

# Intelligencer



LIFE AFTER WARMING | FEB. 4, 2019

# The Cautious Case for Climate Optimism

## Believing in a comfortable future : machines.

By David Wallace-Wells | Photo illustration by Joe Darrow

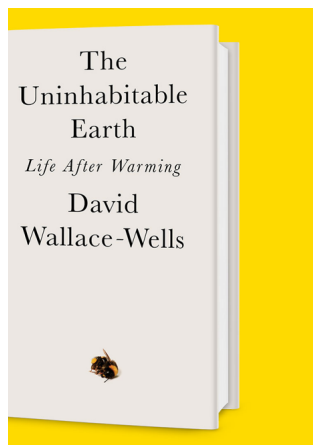
Photo-Illustration: Joe Darrow/Sven Schabbach/Getty Images

Adapted from *The Uninhabitable Earth*, by David Wallace-Wells, to be published on February 19 by Tim Duggan Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright (

**It's not too late.** In fact, it never will be. Whatever you may have read over the past year — as extreme weather brought a global heat wave and “Climate Change Is Here” — global warming is not binary. It is not a matter of “yes” or “no,” not a question of “fucked” or “not.” Instead, it is a process. Which means that no matter how hot it gets, no matter how fully climate change transforms the planet and the way we live on it, it will allow for less suffering. Just how much is up to us, and always will be.

A century and a half after the greenhouse effect was first identified, and a few decades since climate denial and misinformation began muddying global temperatures and sea-level rise and even hurricane frequency and wildfire volume. And there are, it is true, feedback loops in the climate system to the extent that we live today under clouds of uncertainty about the future of climate change, those clouds are, overwhelmingly, not projections of climate change but of human action. The question of how bad things will get is not, actually, a test of the science; it is a bet on human activity. How much will we do to

These are the disconcerting, contradictory lessons of global warming, which counsels both human humility and human grandiosity, each drawing from the same source — gods. But for the moment, at least, many of us seem inclined to run from that responsibility rather than embrace it. Or even admit we have it. That it targets us all and that we must all share in the responsibility so we do not all share in the suffering — at least not share in so suffocatingly



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**Since I first began** writing about climate a few years ago, I've been asked often whether I see any reason for why one wants to believe disaster is coming, but those who look, do. At about two degrees Celsius of warming, just eventually bringing, over centuries, perhaps as much as 50 feet of sea-level rise. In the meantime, major cities will experience many extreme heat waves in India, and even in the northern latitudes, heat waves will kill thousands each summer (with clean ones like wind and solar), this is probably our best-case scenario. It is also what is called — so often by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change when he used another word to describe the meaning of two degrees

You do not need to contemplate worst-case scenarios to be alarmed; this best-case scenario is alarming enough. It includes permanent drought, African droughts would last five years on average, and the areas burned annually by wildfires would be much better than four, at which point six natural disasters could strike a single community simultaneously; the

damages from warming could reach \$600trillion — about double all the wealth that exists in the world today. We are on track for more warming than the possibility of four degrees shapes mine.

It is unlikely, I think, that we reach four degrees this century. But this is what it would take to stay under two: a comprehensively decarbonized world without meat-eaters. We also need overhauls of the world's transportation systems and infrastructure. Every year the average American emits 100 tons of carbon dioxide to the ocean. Every minute, we each add five gallons.

If the task of reversing all that seems incomprehensibly big, it is. The scale of the technological transformation required dwarfs every technological invention of agriculture 10,000 years ago. By definition, it dwarfs them, because it contains all of them — every single sector needs to be rebuilt. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that the world has only a dozen years to halve its carbon emissions to safely avoid two degrees

Is it possible? The short answer is, technically speaking, maybe — though just maybe. But speaking practically, and politically, is another matter.

Let's consider the tools at hand. First: a carbon tax. The very same day the IPCC released its “Doomsday” report, the Nobel Prize in economics was awarded primarily for having championed the idea of carbon pricing. The premise is simple: Legislate a high enough cost on the stuff and the market will do what we want to see the economy truly upended; to those who trust that market forces will deliver the outcomes they are predicted to; to those who believe in free markets and to those who believe that action would otherwise involve, invariably, a trade-off — that climate action of any meaningful scale would be expensive

Over the past several years, there has been a raft of papers showing that the intuitive terms of that bargain are backward: Faster action on climate according to one estimate; those \$600 trillion in damages avoided by the end of the century, according to another). But the labor involved in such a transition — with the help of just a little incentive-setting — has prevailed, at least among a certain set.

In January, 45 economists described by Bloomberg as both “an all-star lineup” and the world’s “economic brain trust” united behind the cause of a carbon tax. For his part, Nordhaus has identified pricing for an “optimal” scenario: between \$35 and \$229 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, a tax that, by his own estimate, could avert “genocide.”

