

Misinformation Grand Rounds

2/26/2025

LSUHSC SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (SGA)

PH SGA Misinformation Grand
Rounds Sign In



What is Misinformation? Disinformation? Malinformation?



- ▶ Misinformation ***misleads***.
 - ▶ It is false, but not created or shared with the intention of causing harm.
- ▶ Disinformation ***deceives***.
 - ▶ It is deliberately created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country.
- ▶ Malinformation ***sabotages***.
 - ▶ It is based on fact, but used out of context to mislead, harm, or manipulate.

Misinformation Example: *The War of the Worlds*

- ▶ October 30, 1938, Orson Welles' radio play *The War of the Worlds* aired as a fictional news broadcast about an alien invasion (adapted from the book).
- ▶ Why It Was Misinformation (Not Disinformation)?
 - ▶ The broadcast was meant as entertainment, not a hoax.
 - ▶ Some listeners missed the disclaimer that it was a dramatization.
 - ▶ People panicked, thinking it was a real news report.
- ▶ How Did It Spread?
 - ▶ Radio was the main source of news, so realistic reporting styles made it sound credible.
 - ▶ Breaking news format added to the confusion.
- ▶ Lesson Learned:
 - ▶ Misinformation can spread quickly when people lack context or don't fact-check.
 - ▶ Media literacy is crucial—always verify information before believing or sharing.



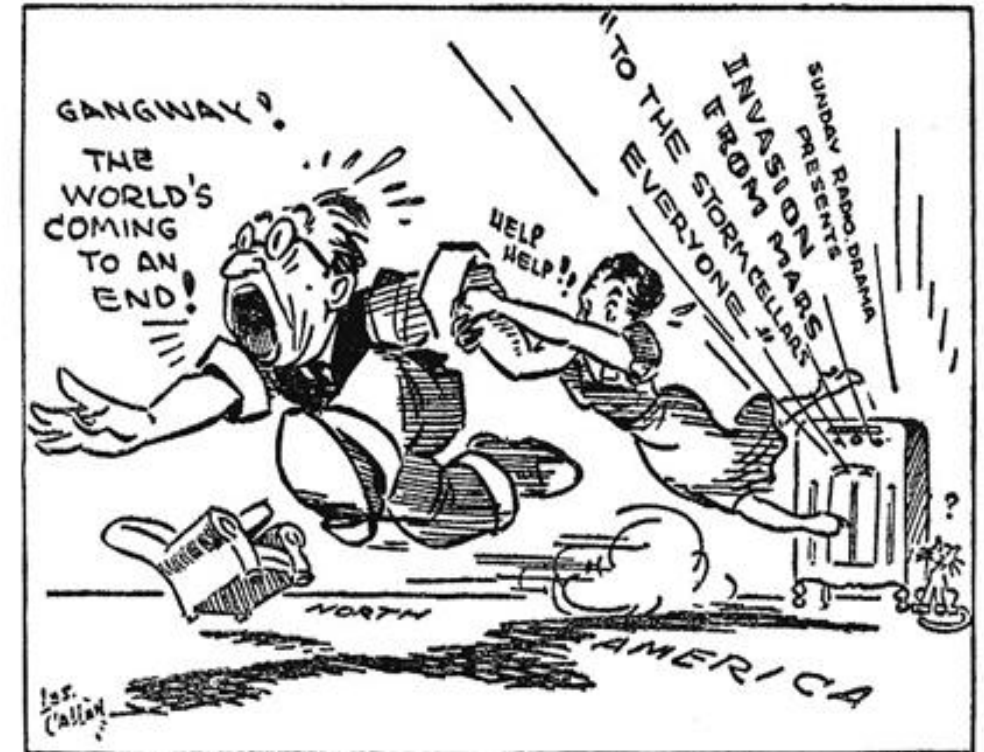
THE ORIGINAL 1938 BROADCAST STARRING ORSON WELLES



Or Was It Actually Disinformation?

- ▶ In 1938, radio was competing with newspapers as a primary news source.
 - ▶ Newspapers saw an opportunity to discredit radio as unreliable and sensationalized the panic.
- ▶ How Newspapers Spread Disinformation
 - ▶ Exaggerated reports claimed widespread hysteria, even though **actual panic was limited**.
 - ▶ Stories falsely suggested that thousands fled their homes or committed suicide (no evidence supports this).
- ▶ Headlines like "**Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact**" reinforced fear and distrust in radio.

"HELP! MEN FROM MARS!"



FROM TIME TO TIME some quirk of fate, some state of mind, or some brilliance of thought makes a broadcast memorable. As such it deserves to be preserved for after it passes

1) Pooley, J., & Socolow, M. J. (2013, October 29). Orson Welles' war of the worlds did not touch off a nationwide hysteria, few Americans listened, even fewer panicked. Slate Magazine. <https://slate.com/culture/2013/10/orson-welles-war-of-the-worlds-panic-myth-the-infamous-radio-broadcast-did-not-cause-a-nationwide-hysteria.html>
2) Tonguetta, P., June-Friesen, K., Staff, H., & Tucher, A. (2018). The fake news of Orson Welles: The War of the Worlds at 80. National Endowment for the Humanities. <https://www.neh.gov/article/fake-news-orson-welles-war-worlds-80>
3) Callan, L. (1939). Memorable Broadcasts. Radio Digest. comic strip, Chicago, Illinois; The Cecelia Company.

Newspapers Framed It as a Mass Panic



What Was the Motive?

- Financial threat: Radio was cutting into newspaper ad revenue.
- Power struggle: Newspapers wanted to regain control of public trust in news. Framing radio as dangerous made people more reliant on print media.



Lesson Learned:

- Disinformation is often driven by self-interest (money, power, influence).
- Media can manipulate narratives to control public perception.
- Fact-checking is essential, even for stories from “trusted” sources.

The Tobacco Industry & "Doubt is Our Product"

► Strategy:

- A 1969 memo from the tobacco industry stated: "Doubt is our product" to confuse the public about smoking risks.

