/biden-administration-proposes-to-replace-of-lead-drinking-water-infrastructure-0001>)

As President Biden introduces sweeping legislation to shape the country in the vision of his administration, it has become clear that drinking water infrastructure will be a major aspect of his plans. Specifically, **lead drinking water pipelines are a major part of the multi-trillion-dollar American Jobs Plan** Biden introduced last week. **“The Biden administration wants to take a huge swing at the problem of lead water pipes, proposing to replace 100% of the nation’s lead pipes and service lines.”** [Bloomberg](#) reported. **“To fund the plan, Biden said he’ll ask Congress to invest \$45 billion** in the EPA’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and in Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) grants.” **Lead-based drinking water pipelines** are some of the country’s most outdated infrastructure and **have caused** some of its most **pervasive and harmful contamination issues**. Most notably, lead pipelines leached the contaminant into drinking water in Flint, MI for years, leading to an emergency declaration and mistrust in water systems that has persisted to this day.

Lead paint, not drinking water, is the primary cause of lead poisoning

Dignam et al. 2019 – Health Scientist at the CDC

(Timothy, Health Scientist At The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention. Rachel B. Kaufmann, PhD/ MPH. Lauren LeStourgeon, MPH. Mary Jean Brown, ScD/ RN. Control of Lead Sources in the United States, 1970-2017: Public Health progress and Current Challenges to Eliminating Lead Exposure. Journal of Public Health, Management, and Practice. January / February 2019. Vol. 25, p. S13-S22.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6522252/> Note: This evidence has been modified for clarity.)

In the United States today, deteriorating lead-based paint in older homes and buildings is the most highly concentrated and significant source of lead exposure among children, accounting for up to 70% of elevated childhood [blood lead levels] BLLs.⁷² Lead dust and paint chip hazards arise through the following: friction between interior surfaces, such as doorframes or windowsills, home renovations that disturb lead paint, and transport from outdoor sources, such as soil and exterior paint, and lead can be transferred from surfaces to hands and ingested by young children via normal hand-to-mouth activity. At least 2 areas in the United States (Washington, District of Columbia, and Maryland) require residential rental properties built before 1978 to meet lead risk reduction standards.^{73,74} Recent events involving lead-contaminated drinking water have highlighted the need to remove lead service lines; however, corrosion control water treatments remain an important component to lead-safe water. The Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN Act; PL 114-322), enacted December 16, 2016, provides for several provisions across multiple agencies to improve water resources and critical infrastructure in the United States.

Studies prove lead levels are declining. We're safer than Canada and South Korea!

Tsoi et al. 2016 (Man-Fung, Medical Researcher At The University of Hong Kong. Ching-Lung Cheung, PhD. Tommy Tsang Cheung, MRCP. Bernanrd Man Yung Cheung, PhD. Continual Decrease In Blood Lead Level In Americans: United States National Health Nutrition and Examination Survey 1999 – 2014. The American Journal of Medicine. Volume 129, Issue 11. P. 1213-1218. November 1, 2016.)

Previous studies have reported a decreasing trend in blood lead levels in the US populations among different age groups and ethnicities. [13](#), [16](#), [21](#), [22](#) Our analysis confirmed this decreasing trend and showed that there were further decreases in recent years. This is encouraging and demonstrates the effectiveness of long-term measures to reduce lead exposure in the United States. Compared with the results of the Canadian Health and Measures Survey and the Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey in the corresponding age groups, the mean blood lead levels in NHANES were lower. [23](#), [24](#) We found that less than 1% of children had a blood lead level ≥ 5 [micrograms per deciliter] $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ in 2013-2014. There were no pregnant women in the sample population with an elevated blood lead level. It may be timely to revise the blood lead reference level to reflect the decrease in blood lead levels in the United States. Our analysis suggested that the upper reference level for blood lead should be reduced to 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$.