A carbon tax is hypothetical for Americans, which may be one reason they tend to be optimistic about it. But there are already, today, many places around the world that are doing enough to meet a goal of two degrees, according to the carbon-watchdog site Climate Action Tracker. It is conceivable, even probable, that at least one state in Washington State, which tried and failed to enact such a tax in 2018, recently put it, “To actually get carbon savings, you have to jack up the price

The longer we wait, the steeper the declines will have to be. If the world as a whole had begun decarbonization in the year 2000, when Al Gore called for a 3 percent cut in emissions per year to achieve climate stability at two degrees; if we begin now, we will have to cut them by 10 percent each year; if we wait until 2020, we will have to cut them by 20 percent each year; if we wait until 2030, we will have to cut them by 30 percent each year; if we wait until 2040, we will have to cut them by 40 percent each year; if we wait until 2050, we will have to cut them by 50 percent each year; if we wait until 2060, we will have to cut them by 60 percent each year; if we wait until 2070, we will have to cut them by 70 percent each year; if we wait until 2080, we will have to cut them by 80 percent each year; if we wait until 2090, we will have to cut them by 90 percent each year; if we wait until 2100, we will have to cut them by 100 percent each year. Last year, Nordhaus’s own nephew Ted wrote in Foreign Affairs that the dream of keeping the world under two degrees of warming, “is a pipe dream.”

**The carbon tax** is the solution favored by business. On the left, another possible approach has emerged: massive public investment and public ownership of an entirely renewable economy. In other words, the Green New Deal.

The term may seem like a response to our very present tense of climate panic, but it has bounced around for a while. It was used by Van Jones, and it was that too many people took note. This year, under that same banner, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has rallied an astonishing level of political and public support, and many of their fellow aspiring nominees will surely follow. Their endorsements were for only a set of goals, as the proposal was still being debated — decarbonizing the American economy entirely by 2030 — and a number of other commitments that have excited many on the left: a massive energy investment “to virtually eliminate poverty in the United States and to make prosperity, wealth, and economic security available to every American.”

These proposals are worthy, invigorating, and — believe it or not — popular. I’m all for them. Unfortunately, they are also, on their own, not enough. The Green New Deal are what logicians call “necessary but insufficient.”

This is not a reflection of the modesty of the legislation, which is not at all modest — in fact, it is perhaps the most ambitious bill put forward in the history of the United States. The IPCC compared the transformation required to stay safely below two degrees to the mobilization of World War II. That mobilization was unprecedented in the history of industry, widespread rationing: The entire American nation turned single-mindedly toward the relevant threat, as did the entire Russian nation. The mobilization that the minded scientists of the world believe is necessary today — to get to half of our current emissions by 2030. Is it possible? Well, just about anything is possible if you have enough money and time. It would take New York City 45 years to build three new stops on a single subway line.

And if such a Green New Deal transformation within the U.S. were possible, it would affect only one country in the world, a country producing more than a quarter of the world’s emissions. Last year, China was responsible for more than a quarter of emissions — and that figure does not account for any of the massive infrastructure projects in progress: highways and ports and airports throughout those continents. If the cement industry were a country, it would be the world’s third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the entire 20th century.

**Climate action does** not just take place within nations but between them. Here too the hurdles are monumental. We have not yet really begun to integrate climate budgets into the architecture of trade agreements and peace treaties, reshaping rivalries between nations by literally reshaping their geographic boundaries. We have not yet begun to address the matter of climate reparations and the question of just who will pay. But the way our present politics is shaping our climate policy is already clear.

The Paris climate accords, signed nearly a decade after the Great Recession, seemed to mark the end of the long era of technocratic, neoliberal global governance. Those values in almost every way. Distressingly, it also reflects the failures of those values. Just two years in, no major industrial nation in the world has met its commitments.

In some places, government action is being lapped by market forces. In America, for instance, coal production is projected to fall faster than was the production of renewable energy has fallen so far that you can hardly measure today’s price using the same scales (since just 2009, for instance, solar-energy prices derived from renewables has not grown at all, which means that, billions of dollars and thousands of dramatic breakthroughs later, the planet is still warming). In fact, less far along, because the market has not responded to these developments by retiring dirty-energy sources and investing in clean energy, this is growth; to human civilization, it is suicide. In 2003, Kan Caldeira of the Carnegie Institution found that the world would need to cut emissions by 50 percent by 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change. In 2018, James Temple of MIT’s Technology Review surveyed our progress; he found that the world would need to cut emissions by 80 percent by 2050 to avoid catastrophic climate change.

