

BEST QUOTES ON POLITICAL SCIENCE

The legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do, at all, or cannot, so well do, for themselves in their separate and individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere.

—Abraham Lincoln

What the man in the street wants is not a big debate on fundamental issues; he wants a little medical care, a rug on the floor, a picture on the wall, a little music in the house, and a place to take Molly and the grandchildren when he retires.

--Lyndon Baines Johnson

I have only one yardstick by which I test every major problem - and that yardstick is: Is it good for America?

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

We need to stop looking to politicians to make our world better. Politicians don't make the world a better place. Everything that's ever made the world a better place has come from inventors, engineers, scientists, teachers, artists, builders, philosophers, healers, and people that choose love over hate.

—Don Freeman

No nation has friends—only interests.

--Charles De Gaulle

My observation about politics in many countries is that its practitioners fall into these two groups. The boys in politics are those individuals who want position in order to be something; the men are those who want position in order to do something.

--Eric Sevareid

Thou dost not know, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed.

--Count Axel Oxenstiern

Politics, and the fate of mankind, are shaped by men without ideals and without greatness. Men who have greatness within them don't go in for politics.

--Albert Camus

Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.

--George Jean Nathan

There is no group in America that can withstand the force of an aroused public opinion.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

There are three constant issues that have run through American politics, ever since the founding of the Republic...war and peace...bread and butter...and black and white.

--Theodore White

You can't have a Congress that responds to the needs of the workingman when there are practically no people here who represent him. And you're not going to have a society that understands its humanity if you don't have more women in government.

--Bella Abzug

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail. Without it, nothing can succeed.

--Abraham Lincoln

The test of any government is the extent to which it increases the good in the people.

--Aristotle

Compromise is a noble word that sums up democracy.

--Saul Alinsky

The very essence of a free government consists in considering offices as public trusts, bestowed for the good of the country, and not for the benefit of an individual or party.

--John C. Calhoun

The high destiny of the individual is to serve rather than to rule.

--Albert Einstein

The men the American public admire most extravagantly are the most daring liars; the men they detest most violently are those who try to tell them the truth.

--H. L. Mencken

The care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of good government.

--Thomas Jefferson

The test of our progress is not whether we add to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough to those who have little.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

The law requires a paper towel ad to be scrupulously honest, but allows political candidates to lie without reproach. What's wrong with this picture?

--Jef I. Richards

A politician would do well to remember that he has to live with his conscience longer than he does with his constituents.

—Melvin R. Laird

The first duty of government is to see that people have food, fuel, and clothes. The second, that they have means of moral and intellectual education.

--John Ruskin

If men would consider not so much wherein they differ, as wherein they agree, there would be far less of uncharitableness and angry feeling.

—Joseph Addison

The ear of the leader must ring with the voices of the people.

—Woodrow Wilson

It is a truism that almost any sect, cult, or religion will legislate its creed into law if it acquires the political power to do so.

--Robert A. Heinlein

I debated in high school! If you told things that weren't true or just made things out of whole cloth, you were penalized. It's too bad they don't apply the same standards to presidential candidates as they do to high school students.

—Mark Hamill

I dream of a world where the truth is what shapes people's politics, rather than politics shaping what people think is true.

—Neil deGrasse Tyson

The two primal fears in American politics are: (1) that Democrats will perpetually increase taxes to the point where they drive the nation and you into penury because they cannot stop spending money on utopian dreams and vote-buying schemes; and (2) that Republicans will happily sacrifice your health, education and welfare in order to enrich themselves and the other fellas down at the country club. These contrasting perceptions have driven American politics since the New Deal.

—Michael Kelly

I would like to nominate a man who is honest and courageous. I'd like to, but this party doesn't have one of those kind of people. My candidate does not know the meaning of the word 'compromise,' does not know the meaning of the word 'appeasement', 'does not know the meaning of the word 'cowardice'—and has done quite well despite his lousy vocabulary.'

—Vaughn Meader

In order to become the master, the politician poses as the servant.

—Charles de Gaulle

Neither current events nor history show that the majority rule, or ever did rule.

—Jefferson Davis

Heroism is essential to politics. We live for the hour when a politician stands up in Theodore Roosevelt's dusty arena and we recognize, with astonishment, that here is a person prepared to take risks, tell us what we don't want to hear, face possible defeat for a principle, tackle insuperable odds, and by doing so, show us that politics need be not just the art of the possible, but the art of the impossible.

—Michael Ignatieff

I love America more than any other country in the world and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually.

—James A. Baldwin

Negotiation in the classic diplomatic sense assumes parties are more anxious to agree than to disagree.

--Dean Acheson

Politicians neither love nor hate. Interest, not sentiment, directs them.

--Lord Chesterfield

Machiavelli was hardly the first theorist to maintain that politics is a ruthless business, requiring leaders to do things their private conscience might abhor. Everyone, it is safe to say, knows that politics is one of those realms of life where you put your soul at risk. What's distinctively shocking about Machiavelli is that he didn't care. He believed not only that politicians must do evil in the name of the public good, but also that they shouldn't worry about it. He was unconcerned, in other words, with what modern thinkers call the problem of dirty hands.

--Michael Ignatieff

When an opposing party holds Congress, it will always view weakening the president as its paramount goal. It will launch as many congressional investigations as possible, in hopes of finding scandal in an administration or at least distracting its appointees. It will block nominations and try to frustrate a president's attempts to keep the executive branch operational. Its leaders will define 'compromise' as the president's accepting all of their demands and abandoning his own. If the leaders of Congress do finally strike a deal with the administration, a president should be wary. The simple fact about most deals with a congressional opposition, is that they just won't work under the American two-party system.

--James H. Rowe, Jr.
(1946)

All conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone you leave them as they are. But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution.

--G. K. Chesterton

After Obama won, the longed-for post-racial moment did not arrive; on the contrary, racism intensified.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

I have a wealthy friend who lives in a wealthy neighborhood. One day he was in his front yard, chatting with his next-door neighbor, a Republican, who asked him why he's a Democrat. My friend said he'd grown up poor but had gotten a good public education, worked his tail off, and made it. Then he pointed to a gardener working across the street. 'Don't you want that gardener's son to live the same American Dream we have?' my friend asked. His neighbor shot him down, sniffing, 'That gardener's son will be my son's gardener.'

--Paul Begala

During the 16 years I served in Congress, and every day since my last term ended, I have seen the United States Congress as it actually functions, not as a gathering of America's chosen leaders to confront, together, the problems we face, but as competing armies—on the floor, in committees, in subcommittees—determined to dominate or destroy.

--Mickey Edwards

A simple and a proper function of government is just to make it easy for us to do good and difficult for us to do wrong.

--Jimmy Carter

The only people who should be in government are those who care more about people than they do about power.

--Millicent Fenwick

To me the Presidency and the Vice Presidency were not prizes to be won but a duty to be done.

--Gerald R. Ford

All progressive legislation has always had its genesis in the mind of one person....One can do much. And one and one and one can move mountains.

--Joan Ward-Harris

The President must be greater than anyone else, but not better than anyone else. We subject him and his family to close and constant scrutiny and denounce them for things that we ourselves do every day. A Presidential slip of the tongue, a slight error in judgment—social, political, or ethical—can raise a storm of protest. We give the President more work than a man can do, more responsibility than a man should take, more pressure than a man can bear. We abuse him often and rarely praise him. We wear him out, use him up, eat him up. And with all this, Americans have a love for the President that goes beyond loyalty or party nationality; he is ours, and we exercise the right to destroy him.

--John Steinbeck

Nothing is easier than spending the public money. It does not appear to belong to anybody. The temptation is overwhelming to bestow it on somebody.

--Calvin Coolidge

People on the whole are very simpleminded, in whatever country one finds them. They are so simple as to take literally, more often than not, the things their leaders tell them.

--Pearl S. Buck

You send me to Washington to represent you in the senate. But you do not send me there because you are interested in grave questions of national or international policy. When I come back to Arizona, you never ask me any questions about such policies; instead you ask me: 'What about my pension?' or 'What about that job for my son?' I am not in Washington as a statesman. I am there as a very well paid messenger boy doing your errands. My chief occupation is going around with a forked stick picking up little fragments of patronage for my constituents.

--Senator Henry
Fountain Ashurst

There is no Democratic or Republican way of cleaning the streets.

--Fiorello la Guardia

I will make a bargain with the Republicans: if they will stop telling lies about Democrats, we will stop telling the truth about them.

--Adlai Stevenson

Democracy is liberty plus economic security. We Americans want to pray, think as we please—and eat regular.

--Maury Maverick

At the extremes of the political spectrum one encounters people who are moved chiefly to find an outlet for the venom that is in them.

--D. Suttan

Most government officials are rushing headlong to solve the problems of 50 years ago, with their ears assailed by the sound of snails whizzing by.

--Eric Jonsson

Every time I hear a political speech or I read those of our leaders, I am horrified at having, for years, heard nothing which sounded human. It is always the same words telling the same lies. And the fact that men accept this, that the people's anger has not destroyed these hollow clowns, strikes me as proof that men attribute no importance to the way they are governed; that they gamble—yes, gamble—with a whole part of their life and their so-called 'vital interests.'

--Albert Camus

The most valuable function performed by the federal government is entertainment.

--Dave Barry

The world of politics is always twenty years behind the world of thought.

--John Jay Chapman

When we got into office, the thing that surprised me most was to find that things were just as bad as we'd been saying they were.

--John F. Kennedy

I learned one thing in politics. If you go into it...then sooner or later you have to compromise. You either compromise or get out.

--Hugh Sloan

The first thing you do when you want to be elected is to prostitute yourself. You show me a man with courage and conviction and I'll show you a loser.

--Ray Kroc

Government is only as good as the men in it.

--Drew Pearson

Our best protection against bigger government in Washington is better government in the states.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

--Edmund Burke

Politics is the diversion of trivial men who, when they succeed at it, become important in the eyes of more trivial men.

--George Jean Nathan

The sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

Within the first few months I discovered that being a president is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep riding or be swallowed.

--Harry S. Truman

It is weakness rather than wickedness which renders men unfit to be trusted with unlimited power.

--John Adams

The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed [and hence clamorous to be led to safety] by menacing it with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary.

--H. L. Mencken

Everybody in government is like a bunch of ants on a log floating down a river. Each one thinks he is guiding the log, but it's really just going with the flow.

--Robert Strauss

Government is how a democracy organizes itself and decides how to deal with large problems, whether it's the education of the young, the safety of our food, or the defense of the nation.

--Jon Meacham

Ninety-eight percent of the adults in this country are decent, hardworking, honest Americans. It's the other lousy two percent that get all the publicity. But then—we elected them.

--Lily Tomlin

A good government remains the greatest of human blessings, and no nation has ever enjoyed it.

--William Ralph Inge

'Do you pray for the Senators, Dr. Hale?' someone asked the chaplain. 'No, I look at the Senators and pray for the country.'

--Edward Everett Hale

A politician thinks of the next election; a statesman of the next generation. A politician looks for the success of his party; a statesman for that of his country. The statesman wishes to steer, while the politician is satisfied to drift.

--J. F. Clarke

In government offices which are sensitive to the vehemence and passion of mass sentiment public men have no sure tenure. They are in effect perpetual office seekers, always on trial for their political lives, always required to court their restless constituents.

--Walter Lippmann

No easy problems ever come to the President of the United States. If they are easy to solve, somebody else has solved them.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

When we get sick, we want an uncommon doctor. If we have a construction job, we want an uncommon engineer. When we get into a war, we dreadfully want an uncommon admiral and an uncommon general. Only when we get into politics are we content with the common man.

--Herbert Hoover

The requisites of government are that there be sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler.

--Confucius

Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

Elections are won by men and women chiefly because most people vote against somebody, rather than for somebody.

--Franklin P. Adams

Politics means the art of compromise. Most politicians are all-too-well schooled in this art. They compromise to get nominated; they compromise to get elected; and they compromise time and time again, after they are elected, to stay in office.

--Dick Gregory

Political history is far too criminal and pathological to be a fit subject of study for the young. Children should acquire their heroes and villains from fiction.

--W. H. Auden

Conservatives and liberals may be defined as those who think that on the whole things are all right and you better not tinker much with them, and those who think that there is enormous room for improvement.

--Justice Felix
Frankfurter

I have always given it as my decided opinion that no nation had a right to intermeddle in the internal concerns of another; that everyone had a right to form and adopt whatever government they liked best to live under themselves.

--George Washington

I belong to no organized political party—I am a Democrat.

--Will Rogers

Whenever you have an efficient government you have a dictatorship.

--Harry S. Truman

The idea that you can merchandise candidates for high office like breakfast cereal—that you can gather votes like box tops—is, I think, the ultimate indignity to the democratic process.

--Adlai Stevenson

The short memories of American voters is what keeps our politicians in office.

--Will Rogers

Our country—when right, to be kept right, when wrong, to be put right.

--Carl Schurz

I think we must save America from the missionary idea that you must get the whole world on the American way of life. That is really a big world danger.

--Gunnar Myrdal

The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government.

--George Washington

When I was a boy, I was told anybody could become President; I'm beginning to believe it.

--Clarence Darrow

The biggest mistake in my political life was not to learn how to use television.

--Hubert H. Humphrey

Guidelines for Bureaucrats: When in charge, ponder; when in trouble, delegate; when in doubt, mumble.

--James Boren

Even in politics, an evil action has evil consequences. That, I believe, is the law of Nature as precise as any law of physics or chemistry.

--Jawaharlal Nehru

We can have democracy in the country or we can have great wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both.

--Louis D. Brandeis

Of all sciences, there is none where first appearances are more deceitful than in politics.

--David Hume

The translation of values into public policy is what politics is about.

--Willard Gaylin

Government is necessary, not because man is naturally bad, but because man is by nature more individualistic than social.

--Thomas Hobbes

If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

--James Madison

I can attack my government, try to organize to change it. That's more than I can do in Moscow, Peking, or Havana.

--Saul Alinsky

A nation without the means of reform is without means of survival.

--Edmund Burke

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.

--Alfred, Lord Tennyson

I always voted at my party's call,
And I never thought of thinking for myself at all.

--William S. Gilbert

I don't know much about Americanism, but it's a damned good word with which to carry an election.

--Warren G. Harding

The government of cities is the one conspicuous failure of the United States.

--James Bryce

Public office is the last refuge of the incompetent.

--Boies Penrose

A conservative is like a player trying to steal second base while keeping his foot on first.

--Laurence J. Peter

Conservatism is the maintenance of conventions already in force.

--Thorstein Veblen

The middle of the road is where the white line is—and that's the worst place to drive.

--Robert Frost

Democracy is that form of society, no matter what its political classification, in which every man has a chance and knows that he has it.

--James Russell Lowell

As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.

--Abraham Lincoln

Law, in a democracy, means the protection of the rights and liberties of the minority.

--Alfred E. Smith

Democracy alone, of all forms of government, enlists the full force of men's enlightened will...It is the most humane, the most advanced and in the end the most unconquerable of all forms of human society. The democratic aspiration is no mere recent phase of human history. It is human history.

--Franklin Delano
Roosevelt

Democracy is based on the conviction that man has the moral and intellectual capacity, as well as the inalienable right, to govern himself with reason and justice.

--Harry S. Truman

A democracy is predicated on the idea that ordinary men and women are capable of governing themselves.

--Adolf Berle

Democracy is the art of thinking independently together.

--Alexander Meiklejohn

Democracy is the worst system of all forms of government.

--Robert Welch

Democracy arose from men's thinking that if they are equal in any respect, they are equal absolutely.

--Aristotle

A democracy is a government in the hands of men of low birth, no property, and unskilled labor.

--Aristotle

Democracy is direct self-government, over all the people, for all the people, by all the people.

--Theodore Parker

Democracy means government by the uneducated, while aristocracy means government by the badly educated.

--G. K. Chesterton

There is no greater farce than to talk of democracy. To begin with, it is a lie; it has never existed in any great country.

--Henri Bourassa

Politics has become so expensive that it takes a lot of money even to be defeated.

—Will Rogers

What is politics but persuading the public to vote for this and support that and endure these for the promise of those?

--Gilbert Highet

The median number of years for the survival of governments without violence is eleven years.

--Daniel Patrick
Moynihan

There is no right government except good government.

--George Santayana

To rule is easy, to govern difficult.

--Johann W. von Goethe

Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property.

--Thomas Jefferson

My ardent desire is, and my aim has been, (as far as depended upon the executive department,) to comply strictly with all our engagements, foreign and domestic, but to keep the United States free from political connexions with every other country, to see them independent of all and under the influence of none. In a word, I want an American character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for ourselves, and not for others. This, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home.

--George Washington

Democracy is an experiment, and the right of the majority to rule is no more inherent than the right of the minority to rule; and unless the majority represents sane, righteous, unselfish public sentiment, it has no inherent right.

--William Allen White

Governments exist to protect the rights of minorities. The loved and the rich need no protection—they have many friends and few enemies.

--Wendell Phillips

Man is a political animal.

--Aristotle

Voters quickly forget what a man says.

--Richard M. Nixon

If you want to understand democracy, spend less time in the library with Plato, and more time in the busses with people.

--Simeon Strunsky

Idealism is the noble toga that political gentlemen drape over their will to power.

--Aldous Huxley

Politics should be the part-time profession of every citizen.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

The successful politician is he who says what everybody is thinking most often and in the loudest voice.

--Theodore Roosevelt

When a man has cast his longing eye on offices, a rottenness begins in his conduct.

--Thomas Jefferson

Assassination...should be used as the vote should ideally be used, that is, bearing in mind only the public good.

--Edward Hyams

I consider world government absolutely impossible to attain.

--Walter Lippmann

The majority is the best way, because it is visible, and has strength to make itself obeyed. Yet it is the opinion of the least able.

--Blaise Pascal

The best government is a benevolent tyranny tempered by an occasional assassination.

--Voltaire

The state, it cannot too often be repeated, does nothing, and can give nothing, which it does not take from somebody.

--Henry George

Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one.

--Thomas Paine

That government is best which governs the least, because its people discipline themselves.

--Thomas Jefferson

Too bad that all the people who know how to run the country are busy driving taxi cabs and cutting hair.

--George Burns

The art of statesmanship is to foresee the inevitable and to expedite its occurrence.

--Talleyrand

The people's right to change what does not work is one of the greatest principles of our system of government.

--Richard M. Nixon

Power is a drug on which the politicians are hooked. They buy it from the voters, using the voters' own money.

--Richard J. Needham

The essential ingredient of politics is timing.

--Pierre Elliott Trudeau

Politics is not a good location or a vocation for anyone lazy, thin-skinned or lacking a sense of humor.

--John Bailey

Politics is the gizzard of society, full of gut and gravel.

--Henry David Thoreau

There is no excitement anywhere in the world, short of war, to match the excitement of the American presidential campaign.

--Theodore White

Democracy is good. I say this because other systems are worse.

--Jawaharlal Nehru

Every man wishes to pursue his occupation and to enjoy the fruits of his labours and the produce of his property in peace and safety, and with the least possible expense. When these things are accomplished, all the objects for which government ought to be established are answered.

--Thomas Jefferson

Do the People, directly or indirectly, participate in directing the policies of their government? If they do, however wrongheaded their policies, they have a democracy; if not, however wise the policies chosen for them, they have none.

--Carl Cohen

A democrat need not believe that the majority will always decide wisely; what he must believe is that the decision of the majority, whether wise or unwise, must be accepted until such time as the majority decides otherwise.

--Bertrand Russell

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

--James Madison

No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of a democracy, however, is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected.

--Harry S. Truman

All government without the consent of the governed, is the very definition of slavery.

--Jonathan Swift

The end of all political effort must be the well-being of the individual in a life of safety and freedom.

--Dag Hammarskjöld

Democracy is a condition where people believe that other people are as good as they are.

--Stuart Chase

He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career.

--George Bernard Shaw

In politics there is no honour.

--Benjamin Disraeli

The pleasure politicians take in their limelight pleases me with a sort of pleasure I get when I see a child's eyes gleam over a new toy.

--Hilaire Belloc

The politician is now assailed by half a dozen competing interests within his own state or region; and his party affiliation, his own political philosophy, may give him no help in making up his mind as to what is going to be good for the public and even for himself.

--D. W. Brogan

If we meet an honest and intelligent politician, a dozen, a hundred, we say they aren't like politicians at all, and our category of politicians stays unchanged; we know what politicians are like.

--Randall Jarrell

I'll tell you what I really think about politicians. The other night I watched some politicians on television talking about Viet Nam. I wanted very much to burst through the screen with a flame thrower and burn their eyes out and their balls off and then inquire from them how they would assess this action from a political point of view.

--Harold Pinter

Politically, what we need is government in which a man offers himself as a candidate because he has a new program that he wants to effectuate, and we choose him because we want that good, and judge that he is the best man to effectuate it.

--Paul Goodman

All the politics-as-usual of today seems so terribly antiquated; it lags so sadly behind the actual situation of man—and behind even our present knowledge of man.

--William Barrett

It was but the other day that a man sent me a letter asking what matter one should put into a political speech. To which I answered, having an expert knowledge in this, that the whole art of a political speech is to put nothing into it. It is much more difficult than it sounds.

--Hilaire Belloc

With all the temptations and degradations that beset it, politics is still the noblest career than any man can choose.

--F. S. Oliver

Those of you who regard my profession of political life with some disdain should remember that it made it possible for me to move from being an obscure lieutenant in the United States Navy to Commander-in-Chief in fourteen years with very little technical competence.

--John F. Kennedy

My experience in government is that when things are non-controversial, beautifully coordinated and all the rest, it must be that there is not much going on.

--John F. Kennedy

The plain fact is that most cities are not organized to cope with their problems. Their haphazard growth has brought such rampant administrative disorder that good government is scarcely possible.

--John W. Gardner

The masses are the material of democracy, but its form—that is to say, the laws which express the general reason, justice, and utility—can only be rightly shaped by wisdom, which is by no means a universal property.

--Henri Frederic Amiel

Democracy is the form of government in which the free are rulers.

--Aristotle

The most may err as grossly as the few.

--John Dryden

The evils of popular government appear greater than they are; there is compensation for them in the spirit and energy it awakens.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Even though counting heads is not an ideal way to govern, at least it is better than breaking them.

--Learned Hand

Democracy is a form of government which may be rationally defended, not as being good, but as being less bad than any other.

--William Ralph Inge

Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories.

--Thomas Jefferson

I know no safe depository for the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education.

--Thomas Jefferson

A conservative is a man with two perfectly good legs who, however, has never learned to walk forward.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Constitution of the United States is a law for rulers and people, equally in war and peace, and covers with the shield of its protection all classes of men, at all times, and under all circumstances.

--Justice David Davis

Democracy is the superior form of government, because it is based on a respect for man as a reasonable being.

--John F. Kennedy

No amount of charters, direct primaries, or short ballots will make a democracy out of an illiterate people.

--Walter Lippmann

Democracy, the practice of self-government, is a covenant among free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

It is for men to choose whether they will govern themselves Or be governed.

--Henry Ward Beecher

A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take it all away.

--Barry Goldwater

There are no necessary evils in government. Its evils exist only in its abuses.

--Andrew Jackson

The only orthodox object of the institution of government is to secure the greatest degree of happiness possible to the general mass of those associated under it.

--Thomas Jefferson

Too often our Washington reflex is to discover a problem and then throw money at it, hoping it will somehow go away.

--Kenneth B. Keating

It is a function of government to invent philosophies to explain the demands of its own convenience.

--Murray Kempton

Any system of government will work when everything is going well. It's the system that functions in the pinches that survives.

--John F. Kennedy

The basis of effective government is public confidence.

--John F. Kennedy

It is perfectly true that that government is best which governs least. It is equally true that that government is best which provides most.

--Walter Lippmann

The art of governing consists in not letting men grow old in their jobs.

--Napoleon I

The essence of the Liberal outlook lies not in what opinions are held, but in how they are held: instead of being held dogmatically, they are held tentatively, and with a consciousness that new evidence may at any moment lead to their abandonment.

--Bertrand Russell

He serves his party best who serves the country best.

--Rutherford B. Hayes

The amount of effort put into a campaign by a worker expands in proportion to the personal benefits that he will derive from his party's victory.

--Milton Rakove

As a man of politics, I cannot afford the doctrine of man's individual magnificence.

--Jean Anouilh

Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.

--John Kenneth
Galbraith

I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics.

--Mohandas K. Gandhi

The tragedy of all political action is that some problems have no solution; none of the alternatives are intellectually consistent or morally uncompromising; and whatever decision is taken will harm somebody.

--James Joll

Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river.

--Nikita Khrushchev

We demand of our political life greater certainty and greater perfection than we demand of our personal life.

--Max Lerner

Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.

--Mao Tse-Tung

All politics are based on the indifference of the majority.

--James Reston

The future lies with those wise political leaders who realize that the great public is interested more in government than in politics.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

Prosperity is necessarily the first theme of a political campaign.

--Woodrow Wilson

If freedom had been the happy, simple, relaxed state of ordinary humanity, man would have everywhere been free—whereas through most of time and space he has been in chains. Do not let us make any mistake about this. The natural government of man is servitude. Tyranny is the normal pattern of government.

--Adlai E. Stevenson

Let us show ourselves Americans by showing that we do not want to go off in separate camps or grounds by ourselves, but that we want to co-operate with all other classes and all other groups in a common enterprise which is to release the spirits of the world from bondage—that is the meaning of democracy.

--Woodrow Wilson

The theory of Communism may be summed up in one sentence: Abolish all private property.

--Karl Marx

Which is the best government? That which teaches us to govern ourselves.

--Johann Wolfgang Von
Goethe

Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.

--Daniel O'Connell

There is an infinity of political errors which, being once adopted, become principles.

--Abbe Raynal

Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few.

--George Bernard Shaw

Public instruction should be the first object of government.

--Napoleon

It is better for a city to be governed by a good man than by good laws.

--Aristotle

They that govern most make the least noise. You see, when they row in a barge, they that do drudgery work, slash and puff, and sweat, but he that governs sits quietly at the stern, and is scarce seen to stir.

--Selden

A conservative is a man who just sits and thinks, mostly sits.

—Woodrow Wilson

The only way in which to fit a people for self-government is to entrust them with self-government.

--Macaulay

Every form of government tends to perish by excess of its basic principle.

--Will Durant

For forms of government let fools contest.
That which is best administered is best.

--Alexander Pope

Society is well governed when the people obey the magistrates, and the magistrates obey the law.

--Solon

Almost any system of government will work if the people will.

--Unknown

Give the people issues, and you will not have to sell your souls for campaign funds.

--William E. Borah

To let politics become a cesspool, and then avoid it because it is a cesspool, is a double crime.

--Howard Crosby

Democrats never agree on anything, that's why they're Democrats. If they agreed with each other, they'd be Republicans.

—Will Rogers

People vote their resentment, not their appreciation. The average man does not vote for anything, but against something.

--William B. Munro

Politicians are as good as you are, for the way you vote creates politicians.

--Unknown

Lincoln was right, of course; you can't fool all of the people all of the time; but you only have to fool a majority.

--Unknown

Men, by their constitutions, are naturally divided into two parties: 1. Those who fear and distrust the people, and wish to draw all powers from them into the hands of the higher classes. 2. Those who identify themselves with the people, have confidence in them, cherish and consider them as the most honest and safe, although not the most wise, depository of the public interests....In every country these two parties exist....The appellation of Aristocrats and Democrats is the true one, expressing the essence of all.

--Thomas Jefferson

Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called.

—Edmund Burke

Nothing appears more surprising to those who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few.
—David Hume

The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest.
--Thomas Jefferson

Government is just a device to protect man so that he may earn his bread in the sweat of his labor.
--Hugh S. Johnson

A hated government does not endure long.
--Seneca

The deterioration of a government begins almost always by the decay of its principles.
--Montesquieu

You can only govern men by serving them. The rule is without exception.
--Victor Cousin

I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government rather than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual.
--Samuel Johnson

One of the greatest delusions in the world is the hope that the evils of this world can be cured by legislation. I am happy in the belief that the solution of the great difficulties of life and government are in better hands even than that of this body.
--Thomas B. Reed

It is indeed astonishing with how little wisdom mankind can be governed, when that little wisdom is its own.
--Dean W. R. Inge

Why has government been instituted at all? Because the passions of men will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice without constraint.
--Alexander Hamilton

Government by a king is best, but government by a tyrant is the worst form of rule.
--St. Thomas Aquinas

Formerly, a public man needed a private secretary for a barrier between himself and the public. Nowadays he has a press secretary, to keep him properly in the public eye.