Federal funding now; President Biden is modernizing rural water infrastructure

U.S. Department of Agriculture 7/7

(Biden-Harris Administration Invests \$307 Million In Rural Water And Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements In 34 States and Puerto Rico. United States Department of Agriculture. Press Release. July 7, 2021.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/07/07/biden-harris-administration-invests-307-million-rural-water-and>)

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$307 million to modernize rural drinking water and wastewater infrastructure in 34 states and Puerto Rico (PDF, 224 KB). The investments being announced today follow President Biden's announcement last week of a Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework that will make the largest investment in clean drinking water in American history. The Framework will replace all of the nation's lead pipes and service lines, helping address barriers faced by communities of color, Tribal communities, and people who live in rural America. "Every community needs safe, reliable and modern water and wastewater systems," said Secretary Vilsack. "The consequences of decades of disinvestment in physical infrastructure have fallen most heavily on communities of color. This is why **USDA is investing in water infrastructure in rural and Tribal communities that need it most** – to help them build back better, stronger and more equitably than ever before." USDA is financing the projects through the [Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program](#). **The investments will help eliminate outdated pipes and service lines to safeguard public health and safety in rural communities. They will improve rural infrastructure for 250,000 residents and businesses.**

Rural development programs can't solve; systemic issues swamp the plan

Ajilore and Willingham 2020 — Analysts at the Center for American Progress

(Olugbenga / Zoe, Analysts At The Center For American Progress. The Path To Rural Resilience In America. The Center For American Progress. September 21, 2020. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2020/09/21/490411/path-rural-resilience-america/>)

USDA Rural Development **The Rural Development office at the USDA leads the federal effort** to promote rural well-being by disbursing guaranteed and direct loans as well as grants to rural organizations, businesses, and individuals. By the end of fiscal year 2019, the office had more than 51,000 loans in its portfolio,⁵⁹ and its total outlays for 2019, excluding payroll, totaled \$2.7 billion.⁶⁰ Including direct and guaranteed loans, which make up the vast majority of Rural Development programs, the total programmatic level weighs in at about \$37.7 billion.⁶¹

Rural Development is divided into three main programs: **the Rural Utilities Service (RUS)**, Rural Housing Service (RHS), and Rural Business-Cooperative Service. The RUS, established in 1936, was created to electrify rural communities during the Great Depression.⁶² Today, it **carries on** that legacy **by supporting projects**, in partnership with businesses and/or local governments, **to expand and improve the delivery of water**, electricity, waste management, **and other key infrastructure** and services. Established in the Housing Act of 1949, the RHS is the successor to the FmHA; it supports affordable rural housing by lending to individual homebuyers, providing direct rental subsidies, and lending to developers building housing in rural areas. The program makes up the lion's share of the guaranteed and direct loans sponsored by Rural Development and houses the Community Facilities Program, which provides grants and loans to build or maintain essential facilities such as health clinics. Yet despite its lead role in rural policy, the RHS is one of the many programs that falls outside of the farm bill, illustrating the scattered nature of rural programs.⁶³ The Rural Business-Cooperative Service offers small loans to small and medium-sized enterprises and would-be entrepreneurs to finance their expansion with the goal of job creation and innovation. It also provides loans and grants to private and public programs that supply technical assistance, training, and mentorship to small-business owners. Additionally, the Rural Business-Cooperative Service houses a program that provides grants and loans to businesses and farms to install energy-efficient or environmentally friendly technology.⁶⁴ This program provides crucial support to local businesses, which are increasingly crowded out of rural communities by chain discount and "big-box" stores.

Rural Development programs provide vital services to communities, but they **alone cannot address the systemic problems facing rural America. These loans and grants are awarded on a competitive basis and are frequently oversubscribed, pitting rural communities against one another to pay for basic necessities** such as affordable housing.⁶⁶ **The longer-term commitments to partners under these programs run about five years and address one discrete problem without addressing the larger context and intersection of problems and structural issues.** Rural communities deserve a more comprehensive and prolonged commitment to and investment in their future.