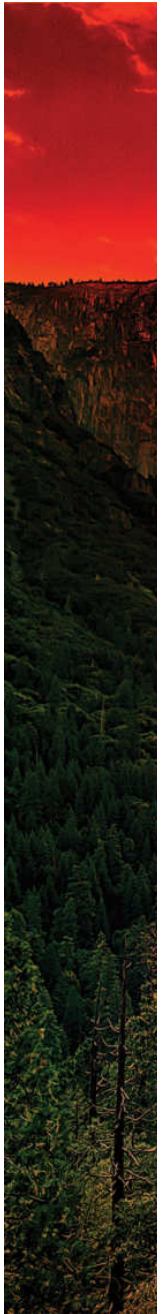
**That gap yawns** so wide it could swallow whole civilizations, and indeed threatens to. Into it has crawled the dreams of those extraordinary tech self-destruction, perhaps we can at least buy ourselves some time by artificially cooling off the planet or maybe sucking some of its toxic fumes ( “magical thinking.”

But if, today, you want to believe in climate hope — want to believe the planet can stay below two degrees of warming — it means believing in something. No matter how aggressively, the goal of a stable climate is functionally out of reach by any conventional method. We can implement the most aggressive being put forward today by the world’s greenest leaders, and we will still need some “magic.” Probably a whole lot of it.

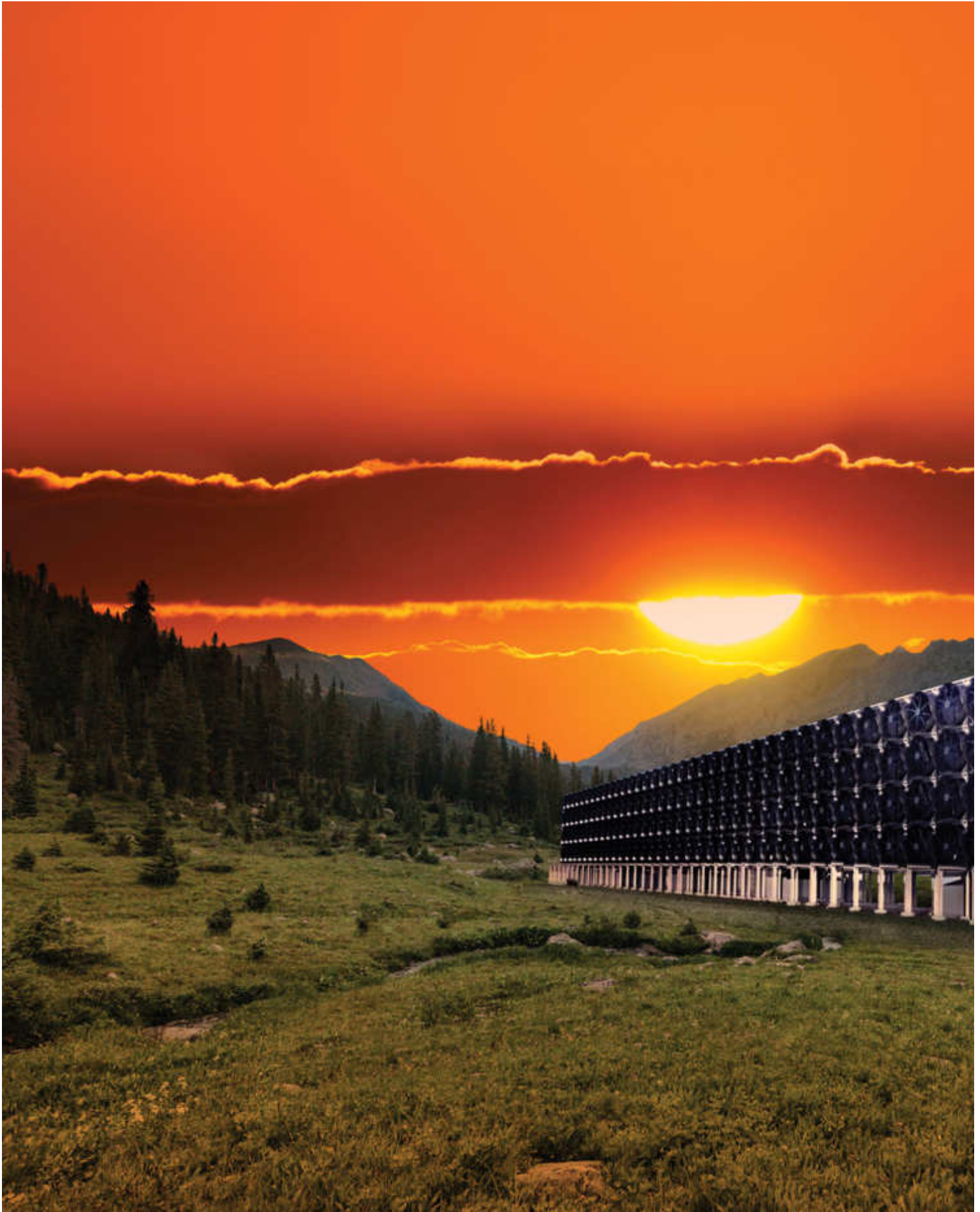
The most promising variety of this magic is “negative emissions”: taking carbon out of the atmosphere. Once a last-ditch, if-all-else-fails strategy almost nobody outside the climate world appreciates: Just about every plausible scenario for avoiding catastrophic change is built on these technologies. In 2014, 344 feature negative emissions, most of them significantly. The ones that don’t rely on negative emissions all require such sharp cuts. On your chalkboard, you can draw whatever carbon-emissions curve you’d like, but keeping the world safely under two degrees by conventional means and much of the world’s heavy industry being suddenly shuttered or redirected by fiat.