--Daniel J. Boorstin

It is not easy for a person to do any great harm when his tenure of office is short, whereas long possession begets tyranny.

--Aristotle

It is an easy and a vulgar thing to please the mob, and not a very arduous task to astonish them; but essentially to benefit and improve them is a work fraught with difficulty and teeming with danger.

--Charles Caleb Colton

He that puts on a public gown must put off a private person.

--Thomas Fuller

Shrewdness in Public Life all over the World is always honored, while honesty in Public Men is generally attributed to Dumbness and is seldom rewarded.

--Will Rogers

In our democracy officers of the government are the servants, and never the masters of the people.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

Your public servants serve you right; indeed often they serve you better than your apathy and indifference deserve.

--Adlai Stevenson

A government can be no better than the public opinion which sustains it.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

Many politicians refuse to answer all your questions on the grounds that it might eliminate them.

--Unknown

To be a successful politician, find out where the public is going, take a short cut across the field, get out in front, and make the people think you're leading the way.

--Unknown

Politics is the science of who gets what, when, and why!

--Sidney Hillman

People don't necessarily vote for the best man these days. They vote for the one they think will give them the most or cost them the least.

--Unknown

Do you not know, my son, with what little understanding the world is ruled?

--Pope Julius III

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.

--Thomas Jefferson

The more I see of the representatives of the people, the more I admire my dogs.

--Alphonse de Lamartine

That is the best government which desires to make the people happy, and knows how to make them happy.

--Thomas Babington
Macaulay

Knowledge of human nature is the beginning and end of political education.

--Henry Brooks Adams

The object of government is the welfare of the people. The material progress and prosperity of a nation are desirable chiefly so far as they lead to the moral and material welfare of all good citizens.

--Theodore Roosevelt

Government is everywhere to a great extent controlled by powerful minorities, with an interest distinct from that of the mass of the people.

--Goldsworthy Lowes
Dickinson

Political campaigns are designedly made into emotional orgies which endeavor to distract attention from the real issues involved, and they actually paralyze what slight powers of cerebration man can normally muster.

--James Harvey Robinson

There's just one rule for politicians all over the world: Don't say in power what you say in opposition; if you do, you only have to carry out what the other fellows have found impossible.

--John Galsworthy

Public life is regarded as the crown of a career, and to young men it is the worthiest ambition. Politics is still the greatest and the most honorable adventure.

--John Buchan

The tendency of democracies is, in all things, to mediocrity, since the tastes, knowledge, and principles of the majority form the tribunal of appeal.

--James Fenimore Cooper

Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half of the people are right more than half of the time.

--E. B. White

Diplomacy is to do and say the nastiest thing in the nicest way.

--Isaac Goldberg

Diplomacy is the art of fishing tranquilly in troubled waters.

--J. Christopher Herold

A diplomat is a person who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip.

--Caskie Stinnett

Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants.

--Edmund Burke

An honest politician is one who, when he is bought, will stay bought.

--Simon Cameron

The saddest life is that of a political aspirant under democracy. His failure is ignominious and his success is disgraceful.

--H. L. Mencken

The good of man must be the end of the science of politics.

--Aristotle

If the conscience of an honest man lays down stern rules, so also does the art of politics. At a juncture where no accommodation is possible between the two, the politician may be faced by these alternatives: 'Shall I break the rules of my art in order to save my private honour? or shall I break the rules of my conscience in order to fulfill my public trust?'

--F. S. Oliver

You cannot adopt politics as a profession and remain honest.

--Louis McHenry Howe

The dead govern the living.

--Augustus Comte

If ever this free people—if this government itself is ever utterly demoralized, it will come from this incessant human wriggle and struggle for office, which is but a way to live without work.

--Abraham Lincoln

Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong.

--Daniel O'Connell

Our Government is a government by political parties under the guiding influence of public opinion. There does not seem to be any other method by which a republic can function.

--Calvin Coolidge

I hate all bungling as I do sin, but particularly bungling in politics, which leads to the misery and ruin of many thousands and millions of people.

--Johann Wolfgang
von Goethe

Some have said that it is not the business of private men to meddle with government, a bold and dishonest saying, which is fit to come from no mouth but that of a tyrant or a slave. To say that private men have nothing to do with government is to say that private men have nothing to do with their own happiness or misery; that people ought not to concern themselves whether they be naked or clothed, fed or starved, deceived or instructed, protected or destroyed.

--Cato

Two kinds of men generally best succeed in political life: men of no principle, but of great talent: and men of no talent, but of one principle—that of obedience to their superiors.

—Wendell Phillips

In politics, merit is rewarded by the possessor being raised, like a target, to a position to be fired at.

--Christian Nestell Bovee

A hypocrite is the kind of politician who would cut down a redwood tree, then mount the stump and make a speech for conservation.

--Adlai E. Stevenson

Far more important to me is, that I should be loyal to what I regard as the law of my political life, which is this: a belief that that country is best governed, which is least governed.

--George Hoadly

Government is a kind of legalized pillage.

--Elbert Hubbard

The government is us; we are the government, you and I.

--Theodore Roosevelt

In the long-run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom; we have to say, 'Like People like Government.'

--Thomas Carlyle

All free governments are managed by the combined wisdom and folly of the people.

--James A. Garfield

You can't run a government solely on a business basis... Government should be human. It should have a heart.

--Herbert Henry Lehman

It is the duty of the government to make it difficult for people to do wrong, easy to do right.

--William E. Gladstone

Diplomacy is a disguised war, in which states seek to gain by barter and intrigue, by the cleverness of arts, the objectives which they would have to gain more clumsily by means of war.

--Randolph Bourne

Diplomacy—the patriotic art of lying for one's country.

--Ambrose Bierce

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

Remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.

--John Quincy Adams

Democracy is only a dream: it should be put in the same category as Arcadia, Santa Claus, and Heaven.

--H. L. Mencken

Too many people expect wonders from democracy, when the most wonderful thing of all is just having it.

--Walter Winchell

Democracy is the art and science of running the circus from the monkey cage.

--H. L. Mencken

Congress is so strange. A man gets up to speak and says nothing. Nobody listens—and then everybody disagrees.

--Boris Marshalov

People talk about the middle of the road as though it were unacceptable. Actually, all human problems, excepting morals, come into the gray areas. Things are not all black and white. There have to be compromises. The middle of the road is all of the usable surface. The extremes, right and left, are in the gutters.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

When it comes to facing up to serious problems, each candidate will pledge to appoint a committee. And what is a committee? A group of the unwilling, picked from the unfit, to do the unnecessary. But it all sounds great in a campaign speech.

--Richard Long Harkness

We understand that politics is nothing but war without bloodshed; and war is nothing but politics with bloodshed.

--Fred Hampton

Politicians are not people who seek power in order to implement policies they think necessary. They are people who seek policies in order to attain power.

--Evelyn Waugh

No man is fit to be trusted with power. Any man who has lived at all knows the follies and wickedness he's capable of.

--C. P. Snow

The principal impediment to personal independence and political freedom lies, not surprisingly, in human nature: specifically in the fact that man possesses a powerful passion to control others; that the most effective way to do so is by infantilizing them and pretending to care for them.

--Thomas Szasz

Somehow liberals have been unable to acquire from life what conservatives seem to be endowed with at birth: namely, a healthy skepticism of the powers of government agencies to do good.

--Daniel Patrick
Moynihan

There are men who desire power simply for the sake of the happiness it will bring: these belong chiefly to political parties.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

The measure of man is what he does with power.

--Pittacus

Power always acts destructively, for its possessors are ever striving to lace all phenomena of social life into a corset of their laws to give them a definite shape.

--Rudolph Rucker

The problem of power is really the fundamental problem of our time and will remain the basic problem of all future history.

--Herbert Rosinski

Those who have seized power, even for the noblest of motives, soon persuade themselves that there are good reasons for not relinquishing it. This is particularly likely to happen if they believe themselves to represent some immensely important cause. They will feel their opponents are ignorant and perverse; before long they will come to hate them.

--Bertrand Russell

Power is the ability to cause people to act as we wish when they would have acted otherwise but for the effects of our desires.

--Bertrand Russell

He who is firmly seated in authority soon learns to think security, and not progress, the highest lesson of statecraft.

--James Russell Lowell

Politics is always a struggle for power, disguised and modified by prudence, reason and moral pretext.

--William Hurrell
Mallock

The lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness.

--Erich Fromm

It is not power itself, but the legitimation of the lust for power, which corrupts absolutely.

--R. H. S. Crossman

Those who have been once intoxicated with power, and have derived any kind of emolument from it, even though but for one year, can never willingly abandon it.

--Edmund Burke

Power intoxicates men. When a man is intoxicated by alcohol, he can recover, but when intoxicated by power, he seldom recovers.

--James F. Byrnes

History is not a web woven with innocent hands. Among all the causes which degrade and demoralize men, power is the most constant and most active.

--Lord Acton

The possession of unlimited power will make a despot of almost any man. There is a possible Nero in the gentlest human creature that walks.

--Thomas Bailey Aldrich

What is a communist? One who hath yearnings for equal division of unequal earnings. Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing, to fork out his copper and pocket your shilling.

--Ebenezer Elliott

The commonest weakness of left-wing radicalism, as we have seen, has been its disposition to assume that the destruction of an existing system of society in its entirety will necessarily be followed by something better.

--Louis J. Halle

The distinctive feature of totalitarian systems, and communism most notably of all, is the elaborately constructed apparatus of control which is inevitably set in place after the seizure of power....Among authoritarian regimes, there is nothing comparable to the calculation, creative thinking, and long-range planning that totalitarianism devotes to the most mundane details of controlling society.

--Arch Puddington

The Communist theory of the dictatorship assumes that ultimate success in achieving the goal is certain—so certain as to justify a generation at least of poverty, slavery, hatred, spying, forced labor, extinction of independent thought, and refusal to cooperate in any way with the nations that have heretical governments.

--Bertrand Russell

The reduction of political discourse to sound bites is one of the worst things that's happened in American political life.

--John Silber

Diplomacy is the art of saying 'nice doggie' until you can find a rock.

--Will Rogers

Tyranny is yielding to the lust of governing.

--Lord Moulton

A monarchy is a merchantman, which sails well, but will sometimes strike on a rock and go to the bottom, whilst a republic is a raft which will never sink, but then your feet are always in water.

--Fisher Ames

Government is not reason, it is not eloquence—it is force.

--George Washington

To govern is to choose.

--Pierre Mendès-France

The illegal we do immediately. The unconstitutional takes a little longer.

--Henry Kissinger

It would be desirable if every government, when it comes to power, should have its old speeches burnt.

--Philip Snowden

Man's capacity for evil makes democracy necessary, and man's capacity for good makes democracy possible.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

States, like men, have their growth, their manhood, their decrepitude, their decay.

--Walter Savage Landor

The point to remember is that what the Government gives it must first take away.

--John S. Coleman

Tyranny is always better organized than freedom.

--Charles Péguy

While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can very seriously injure the government in the short space of four years.

--Abraham Lincoln

Any people anywhere, being inclined and having the power, have the right to rise up and shake off the existing government and form a new one. This is a most valuable and sacred right—a right which we hope and believe is to liberate the world.

--Abraham Lincoln

No man should be in public office who can't make more money in private life.

--Thomas E. Dewey

My definition of a free society is a society where it is safe to be unpopular.

--Adlai Stevenson

Washington is a city of people doing badly what shouldn't be done at all.

--Robert H. Gurney

There is nothing in which the power of circumstances is more evident than in politics.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Public office is a public trust, the authority and opportunities of which must be used as absolutely as the public moneys for the public benefit.

--Dorman B. Eaton

Socialism: You have two cows. Give one to your neighbor.

Communism: You have two cows. Give both to the government. The government give you milk.

Fascism: You have two cows. Give milk to the government. The government sells it.

Nazism: The government shoots you and takes the cows.

New Dealism: The government shoots one cow, milks the other, and pours the milk down the sink.

Anarchism: Keep the cows. Steal another one. Shoot the government.

Conservatism: Freeze the milk. Embalm the cow.

Liberalism: Give away one cow. Get the government to give you a new cow. Now give them both away.

--*University of Manitoba*

Government today sits as an invisible partner of every company, every family and every individual in the country.

--William Wearly

Anything that the private sector can do, government can do it worse.

--Dixie Lee Ray

No matter how noble the objectives of a government, if it blurs decency and kindness, cheapens human life, and breeds ill will and suspicion—it is an evil government.

--Eric Hoffer

All government—indeed, every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue and every prudent act—is founded on compromise and barter.

--Edmund Burke

A government could produce a good print edition of Shakespeare's work, but it could not get them written.

--Alfred Marshall

The experience of Russia, more than any theories, has demonstrated that all government, whatever its forms or pretenses, is a dead weight that paralyzes the free spirit and activities of the masses.

--Emma Goldman

To govern is always to choose among disadvantages.

--Charles De Gaulle

The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life—the children; those who are in the twilight of life—the aged; and those who are in the shadows of life—the sick, the needy and the handicapped.

--Hubert Humphrey

It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong.

--Voltaire

Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber.

--Plato

The reason there are so few female politicians is that it is too much trouble to put makeup on two faces.

--Maureen Murphy

Once you touch the biographies of human beings, the notion that political beliefs are logically determined collapses like a pricked balloon.

--Walter Lippmann

Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give the appearance of solidarity to pure wind.

--George Orwell

In my own experience, I have been amazed to see how unrealistic are the bases for political opinion in general. Only rarely have I found a person who has chosen any particular political party—democratic or totalitarian—through study and comparison of principles.

--Joost A. Merloo

It was a wise man who said that there is no greater inequality than the equal treatment of unequals.

--Felix Frankfurter

A new race of men is springing up to govern the nation; they are hunters after popularity, men of ambition, not of the honor so much as the profits of an office...whose principles hang laxly upon them, and who follow not so much what is right as what leads them to a temporary vulgar applause.

--Joseph Story

When all the fine phrases are stripped away, it appears that the state is only a group of men with human interests, passions, and desires or, worse yet...an obscure clerk hidden in some corner of a governmental bureau. In either case the assumption of superhuman wisdom and virtue is proved false.

--William Graham
Sumner

The politician who curries favor with the citizens and indulges them and fawns upon them and has a presentiment of their wishes, and is skilled at gratifying them, is esteemed as a great statesman.

--Plato

Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.

--Plato

Party-spirit at best is but the madness of many for the gain of a few.

--Alexander Pope

The worst government is the most moral. One composed of cynics is often very tolerant and humane. But when fanatics are on top there is no limit to oppression.

--H. L. Mencken

The tragedy of all political action is that some problems have no solution; none of the alternatives are intellectually consistent or morally uncompromising; and whatever decision is taken will harm somebody.

--James Joll

One of the most curious things about politics in America is the extraordinary lack of knowledge concerning its practice and principles, not only on the part of the people as a whole but of the practitioners themselves.

--Frank R. Kent

The people are no more capable of organizing and acting to attain and guard their general interests by sound political action than they are of achieving immortality by incantation and prayer. Unless saved by forces outside themselves they are perpetually doomed to be victims of their own ineptitude or of their shrewd exploiters.

--Ferdinand Lundberg

Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other.

--Oscar Ameringer

To exploit and to govern mean the same thing. Exploitation and government are two inseparable expressions of what is called politics.

--Mikhail A. Bakunin

It is proof of a base and low mind for one to think with the masses or majority, merely because the majority is the majority. Truth does not change because it is, or is not, believed by a majority of people.

--Giordano Bruno

Government has no right to control individual liberty beyond what is necessary to the safety and well-being of society. Such is the boundary which separates the power of the government and the liberty of the citizen or subject in the political state.

--John C. Calhoun

A president's hardest task is not to do what's right, but to know what's right.

--Lyndon B. Jonson

The office of government is not to confer happiness, but to give men opportunity to work out happiness for themselves.

--William Ellery
Channing

I hold it, that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.

--Thomas Jefferson

The president is the representative of the whole nation and he's the only lobbyist that all the one hundred and sixty million people in this country have.

--Harry S. Truman

The presidency does not yield to definition. Like the glory of a morning sunrise, it can be experienced—it can not be told.

--Calvin Coolidge

In America, any boy may become president, and I suppose it's just one of the risks he takes.

--Adlai Stevenson

I have no expectation of making a hit every time I come to bat.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

I desire to so conduct the affairs of this administration that if, at the end...I have lost every friend on earth, I shall have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.

--Abraham Lincoln

Power corrupts the few, while weakness corrupts the many.

--Eric Hoffer

It is not power that corrupts but fear. The fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it, and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it.

--Aung San Suu Kyi
(Winner of 1991
Nobel Peace Prize)

A dictatorship is a country where they have taken the politics out of politics.

--Sam Himmel

Vote for the man who promises least; he'll be the least disappointing.

--Bernard Baruch

Once upon a time my political opponents honored me as possessing the fabulous intellectual and economic power by which I created a worldwide depression all by myself.

--Herbert Hoover

In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics'. All issues are political issues.

--George Orwell

As I learnt very early in my life in Whitehall, the acid test of any political question is: What is the alternative?

--Lord Trent

When Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero 106-43 BC,) was in 64 BC running for consul of Rome he was reported to be advised by his 'campaign manager' that the voters 'had rather you lied to them than refused them.'

--Unknown

Practical politics consists in ignoring facts.

--Henry Adams

Politics, as a practice, whatever its professions, has always been the systematic organization of hatreds.

--Henry Adams

If you ever injected truth into politics you would have no politics.

--Will Rogers

Politics. The diplomatic name for the law of the jungle.

--Ely Culbertson

In politics a community of hatred is almost always the foundation of friendships.

--Alexis de Tocqueville

I'm not an old, experienced hand at politics. But I am now seasoned enough to have learned that the hardest thing about any political campaign is how to win without proving that you are unworthy of winning.

--Adlai Stevenson

Never retract, never explain, never apologize—get the thing done and let them howl.

--Nellie McClung

A Conservative is a man who will not look at the new moon, out of respect for that ancient institution, the old one.

--Douglas Jerrold

I just received the following wire from my generous Daddy 'Dear Jack: Don't buy a single vote more than necessary. I'll be damned if I am going to pay for a landslide.'

--John F. Kennedy

In politics it is necessary either to betray one's country or the electorate. I prefer to betray the electorate.

--Charles de Gaulle

Politics is a blood sport.

--Aneurin Bevan

Politics is supposed to be the second oldest profession. I have come to realize that it bears a very close resemblance to the first.

--Ronald Reagan

The second office of this government is honorable and easy, the first is but a splendid misery.

--Thomas Jefferson

The great nations have always acted like gangsters, and the small nations like prostitutes.

--Stanley Kubrick

The heaviest penalty for deciding to engage in politics is to be ruled by someone inferior to yourself.

--Plato

The radical invents the views. When he has worn them out, the conservative adopts them.

--Mark Twain

The world is a dangerous place to live—not because of the people who are evil but because of the people who don't do anything about it.

--Albert Einstein

90% of the politicians give the other 10% a bad reputation.

--Henry Kissinger

All political lives, unless they are cut off in midstream at a happy juncture, end in failure.

--Enoch Powell

Probably the most distinctive characteristic of the successful politician is selective cowardice.

--Richard Harris

Successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies.

--Walter Lippman

A Conservative is a fellow who is standing athwart history yelling 'Stop!'

--William F. Buckley, Jr.

Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his friends for his political life.

--Jeremy Thorpe

Our Congressmen are the finest body of men money can buy.

--Maury Amsterdam

He knows nothing; he thinks he knows everything—that clearly points to a political career.

--George Bernard Shaw

If I believe in something, I will fight for it with all I have. But I do not demand all or nothing. I would rather get something than nothing. Professional liberals want the fiery debate. They glory in defeat. The hardest job for a politician today is to have the courage to be a moderate. It's easy to take an extreme position.

--Hubert Humphrey

You do not know, you cannot know, the difficulty of the life of a politician. It means every minute of the day or night, every ounce of your energy. There is no rest, no relaxation. Enjoyment? A politician does not know the meaning of the word.

--Nikita Khrushchev

A politician divides mankind into two classes: tools and enemies.

--Friedrich Nietzsche

Since a politician never believes what he says, he is surprised when others believe him.

--Charles de Gaulle

More men have been elected between Sundown and Sunup than ever were elected between Sunup and Sundown.

--Will Rogers

Macdonald's Law: Never write a letter if you can help it, and never destroy one.

--John A. Macdonald

When liberty destroys order, the hunger for order will destroy liberty.

--Will Durant

As the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it.

--John Adams

Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants.

--Edmund Burke

While the people should patriotically and cheerfully support their Government, its functions do not include the support of the people.

--Grover Cleveland

Government should do only those things the people cannot do for themselves

--Ronald Reagan

No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of a democracy, however, is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected.

--Harry S. Truman

Government never shrinks.

--Unknown

Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one,...cities will never have rest from their evils,—no, nor the human race.

--Plato

To say nothing, especially when speaking, is half the art of diplomacy.

--Will and Ariel Durant

The hatred Americans have for their own government is pathological....At one level it is simply thwarted greed: since our religion is making a buck, giving a part of that buck to any government is an act against nature.

--Gore Vidal

Diplomacy—the art of jumping into trouble without making a splash.

--Art Linkletter

A diplomat is a man who always remembers a woman's birthday, but never remembers her age.

--Robert Frost

Governments tend not to solve problems, only rearrange them.

--Ronald Reagan

There are only two kinds of politics...the politics of fear and the politics of trust. One says: you are encircled by monstrous dangers. ...The other says: the world is a baffling and hazardous place, but it can be shaped to the will of men.

--Edmund Muskie

The difference between the men and the boys in politics is, and always has been, that the boys want to be something, while the men want to do something.

--Eric Sevareid

Being in politics is like being a football coach. You have to be smart enough to understand the game and dumb enough to think it's important.

--Eugene McCarthy

Politics is show business for ugly people.

--Paul Begala

A government big enough to give us everything we want would be big enough to take from us everything we have.

--Gerald Ford

The President is the government.

--John Ehrlichman

There is but one way for a president to deal with the Congress, and that is continuously, incessantly, and without interruption. If it's really going to work, the relationship between the president and the Congress has got to be almost incestuous.

--Lyndon Baines Johnson

Government is an expression of philosophy, and active governments are inevitably guided by philosophers.

--Lyndon Baines Johnson

The government solution to a problem is usually as bad as the problem.

--Milton Friedman

To put political power in the hands of men embittered and degraded by poverty is to tie firebrands to foxes and turn them loose amid the standing corn.

--Henry George

Suppose you were an idiot and suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.

--Mark Twain

It is inaccurate to say I hate everything. I am strongly in favor of common sense, common honesty, and common decency. This makes me forever ineligible for any public office.

--H. L. Mencken

What this country needs is more unemployed politicians.

--Edward Langley

Ronald Reagan is not a typical politician because he doesn't know how to lie, cheat, and steal. He's always had an agent for that.

--Bob Hope

Too often the great decisions are originated and given form in bodies made up wholly of men, or so completely dominated by them that whatever of special value women have to offer is shunted aside without expression.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

And you're not going to have a society that understands its humanity if you don't have more women in government.

--Bella Abzug

In politics women...type the letters, lick the stamps, distribute the pamphlets and get out the vote. Men get elected.

--Clare Boothe Luce

I don't consider the Equal Rights Amendment a political issue. It is a moral issue as far as I am concerned. Where are women mentioned in the Constitution except in the Nineteenth Amendment, giving us the right to vote? When they said all men were created equal, they really meant it—otherwise, why did we have to fight for the Nineteenth Amendment?

--Carol Burnett

Politics are usually the executive expression of human immaturity.

--Vera Brittain

Degeneracy follows every autocratic system of violence, for violence inevitably attracts moral inferiors. Time has proven that illustrious tyrants are succeeded by scoundrels.

--Albert Einstein

We have a lot of people revolutionizing the world because they've never had to present a working model.

--Charles F. Kettering

Revolution: in politics, an abrupt change in the form of misgovernment.

--Ambrose Bierce

Man is born to seek power, yet his actual condition makes him a slave to the power of others.

--Hans J. Morgenthau

Politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians.

--Charles de Gaulle

Power will intoxicate the best hearts, as wine the strongest heads. No man is wise enough, nor good enough to be trusted with unlimited power.

--Charles Caleb Colton

I was really too honest a man to be a politician and live.

--Socrates

The whole art of politics consists in directing rationally the irrationalities of men.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

Politics is a profession; a serious, complicated and, in its true sense, a noble one.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

I'm proud that I'm a politician. A politician is a man who understands government, and it takes a politician to run a government. A statesman is a politician who's been dead 10 or 15 years.

--Harry S. Truman

A political career brings out the basest qualities in human nature.

--Lord Bryce

The political world is stimulating. It's the most interesting thing you can do. It beats following the dollar.

--John Fitzgerald
Kennedy

No nation is fit to sit in judgment upon any other nation.

--Woodrow Wilson

The political machine works because it is a united minority acting against a divided majority.

--Will Durant

There is nothing in which the power of circumstances is more evident than in politics.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Public office is a public trust, the authority and opportunities of which must be used as absolutely as the public moneys for the public benefit.

--Dorman B. Eaton

The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings; the inherent virtue of socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.

--Winston Churchill

Capitalism and communism stand at opposite poles. Their essential difference is this: The communist, seeing the rich man and his fine home, says: 'No man should have so much.' The capitalist, seeing the same thing, says: 'All men should have as much.'

--Phelps Adams

Government must be responsive to the needs and the dreams of its people.

--Mary Ellen Withrow

One of the world's few true generalizations is that all nations, including the British and the Americans, fight the boredom of everyday life by admiring and despising the flaws and glamour of their dynasties.

--Simon Sebag Montefiore

Monarchy is something kept behind a curtain about which there is a great deal of bustle and fuss, and a wonderful air of seeming solemnity. But when, by any accident, the curtain happens to be open, and the company see what it is, they burst into laughter.

--Thomas Paine

Politics and money...these most complex dealings in human mischief are ruled by the most ordinary men who achieve wealth and power simply by fitting neatly into their appointed slots without disturbing the bureaucratic or organizational machinery.

--Louise Brooks

How is the world ruled and how do wars start? Diplomats tell lies to journalists and then believe what they read.

--Karl Kraus

You campaign in poetry; you govern in prose.

--Mario Cuomo

A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country.

—'Texas' Guinan

A politician is a man who approaches every question with an open mouth.
--Adlai E. Stevenson II

I used to say that politics was the second lowest profession and I have come to know that it bears a great similarity to the first.
--Ronald Reagan

The only thing that saves us from the bureaucracy is its inefficiency.
--Eugene McCarthy

No diet will remove all the fat from your body because the brain is entirely fat. Without a brain you might look good, but all you could do is run for public office.
--Covert Bailey

Conservatives are satisfied with present evils; liberals want to replace them with new ones.
--Unknown

A politician is an animal which can sit on a fence and yet keep both ears to the ground.
--H. L. Mencken

What a politician needs: 'It is the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month, and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen.'
--Winston Churchill

We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.
--Aesop

A politician is a person with whose politics you don't agree; if you agree with him he is a statesman.
--David Lloyd George

Women need to see ourselves as individuals capable of creating change. That is what political and economic power is all about: having a voice, being able to shape the future. Women's absence from decision-making positions has deprived the country of a necessary perspective.
--Madeleine Kunin

Women's place is in the House—and in the Senate.

--Gloria Schaffer

One of the things being in politics has taught me is that men are not a reasoned or reasonable sex.

--Margaret Thatcher

Party organization matters. When the door of a smoke-filled room is closed, there's hardly ever a woman inside.

--Millicent Fenwick

There's one sure way of telling when politicians aren't telling the truth—their lips move.

--Felicity Kendal

It is not lack of polling data or campaign contributions which keeps many women from ascending higher on the political ladder. It is fear and loathing for the political system itself.

--Madeleine Kunin

Democrats are the kind of people who'd stop to help you change a flat, but would somehow manage to set your car on fire. I would be reluctant to entrust them a Cuisinart, let alone the economy. The Republicans, on the other hand, would know how to fix your tire, but they wouldn't bother to stop because they'd want to be on time for Ugly Pants Night at the country club.