Environmental Justice (Middle School JV)

SY 2021 – 2022 (Atlanta Urban Debate League)



Environmental Justice Negative (2NC / 1NR)

2NC Spending DA (Impact – Turns Case)

Disadvantage turns the case. Inflation uniquely impacts the poor. The plan causes economic injustice

Pittinsky 6/20 – Professor of Technology

(Todd, Professor of Technology At SUNY Stony Brook. Inflation Disproportionately Hurts the Poor. Wall Street Journal. June 20, 2021.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/inflation-disproportionately-hurts-the-poor-11624207206>)

Inflation, always a key economic metric, is especially important to watch now as it **threatens to undermine**, if not completely erode, the Biden administration's gargantuan spending thus far on behalf of poor and working-class Americans—its **“economic justice”** agenda (**“Inflation Jumps to 13-Year High.”** Page One, June 11). **The effects of inflation** not only **are** greater, but **disproportionately greater, for poorer people. Those with higher incomes often offset price increases** (goods, services) **with increased income.** Furthermore, **prices often increase more for basic needs** than for luxury items, **a phenomenon economists call “inflation inequality.”** Simply put, **low-income families’ budgets will stress and strain as they confront** the coming **rising costs of the essentials** they need (food, energy, transport, child care). The economic well-being of the most economically vulnerable Americans too often tends to be discussed as a matter of the latest Washington program or policy. **Those acting in the name of “economic justice” need to pay more attention to basic economic indicators** such as employment rates by demographic group, incomes and, yes, inflation, if we want to truly understand what's happening not just to the economy in a general sense but specifically to the most vulnerable within it. As coming waves of inflation will demonstrate, **the fundamentals**—and not the latest federal government initiative—**will most directly** characterize and **affect the economic well-being of the most economically vulnerable in our country.**

No inflation now. Ignore short-term trends

Foroohar 7/18 – Journalist for the *Financial Times*

(Rana, Journalist For The Financial Times. Post-Pandemic Inflation Fears Are Overblown. Financial Times. July 18, 2021.

<https://www.ft.com/content/2e6cc67e-0ae3-488d-834b-b84625d103b5>)

Too much in our market system revolves around the short term. That certainly holds true for the debate about inflation. Last week's data showed US prices rising at their fastest pace in 13 years. **That has led everyone** from top investors to restaurant and hotel owners, who are now finding that they may have to pay more for previously low wage service staff, **to fret about an overheating economy. But the hand-wringing is premature. These early signs of rising prices are more reflective of a predictable, post-lockdown surge** in animal spirits **than any longer term trend. Supply chain bottlenecks will soon ease, as they did in 2020** with, say, personal protective equipment. **Purchases of cars and vacations will subside as the post-pandemic spending splurge passes. And waiters commanding high salaries today may be replaced by automated systems tomorrow:** just notice how many summer travellers already tap their pre-flight cocktail orders into an iPad.

2NC Spending DA (Internal Link)

New deficit spending tanks the economy; expert evidence

Boskin 6/23 – Professor of Economics at Stanford University

(Michael J., Professor of Economics At Stanford University. Beware America's Soaring Public Debt. Project Syndicate. June 23, 2021.

<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/biden-spending-plan-large-deficits-inflation-risk-by-michael-boskin-2021-06>)

Some argue that the US has nothing to worry about. **Deficits supposedly don't** much **matter** when an economy borrows in its own currency; the US Federal Reserve just needs to buy up the debt from the Treasury. And with government-borrowing rates lower than the projected growth rate, the debt can be rolled over forever. Deficit finance becomes a "free lunch." **These claims merit considerable skepticism.** The reasons why are highlighted in recent technical papers by [me](#), my Hoover Institution colleague, [John Cochrane](#), [Greg Mankiw](#) and [Laurence Ball](#) (of Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University, respectively), and Boston University's [Larry Kotlikoff](#), along with his [co-authors](#). **Historically, huge debt buildups have** usually **been followed by serious problems: sluggish growth, an uptick in inflation, a financial crisis, or all of them**. We cannot be certain which problems will occur or what debt-to-GDP ratio will signal trouble for which countries. And the US does have the advantage of issuing the world's leading reserve currency. But **inflation risks are rising – a trend that more deficit-financed spending will only accelerate.** **Higher debt** also **increases the temptation to stoke inflation,** particularly if foreigners hold a large share of it. The grossly simplistic assumption that debtors are rich and creditors are poor is likely to reinforce this temptation, especially in a political climate where many politicians and voters support tax and other policies that target the wealthy. Yet another problem is that **more public debt will eventually push interest rates higher, crowding out investment and harming the economy's potential growth.** The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [expects](#) ten-year Treasuries to rise sooner and faster than the Biden budget does.