What is more of a fantasy — that scenario or the “magical thinking” of negative emissions? Because it promises a sort of global extension on the one hand. But the math tells us negative emissions is also a last, best, hope.









**In 1950, walking to lunch** at Los Alamos, the Italian-born physicist Enrico Fermi, one of the architects of the atomic bomb, found himself caught jumping back in, long after everyone else had moved on, to ask, “Where is everybody?” The story passed into scientific legend, the interjection r

life in it? The answer may be as simple as climate. Nowhere else in the known universe is a single planet as suited as this one to produce life of t

The astrophysicist Adam Frank calls this kind of thinking “the astrobiology of the Anthropocene” in his book *Light of the Stars*, which considers “thinking like a planet,” he calls it. “We are not alone. We are not the first,” Frank writes in the book’s opening pages. “This — meaning everythir trillions of times before.”

What sounds like a parable from Nietzsche is really just an explication of the meaning of infinity, and how small and insignificant the concept n climatologist Gavin Schmidt, Frank went even further, suggesting that there may even have been advanced industrial civilizations of some form below our feet, making them permanently invisible to us.

The paper was meant as a thought experiment, pointing out how little we can really know from archaeology and geology, not as a serious claim the empowering perspective that our “project of civilization” is profoundly fragile and that we must take extraordinary measures to protect it. B been trillions of other civilizations like this one, somewhere out there in the universe and including possibly a few scattered in the dust of the ea

That is a lot of despair to hang on “trillions” — in fact a lot to hang on some very speculative math. Fatalism has a strong pull in a time of ecolog anthropogenic climate change — that is, climate change caused by humans — has produced a vogue for Fermi’s paradox and so little for its phil explain away but as the centerpiece of a grandly narcissistic view of the cosmos: However unlikely it may seem that intelligent civilization arose world we live on is a sort of logical inevitability, given that we are asking these questions, because only a universe compatible with our kind of c

This is a Möbius strip of logic, a gimmicky tautology rather than a claim based strictly on observed data. And yet, I think, it is helpful — by whic ahead. There is one civilization we know of, and it is still around and kicking — for now, at least. Why should we be suspicious of our exception: it?

Of course, a sense of cosmic specialness is no guarantee of good stewardship. And “thinking like a planet” is so alien to the perspectives of mode at first lifted from kindergarten. But reasoning from first principles is reasonable when it comes to climate; in fact, it is necessary, as we do not however terribly we poison it; it is thinking like a people, one people, whose fate is shared by all.

The path we are on as a planet should terrify anyone living on it, but, if we think like one people, all the relevant inputs are within our control a responsibility. When J. Robert Oppenheimer, the head of Los Alamos, later reflected on the meaning of the bomb he and Fermi had helped brir from the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Now I am become death, destroyer of worlds.” But the interview occurred years after those tests, after Oppenheimer revoked). According to his brother, Frank, who was also there, when Oppenheimer watched the detonation of the device nicknamed “the gadge

This can work too. No single solution alone is sufficient, but the solutions, plural, are here already. As climate activists often say, we have, today, aggressively phase out dirty energy, even outright ban much of it; a new approach to agricultural practices and a shift away from beef and dairy implement them — all of them — and quite fast. But of course political will is not some trivial ingredient always at hand. We probably have the

That the solutions are obvious, and available, does not mean the problem is anything but overwhelming. We may never be quite able to hold in continues on anything like its present track, it will come to shape everything we do on the planet, from agriculture to human migration to busir prove to be a knowledge system as total as “modernity.”

How will we navigate that system — or understand our place within it? Even before the age of climate change, the literature of conservation fur of the world as a single, evolving, quasi-biological entity. Buckminster Fuller popularized “spaceship Earth,” which presented the planet as a kin suggests a vivid picture of a world spinning through the solar system barnacled with enough carbon-capture plants to actually stall out warmin; space probe gave us the Pale Blue Dot — the inescapable smallness, and fragility, of the entire experiment we’re engaged in, together, whether v cruelty flatters our sense of power and, in so doing, calls the world, as one, to action. At least, I hope it does. But that is another meaning of clin without ever seeing it clearly. You can choose your metaphor. You can’t choose the planet, which is the only one any of us will ever call home.