--Dave Barry

People, when they go into politics, they give up a lot. They give up financially, they give up their private lives and sometimes their health. And then bang, no thanks, you're out. Then you've got to pick up the pieces and make your way.

--Michael Wilson

There are some politicians who, if their constituents were cannibals, would promise them missionaries for dinner.

--H. L. Mencken

Politics is social work with power.

--Barbara Mikulski

I have simplified my politics into an utter detestation of all existing governments...riches are power, and poverty is slavery...and one sort of establishment is no better, nor worse, for a people than another.

--Lord Byron

When a nation's young men are conservative, its funeral bell is already rung.

--Henry Ward Beecher

Fascists can't argue, so they kill.

--Victor Marguerite

Politicians...rise predominantly from...the 'lower middle class'; most are self-made men...; most depend on their political jobs for a livelihood and most have little time, inclination, or opportunity for adult education; hence the dominating qualities of so many are greed, vulgarity, attention to special interest, avarice, and selfishness.

--John Gunther

A man that'd expect to train lobsters to fly...is called a loonytic; but a man that thinks men can be turned into angels by an illiction is called a rayformer an' remains at large.

--Finley Peter Dunne

When there is a lack of honor in government, the morals of the whole people are poisoned.

--Herbert Hoover

The power which establishes a state is violence; the power which maintains it is violence; the power which eventually overthrows it is violence.

--Kenneth Kaunda

Under the doctrine of separation of powers, the manner in which the president personally exercises his assigned executive powers is not subject to questioning by another branch of government.

--Richard Nixon

No voter in the world ever voted for nothing; in some way he has been convinced that he is to get something for the vote. His vote is all that our Constitution gives him, and it goes to the highest bidder.

--Will Rogers

An election is a moral horror, as bad as a battle except for the blood: a mud bath for every soul concerned in it.

—George Bernard Shaw

The chief distinction of a diplomat is that he can say no in such a way that it sounds like yes.

--Lester Bowles Pearson

A good politician is quite as unthinkable as an honest burglar.

--H. L. Mencken

He knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career.

--George Bernard Shaw

If you want to succeed in politics, you must keep your conscience well under control.

--David Lloyd George

Politics are almost as exciting as war and quite as dangerous. In a war you can only be killed once, but in politics—many times.

--Winston Churchill

I have never found in a long experience of politics that criticism is ever inhibited by ignorance.

--Harold Macmillan

Have you ever seen a candidate talking to a rich person on television?

--Art Buchwald

There are no true friends in politics. We are all sharks circling, and waiting, for traces of blood to appear in the water.

--Alan Clark

Giving money and power to the government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys.

--P. J. O'Rourke

The price of power is responsibility for the public good.

--Winthrop W. Aldrich

Unlimited power is worse for the average person than unlimited alcohol; and the resulting intoxication is more damaging for others. Very few have not deteriorated when given absolute dominion. It is worse for the governor than for the governed.

--William Lyon Phelps

No man is worthy the honored name of a statesman who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may have eloquence, he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence; and by these he might claim, in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman; but, unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman.

--Horace Mann

In America you can go on the air and kid the politicians, and the politicians can go on the air and kid the people.

--Groucho Marx

In a dictatorship there is only one dictator; in a democracy the government is full of them.

--Unknown

After a man has been in Congress, he rarely goes back to real work.

--Ed Howe

A State which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes—will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.

--John Stuart Mill

The purpose of political action and the opportunity of free political life is for the people ultimately to determine their own destiny, and—after they have had the chance to learn—even to make their own mistakes. The great end they are serving is the development of their country through the development of themselves, not by authoritative interventions, no matter how competent or benevolent. It is not true that tyrants can never be benevolent. The trouble is that they go on being tyrants, and under tyranny individual men dry up for lack of spiritual exercise.

The purpose of a democratic society is to make great persons.

--Lyman Bryson

I ...regard the exaggerated hopes we attach to politics as the cure of our age, just as I regard moderation as one of our vanishing virtues.

--Irving Kristol

An ambassador is an honest man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country.

--Sir Henry Wotton

My people and I have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please.

--Frederick the Great

Communism is socialism with electricity.

--Vladimir Lenin

Once there were two brothers: one ran away to sea, the other was elected Vice-President—and nothing was ever heard from either of them again.

--Thomas R. Marshall

Democracy is the art and science of running the circus from the monkey cage.

--H. L. Mencken

A democracy is a government in the hands of men of low birth, no property, and unskilled labor.

--Aristotle

Why pay money to have your family tree traced; just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you.

--Mark Twain

Foreign aid is a form of foreign trade by which American dollars are exchanged for ill will.

--Unknown

What I gained by being in France was learning to be better satisfied with my own country.

--Samuel Johnson

A government is the only known vessel that leaks from the top.

--James Reston

Every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under.

—H. L. Mencken

With politicians the lie is as much a part of speech as the noun and verb.

--Unknown

To want a change in government is like biting another lemon to see which is the sweeter.

--Unknown

A statesman lives to serve his country well, a politician serves it to live well.

--Unknown

The difference between the statesman and the politician is that one acts on principle while the other acts on self-interest.

--Unknown

Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters.

—Abraham Lincoln

Power does not corrupt man; fools, however, if they get into a position of power, corrupt power.

--Bernard Shaw

The Senate is a body of elderly men charged with high duties and misdemeanors.

--Ambrose Bierce

Nearly all legislation is the result of compromise.

--Joseph G. Cannon

I have come to the conclusion that one useless man is called a disgrace, that two are called a law firm, and that three or more become a congress.

--Peter Stone

Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in its committee-rooms is Congress at work.

--Woodrow Wilson

To my mind Judas Iscariot was nothing but a low, mean, premature Congressman.

--Mark Twain

There is a tradition that, on his return from France, Jefferson called Washington to account at the breakfast-table for having agreed to a second chamber. 'Why,' asked Washington, 'did you pour that coffee into your saucer?' 'To cool it,' quoth Jefferson. 'Even so,' said Washington, 'we pour legislation into the senatorial saucer to cool it.'

--Moncure D. Conway

A conservative believes nothing should be done for the first time.

—Thomas Fuller

Democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.

--Winston Churchill

The true art of government consists in not governing too much.

--Jonathan Shipley

Government is like a big baby—an alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other.

--Ronald Reagan

The ultimate aim of government is not to rule, or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work without injury to himself or others.

No, the object of government is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security, and to employ their reason unshackled; neither showing hatred, anger, or deceit, nor watched with the eyes of jealousy and injustice. In fact, the true aim of government is liberty.

--Benedictus De Spinoza

I favor the policy of economy, not because I wish to save money, but because I wish to save people. The men and women of this country who toil are the ones who bear the cost of the Government. Every dollar that we carelessly waste means that their life will be so much the more abundant. Economy is idealism in its most practical form.

--Calvin Coolidge

A liberal is a person whose interests aren't at stake at the moment.

--Willis Player

Lord, the money we do spend on Government and it's not one bit better than the government we got for one-third the money twenty years ago.

--Will Rogers

A nation that can not preserve itself ought to die, and it will die—die in the grasp of the evils it is too feeble to overthrow.

--Morris Sheppard

Senator Stephen Douglas is of world-wide renown. All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party for years past, have been looking upon him as certainly, at no distant day, to be the President of the United States. They have seen in his round, jolly, fruitful face, post offices, land offices, marshalships, and cabinet appointments, charge ships and foreign missions, bursting and sprouting out in wonderful exuberance ready to be laid hold of by their greedy hands.

--Abraham Lincoln

[Recipe for Political Success:] If a politician during a campaign finds it necessary to resort to flattery, he should spread it on, not in thin layers, but with a trowel, or better yet, a shovel. Politicians should not forget that voters never grow weary of illusory promises. Politicians should ever remember that the electorate suspects and distrust men of superb intellect, calmness, and serenity. And, finally, the politician must always tell people what they want to hear.

--Senator Henry
Fountain Ashurst

POLITICIAN, n. An eel in the fundamental mud upon which the superstructure of organized society is reared. When he wriggles he mistakes the agitation of his tail for the trembling of the edifice. As compared with the statesman, he suffers the disadvantage of being alive.

--Ambrose Bierce

In my youth, I, too, entertained some illusions; but I soon recovered from them. The great orators who rule the assemblies by the brilliancy of their eloquence are in general men of the most mediocre political talents: they should not be opposed in their own way; for they have always more noisy words at command than you. Their eloquence should be opposed by a serious and logical argument; their strength lies in vagueness; they should be brought back to the reality of facts; practical arguments destroy them. In the council, there were men possessed of much more eloquence than I was: I always defeated them by this simple argument—two and two make four.

--Napoleon

I think politicians and movie actors and movie executives are similar in more ways than they're different. There is an egocentric quality about both; there is a very sensitive awareness of the public attitude, because you live or die on public favor or disfavor. There is the desire for publicity and for acclaim, because, again, that's part of your life....And in a strange and bizarre way, when movie actors come to Washington, they're absolutely fascinated by the politicians. And when the politicians go to Hollywood, they're absolutely fascinated by the movie stars. It's a kind of reciprocity of affection by people who both recognize in a sense they're in the same racket.

--Jack Valenti

They are wrong who think that politics is like an ocean voyage or a military campaign, something to be done with some particular end in view, something which leaves off as soon as that end is reached. It is not a public chore, to be got over with. It is a way of life. It is the life of a domesticated political and social creature who is born with a love for public life, with a desire for honor, with a feeling for his fellows; and it lasts as long as need be.

--Plutarch

Politics is the practical exercise of the art of self-government, and somebody must attend to it if we are to have self-government; somebody must study it, and learn the art, and exercise patience and sympathy and skill to bring the multitude of opinions and wishes of self-governing people into such order that some prevailing opinion may be expressed and peaceably accepted. Otherwise, confusion will result either in dictatorship or anarchy. The principal ground of reproach against any American citizen should be that he is not a politician. Everyone ought to be, as Lincoln was.

--Elihu Root

The political activity prevailing in the United States is something one could never understand unless one had seen it. No sooner do you set foot on American soil than you find yourself in a sort of tumult; a confused clamor rises on every side, and a thousand voices are heard at once, each expressing some social requirements. All around you everything is on the move: here the people of a district are assembled to discuss the possibility of building a church; there they are busy choosing a representative; further on, the delegates of a district are hurrying to town to consult about some local improvements; elsewhere it's the village farmers who have left their furrows to discuss the plan for a road or a school.

--Alexis de Tocqueville
(1840)

Politics is the art of the possible.

--Otto van Bismarck

Politics is a fascinating game, because politics is government. It is the art of government.

--Harry S. Truman

Until you've been in politics
you've never really been alive
it's rough and sometimes it's
dirty and it's always hard
work and tedious details
But, it's the only sport for grownups—all other
games are for kids.

—Robert A. Heinlein

The essence of Government is power; and power, lodged as it must be in human hands, will ever be liable to abuse.

--James Madison

A Private Life is to be preferr'd; the Honour and Gain of publick Posts, bearing no proportion with the Comfort of it.

--William Penn

The office should seek the man, not man the office.

--Silas Wright

It is from weakness that people reach for dictators and concentrated government power. Only the strong can be free. And only the productive can be strong.

--Wendell Willkie

I would relate to the crowds how I called on a certain rural constituent and was shocked to hear him say he was thinking of voting for my opponent. I reminded him of the many things I had done for him as prosecuting attorney, as county judge, as congressman, and senator. I recalled how I had helped get an access road built to his farm, how I had visited him in a military hospital in France when he was wounded in World War I, how I had assisted him in securing his veteran's benefits, how I had arranged his loan from the Farm Credit Administration, how I had got him a disaster loan when the flood destroyed his home, etc. etc.

'How can you think of voting for my opponent?' I exhorted at the end of this long recital. 'Surely you remember all these things I have done for you?'

'Yeah,' he said, 'I remember. But what in hell have you done for me lately?'

--Alben W. Barkley

We'd all like t'vote fer th'best man, but he's never a candidate.

--Kin Hubbard

Historically the American people have always yearned mightily for leadership and have consistently mistrusted and maligned it whenever it appeared.

--Samuel B. Gould

I was once a Communist, but not now. It is a good philosophy, but a bad political system.

--Milovan Djilas

Communism: It did not offer an answer to the question: why should a man be good?

--Jaya Prakash Narayan

Under Communism everyone must have a job. But there is no requirement to work.

--Warsaw Resident

The cold war of rhetoric between communism and capitalism has killed no soldiers, but the air is full of the small corpses of words that once were alive: democracy, freedom, liberation.

--Donald Hall

What is called Communism in backward countries is hunger becoming articulate.

--Lord Boyd Orr

'The common good' is the most common argument politicians use for coercing individuals to conform to social custom.

--Perry London

Congress is an institution designed only to react, not to plan or lead.

--Jimmy Breslin

There is rarely political risk in supporting the President and rarely political advantage in disagreement—unless and until a particular policy appears a failure.

--Nicholas Katzenbach

Eisenhower sat on his ass and we were a thousand times better off.

--Eric Hoffer

No democracy is possible without friction.

--Nicholas von Hoffmann

Instead of The Ugly Americans we should be labelled The Childish Americans, who think that by sharing a half-licked lollipop in our favorite democratic flavor we can make people love us.

--Grace Nies Fletcher

We cannot, when it comes to dealings between governments, assign moral values the same significance we give them in personal life.

--George F. Kennan

Government is nothing but who collects the money and how they spend it.

--Gore Vidal

In government the budget is the message.

--I. F. Stone

The only way a government can provide anything to anybody is if they first take it away from somebody else. The government is capable of providing nothing but control. That is its only purpose.

--Simon L. Miller, Jr.

In government the sin of pride manifests itself in the recurring delusion that things are under control.

--George F. Will

Two characteristics of government are that it cannot do anything quickly, and that it never knows when to quit.

--George Stigler

Anyone who thinks he will be happy and prosperous with the government looking after him should take a close look at the American Indian.

--Henry Ford

Politics is a flexible art; the minute you take a fixed position, you're in trouble.

--Norman Mailer

The men who study groups of white rats in cages might do better to study what happens when groups of bright, egocentric and ambitious—oh, ambitious—people come together to grab for public power in a short scramble to the tape marked Election Day.

--Richard Reeves

Politics—A little vagueness goes a long way in this business.

--Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

There is a thin line between politics and theatricals.

--Julian Bond

Politics is far more complicated than physics.

--Albert Einstein

Disgusted with politicians, some people from time to time yearn for government without politics. Sometimes, to their dismay, they get it, as in Soviet Russia, Poland and North Korea, where the political process has been abolished.

--S. I. Hayakawa

The typical political leader of the contemporary managerial society is a man of strong will, a high capacity to get himself elected, but no very great conception of what he is going to do when he gets into office.

--Henry A. Kissinger

I know that if one waits for the politician to find a solution, it is almost always the wrong one because politicians, by definition, react to headlines. And that's always treating the symptoms and leaving the basic conditions untouched.

--Peter Drucker

The impact of immediacy created by TV has placed a premium not on reflection and reason but on the glib answer and the bland statement. The politician is concerned with public relations, not with public principles.

--Richard B. Morris

The lust for power is not rooted in strength but weakness.

--Erich Fromm

Presidents in general are not lovable, they've had to do too much to get where they are.

--Walter Lippmann

The man who bats most often has the opportunity to hit the most foul balls—the President has a chance to bat every day.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

Men are too emotional to vote. Their conduct at baseball games and political conventions shows this, while their innate tendency to appeal to force renders them particularly unfit for the task of government....Man's place is the armory.

--Alice Duer Miller

Many southern states have political totems: tobacco in North Carolina, textiles in South Carolina, cotton in Mississippi, and oil in Louisiana and Texas. So long as an incumbent politician is faithful to the totem of his state, evil spirits seldom touch him.

--Robert Sherrill

The trouble with addicted people, communities, corporations, or countries is that they tend to lie, cheat, or steal to get their 'fix.' Corporations are addicted to profit and governments to power.

--Helen Caldicott

There are no persons capable of stooping so low as those who desire to rise in the world.

--Countess of Blessington

Under democracy, one party always devotes its chief energies to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule, and both commonly succeed. U.S. history is simply a record of vacillations between two gangs of frauds.

--H. L. Mencken

Unless you have \$7 million by the time of the next election you're not going to be able to keep the job. And therein is the corruption. Our efforts, our determination, our endeavor is to keep the job rather than to do the job.

--Sen. Ernest Hollings

The government is us; we are the government, you and I.

--Theodore Roosevelt

A President's hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

In my opinion, eight years as President is enough and sometimes too much for any man....There is a lure in power. It can get into a man's blood just as gambling and lust for money have been known to do.

--Harry S. Truman

The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

Voters don't decide issues, they decide who will decide the issues.

--George F. Will

Women are half the people; women should be half the Congress.

--Jeannette Rankin

The love of liberty is the love of others. The love of power is the love of ourselves.

--William Hazlit

If God wanted us to vote, he would have given us candidates.

--Jay Leno

The ballot is stronger than the bullet.

--Abraham Lincoln

The people have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge—I mean of the character and conduct of their rulers.

--John Adams

In a president, character is everything. A president doesn't have to be brilliant... He doesn't have to be clever; you can hire clever... You can hire pragmatic, and you can buy and bring in policy wonks. But you can't buy courage and decency, you can't rent a strong moral sense. A president must bring those things with him... He needs to have, in that much maligned word, but a good one nonetheless, a 'vision' of the future he wishes to create.. But a vision is worth little if a president doesn't have the character—the courage and heart—to see it through.

--Peggy Noonan

Those who cast the votes decide nothing. Those who count the votes decide everything.

--Joseph Stalin

Our people are slow to learn the wisdom of sending character instead of talent to Congress. Again and again they have sent a man of great acuteness, a fine scholar, a fine forensic orator, and some master of the brawls has crunched him up in his hands like a bit of paper.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Politics ruins the character.

--Otto von Bismarck

In our brief national history we have shot four of our presidents, worried five of them to death, impeached one and hounded another out of office. And when all else fails, we hold an election and assassinate their character.

--P. J. O'Rourke

Politics offers yesterday's answers to today's problems.

--Marshall McLuhan

Money is the mother's milk of politics.

--Jesse Unruh

If God had wanted us to vote, he would have give us candidates.

--Jay Leno

The only way to combat criminals is by not voting for them.

--Dayton Allen

Patriotism—The last refuge of a scoundrel.

--Samuel Johnson

When someone is beating you over the head with a hammer, don't sit there and take it. Take out a meat cleaver and cut off their hand.

--Bill Clinton

Government can't do anything for us without first taking from us the means to do it. Its only tool is force—usually the worst possible tool to apply in social matters.

--George Roche

We want to be in control of our lives. Whether we are jungle fighters, craftsmen, company men, gamesmen, we want to be in control. And when the government erodes that control, we are not comfortable. We're not comfortable at all.

--Barbara Jordan

The President cannot make clouds to rain and cannot make the corn to grow; he cannot make business good, although when these things occur, political parties do claim credit for the good things that have happened in this way.

--William Howard Taft

Finishing second in the Olympics gets you silver. Finishing second in politics gets you oblivion.

--Richard M. Nixon

The political arena leaves one no alternative, one must either be a dunce or a rogue.

--Emma Goldman

There is no hope even that woman, with her right to vote, will ever purify politics.

--Emma Goldman

In the United States, anybody can be president. That's the problem.

--George Carlin

You can lead a man to Congress, but you can't make him think.

--Milton Berle

Sometimes I wonder if we shall ever grow up in our politics and say definite things which mean something, or whether we shall always go on using generalities to which everyone can subscribe, and which mean very little.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

A government big enough to give you everything you want is a government big enough to take from you everything you have.

--Gerald R. Ford

A political leader must keep looking over his shoulder all the time to see if the boys are still there. If they aren't still there, he's no longer a political leader.

--Bernard Baruch

Diplomacy: the art of restraining power.

--Henry A. Kissinger

You can talk about capitalism and communism and all that sort of thing, but the important thing is the struggle everybody is engaged in to get better living conditions, and they are not interested too much in government.

--Bernard Baruch

At the bottom of all the tributes paid to democracy is the little man, walking into the little booth, with a little pencil, making a little cross on a little bit of paper. . . .

--Gilbert Keith
Chesterton

The Vice-Presidency is sort of like the last cookie on the plate. Everybody insists he won't take it, but somebody always does.

--Bill Vaughan

It's not the voting that's democracy; it's the counting.

--Tom Stoppard

The Democrats seem to be basically nicer people, but they have demonstrated time and time again that they have the management skills of celery. They're the kind of people who'd stop to help you change your flat, but would somehow manage to set your car on fire. I would be reluctant to entrust them with a Cuisinart, let alone the economy. The Republicans, on the other hand, would know how to fix your tire, but they wouldn't bother to stop because they'd want to be on time for Ugly Pants Night at the country club.

--Dave Barry

I have only one firm belief about the American political system: God is a Republican and Santa Claus is a Democrat.

--P. J. O'Rourke

The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks.

--Doug Larson

Let the people think they govern, and they will be governed.

--William Penn

It is an axiom in political science that unless a people are educated and enlightened, it is idle to expect the continuance of civil liberty to the capacity for self-government.

--*Texas Declaration of Independence*

The biggest need in politics and government today is for people of integrity and courage, who will do what they believe is right and not worry about the political consequences to themselves.

--Neva Beck Bosone

You can fool some of the people all of the time. Those are the people you have to concentrate on.

--George W. Bush

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

--Abraham Lincoln

Taxation WITH representation ain't so hot either.

--Gerald Barzon

I hope our wisdom will grow with our power, and teach us, that the less we use our power the greater it will be.

--Thomas Jefferson

And all this madness, all this rage, all this flaming death of our civilization and our hopes, has been brought about because a set of official gentlemen, living luxurious lives, mostly stupid, and all without imagination or heart, have chosen that it should occur rather than that any one of them should suffer some infinitesimal rebuff to his country's pride.

--Bertrand Russell

A neo-conservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality.

--Irving Kristol

Laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made.

--Otto von Bismarck

The danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern. Every class is unfit to govern.

--Lord Acton

Nothing is so admirable in politics as a short memory.

--John Kenneth
Galbraith

In politics you must always keep running with the pack. The moment that you falter and they sense that you are injured, the rest will turn on you like wolves

--R. A. Butler

Doing what's right isn't the problem. It is knowing what's right.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

It is dangerous to let the public behind the scenes. They are easily disillusioned and then they are angry with you, for it was the illusion they loved.

--W. Somerset Maugham

All the President is, is a glorified public relations man who spends his time flattering, kissing and kicking people to get them to do what they are supposed to do anyway.

--Harry S. Truman

There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can't remember what the second one is.

--Marcus Alonzo Hanna

If you cannot convince them, confuse them.

--Harry S. Truman

You're entitled to be called a fool, idiot, bonehead, slob, screwball. But an attack unanswered is an attack believed.

--Alan Simpson

Ninety percent of the politicians give the other ten percent a bad reputation.

--Henry Kissinger

All politicians think that the more they talk, the more persuasive they are.

--Leonard Cavise

The voters don't determine elections. Contributors do!

--Congressman Wilson in
*Charlie Wilson's
War*

I don't give people hell. I just tell the truth, and they think it's hell.

--Harry S. Truman

A citizen of America will cross the ocean to fight for democracy, but won't cross the street to vote in a national election.

--Bill Vaughan

Nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law of the land than passing laws which cannot be enforced.

--Albert Einstein

Politicians... talk in generalities and lies, and I think they've caused all our grief. They're so awful, they're really funny. I hate thinking this because my dad loved politics.

--Paul Lynde

Legislation is a lot like making a pot of chili. You put in a bunch of ingredients that some people like and some people don't. Then it simmers for a while before you eat it—or vote on it.

--David Yepsen

Too bad the only people who know how to run the country are busy driving cabs and cutting hair.

--George Burns

Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy.

--Ernest Benn

In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man; if you want anything done, ask a woman.

--Margaret Thatcher

Toleration and liberty are the foundations of a great republic.

--Frank Lloyd Wright

Let us not be afraid of debate or dissent.

--John F. Kennedy

A nation without the means of reform is without means of survival.

--Edmund Burke

The sole advantage of power is that you can do more good.

--Baltasar Gracián

Our duty is to be useful, not according to our desires but according to our powers.

--Henri Frédéric Amiel

The liberals can understand everything but people who don't understand them.

--Lenny Bruce

Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my heart and my hand to this vote.

--Daniel Webster

Don't sacrifice your political convictions for the convenience of the hour.

--Edward M. Kennedy

To announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public.

--Theodore Roosevelt

Being a better-informed voter only helps you better know who not to vote for.

--John Lenza III

To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men.

--Abraham Lincoln

I think of politics much as I think of prostitution. Sure, there are a lot of misbehaving pimps out there, but I'm not joining a prostitution ring to try and fix the problem. Politics, like prostitution rings, are fundamentally immoral--and this is exactly what you'd expect from the science of misdirecting power from the governed to their self-serving elected rulers and the rich puppeteers who back them.

--John Lenza III

If 'CON' is the opposite of 'PRO', what is the opposite of PROGRESS?

—Jon Stewart

The only thing that saves us from the bureaucracy is inefficiency. An efficient bureaucracy is the greatest threat to liberty.

--Eugene McCarthy

The greater the ignorance the greater the dogmatism.

--Sir William Osler

I get no respect. The way my luck is running, if I was a politician I would be honest.

--Rodney Dangerfield

You don't hide your beliefs. You persuade people. You win or lose. And if you win, you are not beholden to anyone or anything other than your own beliefs.

--Jeb Bush

When the president during the campaign said he was against nation building, I didn't realize he meant our nation.

--Al Franken

The presidency is a pretty cool job. You get a nice mansion with backyard, a bowling alley, a chef, your own helicopter, and an impressive pile of nuclear weapons.

--Howard Kurtz

If you are a politician and want to remain one, the next election is always the straw that stirs the drink of those who are intoxicated by power. Those who disagree with that proposition are known as runners-up.

--Chuck Goudie

There is no surer sign of a country's cultural and political decay than an obtuse blindness to its unmistakable beginnings.

--Edward Gibbon

I think the President is the only person who can change the direction or attitude of our nation.

--Jimmy Carter

Real leaders, they don't read polls. They change polls.

--Chris Christie

You will find that the State is the kind of organization which, though it does big things badly, does small things badly, too

--John Kenneth
Galbraith

You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.

--Zig Ziglar

Freedom works better in speeches than in practice.

--Will Rogers

Elections are never about the past, they're about the future.

--Bill Clinton

Politicians and diapers have one thing in common. They should both be changed regularly, and for the same reason.

—Mark Twain

Elections are about the past and present—governing is about the present and the future.

--Richard Wade

Politics are so vicious precisely because the stakes are so small.

--Henry Kissinger

Some people have the souls of collaborators, and others the souls of resisters. Collaborators aren't simply the active supporters of a system's oppressions. They are everyone who tacitly accepts injustice without a murmur. They confirm the system, fulfill the system, and validate the system; they are the system.

--Václav Havel

Here's what I know about political campaigns; no matter what you map out at the beginning, it's always different at the end.

--Chris Christie

Being president doesn't change who you are—it reveals who you are.

--Michelle Obama

The man who will say anything, will do anything.

--Napoleon

The one virtue of debates above all is that they are the only place in the modern campaign where the candidates, with few if any notes, speak to each other and to the public....The debates are about character.

--Craig Lamay

The easiest way to judge 'victory' in many debates is to watch with the sound turned off, so you can assess the candidates' ease, tenseness, humor, and other traits signaled by their body language.

--James Fallows

No one becomes president who is in any sense 'humble,' and the daily circumstances of the job separate this one person from the rest of human existence. You are in a bubble, and you don't know it. Everyone stands when a president enters the room; the traffic is stopped wherever he goes; no one disagrees to his face except in the most careful way. Nobody calls you on things, nobody questions your motives. When someone finally does, it is really hard for presidents to avoid showing their sense of indignation. They know they are doing the right thing for the country, and somehow these ingrates aren't giving them credit for it.

--Samuel Popkin

A black man can't be president in America, given the racial aversion and history that's still out there. However, an extraordinary, gifted, and talented young man who happens to be black can be president.