Trump limited federal control of water policy. The plan expands federal authority at the expense of federalism

Keegan 2020 — Analyst for the National Rural Water Association

(Mike, Analyst For The national rural Water Association. Commentary: The Liberal Case For EPA's New WOTUS Law. Water Finance & Management. August 20, 2020. <https://waterfm.com/commentary-the-liberal-case-for-epas-new-wotus-law/>)

After withstanding numerous preemptive judicial challenges, the Trump administration's version of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) went into effect on June 22. The **Trump** rule **circumscribed the federal regulatory power over U.S. waters** compared to the 2015 Obama administration's rule which circumscribed the previous rule after the Supreme Court ruled it was a federal overreach in 1989. Critics of the Trump rule argue it is not supported by science, relying on EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB) that concluded the Trump rule *"decreases protection for our Nation's waters and does not provide a scientific basis in support of its consistency with the objective of restoring and maintaining 'the chemical, physical and biological integrity' of these waters."* There are two flaws in this argument. One, "science" as they use the term means the interconnectedness of all waters in the Anthropocene would lead to the logical conclusion that the same science did not support the Obama rule either. This is a point the supporters of the Obama rule must omit to stand-up their strawman argument. Two, the SAB claims the Trump rule "decreases protection" of U.S. waters. However, it would be more accurate to say it decreases "federal regulation," not "protection" of the waters. The two terms are not synonymous.

Eliminating federal regulation does not necessarily leave the waters unprotected. **State and local governments retain all powers to protect or regulate the intrastate waters** no longer covered by the federal government. The 1989 Supreme Court's *Rapanos* ruling delineated which waters are interstate or intrastate to respect the principle of federalism enshrined in the Constitution. It would be more honest for the Trump rule critics **to argue that we can't trust states and localities to protect their waters like we can trust the federal regulators**. These paternalistic advocates and their experts could even be right, but that is neither liberty nor democracy – it **is rather the usurpation of liberty**. Much of the environmental law enacted since the late 1960s has been predicated on the theory that the federal bureaucracy cares more about the public and is smarter than the democratically elected state and local governments. Regulators were delegated enforcement authority over state and local governments to protect the public from the decisions of their elected local leaders. In essence, they believe people need to be protected from themselves and their local democratic processes by the experts. This WOTUS debate has less to do with science and more to do with control. State and local governments could always take the advice of the EPA, their SAB, or any scientific academy. **Federalism's** sovereignty allows for the competition of ideas from the many laboratories of innovation. However, there is a more virtuous element of federalism – democracy; it **allows the very people affected by a policy to decide that policy. This is the case in the Trump WOTUS rule; if a water body is wholly within a state, it should be those people through their local democratic processes who determine the content of the regulation.** They are the only ones who are affected, pay the cost, and can balance the value of economic advancement with environmental preservation. It is a fallacy to argue this allows for the choice to pollute because actual contamination of the environment is covered under other remedies (i.e. tort, nuisance, etc.). The Trump administration did not decide the delineation of intra versus interstate waters. The Supreme Court and Constitution did and even the dissenters in *Rapanos* believed some waters were entirely intrastate. If the Trump rule scales back the delineation more than Congress enacted, it is open to judicial, legislative and political accountability. Federalism provides the same corrective at the state and local level. Instead of the experts and regulators being the vanguard of the people by usurping their control, **why don't we give the power to the people? Let the federal agencies, experts and green-activists take their policies directly to the local community – and let the people decide for themselves.** If they can get the community's support, all the better – it will be clear who made what decisions and who is accountable. "Think globally and act locally," is still true today.