*\*This article appears in the February 4, 2019, issue of New York Magazine. [Subscribe Now!](#)*

#### **MORE ON LIFE AFTER WARMING**

➤ [The Green New Deal Isn’t Enough. But Democrats Should Embrace It Anyway.](#)

➤ [Parenting the Climate Change Generation](#)

➤ [You, Too, Are in Denial of Climate Change](#)

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1 COMMENT

THE **Intelligencer** FEE



**12:20 A.M.****A move very much in line with Melania Trump's copy-paste RNC speech in 2016**

The GOP released a graphic Monday that mirrors a tagline from [Hillary Clinton's](#) 2016 campaign.

"We're only getting stronger together," the graphic says superimposed over a picture of [President Trump](#).

Trump made the statement during a rally in El Paso, Texas, on Monday night. The tweet was sent during the rally.

The phrase "Stronger Together" was also the slogan of Clinton's 2016 candidacy.

Clinton and her running-mate Sen. [Tim Kaine](#) (D-Va.) wrote a book during the campaign with that same name.

**GOP promotes Trump line mirroring Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign slogan****—The Hill****12:13 A.M.****It may not be all that great to be a contractor for Apple Maps**

Inside the building, say former workers, they came to expect the vending machines to be understocked, and to have to wait in line to use the men's bathrooms. Arch assignments of 12 to 15 months are up.

It's not uncommon for workers not to make it that long. According to 14 current and former contractors employed by Apex Systems, a firm that staffs the building: "we were at-will employees and they would fire us at any time," says one former Hammerwood contractor, who, like most of the workers interviewed for this story, says contractors which I got infected by and probably spread."

The treatment of these workers is emerging alongside sexual harassment and military contracting as a principal target of the wave of tech worker activism that's been learning about it in advance because they don't have access to internal mailing lists. A month later, Googlers [sent an open letter](#) to the company's management demanding

**What It's Like to Work Inside Apple's 'Black Site'****—Bloomberg****12:07 A.M. GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN****Congress Tentatively Agrees to Wall Funding Democrats First Proposed in December***By* MATT STIEB

On Monday, negotiators put forward a \$1.375 billion deal for wall funding – a number conspicuously close to what Democrats proposed back in December.

**MOST POPULAR****1. Republicans Keep Admitting Everything They Said About Obama Was a Lie***By* JONATHAN CHAIT**2. Joe Biden May Be the Last Hurrah for Moderate Democrats***By* ED KILGORE**3. Trump Tax Cuts Are (Probably) About to Become a Political Disaster***By* ERIC LEVITZ**4. The Christian Right, Not AIPAC, Drives the GOP's Pro-Israel Stance***By* ED KILGORE**5. Finally, a Device for Telling Your Partner You Want to Bang Without Speaking to Them***By* MADISON MALONE KIRCHER

2/11/2019

The recent movement of teachers strikes heads to Denver, a city that hasn't seen educator walkouts in 25 years



Photo: Helen H. Richardson/Denver Post via Getty Images

**2/11/2019****We're closer to the 2020 election than to 2016.**

"Lock her up!" the crowd chants at Trump rally tonight, referring to Hillary Clinton, of course

—@mkraju

**2/11/2019****Unsurprisingly, Trump's El Paso speech is boilerplate MAGA material**

Trump says Burr's committee has cleared him, then seeks to rebrand "collusion" with Dems and Russia, and Dems and media at El Paso rally. Lines he's used in vari

—@maggieNYT

**2/11/2019****An "In Principle" shutdown agreement meets President Trump**

Trump: "As I was walking up to the stage, they said that progress is being made with this committee. Just so you know, we're building the wall anyway."

—@PhilipRucker

**2/11/2019****Highlights from Trump's speech in El Paso**

"This is like the Academy Awards used to be," describing the full press box, after encouraging the crowd to boo.

"Explain that," regarding the recent Rasmussen poll in which 52% of Americans approved of the president.

"We were all challenged by a young man who lost an election to Ted Cruz, and they said you know what you're supposed to win in order to run," referring to Beto O'Rourke.

"By the way, we, I, me, we're one for one ... now we're going to be two for 0," referring to his electoral wins.

"You really mean 'finish that wall,' because we built a lot of it already," referring to the MAGA crowd's preferred chant.