--Cornell Belcher

Barack Obama governs a nation enlightened enough to send an African American to the White House, but not enlightened enough to accept a black man as its president.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

Before Barack Obama, the 'black president' lived in the African American imagination as a kind of cosmic joke, a phantom of all that could ever be. White folks, whatever their talk of freedom and liberty, would not allow a black president. They could not tolerate Emmett's boyish gaze. Dr. King turned the other cheek, and they blew it off. White folks shot Lincoln over 'nigger equality,' ran Ida Wells out of Memphis, beat Freedom Riders over bus seats, slaughtered Medgar in his driveway like a dog.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

The first black president would need a 'Vice President Santiago'—because the only thing that would ensure his life in the White House was a Hispanic president-in-waiting.

--Dave Chappelle

The peculiar qualities which should characterize any people who are fit to decide upon the management of public affairs for a great state have seldom been combined. It is the glory of white men to know that they have had these qualities in sufficient measure to build upon this continent a great political fabric and to preserve its stability for more than ninety years, while in every other part of the world all similar experiments have failed. But if anything can be proved by known facts, if all reasoning upon evidence is not abandoned, it must be acknowledged that in the progress of nations Negroes have shown less capacity for government than any other race of people. No independent government of any form has ever been successful in their hands. On the contrary, wherever they have been left to their own devices they have shown a constant tendency to relapse into barbarism.

--Andrew Johnson

The central question that emerges—and it is not a parliamentary question or a question that is answered by merely consulting a catalog of the rights of American citizens, born Equal—is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes—the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.,
(1957)

The great majority of the Negroes of the South who do not vote do not care to vote and would not know for what to vote if they could.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.,
(1957)

When our laws, our leaders, or our government are out of alignment with our ideals, then the dissent of ordinary Americans may prove to be one of the truest expressions of patriotism.

--Barack Obama

Love of country, like all other forms of love, requires that you tell those you care about not simply what they want to hear but what they need to hear.

--Barack Obama

It is much safer to be feared than loved.

--Machiavelli

Government is the enemy until you need a friend.

--Bill Cohen

I always believe the worst poll. The easiest way to lose is to believe you've won when the fat lady hasn't even started humming.

--Tubby Harrison

No other factor, in fact, came close to dividing the Democratic primary electorate as powerfully as their feelings about African Americans. The impact of racial attitudes on individual vote decisions...was so strong that it appears to have even outstripped the substantive impact of racial attitudes on Jesse Jackson's more racially charged campaign for the nomination in 1988.

--Michael Tesler and
David Sears on the
2008 Democratic
Primary

It was only once America was well and truly bankrupted that the presidency went to a black man.

--Ta-Nehisi Coates

To make mankind just and happy and creative and harmonious forever—what could be too high a price to pay for that? To make such an omelette, there is surely no limit to the number of eggs that should be broken—that was the faith of Lenin, of Trotsky, of Mao, for all I know, of Pol Pot....You declare that a given policy will make you happier, or freer, or give you room to breathe; but I know that you are mistaken, I know what you need, what all men need; and if there is resistance based on ignorance or malevolence, then it must be broken and hundreds of thousands may have to perish to make millions happy for all time.

--Isaiah Berlin

The biggest argument against Democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.

--Winston Churchill

You win elections by addition.

--Richard Daley

The point of getting elected is getting reelected.

--Michael Tomasky

If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.

--Harry Truman

Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts.

--Daniel Patrick
Moynihan

The commonest error in politics is sticking to the carcass of dead policies.

--Marquess of Salisbury

Taking the politics out of politics is like taking the money out of capitalism.

--Rahm Emmanuel

The only index by which to judge a government or a way of life is by the quality of the people it acts upon. No matter how noble the objectives of a government, if it blurs decency and kindness, cheapens human life, and breeds ill will and suspicion — it is an evil government.

--Eric Hoffer

Every budget is a moral document.

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Never underestimate the power of human stupidity.

--Robert A. Heinlein

All presidents are unsuited to office, and therefore all presidents fail in certain crucial aspects of the job. All betray their supporters and provoke bitter criticism from their own side at some point in their term. And all are mis-assessed while in office, for reasons that typically depend more on luck and historical accident than on factors within their control.

--James Fallows

A president needs empathy and emotional intelligence, so that he can prevail in political dealings with his own party and the opposition in Washington, and in face-to-face negotiations with foreign leaders, who otherwise will go away saying that this president is 'weak' and that the country's leadership role is suspect. He needs to be confident but not arrogant; open-minded but not a weather vane; resolute but still adaptable; historically minded but highly alert to the present; visionary but practical; personally disciplined but not a prig or martinet. He should be physically fit, disease-resistant, and capable of being fully alert at a moment's notice when the phone rings at 3 a.m.—yet also able to sleep each night, despite unremitting tension and without chemical aids.

--James Fallows

A new president's first term is usually an experiment in seeing which weak point will limit everything else he does.

--James Fallows

Without exception, they [new presidents] betray their followers—and must do so, to stay in office and govern.

--James Fallows

The question in each campaign...is not 'How many of his aspirations will this president fulfill, and what trade-offs must he make along the way?' but rather 'Is he better or worse than that other person?'

--James Fallows

Failure in the management of practical affairs seems to be a qualification for success in the management of public affairs.

--Eric Hoffer

Politics changes when people can't pay for their home mortgages and can't afford medical care and can't send their kids to school. It is such a humiliating blow to be the head of a family and be unable to work and provide, that people don't respond entirely rationally all the time. It can explode in politics in a hard-to-understand way.

--Walter Mondale

Presidents are not supermen. They are human beings too, worrying about decisions, attending to wives and children, juggling balls in the air, and putting on their pants one leg at a time.

--Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

We are a pretty new nation. We're still at the stage of rebellious teenager, and we don't like it when the government tells us what to do. People don't trust government to do what's right. They are very attracted to the idea of a nation of individuals, so they don't think about what's good for the collective.

--Tom Mauser

The ultimate test of leadership is not the polls you take, but the risks you take.

--Gerald Ford

This used to be a government of checks and balances. Now it's all checks and no balances.

--Gracie Allen

Trite as it may seem, the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, was the first public assertion of human equality as a legitimate rationale for political action. The Declaration would eventually eat away at the formal barriers of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and any other differences that human beings have created to hold some down and raise others up.

--Anne-Marie Slaughter

It is terrible to contemplate how few politicians are hanged.

--G. K. Chesterton

Voting for a party is a habit, ...and the habit tends to stick. The Americans who came of age under FDR leaned more Democratic than the electorate as a whole for the rest of their voting lives.

--Molly Ball

Party loyalty is a tribe-like social identification. Despite parties' shifting stances on issues, and despite changes in personal beliefs over time, voters tend to continue to affiliate with the same political party.

--Donald Green, Bradley
Palmquist, and
Eric Schickler

There's a saying that a young person who isn't a liberal has no heart, and an old person who isn't a conservative has no brain.

--Molly Ball

Women in politics, it has long been assumed, are trapped in a disabling web of double standards—presumed by voters to be weaker and less capable leaders, but punished for violating gender norms if they do act tough or get angry.

--Molly Ball

A family on the throne is an attractive idea that disguises the complexity of government to the ignorant and heedless. As long as the human heart is strong and human reason weak, monarchies will persist, for they appeal to diffused feeling rather than to understanding. In a world of conflicting global sovereignties in which British politics will become more unintelligible and tawdry, the monarchy is well placed to be one of the few institutions in Britain able to retain its dignity, if only because it is symbolic of something beyond politics.

--Walter Bagehot

The left favors the line—the right the ladder.

--Winston Churchill

It makes sense that when women are more than half the population that you have to have women politically empowered.

--Madeleine Albright

The rise of women is not the result of any ideology or political movement; it is a result of the widespread realization, sometime after the Second World War, that families in which women work are families that prosper. And countries in which women work are countries that prosper. In 2006, a database created by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development demonstrated what common sense tells us; with few exceptions, countries in which women have more economic and political power are richer than countries where women are relatively powerless. Patriarchy is damn expensive. That's why it's doomed.

--Stephen Marche

I want to close the leadership gap: to elect a woman president and 50 women senators; to ensure that women are equally represented in the ranks of corporate executives and judicial leaders. Only when women wield power in sufficient numbers will we create a society that genuinely works for all women. That will be a society that works for everyone.

--Anne-Marie Slaughter

The word appropriators in journalism have got to stop describing our politics in the language of war or pugilism. (If I see one more 'traded jabs' reference describing a campaign debate, I am going to open my window and scream, and I invite you to join me). This war imagery is built on the construct that there must be definite winners vs. losers in any public policy outcome and that destroying your opponent is the ultimate goal. Some might think just that... politics is war. War is the failure of politics.

--Chuck Raasch

If women ruled the world there would be no wars...just a bunch of countries not talking to each other.

--Chris Rock

Nations are born in the hearts of poets, they prosper and die in the hands of politicians.

--Muhammad Iqbal

The American Constitution is, so far as I can see, the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.

--William Gladstone

Beware the politically obsessed. They are often bright and interesting, but they have something missing in their natures; there is a hole, an empty place, and they use politics to fill it up. It leaves them somehow misshapen.

--Peggy Noonan

We are fast approaching the stage of the ultimate inversion: the stage where the government is free to do anything it pleases, while the citizens may act only by permission; which is the stage of the darkest periods of human history, the stage of rule by brute force.

--Ayn Rand

My thinking tends to be libertarian. That is, I oppose intrusions of the state into the private realm - as in abortion, sodomy, prostitution, pornography, drug use, or suicide, all of which I would strongly defend as matters of free choice in a representative democracy.

--Camille Paglia

Liberals stand for tolerance, magnanimity, community spirit, the defense of the weak against the powerful, love of learning, freedom of belief, art and poetry, city life, the very things that make America worth dying for. Conservatives stand for tax cuts...[and] use the refund to buy a gun and an attack dog to take with you when you drive your all-terrain vehicle through the barricades of Republicanville.

--Garrison Keillor

Conservatives work harder, feel happier, have closer families, take fewer drugs, give more generously, value honesty more, are less materialistic and envious, whine less...and even hug their children more than liberals.

--Peter Schweizer

The corporate lobby in Washington is basically designed to stifle all legislative activity on behalf of consumers.

--Ralph Nader

Some fellows get credit for being conservative when they are only stupid.

--Kin Hubbard

There's a reason people run negative ads... it's because they work.

--Anne Northup

I learned in business that you had to be very careful when you told somebody that's working for you to do something, because the chances were very high he'd do it. In government, you don't have to worry about that.

--George P. Shultz

The most practical kind of politics is the politics of decency.

--Theodore Roosevelt

Women in politics or public roles should grow skin like a rhinoceros.

--Eleanor Roosevelt

Democracy and socialism are means to an end, not the end itself.

--Jawaharlal Nehru

Whoever looks at America will see: the ship is powered by stupidity, corruption, or prejudice.

--Johann Most

Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves are its only safe depositories.

--Thomas Jefferson

When at some future date the high court of history sits in judgment on each one of us-recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state-our success or failure, in whatever office we may hold, will be measured by the answers to four questions-were we truly men of courage ... were we truly men of judgment ... were we truly men of integrity ... were we truly men of dedication?

--John Fitzgerald
Kennedy

Power is not alluring to pure minds.

--Thomas Jefferson

If American politics are too dirty for women to take part in, there's something wrong with American politics.

--Edna Ferber

Politics are usually the executive expression of human immaturity.

--Vera Brittain

There's the biggest kind of a difference between political looters and politicians who make a fortune out of politics by keepin' their eyes wide open. The looter goes in for himself alone without considerin' his organization or his city. The politician looks after his own interest, the organization's interests, and the city's interests all at the same time.

--William L. Riordon

Dirty graft is parasitic, mere larceny, whereas honest graft helps knit together a patronage network that ensures leaders can lead and followers will follow. Reformers who failed to understand this crucial distinction courted anarchy.

--Jonathan Rauch

First, this great and glorious country was built up by political parties; second, parties can't hold together if their workers don't get the offices when they win; third, if the parties go to pieces, the government they built up must go to pieces, too; fourth then there'll be hell to pay.

--William L. Riordon

The trouble with some people is that they think this place is on the level.

--Jimmy Burke

I am neither bitter nor cynical but I do wish there was less immaturity in political thinking.

--Franklin D. Roosevelt

The saddest life is that of a political aspirant under democracy. His failure is ignominious and his success is disgraceful.

--Mary Catherine
Bateson

In the frank expression of conflicting opinions lies the greatest promise of wisdom in governmental action.

--Louis D. Brandeis

Every person has only so much attention to give, and politics and government takes up only a fraction of what it did 25 years ago.

--Robert Teeter

What generally happens in this county is that our politicians don't serve us well because they don't tell the truth, and they don't keep their promises.

--Peter Garrett

There are no true friends in politics. We are all sharks circling, and waiting, for traces of blood to appear in the water.

--Alan Clark

Bad laws are the worst sort of tyranny.

--Edmund Burke

Power is what men seek and any group that gets it will abuse it.

--Lincoln Steffens

The real question of government versus private enterprise is argued on too philosophical and abstract a basis. Theoretically, planning may be good. But nobody has ever figured out the cause of government stupidity and until they do (and find the cure) all ideal plans will fall into quicksand.

--Richard Feynman

I will not speak with disrespect of the Republican Party. I always speak with respect of the past.

--Woodrow Wilson

A healthy democracy requires a decent society; it requires that we are honorable, generous, tolerant and respectful.

--Charles W. Pickering

Elected leaders who forget how they got there won't the next time.

--Malcolm Forbes

I am Al Gore. I used to be the next president of United States of America. I'm a recovering politician. And the longer I avoid a relapse, the more confidence I have that I will not succumb to the temptation to run yet again.

--Al Gore

At the White House, everybody works for the same person. They're all part of the same company. But on Capitol Hill, they're all independent contractors. They all work for themselves.

--Bob Schieffer

I believe that all government is evil, and that trying to improve it is largely a waste of time.

--H. L. Mencken

There is nothing quite so depressing as waking up to face a day when you know that you are going to have to deal with a government office or bureaucrat.

--Neal Boortz

I know no method to secure the repeal of bad, obnoxious, or unjust laws so effective as their strict execution.

--Ulysses S. Grant

The world is not going to be saved by legislation.

--William Howard Taft

Politics: A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage.

--Ambrose Bierce

I didn't come to Washington to be loved and I haven't been disappointed.

--Philip L. Gramm

We urge the next president to establish a *White House Council of Historical Advisers*....Operationally, the *Council of Historical Advisers* would mirror the *Council of Economic Advisers*, established after World War II. A chair and two additional members would be appointed by the president to full-time positions, and respond to assignments from him or her. They would be supported by a small professional staff and would be part of the Executive Office of the President.

—Graham Allison and
Niall Ferguson

Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important.... They do not mean to do harm.... They are absorbed in the endless struggle to think well of themselves.

—T. S. Eliot

We in the press have a special role since there is no other institution in our society that can hold the President accountable. I do believe that our democracy can endure and prevail only if the American people are informed.

—Helen Thomas

With words we govern men.

--Benjamin Disraeli

We have room but for one Language here and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans of American nationality and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding-house.

--Theodore Roosevelt

Liberals tend to be more tolerant of complexity and open to novelty, while conservatives tend to prefer clearer answers and be more resistant to change.

—Carola Salvi

The marvel of all history is the patience with which men and women submit to burdens unnecessarily laid upon them by their governments.

--George Washington

The liberal ideal is that everyone should have fair access and fair opportunity. This is not equality of result. It's equality of opportunity. There's a fundamental difference.

--Robert Reich

When the politicians complain that TV turns the proceedings into a circus, it should be made clear that the circus was already there, and that TV has merely demonstrated that not all the performers are well trained.

—Edward R. Murrow

This is a strange country we live in. When it comes to electing a President, we get two choices. But when we have to select a Miss America, we get 50.

—Jay Leno

The first requirement of politics is not intellect or stamina but patience. Politics is a very long run game and the tortoise will usually beat the hare.

--John Major

From the beginning of our history the country has been afflicted with compromise. It is by compromise that human rights have been abandoned. I insist that this shall cease. The country needs repose after all its trials it deserves repose. And repose can only be found in everlasting principles.

--Charles Sumner

Bad politicians are sent to Washington by good people who don't vote.

--William E. Simon

In the scheme of our national government, the presidency is preeminently the people's office.

--Grover Cleveland

It seems very unfortunate that in order to secure political preference, people are made Vice President who are never intended, neither by party nor by the Lord, to be Presidents.

--General Omar Nelson
Bradley

There is no diplomacy like candor.

--Edward V. Lucas

Laws made by common consent must not be trampled on by individuals.

--George Washington

Rome had Senators too; that's why it declined.

--Frank Dane

The Greek thinker Plato envisioned an ideal society ruled by philosopher-kings: enlightened guardians who would steer the ship of state with wisdom and justice. This happened exactly zero times. The most common path to the throne was hereditary succession, which was frankly a bit of a crapshoot.

--*Earth (The Book) A*
Visitor's Guide to
the Human Race

Bureaucracy is the opposite of anarchy. Whereas anarchy destroys property, bureaucracy generally destroys the soul. It isn't even a real form of government. It is just a parasite that attaches itself to whatever form of government is around. And though bureaucracy's goals could be called laudable—the standardization of procedure in otherwise large, ungovernable groups—it always wraps itself in a protective cocoon of inflexibility, paperwork and mean ladies who are too busy with their personal calls to talk to you.

--*Earth (The Book) A*
Visitor's Guide to
the Human Race

First practiced by the ancient Greeks, democracy came from their word *demokratos* meaning ‘a short break from pederasty to deal with this zoning issue.’ The major strength of democracy is that every citizen has a voice in government. The major weakness of democracy is that every citizen has a voice in government. The risks are high for short-sighted rule by mob whim, inaction caused by deadlocked interest groups, or your favorite TV shows being pre-empted by some boring debate. In exchange for control over their own destinies, democracy demands one great sacrifice from its practitioners: a lunch-break trip to an elementary school gym once every two to four years. Generally, this is too much to ask. Citizens find the energy to vote only when they believe their wealth, guns or vaguely defined concept of ‘freedom’ is threatened. In fact, a democracy’s health can best be measured by the number of people who didn’t vote, thus signaling they are completely satisfied. Democracy proves to be surprisingly resilient in times of chaos or social change. This helps mask the fact that it doesn’t really work that well.

--*Earth (The Book) A
Visitor’s Guide to
the Human Race*

Don’t steal. The government hates competition.

—Ron Paul

A reformer is one who sets forth cheerfully toward sure defeat.

--Lydia M. Child

The jury consist of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer.

--Robert Frost

Politics, as the word is commonly understood, are nothing but corruptions.

--Jonathan Swift

What is the best system of government? While it has its flaws, democracy is the finest and most just system of government, provided that the party one supports is in power. (If the party one opposes is in power, however, democracy is a horrible mistake, forcing citizens to live by the hideous whims of the tyrannical, brain-washed, sub-moronic majority.

--*Earth (The Book) A
Visitor’s Guide to
the Human Race*

The results of political changes are hardly ever those which their friends hope or their foes fear.

--Thomas Huxley

This is the very devilish thing about foreign affairs: they are foreign and will not always conform to our whim.

--James Reston

While democracy must have its organizations and controls, its vital breath is individual liberty.

--Charles Evans Hughes

A politician's words reveal less about what he thinks about his subject than what he thinks about his audience.

--George Will

One must bear in mind that the expansion of federal activity is a form of eating for politicians.

--William F. Buckley, Jr.

In every society in human history, including the United States, those in power seek to imbue themselves with the attributes of religion and patriotism as a way of getting greater support for their policy and insulating themselves from any criticism.

--George J. Mitchell

Neither current events nor history show that the majority rule, or ever did rule.

--Jefferson Davis

They should rule who are able to rule best.

--Aristotle

A statesman is a successful politician who is dead.

--Thomas B. Reed

Ours is a government of checks and balances. The Mafia and crooked businessmen make out checks, and the politicians and other compromised officials improve their bank balances.

--Steve Allen

Ignorance makes most men go into a political party, and shame keeps them from getting out of it.

--Edward F. Halifax

Members of the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate are not there by accident. Each managed to get there for some reason. Learn what it was and you will know something important about them, about our country and about the American people.

--Donald Rumsfeld

The political machine triumphs because it is a united minority acting against a divided majority.

--Will Durant

Damn your principles! Stick to your party.

--Benjamin Disraeli

Republicans have nothing but bad ideas, and Democrats have no ideas.

--Lewis Black

We have been taught to regard a representative of the people as a sentinel on the watch-tower of liberty.

--Daniel Webster

Protecting the rights of even the least individual among us is, basically, the only excuse the government has for even existing.

--Ronald Reagan

The people that have had the most profound effect on the world are not elected officials, not people who have held vast kingdoms, but are basically people who walked out their front door and acted right.

--Matthew Dowd

Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future.

--John Fitzgerald
Kennedy

There are whole precincts of voters in this country whose united intelligence does not equal that of one representative American woman.

--Carrie Chapman Catt

Every government is run by liars and nothing they say should be believed.

--I. F. Stone

Richard Nixon is a no good, lying bastard. He can lie out of both sides of his mouth at the same time, and if he ever caught himself telling the truth, he'd lie just to keep his hand in.

--Harry S. Truman

In politics, what begins in fear usually ends in failure.

--Samuel Taylor
Coleridge

This will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave.

--Elmer Davis

A liberal is a man or a woman or a child who looks forward to a better day, a more tranquil night, and a bright, infinite future.

--Leonard Bernstein

The punishment which the wise suffer who refuse to take part in the government, is to live under the government of worse men.

--Plato

In America, anyone can become president. That's one of the risks you take.

--Adlai Stevenson

Those who have been eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, and the arts have all had tendencies toward melancholia.

--Aristotle

If Congress refuses to listen to and grant what women ask, there is but one course left then to pursue. What is there left for women to do but to become the mothers of the future government?

--Victoria Woodhull

The President is always abused. If he isn't, he isn't doing anything.

--Harry S. Truman

The first people totalitarians destroy or silence are men of ideas and free minds.

--Isaiah Berlin

Americans and British have different ways of saying things. They say 'elevator,' we say 'lift' ... they say 'President,' we say 'stupid psychopathic git.'

--Alexis Sayle

Government is like a baby. An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other end.

--Ronald Reagan

As the population ages, so do the political powers that be—and they're aging in place. Computerized block-by-block voting analysis and shameless gerrymandering—Maryland's new sixth congressional district is such a strange shape, it would have embarrassed Elbridge Gerry—lock incumbents into power as never before. Campaign-finance laws appear to promote reform, but in fact have been rigged to discourage challengers. Between rising life expectancy and the mounting power of incumbency, both houses of Congress are the oldest they've ever been: the average senator is 62 years old; the average representative, 57.

—Gregg Easterbrook

To me a real patriot is like a real friend. Who's your real friend? It's the person who tells you the truth. That's who my real friends are. So, you know, I think as far as our country goes, we need more people who will do that.

—Bill Maher

The difference in golf and government is that in golf you can't improve your lie.

—George Deukmejian

The word democracy comes from the Greek and means, literally, government by the people.

—Robert Welch

Fear is the foundation of most governments.

—John Adams

The trouble with this country is that there are too many politicians who believe, with a conviction based on experience, that you can fool all of the people all of the time.

—Franklin Pierce Adams

A relentless focus on scandal, spectacle, and the 'game' of politics was driving citizens away from public affairs, making it harder for even the least cynical politicians to do an effective job, and at the same time steadily eroding our public ability to assess what is happening and decide how to respond.

--James Fallows

What is the first part of politics? Education. The second? Education. And the third? Education.

—Jules Michelet

We are a great country because we are a good country.

--Abe Lincoln

Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong.

—Richard Armour

The government should not be guided by Temporary Excitement, but by Sober Second Thought.

—Martin Van Buren

I have always felt that a politician is to be judged by the animosities he excites among his opponents.

—Sir Winston Churchill

There are risks and costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction.

—John F. Kennedy

Here's a very good rule of thumb in politics: losing begets losing.

—John Podhoretz

I have wondered at times what the *Ten Commandments* would have looked like if Moses had run them through the U.S. Congress.

—Ronald Reagan

Political interest [can] never be separated in the long run from moral right.

—Thomas Jefferson

I don't like people who are in politics for themselves and not for others. You want that, you can go into show business.

—Elvis Presley

The White House: I don't know whether it's the finest public housing in America or the crown jewel of the prison system.

—Bill Clinton

No man is regular in his attendance at the House of Commons until he is married.
—Benjamin Disraeli

It used to be, everyone was entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. But that's not the case anymore. Facts matter not at all. Perception is everything.
—Stephen Colbert

Politics has become infused with narcissism in American.
—John Oliver

How does it become a man to behave towards the American government today? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it.
—Henry David Thoreau

Imagine planning a party and inviting 20 friends. 9 of them want pepperoni pizza and 11 want cheese. So you cancel the whole party. That's how the senate works.
—Unknown

On his climb up the 'greasy pole,' as he famously characterized politics, Disraeli had shoved his rivals and betters down.
—Deborah Cohen

There are two parties in Washington, the stupid party and the evil party, who occasionally get together and do something both stupid and evil, and this is called bipartisanship.
—Samuel T. Francis

The American public and its political leadership will do anything for the military except take it seriously. The result is a chickenhawk nation in which careless spending and strategic folly combine to lure America into endless wars it cannot win.
—James Fallows

If more members of Congress or the business and media elite had had children in uniform, the United States would probably not have gone to war in Iraq at all.
—Seth Moulton

The great men of power who seek to change the nations they belong to usually are pretty terrible people.
—John Keegan

I've never been able to understand why a Republican contributor is a 'fat cat' and a Democratic contributor of the same amount of money is a 'public-spirited philanthropist'.

—Ronald Reagan

'Daddy,' a little girl asked her father, 'do all fairy tales begin with 'Once upon a time'?'

'No, sweetheart,' he answered. 'Some begin with 'If I am elected.'

—Unknown

The difference between a democracy and a dictatorship is that in a democracy you vote first and take orders later; in a dictatorship you don't have to waste your time voting.

—Charles Bukowski

All tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent.

—Edmund Burke

In a democracy, the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority.

—Edmund Burke

When I have to choose between voting for the people or the special interests, I always stick with the special interests. They remember. The people forget.

—Henry Fountain
Ashurst

It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native criminal class except Congress.

—Mark Twain

Politics should be the part-time profession of every citizen who would protect the rights and privileges of free people and who would preserve what is good and fruitful in our national heritage.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

We hate those in power in Washington D.C. and anything bad that happens to them is good for us.

—Tom Metzger

A liberal is a man who is right most of the time, but he's right too soon.

—Gregory Nunn

The best time to listen to a politician is when he's on a stump on a street corner in the rain late at night when he's exhausted. Then he doesn't lie.

—Theodore White

The House of Representatives is one of the two houses of the United States Congress controlled by lobbyists.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

The Democratic Party is a U.S. political party that promotes a strong central government, expansive social programs and frequently abandoning the aforementioned values.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

The Republican Party is a U.S. political party that favors a conservative fiscal stance, limited government, and a strong national defense against 21st century ideals.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

The Green Party is a formally organized political party based on the principles of wanting to waste your vote but not wanting to waste it on the Libertarian candidate.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

Musicians can better run this state than politicians. And, hell, beauticians can better run the state than politicians.

—Kinky Friedman

If forced to choose between the penitentiary and the White House for four years, I would say the penitentiary, thank you.

—William Tecumseh
Sherman

The politicians don't just want your money. They want your soul. They want you to be worn down by taxes until you are dependent and helpless. When you subsidize poverty and failure, you get more of both.

—James Dale Davidson

Now more than ever before, the people are responsible for the character of their Congress. If that body be ignorant, reckless and corrupt, it is because the people tolerate ignorance, recklessness and corruption.

—James Garfield

Every so often, we pass laws repealing human nature.

—Howard Lindsay

A conservative is someone who makes no changes and consults his grandmother when in doubt.

—Woodrow Wilson

Anybody who doesn't know that politics is crime has got a few screws loose.

—James Ellroy

Anybody who enjoys being in the House of Commons probably needs psychiatric help.

—Ken Livingstone

On the one hand, political power gives you the wonderful opportunity of confirming, all day long, that you really exist, that you have your own undeniable identity, that with every word and deed you are leaving a highly visible mark on the world. Yet within that same political power...lies a terrible danger that while pretending to confirm our existence and our identity, political power will in fact rob us of them.

—Václav Havel

Whenever the people are for gay marriage or medical marijuana or assisted suicide, suddenly the 'will of the people' goes out the window.

—Bill Maher

No written law has ever been more binding than unwritten custom supported by popular opinion.