► Tactics:

- Funded biased research, hired scientists to challenge health risks, and promoted false controversy.

► Impact:

- Delayed regulations, cost millions of lives, and set a precedent for other disinformation campaigns (e.g., climate change denial).

► Lesson:

- **Manufactured doubt protects industries**, not people. Always check who funds research.

"Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the "body of fact" that exists in the mind of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy. Within the business we recognize that a controversy exists. However, with the general public the consensus is that cigarettes are in some way harmful to the health. If we are successful in establishing a controversy at the public level, then there is an opportunity to put across the real facts about smoking and health. Doubt is also the limit of our "product". Unfortunately, we cannot take a position directly opposing the anti-cigarette forces and say that cigarettes are a contributor to good health. No information that we have supports such a claim.

Truth is our message because of its power to withstand a conflict and sustain a controversy. If in our pro-cigarette efforts we stick to well documented fact, we can dominate a controversy and operate with the confidence of justifiable self-interest."

Why Are We Susceptible?

► Cognitive Biases:

- We accept repeated information as true, even if false.

► Information Overload:

- Too much data makes fact-checking hard.

► Emotional Appeals:

- Fear, anger, or hope can override critical thinking.

► Social Confirmation:

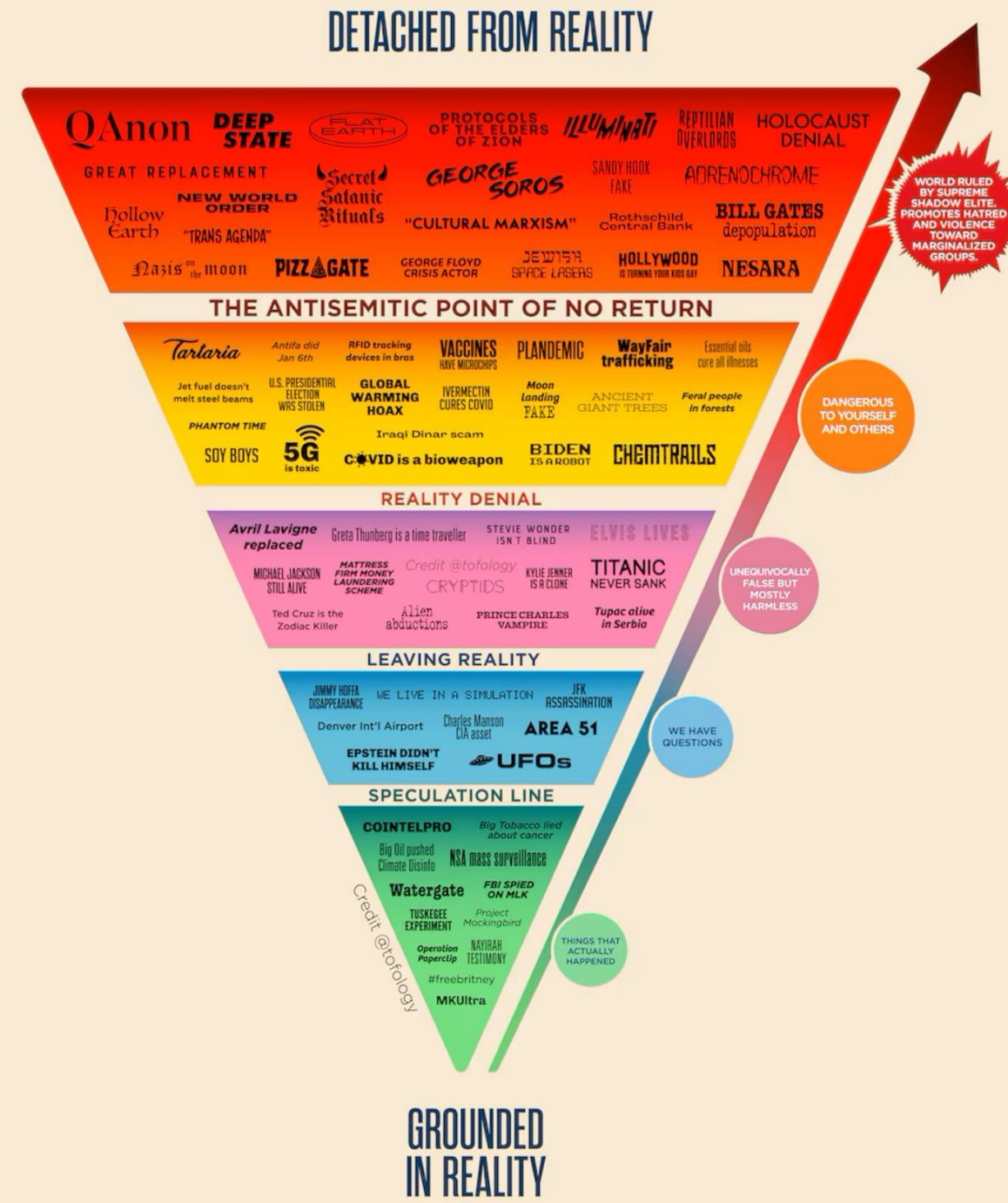
- We trust info from friends or our community.

► Erosion of Trust:

- Skepticism toward traditional media pushes people to unreliable sources.

► Plausibility Trap:

- Some false claims seem real because similar events happened before (e.g., MKUltra, Tuskegee Syphilis Study).



1) Perfors, A. P. A. (2024, July 10). Why are we so vulnerable to bad information?. Pursuit by the University of Melbourne. <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/why-are-we-so-vulnerable-to-bad-information>

2) Larson, S. (2021, November 29). This chart on conspiracy theories has gone viral. A local disinformation researcher breaks down what to know - The Boston Globe. <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/11/29/metro/this-chart-conspiracy-theories-has-gone-viral-freebritney-qanon-local-disinformation-researcher-breaks-down-what-know/>

You!

Yes, YOU are Vulnerable!