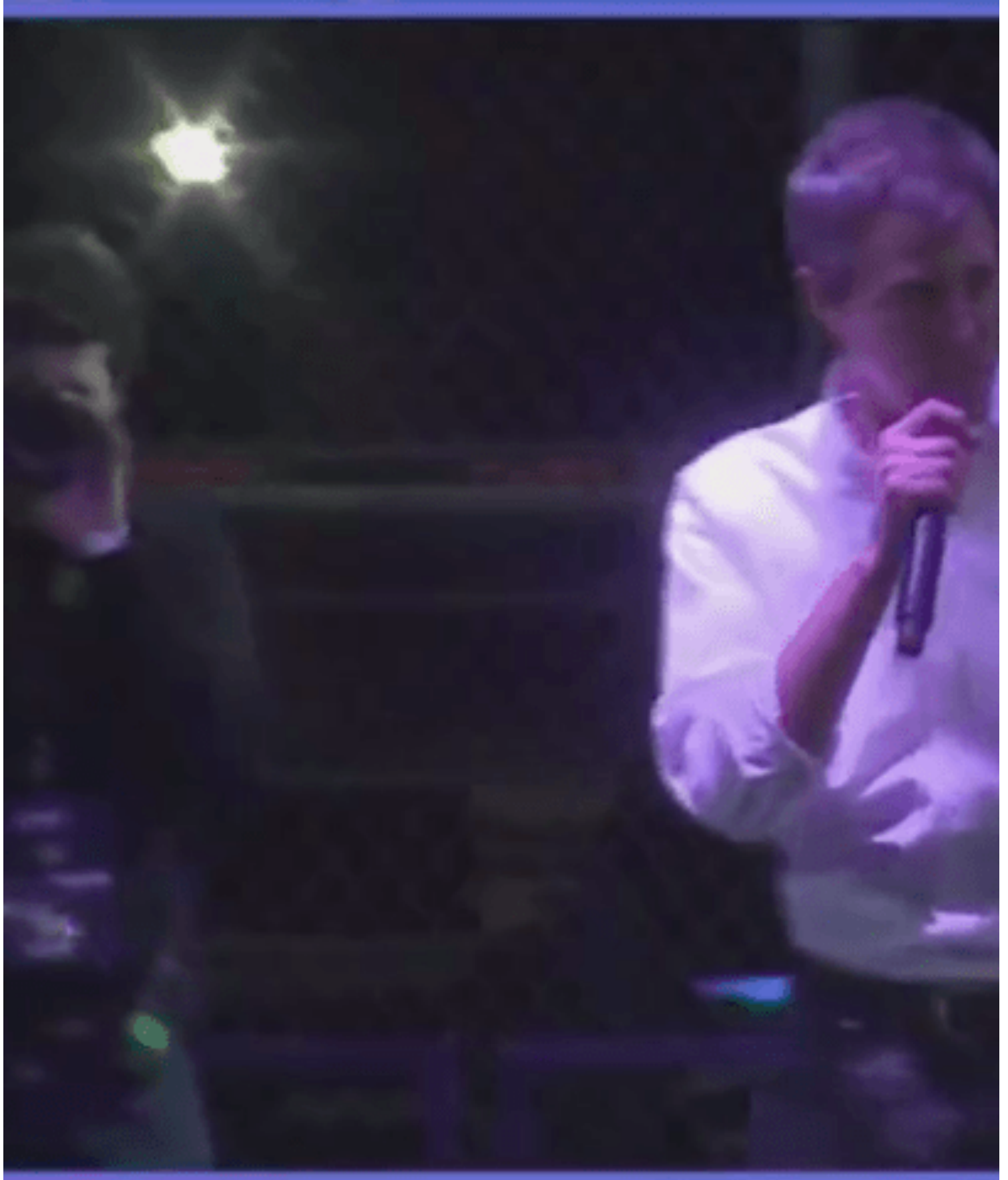
"It sounds like a high school term paper that got a low mark," referring to the Green New Deal. "How do you take a train to Europe?"

"Just would not have been a good scene, his wife saved him," referring to Virginia Governor Ralph Northam's press conference in which it appeared he was considering a resignation.

—President Trump

2/11/2019

**Beto O'Rourke, with the ex-punk mic hold, praises the "two cultures, two histories" of El Paso and Juárez, and calls for immigration reform**





2/11/2019

**It appears that Bill de Blasio wants to keep up the streak of New York mayors flirting with presidential bids**

.@NYCMayor will head to New Hampshire Friday as he contemplates 2020 presidential bid. He's also talking to 2 City Hall staffers w/ nat'l experience about a poss  
 —@SallyGold

2/11/2019

**Hopefully, Trump also agrees “in principle”**

Lawmakers said on Monday night that they had reached an agreement “in principle” to avoid a second partial government shutdown set to begin on Saturday.

The breakthrough came after Sens. Shelby (R-Ala.) and [Patrick Leahy](#) (D-Vt.) and Reps. [Nita Lowey](#) (D-N.Y.) and [Kay Granger](#) (R-Texas)—the top members of the Senate. Negotiators refused to discuss the particulars of the deal and Lowey said staff were still finalizing the details. Lowey said she hopes for legislation to be released so Congress has until Saturday to get the seven remaining fiscal year 2019 appropriations bills to Trump's desk to fund roughly 25 percent of the federal government,

**Lawmakers reach agreement 'in principle' to avert shutdown**

—The Hill

2/11/2019

**Grassley: We're mad, but not mad enough to seek action**

The uproar among Republicans is just the latest example of their deep discontent with the president's foreign policy. It could prompt even more defections in favor of Yemen's civil war.