—Carrie Chapman Catt

Our government has kept us in a perpetual state of fear—kept us in a continuous stampede of patriotic fervor—with the cry of grave national emergency. Always there has been some terrible evil at home or some monstrous foreign power that was going to gobble us up if we did not blindly rally behind it.

—Douglas MacArthur

Since I entered politics, I have chiefly had men's views confided to me privately. Some of the biggest men in the United States, in the field of commerce and manufacture, are afraid of somebody, are afraid of something. They know that there is a power somewhere so organized, so subtle, so watchful, so interlocked, so complete, so pervasive, that they had better not speak above their breath when they speak in condemnation of it.

—Woodrow Wilson

If you think too much about being re-elected, it is very difficult to be worth re-electing.

—Woodrow Wilson

Conservatism is the policy of making no changes and consulting your grandmother when in doubt.

—Woodrow Wilson

The real rulers of Washington are invisible and exercise power from behind the scenes.

—Felix Frankfurter

Government is inherently incompetent, and no matter what task it is assigned, it will do it in the most expensive and inefficient way possible.

—Charley Reese

I love power. But it is as an artist that I love it. I love it as a musician loves his violin, to draw out its sounds and chords and harmonies.

—Napoleon Bonaparte

It is work and personal worth which make a State great both politically and industrially, and in my estimation they are to be found in largest proportions in the Democratic party.

—Franklin Knight Lane

Turn on the television during election season, and the role that fear plays in contemporary political life couldn't be more obvious: the ominous music, the clips of shadowy masked figures, the deep-voiced narrator making alarming claims about our vulnerability to any number of deadly menaces. Sometimes political ads seem to boil down to a simple message: be very afraid.

—David A. Bell

No government ever voluntarily reduces itself in size.

—Ronald Reagan

Political promises are much like marriage vows. They are made at the beginning of the relationship between candidate and voter, but are quickly forgotten.

—Dick Gregory

Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.

—John Adams

Nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law of the land than passing laws which cannot be enforced. It is an open secret that the dangerous increase of crime in this country is closely related with this.

—Albert Einstein

A demagogue is a person with whom we disagree as to which gang should mismanage the country.

—Don Marquis

It is the duty of the President to propose and it is the privilege of the Congress to dispose.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Our ideals of freedom, set forth and realized in our Constitution, are our greatest export to the world.

—Robert Byrd

Much more so than in some other arenas, age can be an asset in politics.

—Liza Mundy

The magician and the politician have much in common: they both have to draw our attention away from what they are really doing.

—Ben Okri

The tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy.

—Charles
de Montesquieu

What people fail to appreciate is that the currency of corruption in elective office is, not money, but votes.

—James L. Buckley

I personally believe that those who are leaders with political power over the world will be forced some day, sooner or later, to give way to common sense and the will of the people.

—Alva Myrdal

A promising young man should go into politics so that he can go on promising for the rest of his life.

—Robert Byrne

Democracy is being allowed to vote for the candidate you dislike least.

—Robert Byrne

History proves that all dictatorships, all authoritarian forms of government are transient. Only democratic systems are not transient. Whatever the shortcomings, mankind has not devised anything superior.

—Vladimir Putin

I would dare say that most anyone in public life, if they stay in public long enough, is not treated fairly.

—Vince McMahon

One realizes that Washington is more often Fallujah than Paris—a war zone where armies of reporters, pundits and politicians wage war with words in theaters of green rooms and bunkers of makeup.

—Kathleen Parker

As societies grow decadent, the language grows decadent, too. Words are used to disguise, not to illuminate, action: you liberate a city by destroying it. Words are to confuse, so that at election time people will solemnly vote against their own interests.

—Gore Vidal

In general, the art of government consists of taking as much money as possible from one class of citizens to give to another.

—Voltaire

Besides anarchy, the worst thing in this world is government.

—Henry Ward Beecher

You can always get the truth from a politician after he has turned seventy, or given up all hope of the Presidency.

—Joe Moore

Honest information has always been the lifeblood of democracy.

—Thomas Kunkel

Of all the varieties of virtues, liberalism is the most beloved.

—Aristotle

Democrats can't get elected unless things get worse—and things won't get worse unless they get elected.

—Jeane Kirkpatrick

Republicans and Democrats have never particularly liked each other, but survey data going back to the 1970s show that on average, their mutual dislike used to be surprisingly mild. Negative feelings have grown steadily stronger, however, particularly since the early 2000s. Political scientists call this process 'affective partisan polarization,' and it is a very serious problem for any democracy. As each side increasingly demonizes the other, compromise becomes more difficult. A recent study shows that implicit or unconscious biases are now at least as strong across political parties as they are across races.

—Greg Lukianoff and
Jonathan Haidt

Sometimes people call me an idealist. Well, that is the way I know I am an American. America is the only idealistic nation in the world.

—Woodrow Wilson

Everybody wants to eat at the government's table, but nobody wants to do the dishes.

—Werner Finck

There are many elements to a campaign. Leadership is number one. Everything else is number two.

—Bertolt Brecht

That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part.
—Thomas Jefferson

The left wing and the right wing belong to the same bird.
—Randy Leer

The reality is that we are hated not because of our democracy, freedoms, and generous social security system; rather, we are hated because of our involvement in foreign conflicts and quarrels that were never our concern.
—Amir Butler

No statement should be believed because it is made by an authority.
—Robert A. Heinlein

The first thing I'll do if elected is demand a recount.
—Kinky Friedman

When the president during the campaign said he was against nation building, I didn't realize he meant our nation.
—Al Franken

The mistake a lot of politicians make is in forgetting they've been appointed and thinking they've been anointed.
—Claude Pepper

Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.
—J. K. Galbraith

Democracy is the only really amusing form of government.
—H. L. Mencken

Democracy consists of choosing your dictators, after they've told you what you think it is you want to hear.
—Alan Coren

It is well known that to be elected president, you pretty much have to have been a governor or a U.S. senator....No one gets elected president or vice president more than 14 years after his or her first gubernatorial or Senate victory.
—Jonathan Rauch

People don't follow titles, they follow courage.

—William Wells Brown

If you're powerful, you are much more likely to be blind and deaf to signals from outside.

—Adam Michnik

What the power structure is afraid of is that we're going to learn to recognize the truth when we hear it.

—Daniel K. Moran

Look at our Lord's disciples. One denied Him; one doubted Him; one betrayed Him. If our Lord couldn't have perfection, how are you going to have it in city government?

—Richard J. Daley

I never did anything alone. Whatever was accomplished in this country was accomplished collectively.

—Golda Meir

Working in politics for 10 years has taught me one thing: Together, we can do amazing things. But we won't.

—Jeff Maurer

Obama said if we agree with him on his tax increase on the rich that he needs us to e-mail our congressmen and representatives. I thought, well then, I'm gonna need you to e-mail me who they are. Because unless they're hosting 'Shark Week,' I'm probably not familiar with their work.

—Kathleen Madigan

I was eating breakfast with my 10-year-old Granddaughter and I asked her, 'What day is tomorrow?'

Without skipping a beat she said, 'It's Presidents Day!'

She's smart, so I asked her 'What does Presidents Day mean?'

I was waiting for something about Obama, Bush or Clinton, etc.

She replied, 'Presidents Day is when the President steps out of the White House, And if he sees his shadow, we have another year of Bull Shit.'

You know, it hurts when hot coffee spurts out your nose.

—Unknown

Politics is the science of getting more power than anyone deserves to have.
—Kirk Brothers

Governments tend not to solve problems, only to rearrange them.
—Ronald Reagan

I think that public service is tough on a family - no ifs, ands, butts about it. I have my own personal wishes, but they're not always front and center.
—Maria Shriver

It is difficult for the common good to prevail against the intense concentration of those who have a special interest, especially if the decisions are made behind locked doors.
—Jimmy Carter

A public-opinion poll is no substitute for thought.
—Warren Buffett

The average hip replacement in the USA costs \$40,364. In Spain, it costs \$7,371. That means I can literally fly to Spain, live in Madrid for 2 years, learn Spanish, run with the bulls, get trampled, get my hip replaced again, and fly home for less than the cost of a hip replacement in the US.
—[facebook.com/outime.org](https://www.facebook.com/outime.org)

Our elections are free. It's in the results where eventually we pay.
—Bill Stern

It's not the hand that signs the laws that holds the destiny of America. It's the hand that casts the ballot.
—Harry S. Truman

Members of the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate are not there by accident. Each managed to get there for some reason. Learn what it was and you will know something important about them, about our country and about the American people.
—Donald Rumsfeld

The corporations don't have to lobby the government anymore. They are the government.
—Jim Hightower

A diplomat is a man who thinks twice before he says nothing.

—Edward Heath

Political identity has become so central because it has come to overlap with so many other aspects of identity: race, religion, lifestyle. In 1960, I wouldn't have learned much about your politics if you told me that you hunted. Today, that hobby strongly suggests Republican loyalty. Unmarried? In 1960, that indicated little. Today, it predicts that you're a Democrat, especially if you're also a woman.

—David Frum

The politicians don't just want your money. They want your soul. They want you to be worn down by taxes until you are dependent and helpless. When you subsidize poverty and failure, you get more of both.

—James Dale Davidson

All politics is rich people screwing poor people. Poor people are too stupid to know they're just chess pieces in a game. All the poor white people, all the poor black people, all the Hispanics, they're in the same boat. They got no economic opportunities ... they spend all their time blaming each other because rich people throw words at them like, illegal immigration, and racism and things like that. If poor people ever get smart, and realize like, 'We should band together, rise up, instead of fighting each other,' we probably can make a difference.

—Charles Barkley

Education and democracy have the same goal: the fullest possible development of human capabilities.

—Paul Wellstone

One of the functions of government is to act as a safeguard not just of property but of our liberties.

—William Weld

Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as those who steal from the public.

—Theodor Wiesengrund
Adorno

My country right or wrong; when right, to keep her right; when wrong, to put her right.

—Carl Schurz

Conservatives are not necessarily stupid, but most stupid people are conservatives.
—John Stuart Mill

Let individuals contribute as they desire; but let us prohibit in effective fashion all corporations from making contributions for any political purpose, directly or indirectly.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Nothing turns out to be so oppressive and unjust as a feeble government.
—Edmund Burke

The more you can increase fear of drugs and crime, welfare mothers, immigrants and aliens, the more you control all the people.

—Noam Chomsky

You don't spread democracy through the barrel of a gun.

—Helen Thomas

I like the noise of democracy.

—James Buchanan

The problem with liberals is not that they don't know everything, but that so much of what they know just isn't so.

—Ronald Reagan

The focus in successful towns was not on national division but on practical problems that a community could address. The more often national politics came into local discussions, the worse shape the town was in.

—James Fallows

The American states rather than the central government are the real laboratories of democracy.

—Louis Brandeis

Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being.

—Hannah Arendt

You can talk about capitalism and communism and all that sort of thing, but the important thing is the struggle everybody is engaged in to get better living conditions, and they are not interested too much in government.

—Bernard Baruch

Democracy may have arisen in the West as the way of striving for the universal aspiration to dignity and freedom, but it isn't alien to the underlying concepts that infuse religion and moral philosophy everywhere.

—Flora Lewis

Really, life is complicated enough without having a bunch of Senators deciding what we should do in the privacy of our own homes.

—Barbara Boxer

The politician is an acrobat. He keeps his balance by saying the opposite of what he does.

—Maurice Barres

If a psychiatric and scientific inquiry were to be made upon our rulers, mankind would be appalled at the disclosures.

—Alfred Korzybski

Compromise makes a good umbrella, but a poor roof; it is temporary expedient, often wise in party politics, almost sure to be unwise in statesmanship.

—James Russell Lowell

Anybody whose mind is functioning at all can't be content with the way the world works.

—Frederick Wiseman

All conservatives are such from personal defects. They have been effeminated by position or nature, born halt and blind, through luxury of their parents, and can only, like invalids, act on the defensive.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

My definition of a redundancy is an air-bag in a politician's car.

—Larry Hagman

During the 1800 election—Thomas Jefferson ran against John Adams—this produced an avalanche of mudslinging journalism. Yale's president wrote that a Jefferson victory would mean 'we will see our wives and daughters the victims of legal prostitution.' The writer and Jefferson supporter James Callender shot back that Adams was a 'hideous hermaphroditical character.'

—Clive Thompson

On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.

—H. L. Mencken

In this world of sin and sorrow there is always something to be thankful for; as for me, I rejoice that I am not a Republican.

—H. L. Mencken

Every decent man is ashamed of the government he lives under.

—H. L. Mencken

If a politician found he had cannibals among his constituents, he would promise them missionaries for dinner.

—H. L. Mencken

Our object in the construction of the state is the greatest happiness of the whole, and not that of any one class.

—Plato

It is better that some should be unhappy, then that none should be happy, which would be the case in a general state of equality.

—Samuel Johnson

Government is emphatically a machine: to the disconnected a 'taxing machine,' to the contented a 'machine for securing property.'

—Thomas Carlyle

Nothing is so galling to a people, not broken in from the birth, as a paternal, or, in other words, a meddling government, a government which tells them what to read and say and eat and drink and wear.

—Thomas B. Macaulay

And I have no doubt that every new example will succeed, as every past one has done, in showing that religion and Government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together.

—James Madison

Will dissent be permitted? The answer to that question will determine whether the society is a free society or a fear society.

—Natan Sharansky

Democracy: The worship of jackals by jackasses.

—H. L. Mencken

Alexander Hamilton's feud with Thomas Jefferson predicted the great schisms of American history: city versus country, North versus South, slavery versus emancipation, nativism versus diversity. Long after the Broadway stage goes dark, those dichotomies will likely still shape our political landscape.

—Dan Charnas

American democracy must be a failure because it places the supreme authority in the hands of the poorest and most ignorant part of the society.

—Thomas Babington
Macaulay

I've said many a time that I think the Un-American Activities Committee in the House of Representatives was the most un-American thing in America!

—Harry S. Truman

A politician should have three hats. One for throwing into the ring, one for talking through, and one for pulling rabbits out of if elected.

—Carl Sandberg

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

—Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Whenever you hear a politician carry on about what a mess the schools are, be aware that you are looking at the culprit.

—Molly Ivins

Never interrupt your opponent when he's destroying himself.

—Paul Begala

We have a moral responsibility to protect the earth and ensure that our children and grandchildren have a healthy and sustainable environment in which to live.

—Jim Clyburn

Under capitalism, man exploits man. Under communism, it's just the opposite.

—John Kenneth
Galbraith

The philosophy of the classroom today will be the philosophy of government tomorrow.

—Abraham Lincoln

I have long enjoyed the friendship and companionship of Republicans because I am by instinct a teacher, and I would like to teach them something.

—Woodrow Wilson

I don't want to be a politician. I don't like politics. It's petty; it fights dirty.

—John Mellencamp

Well the first order of government is to preserve the public order and safety.

—Bob Wise

People who are in power make their arrangements in secret, largely as a way of maintaining and furthering that power.

—Don DeLillo

To summarize: it is a well-known fact that those people who most want to rule people are, ipso facto, those least suited to do it. To summarize the summary: anyone who is capable of getting themselves made President should on no account be allowed to do the job. To summarize the summary of the summary: people are a problem.

—Douglas Adams

Why do people always expect authors to answer questions? I am an author because I want to ask questions. If I had answers I'd be a politician.

--Eugene Ionesco

The people want change, and they keep putting outsiders in to bring about the change. The the change doesn't come...because we're putting people in that don't understand compromise.

—John Kasich

Since the 1970s, political scientists have demonstrated that whites who express a higher level of resentment toward African Americans are more likely to identify as Republicans. Since the 1990s, as the political scientist Zoltan Hajnal and Michael Rivera detail in a 2014 paper, a similar correlation has emerged between resentment toward Latinos and Republican partisanship.

—Peter Beinart

To take an analogy: if we say that a democratic government is the best kind of government, we mean that it most completely fulfills the highest function of a government—the realisation of the will of the people.

—John Drinkwater

All people are born alike—except Republicans and Democrats.

—Groucho Marx

My mother always said democracy is the best revenge.

—Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

Politics is the only business where doing nothing other than making the other guy look bad is an acceptable outcome.

—Mark Warner

If 16-year-olds are old enough to drink the water polluted by the industries that you regulate, if 16-year-olds are old enough to breathe the air ruined by garbage burners that government built, if 16-year-olds are old enough to walk on the streets made unsafe by terrible drugs and crime policies, if 16-year-olds are old enough to live in poverty in the richest country in the world, if 16-year-olds are old enough to get sick in a country with the worst public health-care programs in the world, and if 16-year-olds are old enough to attend school districts that you underfund, than 16-year-olds are old enough to play a part in making them better.

—Rebecca Tilsen, 14, of
Minneapolis

[Given as testimony to the Minnesota House subcommittee in 1991 regarding lowering the voting age.]

What Washington needs is adult supervision.

—Barack Obama

Never blame a legislative body for not doing something. When they do nothing, that don't hurt anybody. When they do something is when they become dangerous.

—Will Rogers

Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts... perhaps the fear of a loss of power.

—John Steinbeck

There's no trick to being a humorist when you have the whole government working for you.

—Will Rogers

The poor man really has a stake in the country. The rich man hasn't; he can go away to New Guinea in a yacht.

--G. K. Chesterton

American politics is typically a grimy business of horses traded and pork delivered.

--Andrew J. Bacevich

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

—Reinhold Niebuhr

The best time to make friends is before you need them.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

Liberals claim to want to give a hearing to other views, but then are shocked and offended to discover that there are other views.

—William F. Buckley, Jr.

If we promise as public officials, we must deliver. If we as public officials propose, we must produce.

—Barbara Jordan

Four years in the White House and two presidential campaigns is an awful long time. In politics, every year in the White House is like dog years, six years off your life.

—George Stephanopoulos

Just what is it that America stands for if she stands for one thing more than another? It is for the sovereignty of self-governing people.

—Woodrow Wilson

Being president is like running a cemetery; you've got a lot of people under you and nobody's listening.

—President Clinton

Liberals feel unworthy of their possessions. Conservatives feel they deserve everything they've stolen.

—Mort Sahl

My place in history will depend on what I can do for the people and not on what the people can do for me.

—William Jennings
Bryan

You can't trust anybody with power.

—Newt Gingrich

If ever time should come, when vain and aspiring men shall possess the highest seats in Government, our country will stand in need of its experienced patriots to prevent its ruin.

—Samuel Adams

Bureaucracy is a giant mechanism operated by pygmies.

—Honoré de Balzac

My kids can do whatever they want as long as they are not Republicans or junkies. That is where I draw the line.

—Steven Bernstein

I can tell you this: no man who ever held the office of President would congratulate a friend on obtaining it. Make no mistake about it—the four most miserable years of my life are my four years in the Presidency.

—John Quincy Adams

My God! What is there in this place that a man should ever want to get in it?

—James A. Garfield

The office of President requires the constitution of an athlete, the patience of a mother, and the endurance of an early Christian...The President is a superior kind of slave.

—Woodrow Wilson

The job-seekers pack the White House every day, pushing their applications at me—in my hand, in my pockets. They pursue me so closely that I can not even attend to the necessary functions of nature.

—William Henry
Harrison

I knew this job would be too much for me. Oftentimes, as I sit here, I don't seem to grasp that I am President. If there is anything wrong with the White House job, it is the inability to be a human being. The White house is a prison. I can't get away from the men who dog my footsteps. I am in jail.

—Warren G. Harding

Corruption, the most infallible symptom of constitutional liberty.

—Edward Gibbon

One hardly saves a world without ruling it.

—Emile M. Cioran

They (who) seek to establish systems of government based on the regimentation of all human beings by a handful of individual rulers. . . call this a new order. It is not new and it is not order.

—Franklin Delano
Roosevelt

It is money, money, money! Not ideas, not principles, but money that reigns supreme in American politics.

—Robert Byrd

As one historian has written, the nation is always divided between two parties—the party of hope and the party of memory. Democrats, abandoning their traditional role, became adherents to the party of memory—the myths of the New Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society—while they served the interests of the established order, money, and, to a lesser extent, the small vocal constituencies they had helped establish.

—Richard Goodwin

Once you touch the biographies of human beings, the notion that political beliefs are logically determined collapses like a pricked balloon.

—Walter Lippmann

Isn't asking members of Congress to vote on a bill that would limit their terms in office to six years like asking an employee to vote on whether he thinks he ought to be fired or not?

—Andy Rooney

Sometimes liberals seem to care more about the environment than they care about the people who use it. Sometimes liberals treat trees like people and people like trees.

—Mickey Edwards

I would rather be bound and gagged than go to Washington. I think there's an oxygen-deprivation problem there. Perfectly good and reasonable people go up there and their brains just turn to raisins.

—Ann Richards

The amazing thing is that voters keep electing candidates who promise them that they can have hot fudge sundaes and still trim their waistlines. Those are the same voters who get mad as hell when the people they elect go on with business as usual.

—Carol Cox

If I wanted to go crazy, I'd do it in Washington, where they wouldn't know the difference.

—Robert Byrd

Most Americans agree...that to help lift the underclass out of poverty will require some combination of government help and greater personal responsibility. But... conservatives don't want to admit the need for government help and liberals don't want to tell poor people to take responsibility for their lives, so nothing gets done.

—Michael Nelson

On any complex issue, poorly informed voters will usually outnumber the well informed. This means that the result of a popular vote is more likely to represent the views of the uninformed than the views of the informed. It also means that complex questions must be simplified to be voted on.

—Jonathan Rauch

He that would govern others, first should be the master of himself.

—Philip Massinger

Politicians from both parties publicly worship the solemn dignity of entrepreneurship and small businesses. But by the numbers, America has become the land of the big and the home of the consolidated.

—Derek Thompson

Upton Sinclair's 1934 run for governor of California was thwarted by a smear campaign orchestrated by the first-ever political-consulting operation, Campaigns Inc. Sinclair dubbed the firm the 'lie factory.'

—Molly Ball

The most famous story about modern presidential campaigning now has a quaint old-world tone. It's about the showdown between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy in the first debate of their 1960 campaign, which was also the very first nationally televised general-election debate in the United States. The story is that Kennedy looked great, which is true, and Nixon looked terrible, which is also true—and that this visual difference has an unexpected electoral effect. As Theodore H. White described it in his hugely influential book *The Making of the President 1960*, which has set the model for campaign coverage ever since, 'sample surveys' after the debate found that people who had only heard Kennedy and Nixon talking, over the radio, thought that the debate had been a tie. But those who saw the two men on television were much more likely to think that Kennedy—handsome, tanned, non-sweaty, poised—had won. Historians who have followed up on this story haven't found data to back up White's sight-versus sound discovery. But from a modern perspective, the only surprising thing about his findings is that they came as a surprise. Today's electorate has decades of televised politics behind it, from which one assumption is that of course images, and their emotional power, usually matter more than words and whatever logic they might try to convey.

—James Fallows

Put all our congressmen together and they weigh about 96, 000 pounds. It's hard to get anything that weighs 48 tons to move quickly.

—Charlie Jones

The vast majority of presidential elections can be forecast based on the state of the nation's economy and the approval rating of the sitting president.

—Lynn Vavreck and
John Sides

Put the right images on the screen and the right words in the script, and all the candidate has to do is read the lines. Politicians aren't leaders—they're interchangeable products to be packaged and sold.

—Molly Ball

The rule is that the way candidates react, immediately and usually involuntarily, while caught by the camera, dominates impressions of who has 'won' or 'lost' an encounter. This is why the most accurate way to predict reaction to a debate is to watch it with the sound turned off.

When Lloyd Bentsen, as Michael Dukakis's running mate in 1988, dressed down the undergrad-looking Dan Quayle with 'You're no Jack Kennedy!' in their vice-presidential debate, Quayle stood like a scolded child, which became a dominant image of him in the campaign.

—James Fallows

In political language, plainness is powerful. 'Of the people, by the people, for the people.' 'Ask not what your country can do for you.' 'I have a dream.' This is especially so for language designed to be heard, like speeches and debate exchanges, rather than read from a page. People absorb and retain information in smaller increments through the ear than through the eye. Thus the classic intonations of every major religion have the simple, repetitive cadence also found in the best political speeches. 'In the beginning.' 'And it was good.' 'Let us pray.'

—James Fallows

...seventh grade level...is generally the level of effective mass communication—newscasts, advertising, speeches.

—James Fallows

...the 'bitch-slap theory of politics' is that the essential purpose of any encounter is not to 'solve problems' or 'advance an agenda' or anything else C-SPAN-worthy. Instead the constant goal is to humiliate a foe.

—Josh Marshall

What's the difference between Republicans and Democrats? Democrats think low wages are a problem. Republicans think low wages are a solution.

—Richard Gephardt

The only reason I'm not running for president is I'm afraid no woman would come forth and say she slept with me.

—Garry Shandling

Our congressman has taken money under the table. His name has been linked romantically with a lot of different ladies, and he enjoys a frequent nip. I'd say he's doing a terrific job representing my interests.

—*Frank and Ernest*
Comic Strip

I looked up the word 'politics' in the dictionary and it's actually a combination of two words: 'poli,' which means many, and 'tics,' which means bloodsuckers.

—Jay Leno

He was what I often think is a dangerous thing for a statesman to be—a student of history; and like most of those who study history, he learned from the mistakes of the past how to make new ones.

—A. J. P. Taylor

We may not imagine how our lives could be more frustrating and complex—but Congress can.

—Cullen Hightower

Those people who treat politics and morality separately will never understand either of them.

—Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Men who are engaged in public life must necessarily aim at reducing opposition to a minimum, and one of the most obvious means to that end is by misrepresenting, discrediting or ruining their opponents.

—Frederick Scott Oliver

More things in politics happen by accident or exhaustion than happen by conspiracy.

—Jeff Greenfield

All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

—Aristotle

Public instruction should be the first object of government.

--Napoleon

No man is worthy the honored name of a statesman who does not include the highest practicable education of the people in all his plans of administration. He may

have eloquence, he may have a knowledge of all history, diplomacy, jurisprudence; and by these he might claim, in other countries, the elevated rank of a statesman; but, unless he speaks, plans, labors, at all times and in all places, for the culture and edification of the whole people, he is not, he cannot be, an American statesman.

--Horace Mann

The Science of Government it is my Duty to study, more than all other Sciences: the Art of legislation and Administration and Negotiation, ought to take Place, indeed to exclude in a manner all other Arts.—I must study Politicks and War that my sons may have liberty to study Mathematicks and Philosophy. My sons ought to study Mathematicks and Philosophy, Geography, natural History, Naval Architecture, navigation, Commerce and Agriculture, in order to give their Children a right to study Painting, Poetry, Musick, Architecture, Statuary, Tapestry and Porcelaine.

--John Adams

Being powerful is a lot like being a woman: If you have to tell someone that you are, invariably, you are not.

—Margaret Thatcher

Get involved in local politics. It's more important to change your politician than to change your lightbulb or your car.

—Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

The political leaders with whom we are familiar generally aspire to be superstars rather than heroes. The distinction is crucial. Superstars strive for approbation; heroes walk alone. Superstars crave consensus; heroes define themselves by the judgment of a future they see it as their task to bring about. Superstars seek success in a technique for eliciting support; heroes pursue success as the outgrowth of inner values. The modern political leader rarely ventures to comment in public, without having tested his views on focus groups, if indeed he does not derive them from a focus group.

—Henry A. Kissinger

Democratic forms of government are vulnerable to mass prejudice, the so-called tyranny of the majority.

—Maggie Gallagher

The general diffusion of knowledge and learning through the community is essential to the preservation of free government.

--Carl Becker

A fact is not what is; a fact for any person is what he believes is so.

—Arthur Combs

American politics is a perverse kind of trench warfare. The best place to be is out of power, it seems, in the trenches, blasting away at anyone who is foolhardy enough to get up and try to do anything.

—Peter Fabricus

On the rules for being an actor in Iran: ‘You cannot have a sense of humor, you cannot be funny, you can’t be a woman, and you can’t be a minority. So it’s the same rules as the Republic convention.’

—Jay Leno

Liberty cannot be preserved without general knowledge among the people.

--John Adams

That which unites us as American citizens is far greater than that which divides us as political parties....With a united people, with faith in democracy, with common concern for others less fortunate around the globe, we shall move forward with God’s guidance toward the time when his children shall grow in freedom and dignity in a world at peace.

—Adlai Stevenson

Less than 10 percent of honor students at American colleges even consider going into government.