- ▶ In 2003, Jobs was diagnosed with pancreatic neuroendocrine tumor, a rare, but curable cancer with surgery.
 - ▶ Early intervention could have improved his chances and saved his life, but he delayed surgery and opted for diet changes, alternative medicine, and acupuncture instead.
 - ▶ He waited 9 months before seeking surgery, allowing the cancer to spread. Surgery was no longer an option.
- ▶ The Result:
 - ▶ Jobs passed away in 2011, and it's believed that his delayed treatment contributed to his early death.
- ▶ Regrets:
 - ▶ **Jobs later expressed regret** for not pursuing medical treatments sooner in his biography
- ▶ Lesson:
 - ▶ Evidence-based medicine is essential for health decisions—**misinformation can have deadly consequences**



Why This Matters: The Real-World Consequences

***“Analysis found that it took the truth approximately six times as long as falsehood to reach 1,500 people.”
(MIT)***

- ▶ Public Health Risks:
 - ▶ Misinformation about vaccines, COVID-19, or tobacco leads to preventable deaths.
- ▶ Erosion of Trust:
 - ▶ False narratives weaken faith in science, media, and institutions, making society more vulnerable.
- ▶ Political Instability:
 - ▶ Disinformation fuels division, violence, and election interference (e.g., January 6th Capitol riot).
- ▶ Financial Harm:
 - ▶ Scams, stock manipulation, and fraud cost individuals and economies billions.
- ▶ Delayed Action on Global Issues:
 - ▶ Climate change denial and public health misinformation slow critical policy responses.
- ▶ Lesson: Bad information has real consequences—question, verify, and think critically.

Our Role as Professionals

- ▶ **Promote Evidence-Based Information** – Share accurate, science-backed facts in a clear, accessible way.
- ▶ **Engage with Communities** – Build trust by addressing concerns **without judgment** and meeting people where they are.
- ▶ **Identify & Address Misinformation** – Correct false claims **with empathy**, providing reliable sources.
- ▶ **Advocate for Media Literacy** – Support education on **critical thinking** and how to evaluate sources.
- ▶ **Encourage Policy Changes** – Push for **stronger regulations** against harmful disinformation in healthcare.
- ▶ **Lead by Example** – Be a **trusted voice** in our communities, modeling ethical communication.



Misinformation Grand Rounds: Climate Misinformation

DR. BARRY KEIM, PH.D - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, CLIMATE AND
SUSTAINABILITY,

DR. KATNER, & DR. HARRINGTON

2/26/2025

LSUHSC SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Some Facts and Fiction about Climate Change

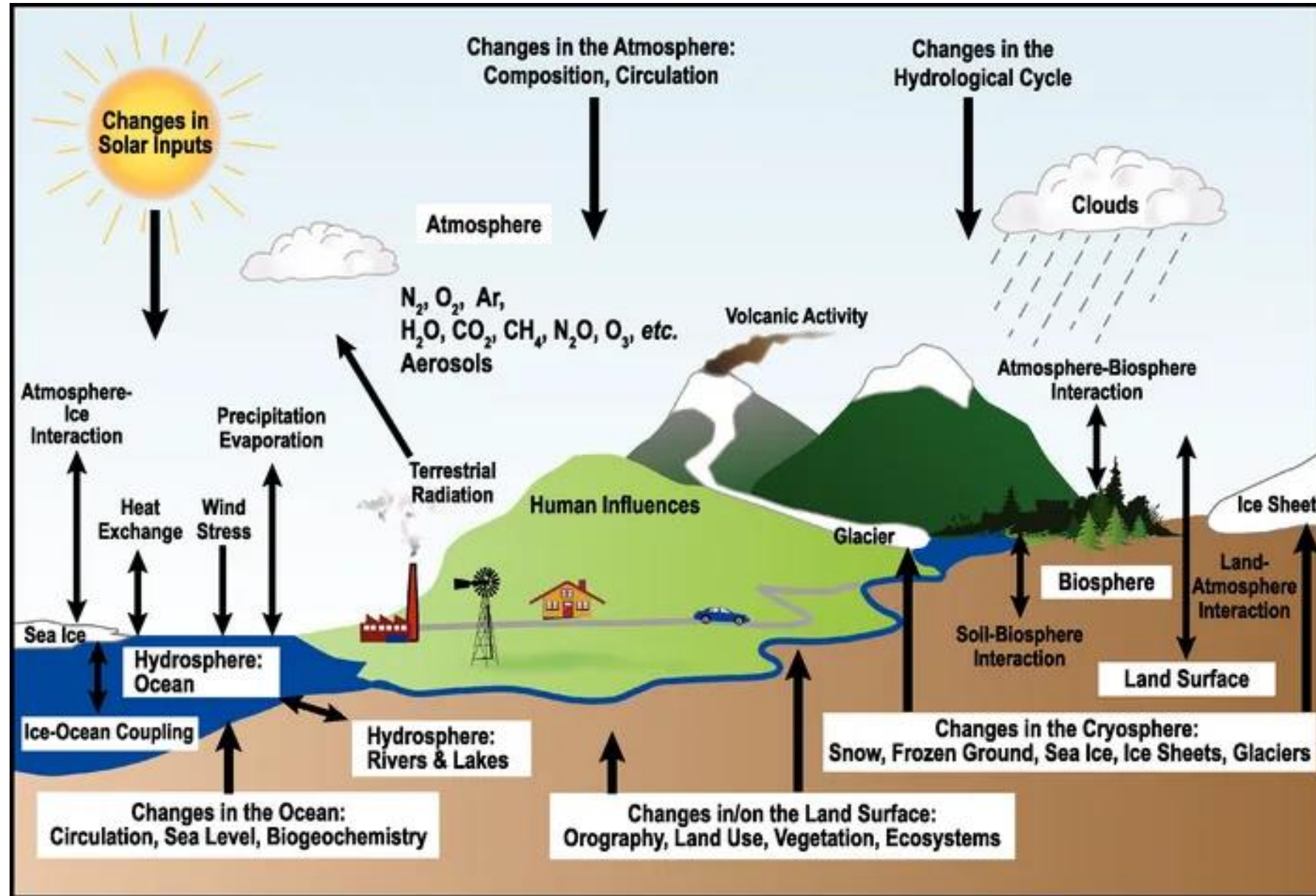
Barry Keim

Environmental Health, Climate, and Sustainability

LSUHSC School of Public Health

NOAA- Southern Climate Impacts Planning
Program

The Climate System



Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii.