“It's not a good way to start the new Congress in its relationship with the Foreign Relations Committee,” said Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a Republican on that panel of the law.”

On Friday, the Trump administration said it reserved the right to decline lawmakers' demand under the Magnitsky Act that the president report to Congress with a commission. “They were supposed to make a report on Friday and they didn't do it,” Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said. “And the only thing I can say now is they better have a good one.”

**GOP livid with Trump over ignored Khashoggi report**

—Politico

2/11/2019

**Or, he could take a retirement lap**

As Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam continues to resist calls to step down over the racist photo on his medical school yearbook page, he and his advisers are close to finishing. Additionally, a source close to the governor said Northam is telling people privately that if the commonwealth's legislature puts a bill on his desk that provides the a path to a new governor. But for all of his belief in a greater purpose, the idea of a refocused policy agenda threatens to cause a rift between younger, more vocal activists who consider indifference if not yet enticed, could come to express support for a groundswell of reversals and investments in black communities. Northam, one person advising him said, has

**Ralph Northam Will Launch A “Listening Tour” About Race Amid Blackface Scandal**

—BuzzFeed News

2/11/2019

**Insiders suspect Joe Biden might not be able to go the distance in 2020**

“Let's be honest: He's an older white guy,” said Jim Cauley, a longtime Kentucky-based Democratic strategist. “Does he connect with the base?”

“Among political professionals, there are deep concerns because we know the history,” said a Pennsylvania-based Democratic strategist, granted anonymity to speak candidly.

Jim Manley, longtime Democratic operative: “I'm not convinced Biden is the right way to go at this point in time.”

**‘Weaker candidate than Hillary’: Democrats cast deep doubt on Biden's 2020 value**

—McClatchy DC



2/10/2019

**Joe Biden May Be the Last Hurrah for Moderate Democrats**

By ED KILGORE

2/11/2019 MEDICAID EXPANSION

**Utah Republicans Move to Thwart Voter-Ordered Medicaid Expansion**

By ED KILGORE

The bill substitutes a partial expansion with right-wing conditions they expect the administration to approve, in place of a voter-mandated expansion.

2/11/2019

**Meanwhile, lawmakers in Virginia consider impeaching Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax, after two women came forward last week alleging sexual assault**

SCOOP: [@LGJustinFairfax](#) has been placed on leave by his law firm as it investigates the sexual assault allegations against him. <https://t.co/P3eOoLW7iF>

—@dcexaminer

2/11/2019

**The president doesn't really operate with the sort of longterm perspective that anticipates why this might be a bad idea**

President Trump signed an executive order Monday meant to spur the development and regulation of artificial intelligence, technology that many experts believe w

A.I. experts across industry, academia and government have [long called on the Trump administration](#) to make the development of artificial intelligence a major priority secretary, [sent a memo to the White House](#) imploring the president to create a national strategy on A.I.

In July 2017, Chinese unveiled a plan to become the world leader in A.I., aiming to create an industry worth \$150 billion to its economy by 2030, and two Chinese cit Britain, France and Canada.

**Trump Signs Executive Order Promoting Artificial Intelligence**

—New York Times



2/6/2019

**Philosopher Nick Bostrom on Whether We Live in a Simulation**

By BRIAN FELDMAN

2/11/2019

**As a second shutdown looms, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA continues to be a political force**

The head of the flight attendants' union on Monday called for demonstrations at the country's airports if [there's another government shutdown](#) — and warned that

While avoiding the term “strike,” Association of Flight Attendants-CWA head Sara Nelson said the recently concluded [35-day partial shutdown](#) had stretched the a

“We will not participate in a system that is not safe,” Nelson said. She called on Americans to come out to the country's airports for mass demonstrations on Saturd the website, [generalstrike2019.org](#).

**Flight attendants union warns of possible airport chaos if there's another shutdown**

—NBC News



2/8/2019

**The Union That Ended the Shutdown Is Preparing to Protest**

By SARAH JONES

2/11/2019

Trump's speech tonight is also, conveniently, a 2020 fundraiser

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Paid for by Trump Victory, a joint fundraising committee authorized by and on behalf of Donald Trump and the Republican National Committee.