—*Volcker Commission on
the Public Service*

Being president is like being a jackass in a hailstorm. There’s nothing to do but stand there and take it.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

Certainly in the next 50 years we shall see a woman president, perhaps sooner than you think. A woman can and should be able to do any political job that a man can do.

—Richard Nixon (1969)

I hate those men who would send into war youth to fight and die for them; the pride and cowardice of those old men, making their wars that boys must die.

—Mary Roberts Rinehart

Although he's regularly asked to do so, God does not take sides in American politics.
—George J. Mitchell

No man's life, liberty or property are safe while the Legislature is in session.
—Gideon J. Tucker

If I help the poor, I am a saint. If I try to change the system that makes them poor, I am a Communist.
—Archbishop Helder
Camera

Too many critics mistake the deliberations of the Congress for its decisions.
—Sam Rayburn

High office teaches decision making, not substance. It consumes intellectual capital; it does not create it. Most high officials leave office with the perceptions and insights with which they entered; they learn how to make decisions but not what decisions to make.
—Henry A. Kissinger

You Liberals think that goats are just sheep from broken homes.
—Malcolm Bradbury

Whatever their other contributions to our society, lawyers could be an important source of protein.
—*Guindon* Cartoon
Caption

Public opinion is no more innately wise than humans are innately kind. People can behave foolishly, recklessly, self-destructively in the aggregate just as they can individually.
—George Orwell

The relative freedom which we enjoy depends on public opinion. The law is no protection. Governments make laws, but whether they are carried out, and how the police behave, depends on the general temper in the country. If large numbers of people are interested in freedom of speech, there will be freedom of speech, even if the law forbids it; if public opinion is sluggish, inconvenient minorities will be persecuted, even if laws exist to protect them.
—George Orwell

The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.

—Alexis de Tocqueville

People who leave Washington do so by way of the box... ballet or coffin.

—Claiborne Pell

I saw what the Depression was doing to my students. Often they could get no jobs, or jobs which were wholly inadequate. And through them, I began to understand how deeply political and economic events could affect men's lives. I began to feel the need to participate more fully in the life of the community.

—J. Robert Oppenheimer

Students of American history will recall that the important place where work gets done in the legislative body, almost without exception, is in the committees, more so than on the floor although sometimes more attention is paid to the floor.

—Paul Sarbanes

The philosophy of the schoolroom in one generation is the philosophy of government in the next.

—Abraham Lincoln

Mitt Romney's 2012 defeat decreased Republicans' happiness twice as much as either the Boston Marathon bombing affected Bostonians' happiness or the Newtown school shooting affected American parents'.

—Ben Rowen

Barack Obama volunteered to be the Captain of the Titanic AFTER it hit the iceberg

—Van Jones

Over the last 30 odd years, Democrats have moved to the right and the right has moved into the mental hospital. So what we have is one perfectly good party for hedge fund managers, credit card companies, banks, defense contractors, big agriculture and the pharmaceutical lobby... That's the Democrats. And they sit across the aisle from a small group of religious lunatics, flat-earthers and civil war re-enactors who mostly communicate by AM radio and call themselves the Republicans and who actually worry that Obama is a socialist. Socialist? He's not even a liberal.

—Bill Maher

Oh, I don't blame Congress. If I had 600 billion at my disposal, I'd be irresponsible, too.

—Lichty and Wagner

Believe me, as one who has seen a number of international crises firsthand, they cannot be handled without an understanding of history.

—Pierre Salinger

When republicans lose an election they want to kill you; when democrats lose an election they want to kill themselves.

—Van Jones

Because we are generous with our freedom, we share our rights with those who disagree with us.

—Wendell Willkie

The little red schoolhouse in my community (c. 1920) was white. In fact, I do not recall ever seeing any red schoolhouse in rural Maine in the old days; usually they were white, or, more commonly, the color of weather-beaten shingles. It must be remembered that the reputation of town officials was measured by their reluctance to spend money on education.

--K. W. Carter

The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

The great corrupter of public man is the ego. Looking at the mirror distracts one's attention from the problem.

—Dean Acheson

Campaign behavior for wives: Always be on time. Do as little talking as humanly possible. Lean back in the parade car so everybody can see the president.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

A statesman, we are told, should follow public opinion. Doubtless, as a coachman follows his horses; having firm hold on the reins and guiding them.

—Augustus W. Hare

The contest for ages has been to rescue liberty from the grasp of executive power.

—Daniel Webster

Did you ever notice that when a politician does get an idea he usually gets it all wrong.

—Don Marquis

Carry the battle to them. Don't let them bring it to you. Put them on the defensive and don't ever apologize for anything.

—Harry S. Truman

How little do politics affect the life, the moral life of a nation. One single good book influences the people a vast deal more.

—William Gladstone

All the measures of the Government are directed to the purpose of making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

—William Henry
Harrison

Being elected to Congress is regarded as being sent on a looting raid for one's friends.

—George Will

The more you read about politics, you got to admit that each party is worse than the other.

—Will Rogers

We must especially beware of that small group of selfish men who would clip the wings of the American eagle in order to feather their own nests.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Our greatness does not come from our government.

—Sonny Perdue

Ambition has but one reward for all: A little power, a little transient fame; A grave to rest in, and a fading name!

—Walter Savage Landor

John F. Kennedy was the victim of the hate that was a part of our country. It is a disease that occupies the minds of the few but brings danger to the many.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

Government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.
—Ronald Reagan

There are always too many Democratic congressmen, too many Republican congressmen, and never enough U.S. congressmen.
—Unknown

George Washington is the only president who didn't blame the previous administration for his troubles.
—Unknown

Bipartisan usually means that a larger-than-usual deception is being carried out.
—George Carlin

I learned early on that if you don't want your memos to get you in trouble some day, just don't write any.
—Vice President Dick Cheney

I did not deal well with the politicians. I tend to tell people that when they are full of crap, that they are full of crap.
—Robert Crandall

In the television age, the key distinction is between the candidate who can speak poetry and the one who can only speak prose.
—Richard M. Nixon

The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse.
—Edmund Burke

We distribute power unevenly by design; for example, we have 100 senators, 50 governors, and only one president, and each has magnitudes more power than the citizens he or she represents. Uneven distribution of power is necessary to get things done efficiently.
--Scott Berkun

Most politicians have four speeches: what they have written down, what they actually say, what they wish they had said, and what they are quoted as saying the next day.
--E. C. McKenzie

It is a paradox that every dictator has climbed to power on the ladder of free speech. Immediately on attaining power each dictator has suppressed all free speech except his own.

--Herbert Hoover

And I have no doubt that every new example will succeed, as every past one has done, in showing that religion and Government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together.

—James Madison

All men having power ought to be mistrusted.

—James Madison

An honest public servant can't become rich in politics.

—Harry Truman

In politics, yesterday's lie is attacked only to flatter today's.

—Jean Rostand

Few benefits of online interactivity are of such potential importance as the Internet's promise for improving democracy.

--Bill Gates

In Washington, success is just a training course for failure.

—Simon Hoggart

There are probably several hundred thousand if we narrow the definition to include only those who in their search for money and power are ruthless and deceitful.

—Henry A. Wallace

Artists should follow their own visions and create whatever they want. That is because it is precisely the variety of those unique visions of the human condition that gives art its true value. While the world knows and loves the dramas of Shakespeare and still recites his sonnets, only historians of the Elizabethan period can remember the names of the politicians who were his contemporaries. The moral of this story is clear. The value of great art will outlive the political controversies of the moment.

--Playthell Benjamin

History is past politics; and politics present history.

--John Seeley

Artists to my mind are the real architects of change, and not the political legislators who implement change after the fact.

—William S. Burroughs

More history is made by secret handshakes than by battles, bills and proclamations.

--John Barth

History, in general, only informs us what bad government is.

--Thomas Jefferson

The study of history is the beginning of political wisdom.

--John Bodin

A lot of history is just dirty politics cleaned up for the consumption of children and other innocents.

—Richard Reeves

Victory is never permanent.

—Barbara Boxer

Calculating how much carbon is absorbed by which forests and farms is a tricky task, especially when politicians do it.

--Donella Meadows

Of the various forms of government which have prevailed in the world, an hereditary monarchy seems to present the fairest scope for ridicule.

—Edward Gibbon

The big companies and their short-term bottom line rule this country.

—Alexandra Paul

The history of liberty is a history of limitation of government power, not the increase of it.

—Woodrow Wilson

Until that day when women, and only women, shall determine which American males must, by law, have vasectomies, then—and only then—will you or any man have the right to determine which American women can have abortions.

--Betty Beale

I'm no prude, but I find it nothing short of obscene that women are forced to expose ourselves to politicians—forced to submit our private matters, our private decisions...to public debate! Men's reproduction isn't regulated by the state—and it shouldn't be. Neither should women's.

--Faye Wattleton

I see little hope for a peaceful world until men are excluded from the realm of foreign policy altogether and all decisions concerning international relations are reserved for women, preferably married ones.

--W. H. Auden

Women are not making it to the top. A hundred and ninety heads of state; nine are women. Of all the people in parliament in the world, 13 percent are women. In the corporate sector, [the share of] women at the top—C-level jobs, board seats—tops out at 15, 16 percent.

--Sheryl Sandberg

Even when the stress was overwhelming—those days when I'd cry in the car on the way to work, asking myself 'Why am I doing this?'—I always knew the answer to that question: I believe in this president. I finally asked myself, 'Who needs me more?' And that's when I realized, it's somebody else's turn to do this job. I'm indispensable to my kids, but I'm not close to indispensable to the White House.

--Mary Matalin,
Presidential
Assistant

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

—Frederick Douglass

We've been conditioned to think that only politicians can solve our problems. But at some point, maybe we will wake up and recognize that it was politicians who created our problems.

—Ben Carson

There is no liberal America, no conservative America, no black America, no white America, no Latino America, no Asian America, only 'the United States of America.'

—Barack Obama

It's hard to run for president by telling people how terrible things are.

—Barack Obama

[David] Axelrod recalled sitting around a conference table with [Chicago Mayor Harold] Washington after he had won the Democratic primary for his reelection in 1987, just as the mayor was about to hold a press conference. Washington asked what percentage of Chicago's white vote he'd received. And someone said, 'Well, you got 21 percent. And that's really good because last time' —in his successful 1983 mayoral campaign—'you only got 8,' Axelrod recalled. 'And he kind of smiled, sadly, and said, 'You know, I probably spent 70 percent of my time in those white neighborhoods, and I think I've been a good mayor for everybody, and I got 21 percent of the white vote and we think it's good.' And he just kind of shook his head and said, 'ain't it a bitch to be a black man in the land of the free and the home of the brave?'

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The ghettos of America are the direct result of decades of public-policy decisions: the redlining of real estate zoning maps, the expanded authority given to prosecutors, the increased funding given to prisons. And all of this was done on the backs of people still reeling from the 250-year legacy of slavery. The results of this negative investment are clear—African Americans rank at the bottom of nearly every major socioeconomic measure in the country.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The researchers Josh Pasek, Jon A. Krosnick, and Trevor Tompson found that in 2012, 32 percent of Democrats held anti-black views, while 79 percent of Republicans did.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

I would rather see the United States respected than loved by other nations.

—Henry Cabot Lodge

We are not educated well enough to perform the necessary act of intelligently selecting our leaders.

—Walter Cronkite

One cannot raise the bottom of a society without benefiting everyone above.

--Michael Harrington

There is nothing to which men cling more tenaciously than the privileges of class.

--Leonard Sidney Woolf

If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

--John F. Kennedy

A city of many people can rarely, if ever, be well-governed.

—Aristotle

True individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. People who are hungry and out of a job are the stuff of which dictatorships are made.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Idiot: a member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling.

--Ambrose Bierce

The psychological pain—and the ethical shame—of American poverty are made greater by the fact that this country possesses the wealth and the energy to raise all children to a minimally decent standard of living.

--Kenneth Keniston

About three-quarters of nonviolent movements get some or all of what they want, compared with only about a third of the violent ones.

--Erica Chenoweth and
Maria Stephan

No drug, not even alcohol, causes the fundamental ills of society. If we're looking for the source of our troubles, we shouldn't test people for drugs, we should test them for stupidity, ignorance, greed and love of power.

—P. J. O'Rourke

Social history might be defined negatively as the history of a people with the politics left out.

—G. M. Trevelyan

I thought society would do the right thing. Now I look around and I think—society never does the right thing. Sometimes people do the right thing. Sometimes one person makes a difference. But civilization has rules, and I've learned them well—never be helpless, never be sick, never be poor.

—Christina Dodd

I will feel equality has arrived when we can elect to office women who are as incompetent as some of the men who are already there.

—Maureen Reagan

A disordered currency is one of the greatest political evils.

--Daniel Webster

The budget is a mythical bean bag. Congress votes mythical beans into it, and then tries to reach in and pull real beans out.

--Will Rogers

I do not believe that Washington should do for the people what they can do for themselves through local and private effort.

--John F. Kennedy

It is not possible for this nation to be at once politically internationalist and economically isolationist. This is just as insane as asking one Siamese twin to high dive while the other plays the piano.

--Adlai Stevenson

The Great Depression, like most other periods of severe unemployment, was produced by government mismanagement rather than by any inherent instability of the private economy.

--Milton Friedman

There's only one place where inflation is made: that's in Washington...in response to pressures from the people at large...The voting public...ask their Congressmen to enact goodies in the form of spending, but they are unhappy about having taxes raised to pay for those goodies.

--Milton Friedman

People who relieve others of their money with guns are called robbers. It does not alter the immorality of the act when the income transfer is carried out by government.

—Cal Thomas

Expenditure rises to meet income. Individual expenditure not only rises to meet income but tends to surpass it...(And) what is true of individuals is also true of governments.

--C. Northcote
Parkinson

The way to stop financial joy-riding is to arrest the chauffeur, not the automobile.

—Woodrow Wilson

Debt is the fatal disease of republics, the first thing and the mightiest to undermine governments and corrupt the people.

--Wendell Phillips

Government is the only institution that can take a valuable commodity like paper, and make it worthless by applying ink.

--Ludwig van Moses

It is the aim of good government to stimulate production, of bad government to encourage consumption.

--Jean Baptiste Say

Great wealth always supports the party in power, no matter how corrupt it may be. It never exerts itself for reform, for it instinctively fears change.

--Henry George

A necessary condition to a healthy economy is freedom from the petty tyranny of a massive government regulation.

--Gerald Ford

A people living under the...threat of war and invasion is very easy to govern. It demands no social reform. It does not haggle over armaments and military expenditures. It pays without discussion, it ruins itself, and that is a fine thing for the financiers and manufacturers for whom patriotic terrors are an abundant source of gain.

--Anatole France

The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to get the most feathers with the least hissing.

--Jean Baptiste
Colbert

The present tax structure is a disgrace to this country. It's just a welfare program for the rich.

--Jimmy Carter

The wisdom of man never yet contrived a system of taxation that would operate with perfect equality.

--Andrew Jackson

Prosperity is something the businessmen created for politicians to take credit for.

--Brunswick (Ga.)
Pilot

The only difference between death and taxes is that death doesn't get worse every time Congress meets.

--Will Rogers

When everybody has got money they cut taxes, and when they're broke they raise 'em. That's statesmanship of the highest order.

--Will Rogers

There is no art which one government learns from another better than that of draining money from the pockets of people.

--Adam Smith

The insane pursuit of the holy grail of a balanced budget in the end is going to drive the economy into a depression.

—William Vickrey

Economic depression cannot be cured by legislative action or executive pronouncement. Economic wounds must be healed by the action of the cells of the economic body—the producers and consumers themselves.

—Herbert Hoover

We need a president who's fluent in at least one language.

—Buck Henry

Until philosophers take to government, or those who now govern become philosophers, so that government and philosophy unite, there will be no end to the miseries of the states.

—Plato

It had been my experience that people who worked for the government in Washington were apt to regard anyone who did not work for the government in Washington as a supplicant, a citizen to whom the rightful order must constantly be made clear, and that one of the several ways of asserting this rightful order was by not returning telephone calls.

—Joan Didion

Governments are not always the best doctors when it comes to diagnosing economic ailments and prescribing the right treatment.

—Kim Campbell

How lucky for those in power that people don't think.

—Adolf Hitler

The drive for power is even less logical than the sex urge . . . and stronger.

—Robert A. Heinlein

Few businessmen are capable of being in politics, they don't understand the democratic process, they have neither the tolerance or the depth it takes. Democracy isn't a business.

—Malcolm Forbes

Distrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful.

--Friedrich Wilhelm
Nietzsche

National mythology cherishes the New England town-hall meeting as the foundation of American democracy, and once upon a time, it was. But the Constitution doesn't mention cities at all, and since the late 19th century, courts have accepted that cities are creatures of the state.

Some states delegate certain powers to cities, but states remain the higher authority, even if city dwellers don't realize it. 'Most people think, We have an election here, we elect a mayor and our city council, we organize our democracy—we should have a right to control our own city in our own way,' says Gerald Frug, a Harvard Law professor and an expert on local government. 'You go to any place in America and ask, 'Do you think this city can control its own destiny?' 'Of course it can!' The popular conception of what cities do runs in direct conflict with the legal reality.'

—David A. Graham

Social science studies have shown persuasively that people connect to candidates on a gut level and then rationalize that connection by agreeing with their policy proposals. There was little difference between the ideology of Bill and Hillary Clinton. But voters in Middle America felt, at an emotional level, that Bill 'got them,' and never felt that way about Hillary.

—Fareed Zakaria

Of all the tasks of government the most basic is to protect its citizens against violence.

--John Foster Dulles

Anyone that wants the presidency so much that he'll spend two years organizing and campaigning for it is not to be trusted with the office.

—David Broder

Truth is the greatest of all national possessions. A state, a people, a system which suppresses the truth or fears to publish it, deserves to collapse.

—Kurt Eisner

If truth was a factor, we couldn't publish half the statements public officials make.

--Seymour Hersh

Newspapers don't tell the truth under many different, and occasionally innocent, scenarios. Mostly when they don't know the truth. Or when they quote someone who does not know the truth.

And more and more, when they quote someone who is spinning the truth, shaping it to some preconceived version of a story that is supposed to be somehow better than the truth, omitting details that could be embarrassing.

And finally, when they quote someone who is flat-out lying. There is a lot of spinning and a lot of lying in our times — in politics, in government, in sports and everywhere. It's gotten to a point where, if you are like me, you no longer believe the first version of anything. It wasn't always that way.

—Ben Bradlee

Scrupulous people are not suited to great affairs.

--Anne-Robert-Jacques
Turgot

We shouldn't accept mediocrity as the best a politician can do.

—Joe Manchin

Power breeds isolation. Isolation leads to the capricious use of power. In turn, the capricious use of power breaks down the normal channels of communication between the leader and the people whom he leads. This ultimately means the deterioration of power and with it the capacity to sustain unity in our society. This is the problem we face today.

--George Reedy

It's useless to hold a person to anything he says while he's in love, drunk, or running for office.

--Shirley MacLaine

Those in power want only to perpetuate it.

--William O. Douglas

No extraordinary power should be lodged in any one individual.

--Thomas Paine

As for the men in power, they are so anxious to establish the myth of infallibility that they do their utmost to ignore truth.

--Boris Pasternak

It is said that power corrupts, but actually it's more true that power attracts the corruptible. The sane are usually attracted by other things than power.

--David Brin

A NATION'S GREATNESS DEPENDS ON ITS LEADER

To vastly improve your country and truly make it great again, start by choosing a better leader. Do not let the media or the establishment make you pick from the people they choose, but instead choose from those they do not pick. Pick a leader from among the people who is heart-driven, one who identifies with the common man on the street and understands what the country needs on every level. Do not pick a leader who is only money-driven and does not understand or identify with the common man, but only what corporations need on every level.

Pick a peacemaker. One who unites, not divides. A cultured leader who supports the arts and true freedom of speech, not censorship. Pick a leader who will not only bail out banks and airlines, but also families from losing their homes—or jobs due to their companies moving to other countries. Pick a leader who will fund schools, not limit spending on education and allow libraries to close. Pick a leader who chooses diplomacy over war. An honest broker in foreign relations. A leader with integrity, one who says what they mean, keeps their word and does not lie to their people. Pick a leader who is strong and confident, yet humble. Intelligent, but not sly. A leader who encourages diversity, not racism. One who understands the needs of the farmer, the teacher, the doctor, and the environmentalist—not only the banker, the oil tycoon, the weapons developer, or the insurance and pharmaceutical lobbyist.

Pick a leader who will keep jobs in your country by offering companies incentives to hire only within their borders, not one who allows corporations to outsource jobs for cheaper labor when there is a national employment crisis. Choose a leader who will invest in building bridges, not walls. Books, not weapons. Morality, not corruption. Intellectualism and wisdom, not ignorance. Stability, not fear and terror. Peace, not chaos. Love, not hate. Convergence, not segregation. Tolerance, not discrimination. Fairness, not hypocrisy. Substance, not superficiality. Character, not immaturity. Transparency, not secrecy. Justice, not lawlessness. Environmental improvement and preservation, not destruction. Truth, not lies.

Most importantly, a great leader must serve the best interests of the people first, not those of multinational corporations. Human life should never be sacrificed for monetary profit. There are no exceptions. In addition, a leader should always be open to criticism, not silencing dissent. Any leader who does not tolerate criticism from the public is afraid of their dirty hands to be revealed under heavy light. And such a leader is dangerous, because they only feel secure in the darkness. Only a leader who is free from corruption welcomes scrutiny; for scrutiny allows a good leader to be an even greater leader.

And lastly, pick a leader who will make their citizens proud. One who will stir the hearts of the people, so that the sons and daughters of a given nation strive to emulate their leader's greatness. Only then will a nation be truly great, when a leader inspires and produces citizens worthy of becoming future leaders, honorable decision makers and peacemakers. And in these times, a great leader must be extremely brave. Their leadership must be steered only by their conscience, not a bribe.

—Suzy Kassem

Great spirits have often overcome violent opposition from mediocre minds.

—Albert Einstein

My sense was that most of the elected officials in Washington—in their heart of hearts—really believe that the system can't be too bad because it produced them.

—DeForest Soaries

I will never understand how politicians who call themselves Christian can read the Gospels and then treat the poor and the sick like dirt.

—Jesuit Priest James
Martin

You've got to work things out in the cloakroom, and when you've got them worked out, you can debate a little before you vote.

—Lyndon B. Johnson

A rich history could be written of the conflicts that have sundered presidents and congressional leaders of the same party, in some cases friends who turned into bitter foes. The Texan Lyndon B. Johnson, who probably had closer ties with the Senate than any other president before or since, tangled with Dixiecrats on civil rights and then with northern liberals, including his former ally Eugene McCarthy, on Vietnam. In 1990, House Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich, attacked George H. W. Bush for cutting a budget deal with Democrats and helped doom his reelection bid in 1992. It was Republican legislators who stopped George W. Bush's attempt to reform immigration, helping wreck his second term.

—Sam Tanenhaus

No man, however strong, can serve ten years as schoolmaster, priest, or Senator, and remain fit for anything else.

--Henry Brooks Adams

THE OLD STONE CROSS

A statesman is an easy man,
He tells his lies by rote;
A journalist makes up his lies
And takes you by the throat;
So stay at home and drink your beer
And let the neighbors vote.

--William Butler Yeats

Political action is the highest responsibility of a citizen.

--John F. Kennedy

It has always been by ambition since childhood to live such a life that one day my fellow citizens would call me to membership in this popular branch of the greatest lawmaking body in the world. Out of their confidence and partiality they have done this. It is now my sole purpose here to help enact such wise and just laws that our common country will by virtue of these laws be a happier and a more prosperous country. I have always dreamed of a country which I believe this should be and will be, and that is one in which the citizenship is an educated and patriotic people, not swayed by passion and prejudice, and a country that shall know no East, no West, no North, no South, but inhabited by a people liberty loving, patriotic, happy, and prosperous, with its lawmakers having no other purpose than to write such just laws as shall in the years to come be of service to human kind yet unborn.

--Representative Sam
Rayburn

Here, everything, pretty much everything you do in government involves heart, whereas in business most things don't involve heart. In fact, in business you're actually better off without it.

—Donald J. Trump

Politics is the art of the next best.

—Otto von Bismarck

I desire so to conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside me.

--Abraham Lincoln

Every person in America has done or said something that would keep him or her from being president. Maybe a nation that consumes as much booze and dope as we do and has our kind of divorce statistics should pipe down about 'character issues.'

--P. J. O'Rourke

It is our character that supports the promise of our future—far more than particular government programs or policies.

--William J. Bennett

Politics is chiefly the manipulation of power and public opinion, and that morality has no place in it....the dormant goodwill in people needs to be stirred. People need to hear that it makes sense to behave decently or to help others, to place common interests above their own, to respect the elementary rules of human coexistence.

—Vaclav Havel

If once you forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem.

--Abraham Lincoln

Democracy is hypocrisy without limitation.

—Iskander Mirza

Congress is more powerful than the president. It comes first in the Constitution for a reason. The public should demand more of it, and care more who runs it.

—Ezra Klein

A purely objective viewpoint does not exist in the cosmos or in politics.

—Howard Fineman

[David Frum says] ‘...people who expect to hear only lies can hardly complain when a lie is exposed.’ This circumstance has existed in the United States for years, maybe decades. I continually hear that misleading statements made during a campaign are discounted, almost expected. I know that if my prospective employer is aware that I lied during a job interview, then I don’t get the job. Americans have been hiring presidents for years who have knowingly misled them during the campaign. Maybe if this habit were not condoned and if there were a way of highlighting these ‘alternative facts,’ Americans could be better positioned to hire the right man or woman.

—Wayne Mortson

Just in general, any government throughout history hasn’t really wanted its people to be educated, because then they couldn’t control them as easily.

—Maynard J. Keenan

By voluntarily stepping down from the presidency after two terms, George Washington did his part to keep the United States from becoming an autocracy. His farewell address laid out an exemplary vision for the country he helped build, forewarning against messy international entanglements and petty domestic disputes. In short, Washington taught us how to say goodbye.

—Brian Wolly

A kitchen appliance accepted throughout the rest of the United States as a basic postwar amenity, the in-sink garbage disposal unit, is... illegal in New York. Disposals, a city employee advised me, not only improve rats, and ‘bacteria,’ presumably in a way that bags of garbage sitting on the sidewalk do not (‘Because it is,’ I was told when I asked how this could be), but also encourage people ‘to put their babies down them.’

On the other hand this illustrates how a familiar urban principle, that patronage (the more garbage there is to be collected, the more garbage collectors can be employed), can be reduced, in the bureaucratic wilderness that is any third-world city, to voodoo; on the other it reflects this particular city’s underlying criminal ethic, its acceptance of graft and grift as the bedrock of every transaction. ‘Garbage costs are outrageous,’ an executive of *Supermarkets General*, which owns *Pathmark*, recently told *City Limits* about why the chains preferred to locate in the suburbs. ‘Every time you need to hire a contractor, it’s a problem.’ The problem, however, is one from which not only the contractor but everyone with whom the contractor does business—a chain of direct or indirect patronage extending deep into the fabric of the city—stands to derive one or another benefit.

—Joan Didion

They speak of a candidate's 'performance,' by which they usually mean his skill at circumventing questions, not as citizens but as professional insiders, attuned to signals pitched beyond the range of normal hearing.

— Joan Didion

Once the campaign explodes to 18 states, as it will the day after New Hampshire, when the focus shifts to a super primary across the nation, the existing communications system simply will not accommodate more than two or three candidates in each party. Neither the television networks, nor the newspapers nor magazines, have the resources of people, space and time to describe and analyze the dynamics of two simultaneous half-national elections among Republicans and Democrats. That task is simply beyond us. Since we cannot reduce the number of states voting on Super Tuesday, we have to reduce the number of candidates treated as serious contenders. These news judgments will be arbitrary—but not subject to appeal. Those who finished first or second in Iowa and New Hampshire will get tickets from the mass media to play in the next big round. Those who don't, won't.

—David S. Broder

President Ronald Reagan acted on the work habits of a lifetime: he regarded his daily schedule as being something like a shooting script in which characters came and went, scenes were rehearsed and acted out, and the plot was advanced one day at a time, and not always in sequence. The Chief of Staff was a sort of producer, making certain that the star had what he needed to do his best; the staff was like the crew, invisible behind the lights, watching the performance their behind-the-scenes efforts had made possible... Reagan's performance was almost always flawless. If he was scheduled to receive a visitor at 10 o'clock, he would finish whatever else he was doing at 9:58, clear off his desk, clear his mind of whatever had gone before, and prepare himself for the next scene.

