

Green New Deal won't solve anything

The poorly considered legislation seems like a plot to smear environmentalists



Cathy Young

As Democrats flex their muscle in Congress and new presidential contenders join the fray to take on the embattled Donald Trump in 2020, the Democratic Party faces a mess of its own: the problem-riddled rollout of the Green New Deal, an ambitious plan to address both environmental and social problems. It's the first sign that, as many have predicted, the party's lurch to the left may prove a way to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

The Green New Deal is a resolution co-sponsored by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of the Bronx, the Democrats' charismatic rising star, and Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.). Its backers include several presidential hopefuls, including Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.).

One of its central goals is to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions to a net zero in 10 years. That means either no carbon

emissions, or offsetting all emissions with carbon dioxide removal or with production of an equivalent amount of clean energy. The resolution also calls for an eco-friendly overhaul of America's infrastructure, transportation system and housing, including "upgrading all existing buildings" for maximum energy efficiency. And there also are non-energy-related goals, including guaranteed jobs with livable wages and adequate family and medical leave, and full access to higher education for everyone.

Who will pay for this green paradise and how? Noah Smith, a Bloomberg Opinion columnist sympathetic to the Green New Deal's goals, notes that it would have astronomical costs — and that the resolution and its accompanying documents say nothing about where to get the money, except to suggest that deficits aren't too bad.

It also seems clear that the program would require not only massive spending but also massive federal intervention in the economy and in Americans'



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-Bronx) and Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), right, announce Green New Deal legislation last week.

lives (such as a shift from driving and air travel to high-speed rail). If the creators of this proposal were right-wing moles trying to boost the talking point that environmentalism is communism with a green face, they couldn't have done better.

An editorial in the left-wing Nation magazine scoffs at those who dismiss the Green New Deal as too radical, arguing that times of crisis call for radical action. But are we really at such a moment? The original New

Deal (leaving aside debates over what it accomplished) was certainly a major shift in American governance; but it was launched amid calamitous unemployment, poverty and social upheaval. The Green New Deal is a response to a future crisis expected to be caused by climate change — a crisis whose timing and extent are a matter of estimate and debate.

Obviously, it's essential to be prepared for worst-case scenarios. But a realistic plan would

include encouragement of new technological solutions to atmospheric carbon dioxide (most of it produced by other countries whose emissions the Green New Deal won't curb). Many experts say it also would include nuclear power. The resolution says nothing about it, but the fact sheets released by the office of Ocasio-Cortez explicitly nix investment in nuclear power plants.

It doesn't help that the documents posted on the congresswoman's website included references to getting rid of airplanes and flatulent cows, as well as a call for guaranteed benefits for people "unable or unwilling to work." It also doesn't help that her staff initially denied these statements and then dismissed them as an accidentally posted early draft.

There is no question that environmental issues will have to be tackled in coming years. It will likely happen through a mix of private initiatives and public incentives. What we're getting right now, it seems, is a mix of utopian idealism and incompetence.

Cathy Young is a contributing editor to Reason magazine.



A view on Jan. 22 of a barrier the United States is expanding at the Mexico border in El Paso, Texas, to stop illegal immigration.

It is a disgrace and deeply immoral that they are made to live in the shadows. There ought to be a program that makes such immigrants eligible for citizenship if they provide two years of national service in the armed forces, Peace Corps or some similar organization.

Howard E. Sayetta, Syosset

I propose two steps to solve the border wall and illegal immigration problem from Central America:

First, build a wall between Mexico and Guatemala and have Central American and Mexicans laborers build it. Funding would be shared by the United States and Mexico.

Second, strictly enforce E-Verify, the government's system for telling employers whether a person is eligible to work. That will deter people coming north if they understand that jobs will not be available to them unless they cross the border legally with valid work visas.

Peter Hanson, Nesconset

Two perspectives of assessment mess

It appears that some elected officials are gleefully pointing out errors by Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, a Democrat, in the reassessment debacle while documenting their attempts to keep her from these pitfalls ["Receivers hit back," News, Feb. 9]. It does occur to me as rather odd that Republican legislators rarely questioned then-Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano's handling of tax assessments, nor other ques-

tionable actions for which he is on trial.

Hempstead Receiver of Taxes Donald Clavin, a Republican, sent out a glossy mailer decrying the current administration's tax reassessment plan. Legis. John Ferretti (R-Levittown) sends frequent emails complaining about Curran.

Shouldn't our elected officials spend time working together for the good of the people? Partisan politics as demonstrated so graphically at the federal level is counterproductive to what government is supposed to do. It should not be the model for how we run our county.

Remember the quote from Eldridge Cleaver: "You either have to be part of the solution, or you're going to be part of the problem."

Kristin Keane, Levittown

I know what Hempstead Tax Receiver Donald Clavin meant when he said that Nassau

County Executive Laura Curran "should actually have people answer the phones in the assessment department and actually have the courtesy to respond to the people looking for help. We reached out on several occasions yesterday and couldn't even get the courtesy of a return phone call" ["Incorrect' claims," News, Feb. 8].

I had a similar experience. I posted a question to the assessor online on Dec. 21 about when the 2020-21 assessment roll would become final. I still have not received an answer, even though the website said a response would be forthcoming as soon as possible.

Richard Siegelman, Plainview

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