No federal action on climate change; Biden won't act

Dolsak and Prakash 2020 — Professors of Environmental Policy

(Nives, Professor of Sustainability Science At The University of Washington. Aseem, Professor of Environmental Politics At the University of Washington. Will The Biden Administration Transform U.S. Climate Policy. Forbes. October 16, 2020.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/prakashdolsak/2020/10/16/will-the-biden-administration-transform-us-climate-policy/?sh=498023124d4c>)

Biden's pro-climate efforts will face many hurdles. Federal policymaking is complex, with multiple institutional veto points.

Courts could become a stumbling block, as FDR discovered when pushing through New Deal legislations. **Non-climate issues** [such as court-packing](#) **might suck up Biden's political capital**, as healthcare did for Obama. And with Trump's defeat,

internal rivalries within the Democratic party will resurface. Further, even if Trump loses elections, Trumpism is not going to disappear. **As Tea**

Party mobilized Republicans against Obamacare, Trumpism could mobilize them against

Biden's climate agenda. Institutional Obstacles in Policymaking In the federal legislative process, there are three major players: the

House, the Senate, and the Presidency. What if Republicans maintain the control of the Senate? Recall, Obama did not submit the 2015 Paris Agreement to the Republican-controlled Senate for ratification. His administration made the argument that the Paris Agreement was not an inter-governmental treaty (which requires Senate ratification) because it did not impose any [new legal obligations on the U.S.](#) While this strategy worked

for an international agreement, it will certainly not work for new domestic legislation. **Even if Democrats retain the House and**

flip the Senate, Biden may not champion aggressive climate policies for several reasons. Recall

that in the first two years of Obama's first term, Democrats controlled the House (the 111th Congress) and the Senate. Thus, 2009-2010 provided Obama with a favorable institutional context to enact aggressive climate policies. His Administration saw the 2007-2009 recession as the most pressing problem and incorporated climate action in the fiscal stimulus: [\\$37 billion climate funding](#) in the [\\$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) passed in 2009. In contrast to the fiscal stimulus, stand-alone climate laws did not pass. Take the 2009 Waxman-Markey bill (the American Clean Energy and Security Act) to create a national cap and trade system. While the House passed it in 2009, the [Senate](#) did not act on it. Of course, once Republicans took control of the House in 2011, this bill was dead. Why did the Waxman-Markey bill fail? This bill unleashed [unusual political dynamics](#): Environmental organizations were split, with Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth opposing it. [The recession](#) focused public attention on jobs, not on climate change. [Some](#) suggest that Obama could have invested more political capital in its passage, but he prioritized the Affordable Care Act. Fast

forward to 2020. **Might the post-election developments compel Biden to prioritize economic**

recovery, pandemic, court-packing or gun control over climate action? Or, could an international crisis such

as China's sudden move on Taiwan draw attention away from climate change? **The reality is that voters do not see climate**

change as a top issue. A recent [Pew poll](#) suggests that they rank climate change very low (12th among the 13 issues). **Taken**
together, it is not clear that Biden would have the incentives to make climate action his top
priority.

We're at a crossroads. Biden's policies will determine the future of federalism

Kettl 2020 — Professor of Public Policy at the University of Maryland

(Donald, Professor of Public Policy at the University of Maryland. The Federalism Challenges Facing A Biden Administration. Governing. November 9, 2020. <https://www.governing.com/now/the-big-federalism-challenges-facing-a-biden-administration.html>)

Unifying the country: **Biden's speech** after winning the election **called this "a time to heal,"** and he clearly sees his most important job as bringing a divided country together. **Many of these divisions,** however, **depend far more than we often acknowledge on the decisions of state and local governments.** One of this year's most horrific events, the killing of George Floyd, occurred at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, but it also reflected the broader problem of policing in many communities across the country. And Trump's campaign promise to keep the suburbs safe was a dog whistle about the spread of Section 8 subsidized housing beyond the cities. No matter how soaring **Biden's** rhetoric, his **success in healing America will depend ultimately on building partnerships with state and local governments.** **The forces of national polarization grow from local divisions, in fierce debates raging from policing to housing to homelessness to mask-wearing** and, especially, to race. **It's hard to imagine an election where the federalism issues were more hidden below the surface but more clear in their underlying importance.** Biden's administration might have an explicit federalism strategy, or it might pick these issues off one at a time. One way or another, **we're surely heading for a massive rethinking of federal-state-local relations in the months to come.**