2/11/2019

**Initial impressions of Klobuchar's platform: bland****Jonathan Chait** 3:19 PM

this platform suuuuuuucks

"Very late, but key 2020 Klobuchar policies, per aides:

- Lower drug costs
- Expand tax savings accounts
- Internet privacy rules
- Rural broadband
- Election security

[read more](#)

2/11/2019

**Perhaps this should be considered a conflict of interest**

Former Virginia Attorney General Richard Cullen, whom Eastern Virginia Medical School has tapped to investigate its blackface scandal and history of racism, below

According to the Post story, other members at the Country Club of Virginia said Cullen, then a U.S. attorney, was a member there. He did not respond to HuffPost's

Cullen is now responsible for [leading an external review](#) of several racist yearbook entries and incidents at the medical school in the wake of last week's news that he wore a blackface outfit and another wearing blackface.

**Attorney Investigating Northam's Blackface Photo Belonged To A Country Club With No Black Members**

—HuffPost

2/11/2019

**Surely this is the thing that will bring Trump down**

Cliff Sims, the former White House communications aide who wrote an insider account of life working for President Trump, is suing the president in his official capacity to keep them from invoking their First Amendment rights.

Mr. Sims was a White House aide from the beginning of the administration. But it was the campaign organization that filed an arbitration claim against him last week in [his book, "Team of Vipers,"](#) last month.

The White House had dozens of people sign such agreements at the beginning of the president's term. But those agreements are widely seen as likely unenforceable.

**Cliff Sims, White House Tell-All Author, Sues Trump for Going After Him Over Book**

—The New York Times

2/11/2019

**Utah is on the verge of defying its voters in the name of giving fewer people health care**

Utah voters decided to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act in November. But the Republican legislature is scaling back the voter-approved plan.

The Republican legislature has passed legislation that would, in effect, replace the voter-approved Medicaid expansion with a more limited version that would actually cut funding. It now heads to Republican Gov. Gary Herbert, who is expected to sign it.

GOP lawmakers are making a big bet: that they will be the first state to receive approval from the Trump administration for a partial Medicaid expansion. Originally, the bill would have followed the will of the voters completely. But the state House, facing intense pressure, changed the bill at the last minute so if the Trump administration does reject partial expansion,

**Utah Republicans have officially blocked their state's voter-approved Medicaid expansion**

—Vox



2/11/2019

**An immigration position that may not have seemed extreme a decade ago will not play very badly with liberals**

As district attorney of San Francisco, Kamala Harris supported a city policy that required law enforcement to turn over undocumented juvenile immigrants to federal courts convicted of a crime.

Harris, who was San Francisco's district attorney from 2004 to 2011, sided with then-Mayor Gavin Newsom in a political fight over San Francisco's status as a sanctuary city, with San Francisco Supervisors opposing it.

Harris' past position could open her up to attacks from immigration activists as well as the more progressive wing of the party as she seeks the Democratic nomination, which she has examined since she entered the national spotlight. KFile explored her position during a review of her record on immigration.

**Kamala Harris supported 2008 San Francisco policy that reported arrested undocumented juveniles to ICE**

—CNN

2/11/2019 MEMES

**A Brief History of Saying 'Gay Rights!' Online**

By BRIAN FELDMAN

A viral clip from stars of *The Favourite* has a tangled past.

2/11/2019 ILHAN OMAR

**The Christian Right, Not AIPAC, Drives the GOP's Pro-Israel Stance**

By ED KILGORE

Whether or not Ilhan Omar's claim of vast AIPAC power has anything to do with anti-Semitism, it's just not accurate, and helps her enemies.

2/11/2019

**One thing you can say about Trump is that he's not petty**

Pres Trump tells visiting sheriffs there's a big line of people outside his event in El Paso waiting to get in, and that rival Beto O'Rourke has a line too but it's a "tiny line."

—@steveholland1

2/11/2019

**Did Ilhan Omar's tweets merit an avalanche of criticism?**

**Zak Cheney-Rice** 12:14 PM

Would it have been preferable on Omar's part to make the same point about AIPAC money, but clarify emphatically that she views AIPAC and Israel (accurately) as separate entities?



**Benjamin Hart** 12:17 PM

She could have mentioned AIPAC in the first place instead of having to clarify what she meant in a later tweet. And she could have cited their general influence instead of just saying they're powerful. I feel the way they do about Israel, but I don't think a tweet in that vein would have drawn this kind of criticism.



**Jonathan Chait** 12:17 PM

Reducing the power of pro-Israel sentiment to money is both wrong analytically and wrong in a way that reflects and feeds stereotypes. There's probably too much to say on that.



**Ed Kilgore** 12:18 PM

Agree.

[read more](#)

2/11/2019

**Is Michael Cohen ever actually going to testify?**

Just in: Senate Intel Committee has delayed Michael Cohen's private testimony that was planned for tomorrow at Cohen's request, per Lanny Davis, "due to post script."

—@NatashaBertrand

2/11/2019 NUT BUTTON

**Finally, a Device for Telling Your Partner You Want to Bang Without Speaking**

By MADISON MALONE KIRCHER

LoveSync is the nut button meme come to life.



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