Data sources: March 1958 to April 1974: [Scripps Institution of Oceanography](#), May 1974 to present day: [Dr. Pieter Tans, NOAA/GML](#)

Last update: 3:35:02 AM on Feb. 25, 2025, Hawaii local time (UTC -10)

10 Days

10 Years

6 Decades

Records

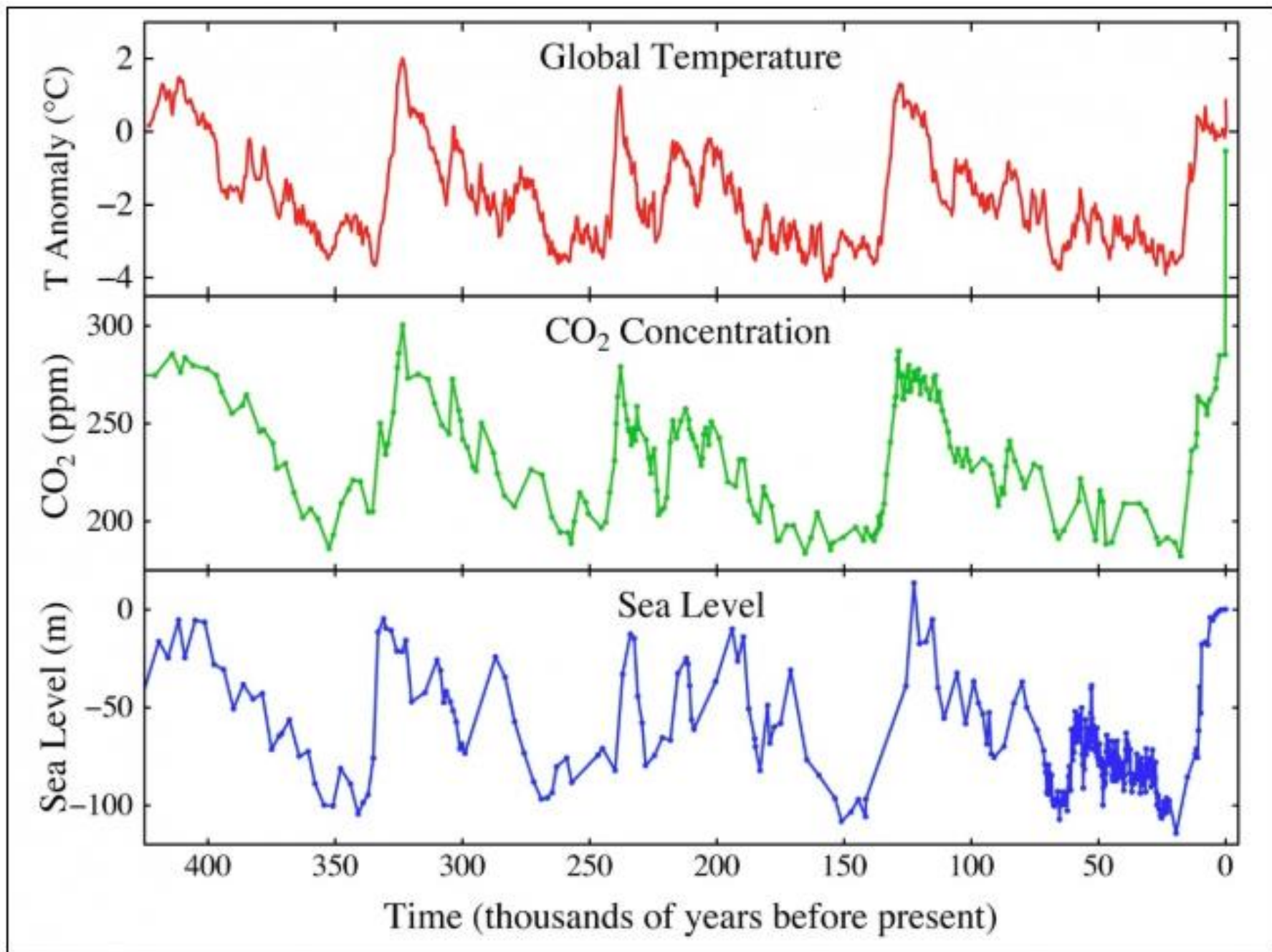
Query CO2

Daily reading 6 decades ago on Feb. 24

Latest		6 decades ago		Change from 6 decades ago
Date	Reading	Date	Reading	
Feb. 24, 2025	427.00 ppm	Feb. 24, 1965	320.73 ppm	106.27 ppm increase (33.13 %)