—Donald Regan

I think a great deal of the job is ceremonial. The way I look at it now, most of politicians holding office think they are doing things but it's all staffed out... most of the day-to-day stuff is very symbolic. That was one of the frustrations I found in being governor. At first, I took literally the nature of the material being presented at meetings, but I soon found that visiting delegations often were satisfied just being in the same room as the governor. There is something illusory about it, like a play. Then again, if that satisfies people, it has some value.

—Jerry Brown

The public is the employer of these government employees and has the right to know what they're up to.

—Jack Anderson

There's one political party in this country, and that's the corporate party.

—John Hall

To become truly great, one has to stand with people, not above them.

—Charles de
Montesquieu

A passion for politics stems usually from an insatiable need, either for power, or for friendship and adulation, or a combination of both.

—Fawn M. Brodie

War is nothing more than the continuation of politics by other means.

--Karl von Clausewitz

War cannot be divorced from politics for a single moment.

--Mao Tse-Tung

We see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means.

--Karl Von Clausewitz

A huge, permanent military establishment would ultimately bankrupt and destroy the democracy it was meant to defend.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

Everything that steel achieves in war can be won in politics by eloquence.

—Demetrius

There can be no peace in the world until the caliber of its statesmen is equal to the caliber of its guns.

--Unknown

The most shocking fact about war is that its victims and its instruments are individual human beings, and that these individual beings are condemned by the monstrous conventions of politics to murder or be murdered in quarrels not their own.

—Aldous Huxley

Politics is war without bloodshed, and war is politics with blood.

--Mao Tse-Tung

There's no difference between one's killing and making decisions that will send others to kill. It's exactly the same thing, or even worse.

--Golda Meir

We Americans have no commission from God to police the world.

--Benjamin Harrison

Where is it written in the Constitution, in what article or section is it contained, that you may take children from their parents, and parents from their children, and compel them to fight the battles of any war in which the folly or the wickedness of government may engage it?

--Daniel Webster

I like to believe that people, in the long run, are going to do more to promote peace than our governments. Indeed, I think that people want peace so much that one of these days governments had better get out of the way and let them have it.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

How different the new order would be if we could consult the veteran instead of the politician.

—Henry Miller

Politics is the womb in which war develops.

—Karl Von Clausewitz

The less government interferes with private pursuits, the better for general prosperity.

—Martin Van Buren

There is no legitimacy on earth but in a government which is the choice of the nation.

—Joseph Bonaparte

We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.

--William Ewart
Gladstone

War is failure of diplomacy.

—John Dingell

You slam a politician, you make out he's the devil, with horns and hoofs. But his wife loves him, and so did all his mistresses.

—Pamela Hansford
Johnson

Though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will, to be rightful, must be reasonable; the minority possess their equal right, which equal laws must protect, and to violate would be oppression.

--Thomas Jefferson

Race prejudice is not only a shadow over the colored—it is a shadow over all of us, and the shadow is darkest over those who feel it least and allow its evil effects to go on.

--Pearl S. Buck

Despite what the media tells you, politics is not like a baseball game or a soap opera. Politics is about coming together to improve the lives of all. We need discussion about serious issues.

—Bernie Sanders

A politician is a person with whose politics you don't agree; if you agree with him he's a statesman.

—David Lloyd George

I am working for the time when unqualified blacks, browns, and women join the unqualified men in running our government.

—Cissy Farenthold

Starving a child is violence;
Depressing a culture is violence;
Neglecting school children is violence;
Punishing a mother and her family is violence;
Discrimination against a working man is violence;
Ghetto housing is violence;
Ignoring medical needs is violence;
Contempt for poverty is violence;
And the lack of will power to help humanity is a sick and sinister form of violence.

--Coretta Scott King

America faces a racial fracture whose severity is not sufficiently recognized. It is not the country we thought it would be when America elected its first black president. That is the stark truth. Let us be depressed about it.

--Tina Brown

The unemployment rate among black college graduates (4.1 percent) is almost the same as the unemployment rate among white high-school graduates (4.6 percent). But that college degree is generally purchased at a higher price by blacks than by whites. According to research by the *Brookings Institution*, African Americans tend to carry more student debt four years after graduation (\$53,000 versus \$28,000) and suffer from a higher default rate on their loans (7.6 percent versus 2.4 percent) than white Americans. This is both the result and the perpetuator of a sprawling wealth gap between the races. White households, on average, hold seven times as much wealth as black households—a difference so large as to make comparing the ‘black middle class’ and ‘white middle class’ meaningless; they’re simply not comparable. According to Patrick Sharkey, a sociologist at New York University who studies economic mobility, black families making \$100,000 a year or more live in more-disadvantaged neighborhoods than white families making less than \$30,000. This gap didn’t just appear by magic; it’s the result of the government’s effort over many decades to create a pigmentocracy—one that will continue without explicit intervention.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1969 against a Des Moines, Iowa, school district, finding that students had a right to protest peacefully on school grounds. In this case, the Court said, the teenage plaintiffs could wear black armbands in protest of the Vietnam War, as long as they did so without ‘materially and substantially’ disturbing class. Justice Hugo Black issued an ominous dissent. ‘It is the beginning of a new revolutionary era of permissiveness in this country,’ he wrote. ‘Groups of students all over the land are already running loose, conducting break-ins, sit-ins, lie-ins, and smash-ins.’ Following the federal ruling, state and local officials passed a flurry of laws that would punish students who were disturbing class, anywhere from universities to elementary schools. At the time, it’s worth remembering, black students weren’t just protesting; they were also integrating white classrooms, backed by the federal government. ‘As soon as we started introducing black bodies into white schools, we got these laws,’ says Jenny Egan, a public defender for juveniles in Maryland who regularly represents clients charged with disturbing school. ‘That’s not a coincidence.’

—Amanda Ripley

For too long, we have focused on our differences—in our politics and backgrounds, in our race and beliefs—rather than cherishing the unity and pride that binds us together.

—Bob Riley

The mark of a true politician is that he is never at a loss for words because he is always half-expecting to be asked to make a speech.

—Richard M. Nixon

Yes, God and the politicians willing, the United States can declare peace upon the world, and win it.

--Ely Colbertson

Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: viz, avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.

--Petrarch

There has never been a war yet which if the facts had been put calmly before the ordinary folk, could not have been prevented. The common man is the greatest protection against war.

--Ernest Bevin

When Kansas and Colorado have a quarrel over the water in the Arkansas River they don't call out the National Guard in each state and go to war over it. They bring a suit in the Supreme Court of the United States and abide by the decision. There isn't a reason in the world why we cannot do that internationally.

--Harry S. Truman

There is such a thing as a nation being so right that it does not need to convince others by force that it is right.

--Woodrow Wilson

There is no more dangerous misconception than this which misconstrues the arms race as the cause rather than a symptom of the tensions and divisions which threaten nuclear war. If the history of the past fifty years teaches us anything, it is that peace does not follow disarmament—disarmament follows peace.

--Bernard M. Baruch

The United Nations is our one great hope for a peaceful and free world.

--Ralph Bunche

Preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education.

--Maria Montessori

Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war.

—Maria Montessori

Nations have recently been led to borrow billions for war; no nation has ever borrowed largely for education. Probably, no nation is rich enough to pay for both war and civilization. We must make our choice; we cannot have both.

--Abraham Flexner

If stupidity got us into this mess, then why can't it get us out?

—Will Rogers

George Washington leaving the presidency...provided the example of serving only two terms, a precedent that was followed by every president until 1940, and later was written into the Constitution. In his farewell address, he warned the country against becoming involved in the internal affairs of foreign countries, advice that is as valid today as it was in 1796.

—Jerry Weaver

Power is a sort of tumor that ends by killing the victim's sympathies.

—Henry Adams

Subjects under the influence of power...acted as if they had suffered a traumatic brain injury—becoming more impulsive, less risk-aware, and, crucially, less adept at seeing things from other people's point of view.

—Dacher Keltner,
Psychology
Professor

'Hubris syndrome,' as Lord David Owen and Jonathan Davidson defined it in a 2009 article published in *Brain*, 'is a disorder of the possession of power, particularly power which has been associated with overwhelming success, held for a period of years and with minimal constraint on the leader.' Its 14 clinical features include: manifest contempt for others, loss of contact with reality, restless or reckless actions, and displays of incompetence.

—Jerry Useem

If power were a prescription drug, it would come with a long list of known side effects. It can intoxicate. It can corrupt. It can ever make Henry Kissinger believe that he's sexually magnetic.

—Jerry Useem

Of all sciences, there is none where first appearances are more deceitful than in politics.

--David Hume

The most significant fashion innovation is definitely the high heel. None of us looks sexy or powerful or stylish walking around on our knees. Height, and the ability to dominate—sexually, stylishly, politically, interpersonally—is our principal social currency.

--Simon Doonan

The political system is not for the people. The people are secondary to the economy. It's about what generates money, not about what benefits the people.

—Ziggy Marley

Good government generally begins in the family, and if the moral character of a people once degenerate, their political character must soon follow.

—Elias Boudinot

It will require a struggle to make America reality-based again. Fight the good fight in your private life. You needn't get into an argument with the stranger at Chipotle who claims that George Soros and Uber are plotting to make his muscle car illegal—but do not give acquaintances and friends and family members free passes. If you have children or grandchildren, teach them to distinguish between true and untrue as fiercely as you do between right and wrong and between wise and foolish.

—Kurt Andersen

The President is the last person in the world to know what the people really want and think.

—James A. Garfield

Let us face it: in the world today, money and economic strength remain more powerful arguments than the number of people you represent.

—Guy Verhofstadt

History offers the best training for those who are to take part in public affairs.

--Polybius

The happiest moments of my life have been the few which I have past at home in the bosom of my family....public employment contributes neither to advantage nor happiness. It is but honorable exile from one's family and affairs.

--Thomas Jefferson

Society is like a stew. If you don't stir it up every once in a while then a layer of scum floats to the top.

—Edward Abbey

The best weapon of a dictatorship is secrecy, but the best weapon of a democracy should be the weapon of openness.

—Niels Bohr

The trouble with practical jokes is that very often they get elected.

—Will Rogers

Power is always dangerous. Power attracts the worst and corrupts the best.

—Edward Abbey

Impressed with a conviction that the due administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government, I have considered the first arrangement of the judicial department as essential to the happiness of our country and to the stability of its' political system – hence the selection of the fittest characters to expound the laws, and dispense justice, has been an invariable object of my anxious concern.

—George Washington

A primary object should be the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? And what duty more pressing than communicating it to those who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?

—George Washington

In politics as in philosophy, my tenets are few and simple. The leading one of which, and indeed that which embraces most others, is to be honest and just ourselves and to exact it from others, meddling as little as possible in their affairs where our own are not involved. If this maxim was generally adopted, wars would cease and our swords would soon be converted into reap hooks and our harvests be more peaceful, abundant, and happy.

—George Washington

Unpleasant questions are being raised about Mother's Day. Is this day necessary?...Isn't it bad public policy?...No politician with half his senses, which a majority of politicians have, is likely to vote for its abolition, however. As a class, mothers are tender and loving, but as a voting bloc they would not hesitate for an instant to pull the seat out from under any Congressman who suggests that Mother is not entitled to a box of chocolates each year in the middle of May.

--Russell Baker

I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Clinton cost John Kerry more votes than he gained for him whenever they appeared together. Imagine being part of a crowd enraptured by the presence of Bill Clinton, and then having to listen to a speech by John Kerry!

—Pat Sajak

My reading of history convinces me that most bad government results from too much government.

—John Sharp Williams

The measure of a man is what he does with power.

—Plato

One of the main government agencies that sponsors research on public health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been virtually forbidden by law from doing any research on gun violence and public policy for two decades. Buried in a 1996 law is a provision, championed by the National Rifle Association, that prohibits the CDC from funding research that might advocate or promote gun control. In America, in 2017, we essentially have a ban on scientific research that might lead to inconvenient conclusions.

—Fareed Zakaria

Birth Control?

BAN IT!

Abortion?

BAN IT!

Gay marriage?

BAN IT!

Guns?

Look, banning things never works.

People will find ways to get them.

—Internet Meme

When we protect guns more than we protect children, we become an uncivilized society.

—Internet Meme

I want any young men who buy a gun to be treated like young women who seek an abortion. Think about it: a mandatory 48-hours waiting period, written permission from a parent or a judge, a note from a doctor proving that he understands what he is about to do, time spent watching a video on individual and mass murders, traveling hundreds of miles at his own expense to the nearest gun shop, and walking through protestors holding photos of loved ones killed by guns, protestor who call him a murderer. After all, it makes more sense to do this for young men seeking guns than for young women seeking an abortion. No young woman needing reproductive freedom has ever murdered a roomful of strangers.

—Unknown

One failed attempt at a shoe bomb, and we all have to take our shoes off at the airport. 31 school shootings since Columbine and no change in the regulation of guns.

—John Oliver

The 2nd Amendment was written 226 years ago.

Imagine trying to write laws today that govern weapons in the year 2243.

—Internet Meme

So long as governments set the example of killing their enemies, private individuals will occasionally kill theirs.

--Elbert G. Hubbard

April 16, 2007, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 32 people on the campus of Virginia Tech University. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded “Now is not the time to talk about gun control.’

Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 28 people including 20 children in Newtown Connecticut. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded ‘Now is not the time to talk about gun control.’

Oct. 1, 2017, a gunman armed with automatic weapons kills 59 people at a Las Vegas concert. When the American public called for stricter gun control laws, Republican lawmakers responded ‘Now is not the time to talk about gun control.’
When is it time?

—Roberta Null

‘Can I get 2 boxes of Sudafed?’
‘Sorry, by law you can only buy one at a time.’
‘Okay then, just the one box of Sudafed and these 7 guns.’

—Internet Meme

We lose eight children and teenagers to gun violence every day. If a mysterious virus suddenly started killing eight of our children every day, America would mobilize teams of doctors and public health officials. We would move heaven and earth until we found a way to protect our children. But not with gun violence.

--Elizabeth Warren

To all the kids from the ‘special’ reading class back in high school (the one where you tried to form words using wooden blocks) -- PLEASE stop telling me that I can't blame an ‘inanimate object’ for the off-the-hook gun violence in this country. YES! ... I CAN!!! I blame all the ‘inanimate objects’ in Congress who refuse to pass sensible gun legislation because they're too chicken-shit to take on Wayne LaPierre and the gun lobby.

--Quentin R. Bufogle

Violence isn't a Democrat or Republican problem. It's an American problem, requiring an American solution.

--DaShanne Stokes

America: Land of the free and home of the gun.

We are not brave, we are cowards, or we would have done something, anything after Newtown. Instead we did Nothing.

--Jonathan Heatt

The regularity of mass killings breeds familiarity. The rhythms of grief and outrage that accompany them become—for those not directly affected by tragedy—ritualised and then blend into the background noise. That normalisation makes it ever less likely that America's political system will groan into action to take steps to reduce their frequency or deadliness.

Those who live in America, or visit it, might do best to regard them the way one regards air pollution in China: an endemic local health hazard which, for deep-rooted cultural, social, economic and political reasons, the country is incapable of addressing.

This may, however, be a bit unfair. China seems to be making progress on pollution.

—*The Economist*

It has been two months since Newtown. This is not the first time this country has debated how to reduce gun violence. But this time is different. Overwhelming majorities of Americans — Americans who believe in the Second Amendment — have come together around common-sense reform -- like background checks that will make it harder for criminals to get their hands on a gun. Senators of both parties are working together on tough new laws to prevent anyone from buying guns for resale to criminals. Police chiefs are asking our help to get weapons of war and massive ammunition magazines off our streets. Each of these proposals deserves a vote in Congress. If you want to vote no, that's your choice. But these proposals deserve a vote. Because in the two months since Newtown, more than a thousand birthdays, graduations, and anniversaries have been stolen from our lives by a bullet from a gun. Gabby Giffords deserves a vote. The families of Newtown deserve a vote. The families of Aurora deserve a vote.

—Barack Obama

Honestly, this is not going to change unless the people who want to prevent these kinds of mass shootings from taking place feel at least as passionate, at least as mobilized and well-funded as the NRA and the gun manufacturers are because the politics in Congress are such where even members of Congress who know better are fearful if they vote their conscience and support common sense measures like background checks, they're worried they're going to lose.

—Barack Obama

The Second Amendment has no place in modern society.

— Alan M. Dershowitz

1967—Jayne Mansfield is killed when her car runs under the rear end of a tractor trailer. Since then, all trailers have a DOT bar at the rear to keep cars from going under them.

1982—Seven people die when Tylenol packaging was tampered with. Since then, it takes a PhD, channel locks, and a sharp object to get into a bottle of pills.

1995—A bombing using a certain kind of fertilizer, solution grade ammonium nitrate, killed 168 people, so the government imposed severe restrictions on the purchase of that fertilizer.

2001—One person attempts to blow up a plane with a shoe bomb. Since then, all air travelers have to take off their shoes for scanning before being allowed to board.

Since 1968—1,516,863 people have died from guns on American soil. Gun violence kills an average of 168 people every two days! Now, the problem apparently can't be solved except with thoughts and prayers.

—Internet Meme

The terrifying fact is that no one is safe so long as Congress chooses to do absolutely nothing in the face of this epidemic. As my colleagues go to sleep tonight, they need to think about whether the political support of the gun industry is worth the blood that flows endlessly onto the floors of American churches, elementary schools, movie theaters, and city streets. Ask yourself – how can you claim that you respect human life while choosing fealty to weapons-makers over support for measures favored by the vast majority of your constituents.

—Chris Murphy

According to experts from around the world, policies restricting firearms correlate with a reduction in firearm deaths. But no matter how many researchers, scientists, and policy experts discuss the need for new gun laws and restrictions, our representatives in Washington insist: A tragedy's aftermath is not the time to talk about gun control. Instead, they lean on 'thoughts and their prayers' to get America through the current gun-related tragedy before the next incident occurs.

While they're sharing their usual thoughts and prayers, they should consider what exactly they are sending. Simple sympathy isn't enough, and it never will be when there are concrete steps that can be made to save actual lives. Politicians' prayers need to be aimed at their fellow lawmakers to enact change. Their thoughts need to be about meaningful policy changes that could prevent another murder, another death, another heartbreaking act of violence. Their tweets, public statements, and news sound bites offering their condolences must be the beginning, not the end, of the conversation.

There is nothing wrong with offering sympathy, showing your empathy, and sending thoughts and prayers to victims of violence. That is, if you're actually going to do something to make sure you never have to think those thoughts or say those prayers again.

—Sadie L. Trombetta

A time will come when a politician who has willfully made war and promoted international dissension will be as sure of the dock and much surer of the noose than a private homicide. It is not reasonable that those who gamble with men's lives should not stake their own.

--H. G. Wells

It is a good thing for a man to know when he has done his work....There are very few men who know how to quit any great office, or to divest themselves of any robe of power.

--Sir Arthur Helps

Few men of action have been able to make a graceful exit at the appropriate time.

--Malcolm Muggeridgers

Old men are dangerous: it doesn't matter to them what is going to happen to the world.

--George Bernard Shaw

We could certainly slow the aging process down if it had to work its way through Congress.

—Will Rogers

All evil comes from the old. They grow fat on ideas and young men die of them.

—Jean Anouilh

The first order of government is to preserve the public order and safety.

—Bob Wise

Nothing is more damaging to a state than that cunning men pass for wise.

—Francis Bacon

Nobody is qualified to become a statesman who is entirely ignorant of the problem of wheat.

--Socrates

What was shocking were the rewards my father's cousins had gathered in the intervening couple of decades. They farmed now on thousands of acres, not hundreds. They drove fancy pickup trucks, owned lakefront property and second homes. A simple Internet search offered the truth of where their riches had come from: good ol' Uncle Sam. Recently I clicked again on a database of farm subsidy payments, and found that five of my father's first cousins had been paid, all told, \$3 million between 1995 and 2005—and that on top of whatever they'd earned outright for the sale of their corn and soybeans. They worked hard, certainly. They'd saved and scrimped through the lean years. They were good and honorable yeoman, and now they'd come through to their great reward: a prime place at the trough of the welfare state. All that corn syrup guzzled down the gullets of America's overweight children, all that beef inefficiently fattened on cheap feed, all that ethanol being distilled in heartland refineries: all of it underwritten by as wasteful a government program as now exists this side of the defense industry. In the last ten years, the federal government has paid \$131 million in subsidies and disaster insurance in just the county [in Minnesota] where I grew up. Corn is subsidized to keep it cheap, and the subsidies encourage overproduction, which encourages a scramble for ever more ways to use corn, and thus bigger subsidies—the perfect feedback loop of government welfare.

--Philip Connors

Most of the energy of political work is devoted to correcting the effects of mismanagement of government.

—Milton Friedman

The greatest advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science and literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government.

—Milton Friedman

Agriculture is a business that has been up to its bib overalls in politics since the first Thanksgiving dinner kickback to the Indians for subsidizing Pilgrim maize production with fish head fertilizer grants.

—P. J. O'Rourke

Agriculture subsidies are far too generous. They need to be reined in because they cater to special interests while distorting free market competition. Yes, the farm laws are an anachronistic mess.

—Juan Williams

Here is my Farm Relief bill: Every time a Southerner plants nothing on his farm but cotton year after year, and the Northerner nothing but wheat or corn, why, take a hammer and hit him twice right between the eyes. You may dent your hammer, but it will do more real good than all the bills you can pass in a year.

--Will Rogers

Federal policy tells us to fill 50 percent of our plates with fruits and vegetables. At the same time, federal farm subsidies focus on financing the production of corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, sorghum, dairy and livestock.

—Chuck Norris

I never knew a government yet that wanted to do anything.

—Anthony Trollope

Racism remains, as it has since 1776, at the heart of this country's political life.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates

In crimes of ideology, it's rarely the crime itself that sends people to ruination, but the cover-up. Watergate ended a presidency, and ever since, -gate has been stuck to political crimes like an STD.

—Peter Landesman

When lies must be told, they should be told by subordinate officials.

—Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

Although book lists go against my teacherly instincts, I think we could come up with some sort of point system for renewing educators' contracts and certifying congressmen as eligible to stand for reelection: one point, say, for Steve Garvey's autobiography or for books by Dick Francis, John Grisham, and Erma Bombeck; five points for Anne Tyler, Tobias Wolff, and Edward Hoagland; 10 points for Stephen Jay Gould, David Halberstam, Gore Vidal, and Kelvin Trilling; 15 points for books in a foreign language, books on modern physics and mathematics, poetry books, and Edward Abbey.

We could argue about how many points dead authors are worth. I worry about people who scream for something they call standards in the schools and then try to convince kids that the only good author is one who's been dead at least 100 years. I'd also award bonus points for familiarity with Squirrel Nutkin, Miss Nelson, Max, the Scroobius Pip, Henry and Mudge, The Stupids, Ramona, Madeline, Eloise, Amelia Bedelia, The Cat in the Hat, The Pinballs, Anastasia, and the hundreds of their literary fellows.

—Susan Ohanian

One of the greatest delusions in the world is the hope that the evils in this world are to be cured by legislation.

—Thomas Reed

Socialism is Bolshevism with a shave.

—*Detroit Journal*

Conservatives wishing to disprove charges of racial bad faith have an obvious place to begin: GOP efforts to make voting harder for minorities, under the guise of preventing voter fraud. In theory, voter fraud is a legitimate, non-bigoted concern. The problem is, a mountains of evidence suggests that in the United States in 2017, it barely exists. Moreover, throughout U.S. history, white politicians have tried to prevent African-Americans from voting. And that's exactly what some Republicans are trying to do today.

—Peter Beinart

After all is said and done, a lot more will be said than done.

—Unknown

There are actually very few US politicians who have integrity and vision.

—David Korean

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals found last year and that North Carolina's Republican-dominated legislature had restricted voting and registration in ways that targeted African-Americans with almost surgical precision. In 2016, a former GOP staffer in the Wisconsin State Legislature reported, 'I was in the closed Senate Republican Caucus when the final round of multiple voter ID bills were being discussed. A handful of the GOP senators were giddy about the ramifications and literally singled out the prospects of suppressing minority and college voters.' Too often, that's what conservative 'color blindness' looks like when the cameras are off.

—Peter Beinart

When, in a famous GOPAC memo, Mr. [Newt] Gingrich advised Republican candidates to characterize Democrats with the words 'decay,' 'sick,' 'pathetic,' 'stagnation,' 'corrupt,' 'waste,' and 'traitors,' and Republicans with the words 'share,' 'change,' 'truth,' 'moral,' 'courage,' 'family,' 'peace,' and 'duty,' each word had been tested and oiled in focus groups to function in what the memo called 'Language, A Key Mechanism of Control.'

—Joan Didion

Presidential elections are defining moments that go way beyond legislative programs or the role of the government. They are measuring points for the country that call forth the range of questions which every candidate must try to address. Who are we? What matters? Where are we going? In the private and public actions of the candidates are embedded their best answers. Action is character, I believe, and when all is said and sifted, character is what matters most.

—Bob Woodward

To what degree, if any, is the private action relevant to the duties of the public office? Shouldn't our right know about a candidate's sex life be confined...to offenses such as rape, harassment, or sex discrimination?

—*The Los Angeles Times*

We do many things at the federal level that would be considered dishonest and illegal if done in the private sector.

—Donald T. Regan

The function of the politician...is one of continuous watchfulness and activity, and he must have intimate knowledge of details if he would work out grand results.

—John George Nicolay

Any government that places profit before people is pure evil.

--Suzy Kassem

Compromise used to mean that half a loaf was better than no bread. Among modern statesmen it really seems to mean that half a loaf is better than a whole loaf.

--G. K. Chesterton

Politics is disappointing. Most young people turn their backs on politics, not because of the lack of excitement of politics as it is practiced, but because of the shallowness, venality, and image-making as these are perceived through the media—one of the technology's greatest achievements.

—Walter Percy

Nothing is more terrible than ignorance in action.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Politics is when you say you are going to do one thing while intending to do another. Then you do neither what you said nor what you intended.

—Saddam Hussein

If by a 'Liberal' they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, someone who cares about the welfare of the people-their health, their housing, their schools, their jobs, their civil rights and their civil liberties-someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad, if that is what they mean by a 'Liberal', then I'm proud to say I'm a 'Liberal.'

--John F. Kennedy

If human beings are fundamentally good, no government is necessary; if they are fundamentally bad, any government, being composed of human beings, would be bad also.

—Fred Woodworth

Democracy isn't a state of perfection. It has to be improved, and that means constant vigilance.

—Antonio Tabucchi

At the top, you have someone [Donald Trump] who consistently does not tell the truth. That's a signal to the people below him that they don't have to tell the truth either, that this is the way we conduct government—we lie when we have to, we mistreat people when we have to, we humiliate them.

—James Glassman

The most dangerous man, to any government, is the man who is able to think things out for himself, without regard to the prevailing superstitions and taboos. Almost invariably he comes to the conclusion that the government he lives under is dishonest, insane and intolerable, and so, if he is romantic, he tries to change it. And if he is not romantic personally, he is apt to spread discontent among those who are.

—Henry Louis Mencken

Partisanship makes you stupid.

—Christopher Hitchens

When the preferences of economic elites and the stands of organized interest groups are controlled for, the preferences of the average American appear to have only a minuscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy.

—Martin Gilens and
Benjamin I. Page

For every dollar spend on lobbying by labor unions and public interest groups, large corporations and their associations now spend \$34. Of the 100 organizations that spend the most on lobbying, 95 consistently represent business.

—Yascha Mounk

By the time they reach office, many politicians have already been socialized into a cultural, educational, and financial elite that sets them apart from average Americans. While some representatives do have strong roots in their district, for many others the connection is tenuous at best. Even for those members who were born and raised in the part of the country they represent, that place is for many of them not their true home. Educated at expensive colleges, likely on the coast, they spend their 20s and 30s in the nation's great metropolitan centers. After stints in law, business, or finance, or on Capitol Hill, they move to the hinterlands out of political ambition. Once they retire from Congress, even if they retain some kind of home in their district, few make it the center of their lives: they seem much more likely than their predecessors to pursue lucrative opportunities in cities such as New York, San Francisco, and, of course, Washington. By just about every metric—from life experience and education to net worth—these politicians are thoroughly disconnected from the rest of the population.