Drinking water is not a key source of lead poisoning

Egan et al. 2021 — Environmental Health Scientist at the CDC

(Kathryn B., Environmental Health Scientist At The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Cheryl R. Cornwell, National Center For Environmental Health. Joseph G. Courtney, National Center for Environmental Health. Adrienne S. Ettinger, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences. Blood Lead Levels in U.S. Children Ages 1 – 11 Years. 1976 – 2016. Environmental Health Perspectives, Vol. 129 / No. 3. March 17, 2021. <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/full/10.1289/EHP7932>)

Although NHANES helps to identify certain risk factors associated with lead exposure (e.g., older housing), it cannot determine the specific source(s) of lead exposure for surveyed children. Given the detrimental health effects and long-term impacts of lead exposure in children, creating lead-safe environments for all children is critical. **Deteriorated lead-based paint and dust in older housing remains the primary sources of lead exposure for U.S. children. In the U.S., approximately 23 million housing units have one or more lead-based paint hazards (HUD 2011). This number includes 3.6 million households with children <6.** In addition, an estimated 6.1 million lead service lines are still in place across the nation (Dignam et al. 2019). **Other sources of lead exposure that exist today include consumer products, imported foods, and workplace take-home exposures** (Ettinger et al. 2019). Continued, coordinated public health effort at national, state, and local levels can build on past achievements and provide lead-safe environments for all children.

Federal funding can't save rural America; economic decline is inevitable

Porter 2018 — Economics Writers for the New York Times

(Eduardo, Economics Writer For The New York Times. The Hard Truths of Trying To 'Save' The Rural Economy. The New York Times. December 14, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/14/opinion/rural-america-trump-decline.html>)

