

Our Failed Leaders and Our Sorry State of Affairs

Ignorance. Incongruity. Irresponsibility. Ineptitude. Stupidity. Sometimes willed-stupidity.

Pick any combination of the above words, apply them to some of our governors and mayors, and you'll find the moniker fits them snug as a glove.

Never in my entire life have I seen so many of America's elected officials guilty of such a massive collective failure of leadership. If that failure didn't end in tragedy it would play out as a farce, a comedy of errors that might bring laughter from the rest of us.

Let's look at just a few of their misadventures, wrongs which none of them take any responsibility for.

On March 25, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo [ordered](#) nursing homes to accept COVID-19 patients and forbade the homes from testing incoming patients for the virus. Thousands of elderly people in these homes died, yet the governor has repeatedly refused to accept responsibility for his order. Recently, Cuomo [rejected](#) calls for an independent investigation into these deaths, labeling them as "political."

Were we the governor, would we have ordered nursing homes to take in people without first testing them for the virus? Or would we have known that such a boneheaded idea could lead to higher rates of infection and more deaths among the elderly?

In May, 33-year-old Ibrahim Bouaichi was [released](#) from jail along with other inmates because of fears about COVID-19. Bouaichi was under indictment for the rape, sodomy, strangulation, and abduction of Karla Dominguez. On July 29, Bouaichi sought out and murdered Dominguez, and later shot

himself. He survived, but is in grave condition.

By May, we understood enough about COVID-19 to know that a 33-year-old was highly unlikely to die of the virus. So why was he released?

Will anyone be held responsible for the release of Bouaichi and others like him who were shooed out of prisons and jails because of coronavirus fears, only to go on to commit additional crimes?

Not likely.

In [cities across the country](#), governments have gathered up homeless people and ensconced them in hotels to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These roundups occurred in the late spring. We should ask ourselves: Is COVID more likely to spread outside on the streets, or inside a hotel lobby?

Earlier this summer, some governors restricted public access to beaches and parks, or closed them altogether. I understand their fears about social distancing and crowds, but how do sunshine and fresh air cultivate coronavirus in people? Even the doctors confronting the Spanish Flu a hundred years ago highly recommended patients spend time outside as a healthy alternative to remaining in hospital beds.

Then there is the incongruous response to the virus vis-à-vis the riots. For two months now, many of our cities have suffered protests and riots, where thousands have come together on the streets. In some of these cities, mayors and other officials allowed protesters free rein, ordering police to stand down and watch as law and order collapsed. In the midst of this disorder, we hear calls to “defund the police,” and some mayors intend to press this issue, despite the fact that [polls show](#) the vast majority of citizens are opposed to such a move.

Does any of this sound rational?

Now we are debating whether schools should reopen. The Center for Disease Control recommends that schools [reopen](#), but teachers unions remain opposed. And though they had all summer to prepare a plan for resuming instruction, some states and school districts still lack any coherent strategy for teaching children this fall. As a result of this failed leadership, many parents are turning to homeschooling, or are forming [small schooling groups](#) with other parents.

Incongruities also abound here in Front Royal. When I visit my coffee shop, I must wear a mask to place my order, but may then take my coffee and sit without a mask at a nearby table for as long as I want. In my church every other pew remains blocked off, but no one social distances while taking communion, and many people gather outside to visit with friends following the service.

In a must-read [article](#) adapted from a lecture delivered at Hillsdale College in June, Heather Mac Donald begins with these words:

“Over the last four months, Americans have lived through what is arguably the most consequential period of government malfeasance in U.S. history. Public officials’ overreaction to the novel coronavirus put American cities into a coma; those same officials’ passivity in the face of widespread rioting threatens to deliver the *coup de grâce*. Together, these back-to-back governmental failures will transform the American polity and cripple urban life for decades.”

Is Mac Donald correct about government malfeasance?

Absolutely.

Will urban life be crippled for decades?

Only time will tell.

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