—Yascha Mounk

For women politicians to succeed, they must defeat and outmaneuver men. Yet the better at it they are, the more detested they become.

—Peter Beinart

The deepest sin against the human mind is to believe things without evidence.

--Thomas Henry Huxley

Teddy White lamented that TV might spell the death of serious politics: to give a thoughtful response to serious questions, politician needed a good thirty seconds to ponder, but television allowed only five seconds of silence at best. DDB (ad men) found nothing to lament and the fact. They were convinced you could learn everything you needed to KNOW about a product, which in this case happens to be a human being, in half a minute—the speed not of thought but of emotion.

--Rick Perlstein

As for the majority, it is not so much race as it is political affiliation that really divides it today. What was once an issue of physical difference is now one of intellectual difference. Men have yet to master disagreeing without flashing all their frustrations that come with it; the conservative will throw half-truths while the liberal will throw insults. Combine these and what do you get? A dishonest mockery of a country.

--Criss Jami

The mass communications that could enable our politics for good have instead turned it into a bland conglomeration of stunted opinion cloaked in the occasional media frenzy of blame or denial.

--Sara Sheridan

What costs millions of dollars but is worthless?
Second place in the election.

—*AARP Bulletin*

In politics, the pen is at its heaviest because it is weighed down by the collective responsibility it holds towards its people and their future in the eyes of the world.

--Aysha Taryam

When our elected officials and our political campaign become entirely untethered to reason and facts and analysis, when it doesn't matter what's true and what's not, that makes it all but impossible for us to make good decisions on behalf of future generations. It threatens the values of respect and tolerance that we teach our children and that are the source of America's strength. It frays the habits of the heart that underpin any civilized society—because how we operate is not just based on laws, it's based on habits and customs and restraint and respect.

--Barack Obama

Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or ill it teaches the whole people by its example.

—Timothy McVeigh

The President of the United States hears a hundred voices telling him that he is the greatest man in the world. He must listen carefully to hear the one voice that tells him he's not.

—Harry Truman

The press and politicians. A delicate relationship. Too close, and danger ensues. Too far apart and democracy itself cannot function without the essential exchange of information. Creative leaks, a discreet lunch, interchange in the Lobby, the art of the unattributable telephone call, late at night.

--Howard Brenton

But the thought leaders on talk radio and Fox do more than shape opinion. Backed by their own wing of the book-publishing industry and supported by think tanks that increasingly function as public-relations agencies, conservatives have built a whole alternative knowledge system, with its own facts, its own history, its own laws of economics.

--David Frum

Congress is usually more eager to assert authority than to accept responsibility, more ready to criticize than to constructively propose, more comfortable in the public relations limelight than in the murkier grayness of the real world, where choices must often be made, not between relative goods, but between bad and worse.

—Henry Hyde

Given their obstinate lack of interest in the subject, asking a group of average Americans about politics is like asking a group of stevedores to solve a problem in astrophysics.

—Andrew Ferguson

Compassionate conservatism is old-fashioned budget-balancing with spending for preventive health measures and protection of the environment, and a strong-pro-choice position on abortion.

—Pete Wilson

The polemics of right-wing radio are putting nothing less than hate onto the air-waves, into the marketplace, electing it to office, teaching it in schools, and exalting it as freedom.

--Patricia J. Williams

The outcome of a presidential election can be accurately predicted based on factors that are known well before the official campaign gets underway. Despite the time, effort and money devoted to campaigning, there is very little that the candidates can do during September and October to alter the eventual outcome of a presidential election.

—Alan I. Abramowitz

On the eve of the election last month my wife Judith and I were driving home late in the afternoon and turned on the radio for the traffic and weather. What we instantly got was a freak show of political pornography : lies , distortions, and half-truths half-truths being perhaps the blackest of all lies. They paraded before us as informed opinion.

--Bill Moyers

Keep in mind our *Constitution* predates the Industrial Revolution. Our founders did not know about electricity, the train, telephones, radio, television, automobiles, airplanes, rockets, nuclear weapons, satellites, or space exploration. There's a lot they didn't know about. It would be interesting to see what kind document they'd draft today. Just keeping it frozen in time won't hack it.

--Ross Perot

No great advance has been made in science, politics, or religion without controversy.

—Lyman Beecher

Those looking for ideology in the White House should consider this: For the men who rule our world, rules are for other people.

—Naomi Klein

If people let government decide what foods they eat and what medicines they take, their bodies will soon be in as sorry a state as are the souls of those who live under tyranny.

—Thomas Jefferson

The press and politicians. A delicate relationship. Too close, and danger ensues. Too far apart and democracy itself cannot function without the essential exchange of information. Creative leaks, a discreet lunch, interchange in the Lobby, the art of the unattributable telephone call, late at night.

—Howard Brenton

Help Wanted!

President of the United States of America

The United States is seeking a chief executive to run a multinational organization with 2.1 million employees and a \$4 trillion dollar budget. Candidates must be at least 35 years of age that have been born in United States. The ideal applicant will be able to act decisively but not rashly and to focus on urgent matters while simultaneously showing a ready familiarity with the details of all non-urgent matters. Responsibilities include but are not limited to: filling 4,000 key open positions, assessing the daily findings of 17 in-house security agencies and taking measures to thwart threats contained therein, hosting visiting dignitaries and championship athletic teams, and administering official rights (the signing of legislation, the pardoning of turkeys). Must be ready to take the blame and share the credit. In the event of a natural disaster, must be able to speak empathetically on short notice. Must be disease-resistant and require little sleep. Must impress schoolchildren. Applicant should be skilled communicator, able to relate to and persuade dictators, legislators, bureaucrats, business leaders, lawyers, engineers, pipe fitters, long-haul truckers, full-stack developers, short-order cooks, and other stakeholders in the organization's operations. The hiring committee has in the past shown a preference for candidates it trusts to have mastered the pressing issues facing the organization, but will settle for one whom the committee members would enjoy having a beer with or who is simply not another applicant they like less. Social-media proficiency is a plus. Frequent travel will be required, Company jet will be provided. Hours are not flexible. No prior experience necessary.

—John Dickerson

James K. Polk's wife, Sarah, was so concerned that the 11th president might enter a room unnoticed, she asked the Marine Band to play 'Hail to the Chief' to get people to turn their head when he arrived.

—John Dickerson

Presidential transitions are a bigger undertaking than any private-sector transfer of power. In business, large mergers and acquisitions typically take a year or more and involve hundreds of staffers. Dow Chemical and DuPont announced their \$130 billion merger in December 2015, and closed in September 2017. A president-elect and his team have two and half months between victory and inauguration to figure out how to run a \$4 trillion dollar government with a civilian workforce of 2 million, to say nothing of the military. The United States federal government is the most complicated conglomerate on the planet.

—John Dickerson

Mr. Truman,

As you have been directly responsible for the loss of our son's life in Korea, you might just as well keep this emblem on display in your trophy room, as a memory of one of your historic deeds.

Our major regret at this time is that your daughter was not there to receive the same treatment as our son received in Korea.

Truman kept the letter in his desk drawer long after his term ended, a testament to the weight that remained on him even after he left the Oval Office. If a president thinks too much about the widows he's making or the children who will never know their mother because of his orders, he might not be able to perform the role of commander-in-chief. Learning to compartmentalize is a necessity for presidents. Some compartments are locked so tight, even the president's closest advisers never see their contents.

—John Dickerson

New York Governor Al Smith was once asked whether he had gotten a commitment from Roosevelt, and responded, 'Did you ever nail a custard pie to a wall?'

—John Dickerson

The natural instinct of a newly elected president is to approach the job like they operated in their previous roles. But the presidency is unlike any previous job. The sooner presidents realize that they are going to have to master new skills to run an effective White House, the better. Every president has to learn this. They know how to get elected, but they have to learn how to govern.

—Mike Leavitt

Nothing comes to my desk that is perfectly solvable. Otherwise, someone else would have solved it. So you wind up dealing with probabilities. Any given decision you make you'll wind up with a 30 to 40 percent chance that it isn't going to work. You can't be paralyzed by the fact that it might not work out.

—Barack Obama

The first thing I think the American people should be looking for is somebody that can build a team and create a culture that knows how to organize and move the ball down the field. No matter how good you are as president, you are overseeing...the largest organization on Earth. And you can't do it by yourself.

—Barack Obama

One of the most important accomplishments of my administration has been minding my own business.

—Clavin Coolidge

Effective government is like an airbag. You don't notice it most of the time, but when things go wrong, you really want it to be there.

—Gautam Mukunda

I have the most reliable friend you can have in American politics, and that is ready money.

—Phil Gramm

One of Heywood Broun's pet hates was ghost-written political speeches—particularly when they failed utterly to reflect either the convictions or the personalities of the big shots who were delivering them. Warren G. Harding pulled one of these phony orations at a newsman's banquet shortly after he assumed the Presidency—a pompous, cliché-laden address that sounded more like a circus press agent than a President of the United States. There was some polite applause as Harding resumed his seat. Then Broun jumped up and cried 'Author! Author!'

—Bennett Cerf

There isn't much credit to being a comedian when you got the whole government working for you. All you have to do is report the facts, and I don't even have to exaggerate.

—Will Rogers

He who walks in the middle of the roads gets hit from both sides.

—George Schultz

As far as the general public is concerned, you foolish Communists—and all other people who waste their time with politics—are like janitors. When my flat is warm and clean, and the elevator is running regularly, and the garbage is collected twice a day, I never give a thought to the janitor in the cellar. But—let the hot water fail to run, or the mail be undelivered, and I begin to think, 'That darn janitor doesn't know his job.' If things continue to go wrong, I see that the old janitor is fired and a new one gets the job. It's the same way in government. Let my own life go on undisturbed, and my private affairs prosper—and I don't give a continental whether the government is being run by a Communist, or a Seventh-Day Adventist, or a Hot-tentot. When they start interfering with my own business, however,—by heaven, I, and all the other people in the country, suddenly become aware of the men who are mismanaging it. We just go out and get ourselves a new janitor.

—Gertrude Stein

Nine-year-old Grace Bedell lived in the Village of Westfield, New York, in 1860. The first time she saw a photograph of the newly elected President of United States, she thought he would be better looking if he grew whiskers, and what is more, she sat down and wrote him so. Mr. Lincoln gravely replied that it might look like a piece of silly affectation for him to begin raising a beard at this stage of his career. No, answered Grace, it was the right thing for him to do, for he looked much too solemn, and she believed other little girls, like herself, would be scared of him without whiskers.

When Mr. Lincoln's special train carried him to New York, and the inauguration at Washington, he ordered a stop at Westfield and, from the rear platform, announced, 'I have a correspondent in this place named Grace Bedell, and if she is present I would like to see her.' Grace stepped forward, and Mr. Lincoln told her, 'You see, I let these whiskers grow for you, Grace. I hope you think I'm better looking now.' Then he kissed her, and Greece cried with joy, and the train moved on, and maybe one or two spectators realized that they had witnessed a wonderful example of American democracy in the truest sense.

—Bennett Cerf

That's the disappointment about politicians, and it's true about all of them, both Democrats and Republicans. More often than not, they answer the question that they wish you had asked and offer poll-tested sound bites.

—Seth Meyers

The 2017 version of *Chapman University's Survey of American Fears* tabbed 'corruption of government officials' as the most common fear, afflicting nearly 75 percent of respondents.

—Ben Healy

Most Americans do not understand the perils of climate change—or of deforestation, clear-cutting, habitat loss. But those who perpetuate the disinformation campaigns, including the administrator of the *Environmental Protection Agency*, the House and Senate majority leaders, and the president of the United States, likely do. It is easier, politically, to claim scientific murkiness than to tell the truth: they value their self-interest over the condition of the world their grandchildren will grow up in. Whether this self-interest is venal or foolish is irrelevant. It's human nature. And that raises a more difficult question: not whether we should take action, but how to come to terms with the fact that our species has proved itself incapable of doing so.

— Nathaniel Rich

He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be, shall never want attentive and favourable hearers.

—Richard Hooker

John Lennon's transformation is instructive. Early in Nixon's term, the former Beatle embarked on a frenzy of protest singing and activism. He took on topics ranging from capitalist exploitation to indigenous rights, and staged the famous 'Bed-In' against war while minting the primal chant of 'Give Peace a Chance.' Thanks to such efforts, he was harassed by Nixon's FBI and immigration authorities. Evidence suggests that the persecution may have succeeded in getting him to ditch plans for an anti-Nixon tour coinciding with the 1972 presidential campaign and culminating at the Republican National Convention. By 1980, Lennon had disavowed his protest career almost entirely.

—Spencer Kornhaber

Every two years the American politics industry fills the airwaves with the most virulent, scurrilous, wall-to-wall character assassination of nearly every political practitioner in the country. And then declares itself puzzled that America has lost trust in its politicians.

—Charles Krauthammer

We live in a stage of politics, where legislators seem to regard the passage of laws as much more important than the results of their enforcement.

—William Howard Taft

For ceremonial functions, the president should dress in suit and tie and be the president of the United States. In the field he should wear khaki slacks, open shirts, long sleeves with the sleeves rolled up. It is my judgment that he should not wear helmets or hats. A fatigue jacket would be fine in the field with soldiers on Thanksgiving Day.

—Roger Ailes

Polling is merely an instrument for gauging public opinion. When a president or any other leader pays attention to poll results, he is, in effect, paying attention to the views of the people. Any other interpretation is nonsense.

—George Gallup

The qualities that get a man into power are not those that lead him, once established, to use power wisely.

—Lyman Bryson

It is just as important that business keep out of government as that government keep out of business.

—Herbert Hoover

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

While the majority goes on about its great work without complaint, a noisy minority maintains an uproar of demands for special favors for special groups. There are pests who swarm through the lobbies of the Congress and the cocktail bars of Washington, representing these special groups as opposed to the basic interests of the Nation as a whole. They have come to look upon the war primarily as a chance to make profits for themselves at the expense of their neighbors—profits in money or in terms of political or social preferment.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

No man will ever bring out of the Presidency the reputation which carries him into it. To myself, personally, it brings nothing but increasing drudgery and daily loss of friends.

—Thomas Jefferson

I have played to audiences all over the country, cities, towns, and right on the bald prairies, and lots of swell charity affairs in New York, and if you talk about International or political affairs a fashionable New York audience is the dumbest one you can assemble anywhere in the Country. Small town people will make a sucker out of em for reading and keeping up with the news.

—Will Rogers

Mr. Ford is wrong when he says ‘90 percent of the people are satisfied.’ 90 percent of the people in the Country are not satisfied. Its just got so that 90 percent of the People in this Country don’t Give a Damn.

—Will Rogers

All one has to do to get his Speech reprinted in the *Record* is to find a Stenographer that can stay awake long enough to take it. Then you mark in the ‘Applause’ and ‘Laughter’ parts yourself. But just between us two I would rather tie up with the *Police Gazette* than the *Congressional Record*.

—Will Rogers

The principal thing is of course, ‘what will this do for me personally back home?’ If it is something that he thinks the folks back home may never read, or hear of, why then he can vote any way he wants to, but Politics and Self-Preservation must come first, never mind the majority of the people of the U.S. If Lawmakers were elected for Life I believe they would do better. A man’s thoughts are naturally on his next term, more than on his Country.

—Will Rogers

I am to go into Ziegfeld's new Follies and I have no Act. So I thought I will run down to Washington and get some material. Most people and Actors appearing on the stage have some Writer to write their material, or they reproduce some Book or old masterpiece, but I don't do that; Congress is good enough for me.

Why should I go and pay some famous Author, or even myself, sit down all day trying to dope out something funny to say on the Stage! No Sir, I have found that there is nothing as funny as things that have happened, and that people know that have happened. So I just have them mail me every day the *Congressional Record*. Is it to me what the *Police Gazette* used to be to the fellow who was waiting for a Hair Cut, it is a life saver.

—Will Rogers

Davis announced that his Policy will be Honesty. Neither is that an issue in Politics. It's a Miracle, and can he get enough people that believe in Miracles to elect him?

—Will Rogers

The last few days I have read various addresses made on Lincoln's Birthday. Every Politician always talks about him, but none of them ever imitate him. They always make that a day of delivering a Lecture on 'Americanism.' When an Office Holder, or one that has been found out, can't think of anything to deliver a speech on, he always falls back on the good old subject, AMERICANISM. Now that is the one thing that I have never delivered an Essay on, either written or spoken. They have all had a crack at it every Fourth of July and Lincoln's Birthday.

—Will Rogers

If Parties are supposed to have to vote together on everything, let each Party only send one man from the entire United States. Why pay these others to just be a lot of Sheep? Party Politics is the most narrow minded occupation in the World. A Guy raised in a straight Jacket is a Corkscrew compared to a thick headed party Politician.

—Will Rogers

Here is what I can't savvy. Why is it that one of us, in fact all of us, will work and save, and stint all our lives. For what? Why, to leave something to our children. When we die we want everything we have left clear and unencumbered. We will break our necks to leave them without a single debt. In fact we won't die if we can help it till we get out of debt for their sake. Now that is what we will do as individuals, BUT, when it comes to COLLECTIVELY, why it looks like we will break our neck to see HOW MUCH we can leave them owing.

—Will Rogers

Al Smith explains that if elected President all Protestants would not be exterminated; that even a few of the present Senators would be retained, including Tom Heflin; that the Knights off Columbus would not replace the Boy Scouts and Kiwanis; that mass would not replace golf on Sunday morning; and, that those that were fortunate enough to have meat could eat it on Friday. It's no compliment to nation's intelligence when these things have to be explained.

—Will Rogers

We went into their [Mexico] Congress. They call it the Chamber of Deputies, and they wear pistols. They are allowed to wear a Gun the same as an officer. I got a great kick out of that. Can you imagine, if we did that, the damage Jim Reed would have done by now? Jim would have exterminated half—the Republican half—the Senate by now, and would have been shooting most of the Democrats just for practice. Can you picture the late Henry Cabot Lodge directing Republican affairs with a forty-five as a Baton? And if Dawes had a gun, we would have to craft a new Senator every morning. I kinder like it. I never heard one Deputy call another a Liar all the time I watched 'em operate. But up home it has become so common that it's almost a greeting.

—Will Rogers

Diplomats are just as essential to starting a war as Soldiers are for finishing it. You take Diplomacy out of war and the thing would fall flat in a week.

—Will Rogers

This country runs IN SPITE of parties. In fact Parties are the biggest handicaps we have to contend with. If we didn't have to stop to play Politics any administration could almost make a garden of Eden out of us. If we were run by the Manager form of Government we would soon be paying so little taxes we would be lonesome. You could transfer ether Senate and Congress over to run the Standard Oil or General Motors and they would have both things bankrupt in two years. No other business in the world could afford to carry such deadwood. But we got em, and they are going to live off us someway, so we just as well put long tail coats on em and call em 'Statesmen.' They are great Guys personally, and they know in their own heart that its a lot of 'Boloney,' and if they are smart enough to make us feed em, why then we are the Yaps, not them.

—Will Rogers

Thats a tough Baby that Secretary of State thing. You come in there labeled as a Statesman and limp out headed for the ash can of Political hopes.

—Will Rogers

The Nineteenth Amendment—I think that's the one that made Women humans by Act of Congress.

—Will Rogers

More is required of public officials than slogans and handshakes and press releases. More is required. We must hold ourselves strictly accountable. We must provide the people with a vision of the future.

—Barbara Jordan

I'm sure that President Johnson would never have pursued the war in Vietnam if he'd ever had a Fulbright to Japan, or say Bangkok, or had any feeling for what these people are like and why they acted the way they did. He was completely ignorant.

—J. William Fulbright

Men of power have not time to read, yet men who do not read are not fit for power.

--Michael Foot

When I entered politics, I took the only downward turn you could take from journalism.

—Jim Hightower

The essence of government is control, or the attempt to control.

—Benjamin Tucker

James Garfield was assassinated by a crazed job seeker just months after he became the 20th president. Some contemporaries and historians have said that with his intelligence, high moral purpose, and record as a Union general in the Civil War, Garfield might have become one of America's greatest presidents.

—Ernest F. Imhoff

Politics is where solutions go to die.

—Jon Stewart

Don't teach my boy poetry, an English mother recently wrote the Provost of Harrow. Don't teach my boy poetry; he is going to stand for Parliament. Well, perhaps she was right but if more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place to live.

—John F. Kennedy

The instant the Government was organized, at the very first Congress, the Northern States evinced a general desire and purpose to use it for their own benefit, and to pervert its powers for sectional advantage, and they have steadily pursued that policy to this day.

—Robert Toombs

The system of government delineated in the Constitution is a concession to the idea that humans are deficient in the science of rational self-governance.

—Jeffrey Goldberg

It does not take a majority to prevail... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men.

—Samuel Adams

Whatever it is that the government does, sensible Americans would prefer that the government do it to somebody else. This is the idea behind foreign policy.

—P. J. O'Rourke

Close alliances with despots are never safe for free states.

—Demosthenes

It is easy when we are in prosperity to give advice to the afflicted.

—Aeschylus

Politics is such a torment that I advise everyone I love not to mix with it.

—Thomas Jefferson

The central point that emerges from our research is that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on US government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence....When a majority of citizens disagrees with economic elites and/or with organized interests, they generally lose. Moreover, because of the strong status quo bias built into the US political system, even when fairly large majorities of Americans favor policy change, they generally do not get it.

—*Testing Theories of
American Politics:
Elites, Interest
Groups, and
Average Citizens*
(2018)

Men of authority have employed all the destructive agents around them to promote their own personal interests at the sacrifice of every just, honorable, and lawful consideration.

—John White Geary

Democratic government, being government by discussion and majority vote, works best when there is nothing of profound importance to discuss.

—Carl Becker

The greatest political evil [to be feared under a democratic constitution was the emergence of] two great parties, each arranged under its leader, and concerting measures in opposition to each other.

—John Adams

The spirit of party is democracy's worst enemy. It agitates the Community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity of one part against another, foments occasionally riot and insurrection.

—George Washington

The rise of what the presidential historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. called the 'imperial presidency' has unbalanced the equilibrium among the three branches. Modern presidents rule by executive order rather than consulting with Congress. They direct a massive administrative state, with jurisdiction over everything from environmental policy to the regulation of the airwaves.

—Jeffrey Rosen

In Alabama, where I grew up, the Second Amendment is not so much a right as an inviolable element of culture—lawmakers are not wrong to believe that challenging this, however slightly, could spell political suicide.

—Elaina Plott

It is the inextricable masculinity in our idea of government which so revolts at the idea of women as voters. 'To govern:' that means to boss, to control, to have authority; and that only, to most minds. They cannot bear to think of the woman as having control over even their own affairs; to control is masculine, they assume. Seeing only self-interest as a natural impulse, and the ruling powers of the state as a sort of umpire, an authority to preserve the rules of the game while men fight it out forever; they see in a democracy merely a wider range of self interest, a wider, freer field to fight in.

—Charlotte Perkins
Gilman

People with power do not regulate their behavior as much. They become egocentric and preoccupied with their own self-interest, which eclipses their awareness of the interests of others.

—Dean M. Schroeder

I found the earliest use of the phrase [America First] as a Republican slogan in the 1880s, but it didn't enter the national discussion until 1915, when Woodrow Wilson used it in a speech arguing for neutrality in World War I. That isn't the same as isolationism, but the phrase got taken up by isolationists. 'America First' also became a prominent slogan of the KKK, which even claimed to hold the copyright. (That wasn't true.)

—Sarah Churchwell

Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people.

—Theodore Roosevelt

The government doesn't have to solve everyone's problem.

—Paul Kurtz

The secret of the demagogue is to make himself as stupid as his audience so they believe they are clever as he.

—Karl Kraus

America is never wholly herself unless she is engaged in high moral principle. We as a people have such a purpose today. It is to make kinder the face of the nation and gentler the face of the world.

—George H. W. Bush

Halloween is that uniquely American holiday that prepares youngsters for political careers as they visit homes throughout the community promising they will not harass residents if they are given the handouts they demand.

—Roger Matile

A national political campaign is better than the best circus ever heard of, with a mass baptism and a couple of hangings thrown in.

—H. L. Mencken

The privileged man, whether he be privileged politically or economically, is a man deprived in intellect and heart.

—Mikhail Bakunin

What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?

—Abraham Lincoln

Today's problems can't be solved by today's people.

—Barbara Kingsolver

Married women predominantly voted Republican....Even once-married women—widows and women who are separated—were more likely to vote Republican....proximity to white men incentivizes white women to shore up white male power wherever possible, and endorse policies and parties that protect the economic and political status of the men on whom they depend.

—Laura Kipnis

One of the great problems we have in the Republican Party is that we don't encourage you to be nasty. We encourage you to be neat, obedient, and loyal, and faithful, and all those Boy Scout words, which would be great around the campfire but are lousy in politics....Politics, above all, is a cutthroat war for power.

—Newt Gingrich

If you're not in *The Washington Post* every day, you might as well not exist. The No. 1 fact about the news media is they love fights...When you give them confrontations, you get attention; when you get attention, you can educate.

—Newt Gingrich

The only path to a subversion of the republican system of the Country is, by flattering the prejudices of the people, and exciting their jealousies and apprehensions, to throw affairs into confusion, and bring on civil commotion. Tired at length of anarchy, or want of government, they may take shelter in the arms of monarchy for repose and security....When a man unprincipled in private life desperate in his fortune, bold in his temper, possessed of considerable talents, having the advantage of military habits—despotic in his ordinary demeanour—known to have scoffed in private at the principles of liberty—when such a man is seen to mount the hobby horse of popularity—to join in the cry of danger to liberty—to take every opportunity of embarrassing the General Government & bringing it under suspicion—to flatter and fall in with all the non sense of the zealots of the day—It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may 'ride the storm and direct the whirlwind.'

—Alexander Hamilton

If you know the right people, they can help you do anything, be anybody, rules and hard work be damned—as long as they like you.

—Casey Gerald

By all accounts, incivility is increasing, resulting in stifled debate and a degradation of truth. Voids of leadership are emerging in virtually every aspect of our society, including within our families, businesses, institutions, and in all political parties. Leadership and vision are needed as much now as at any time in our history.

The Greek system...is uniquely qualified to develop the leaders needed for our society's future. Done right, our Fraternity's local chapters provide unparalleled incubators for leadership development....Expect the Best. Nothing Less.

—John Hearn

There is an epidemic of towns trying to claim the birth of the Republican Party. All they have to do to find where the Republican Party was formed is find where the first corporation was formed. It was incorporated for the sole purpose of taking over the management and finances of the United States.

—Will Rogers

This country has come to feel the same when Congress is in session as we do when the baby gets hold of a hammer. It's just a question of how much damage he can do with it before we can take it away from him.

—Will Rogers

Come pretty near having two holidays of equal importance in the same week, Halloween and Election, and of the two election provides us the most fun. On Halloween they put pumpkins on their heads, and on election they don't have to.

—Will Rogers

Did you ever figure what constitutes our modern 'representative?' The one that can bring home the new Federal postoffice, even if they wasn't using the old one; Federal aid for the roads, that nobody may ever drive on, and a government dam. That's the height of statesmanship is to come home with a dam. Even if you got nowhere to put it. Just raid the national treasury enough and you will soon be referred to as a 'Statesman.'

—Will Rogers

Confucius perspired out more knowledge than the U.S. Senate has vocalized out in the last 50 years.

—Will Rogers

You can't beat that England. She don't look good till they get in a hole, then watch her. They wasn't afraid to put an additional tax on big incomes. They forget politics when they're in a tight place. Republicans can't tax big incomes over here for they haven't got next year's campaign budget yet. Democrats still owe for their last three elections.

—Will Rogers

I have said for the last two years that things would pick up in 32. 'WHY?' Why because it's an election year, and the Republicans always see to it that things look good on election years. They give us three bad years and one good one, but the good one is the voting year. Elections are always just a year too late for the Democrats.

—Will Rogers

Republicans were in a tight spot because they could not point 'with pride to accomplishments' nor 'view with alarm the mistakes of the Opposition.'

—Will Rogers

There should be a moratorium called on candidates speeches. They have both called each other everything in the world they can think of. From now on they are just talking themselves out of votes. The high office of President of the United States has degenerated into two ordinarily find men being goaded on by their political leeches into saying things that if they were in their right minds they wouldn't think of saying.

—Will Rogers