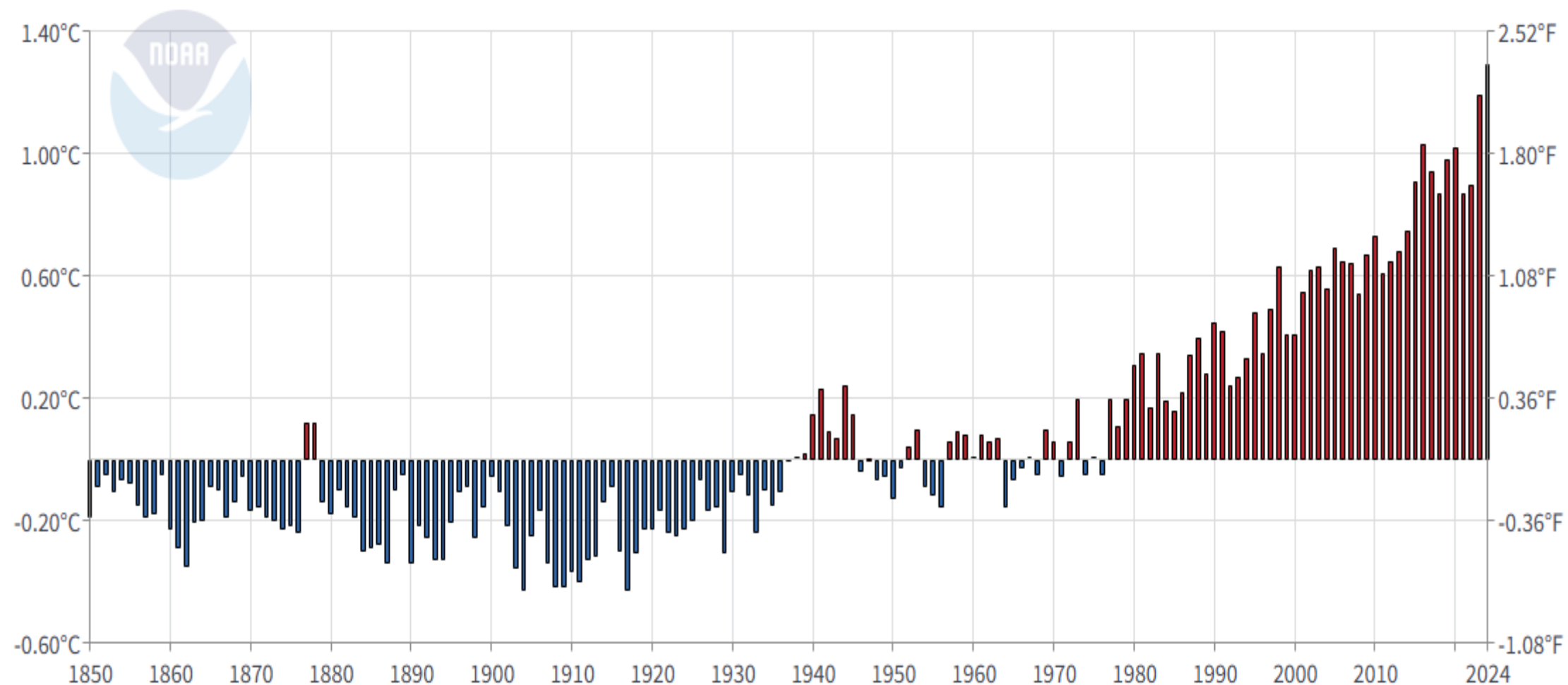
Daily CO2 10 years apart on Feb. 24 (Last 6 Decades)

Decade	Date	Reading	Decadal change	Average annual change
Latest Decade	Feb. 24, 2015	401.32 ppm	25.68 ppm increase (6.40 %)	2.57 ppm
2 Decades Ago	Feb. 24, 2005	380.16 ppm	21.16 ppm increase (5.57 %)	2.12 ppm
3 Decades Ago	Feb. 24, 1995	361.68 ppm	18.48 ppm increase (5.11 %)	1.85 ppm
4 Decades Ago	Feb. 24, 1985	347.28 ppm	14.40 ppm increase (4.15 %)	1.44 ppm
5 Decades Ago	Feb. 24, 1975	331.78 ppm	15.50 ppm increase (4.67 %)	1.55 ppm
6 Decades Ago	Feb. 24, 1965	320.73 ppm	11.05 ppm increase (3.45 %)	1.11 ppm