These days, **economic growth bypasses rural economies**. In the first four years of the recovery after the 2008 recession, counties with fewer than 100,000 people lost 17,500 businesses, according to the Economic Innovation Group. By contrast, counties with more than 1 million residents added, altogether, 99,000 firms. By 2017, the largest metropolitan areas had almost 10 percent more jobs than they did at the start of the financial crisis. Rural areas still had fewer. The Economic Innovation Group [measures "distress"](#) as a combination of data ranging from joblessness and poverty to abandoned homes and educational attainment. Since the 1990s, there has been an "intensifying ruralization of distress," said John Lettieri, the group's president. I've lived most of my life in big cities. I don't pretend to understand what it's like to live in a small town or on a family farm, or how it feels when all the jobs in a community seem to be fading away. I do spend a lot of time thinking about how the economic changes of the last several decades have undercut many American workers. One thing seems clear to me: **nobody** — not experts or policymakers or people in these communities — **seems to know** quite **how to pick rural America up. States, municipalities and the federal government have spent billions** to draw jobs and prosperity to stagnant rural areas. **But they haven't yet figured out how to hitch this vast swath of the country to the tech-heavy economy that is flourishing in America's cities.** There are 1,888 counties in America in which more than half the population is rural, according to the Census Bureau, and they stretch from coast to coast in Comanche County, a land of cattle, farming, oil and gas on the plains of southwestern Kansas, 1,790 people live in a sparsely settled area of nearly 800 square miles. In Perry County — home to some 26,500 people in the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky — so far no other industry has replaced once-mighty coal. Essex County in New York's Adirondacks is three-quarters rural, by the census definition. So is Calaveras County in California. After World War II, small town prosperity relied on its contribution to the industrial economy. The census considers Price County, Wis., to be 100 percent rural. Still, over a third of the jobs there are in manufacturing, from building industrial machines to assembling trucks. Auto parts manufacturers in West Point, Ga., draw workers from all over Troup County. Overall, manufacturing employs about one in eight workers in the country's 704 entirely rural counties. That's more than agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining combined and second only to education, health care and social assistance, which includes teachers, doctors, nurses and social service counselors. Most of those jobs are government funded. But **factory jobs can no longer keep small-town America afloat.** Even after a robust eight-year growth spell, there are fewer than 13 million workers in manufacturing across the entire economy. **Robots and workers in China put together most of the manufactured goods that Americans buy**, and the high-tech industries powering the economy today don't have much need for the cheap labor that rural communities contributed to America's industrial past. They mostly need highly educated workers. They find those most easily in big cities, not in small towns. What to do? Since the presidential election in 2016, when small town voters enthusiastically endorsed the populist campaign of President Trump, policymakers and academics have thrown themselves at [understanding the economic backdrop to their frustrations](#). They have come up with no shortage of proposals for how to turn rural America around, from offering a tax credit for employers that hire workers in distressed communities to designing investment funds to draw venture capital into rural areas. In a [report published in November](#), Mark Muro, William Galston and Clara Hendrickson of the Brookings Institution laid out a portfolio of ideas to rescue the substantial swath of the country that they identify as "left behind." They identify critical shortages bedeviling declining communities: workers with digital skills, broadband connections, capital. And they have plans to address them: [IT training and education initiatives](#), regulatory changes to boost lending to small businesses, incentives to invest in broadband. Wisely, they suggest that any federal government effort must choose its targets carefully. Better to focus on middle-sized places that are near big tech hubs and have some critical infrastructure, rather than scatter assistance all over the landscape. Sound as these ideas may be, however, even the authors concede that they may not be up to the task. "I don't know if these ideas are going to work," Mr. Galston acknowledged when I pressed him on the issue. "But it is worth making the effort." This is the inescapable reality of agglomeration, one of the most powerful forces shaping the American economy over the last three decades. **Innovative companies** choose to **locate where other successful, innovative companies are**. That's where they can find lots of highly skilled workers. The more densely packed these pools of talent are, the more workers can learn from each other and the more productive they become. **This dynamic feeds on itself**, drawing more high-tech firms and highly skilled workers to where they already are. **"We have a spatial reorganization of the economy,"** said Mr. Muro. "We have an archipelago of superstars in an ocean of low-productivity sectors." In hindsight, no amount of tax incentives [would have convinced Amazon to expand in a medium-sized city such as Columbus, Ohio, rather than Northern Virginia and Queens](#), which sit in some of the largest pools of talent in the country. **If even medium-sized cities find it difficult to compete, what are the odds that**, say, **a small town** like Amory, Miss., where 14 percent of adults have a bachelor's degree and a quarter of its 2,500 workers work in small-scale manufacturing, **have a chance to attract well-paid tech jobs?** Consider [a recent Brookings Institution study](#) by Benjamin Austin, Edward Glaeser and Lawrence Summers. They focus on the alarming rate of joblessness in what they call the Eastern Heartland, the region roughly between the Mississippi River and the states on the Atlantic coast, where rural communities are doing particularly poorly. After examining a range of potential policy interventions, they conclude that a targeted employment subsidy, such as the earned-income tax credit, is probably the most powerful tool available to revive employment. But they, too, are not sure it will work. "Our call for a wage subsidy is us saying, 'We can't figure this out, and we hope the private sector will,'" Mr. Glaeser told me. There are, to be sure, some rural communities with productivity as high as some big cities. But they rely on heavily mechanized and automated industries that support few jobs: oil extraction or large-scale agriculture, in which tractors talk to satellites and no drivers are involved. The livestock business on the vast pastures of Sioux County, Neb., for example, supports an economy worth \$306,000 per worker, according to data from Mr. Muro and Jacob Whiton of Brookings. But only 1,200 people live there. In the Southeast Fairbanks area of Alaska, it is all about oil and gas. Output per worker is \$203,000. But its population doesn't quite reach 7,000. Excluding these places, **the United States is still left with 50 to 55 million people living in rural communities that no longer have much to offer them economically. What if nothing really works?** Is there really no option but to do nothing and, as some have suggested, return depopulated parts of rural America to the bison?