Global Land and Ocean Average Temperature Anomalies

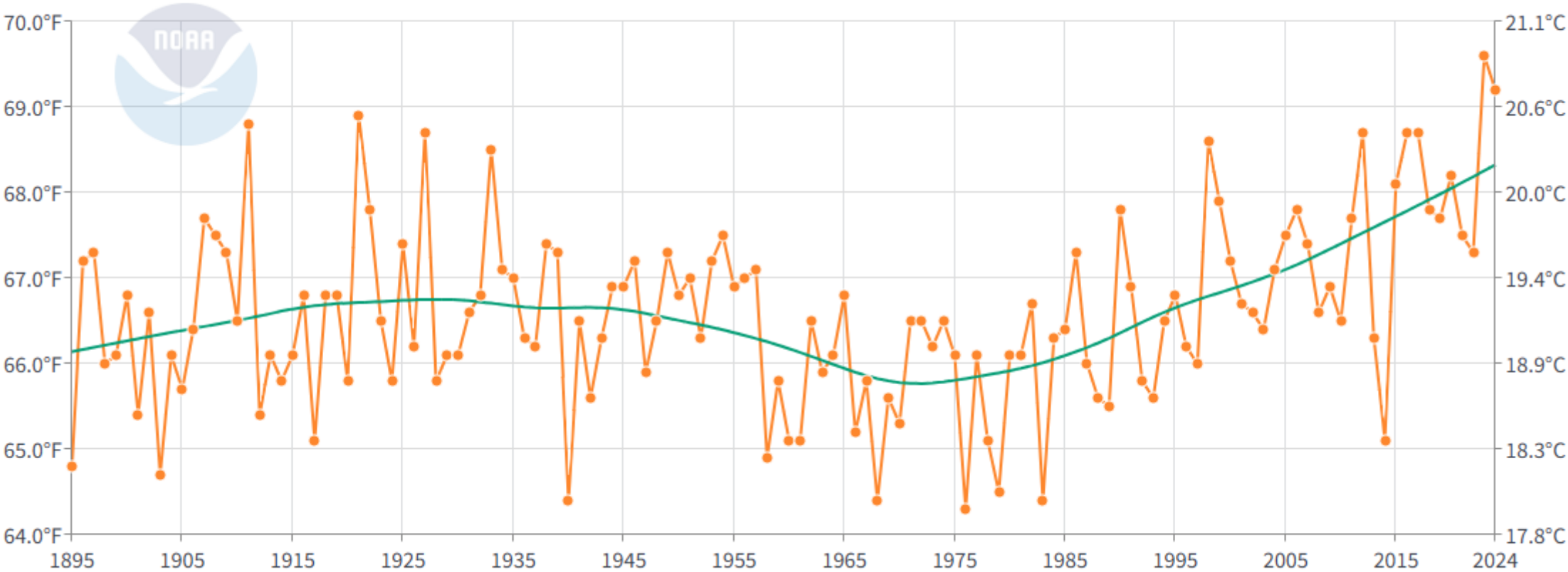
January-December



Louisiana Average Temperature

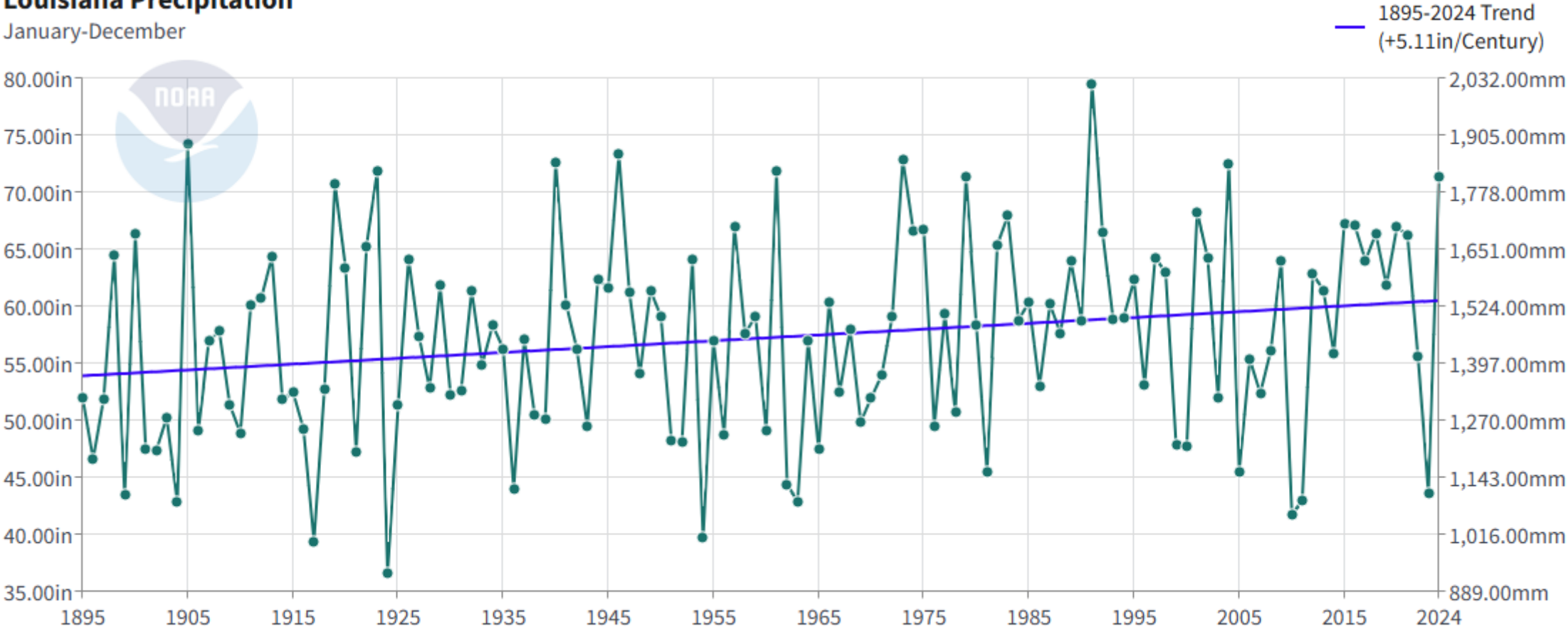
January-December

— LOESS



Louisiana Precipitation

January-December





🗨 Video Ad Feedback

Scientists fear Trump will erase public research, here's what they are doing



The Environmental Data and Governance Initiative is working to preserve scientific data and research on public government websites amid fears that topics like climate change and green energy will be removed from government websites after President-elect Trump takes office. CNN's René Marsh explains.

01:16 - Source: CNN

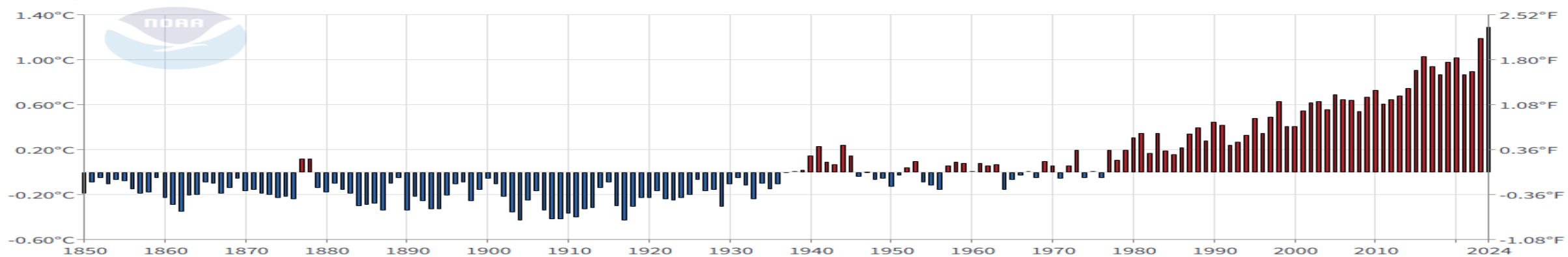
From Project 2025

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) should be dismantled and many of its functions eliminated, sent to other agencies, privatized, or placed under the control of states and territories. P. 664

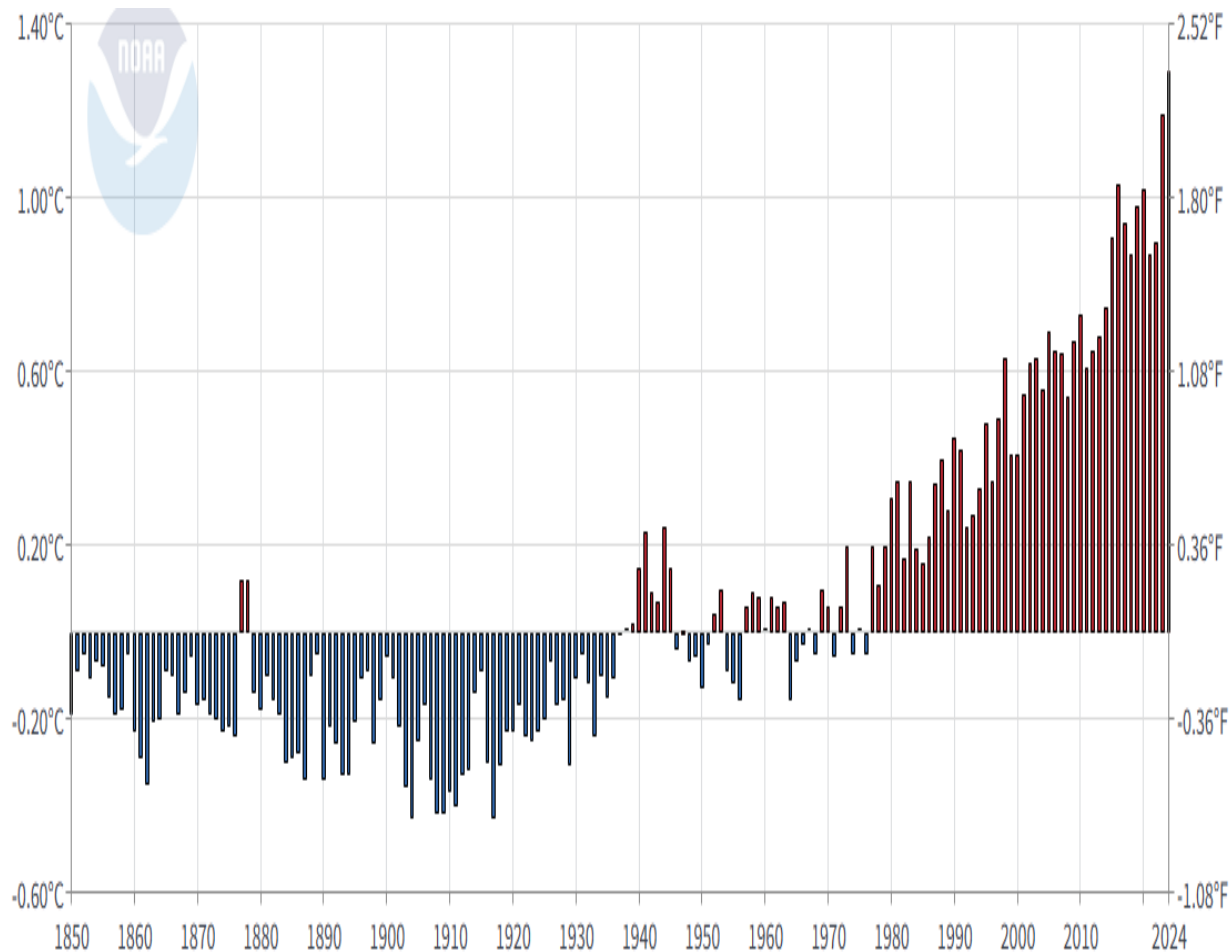
The NWS provides data the private companies use and should focus on its data-gathering services. Because private companies rely on these data, the NWS should fully commercialize its forecasting operations. P. 675

Downsize the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. OAR provides theoretical science, as opposed to the applied science of the National Hurricane Center. OAR is, however, the source of much of NOAA's climate alarmism. The preponderance of its climate-change research should be disbanded. P. 676

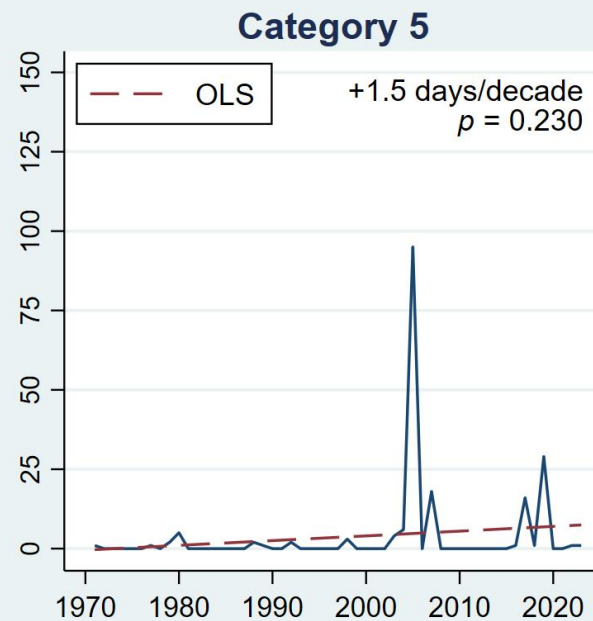
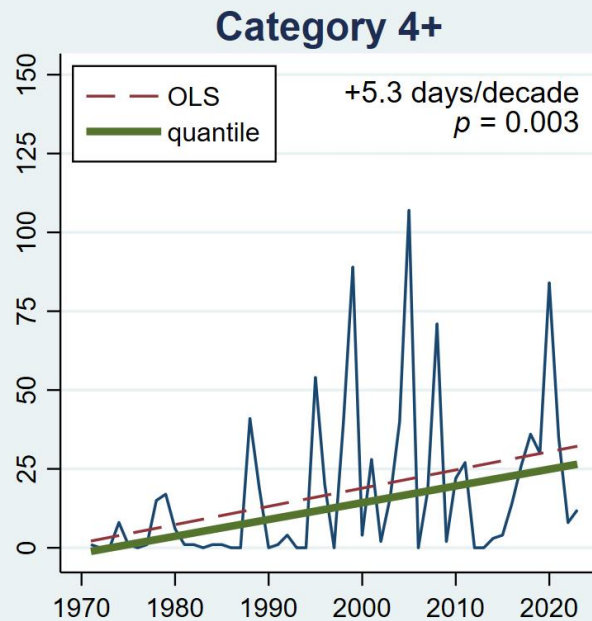
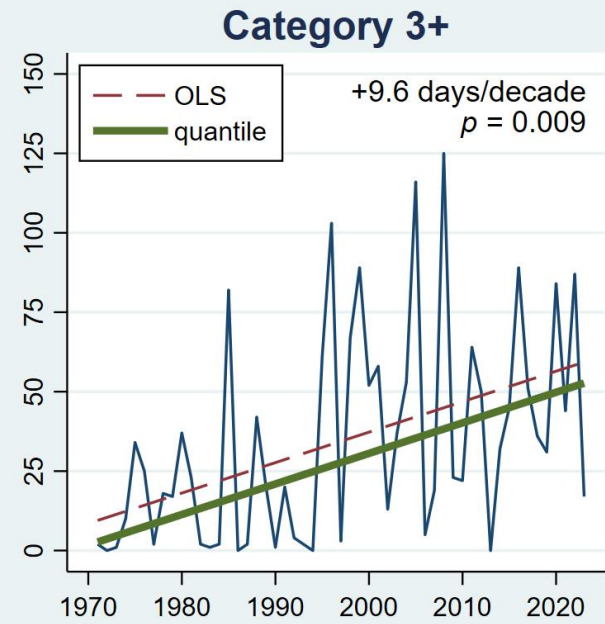
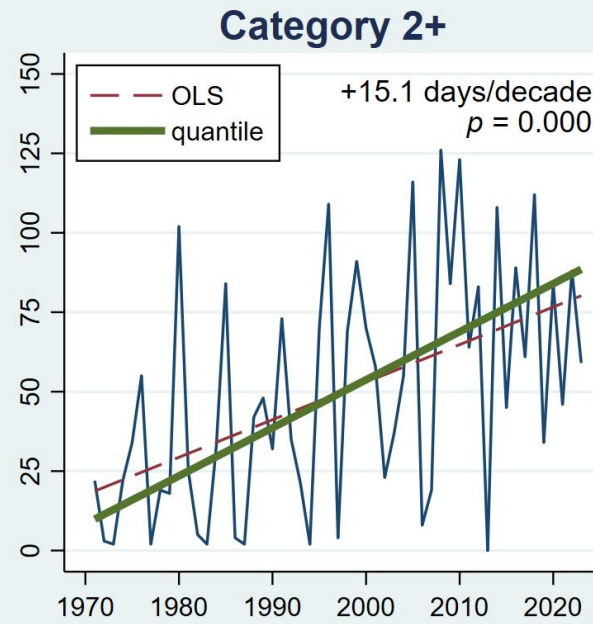
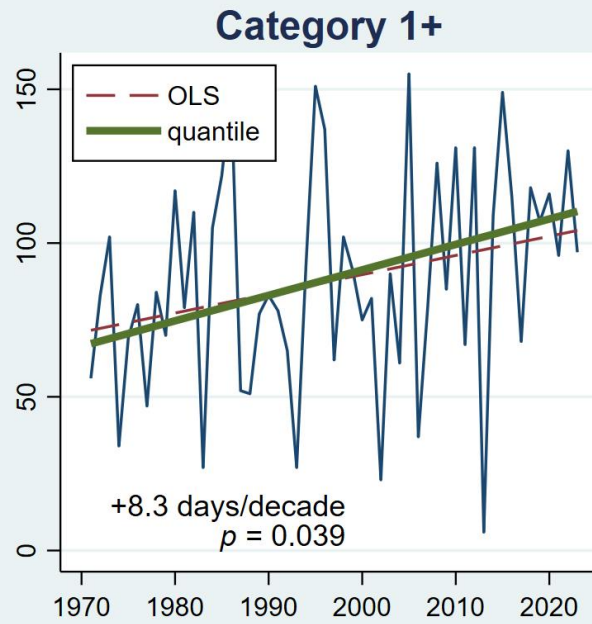
Global Land and Ocean Average Temperature Anomalies



Powered by **ZinoChart**

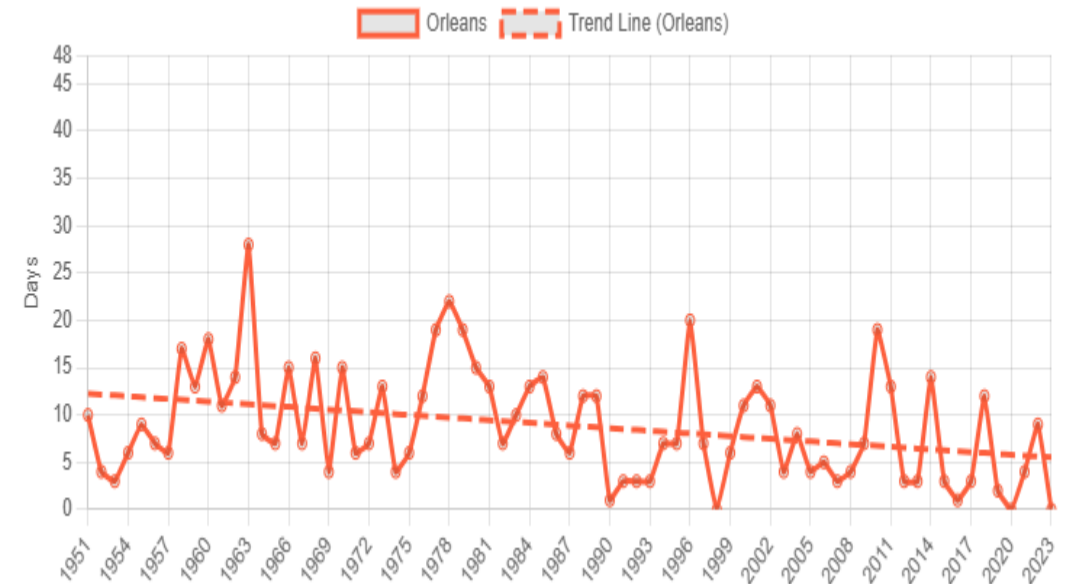
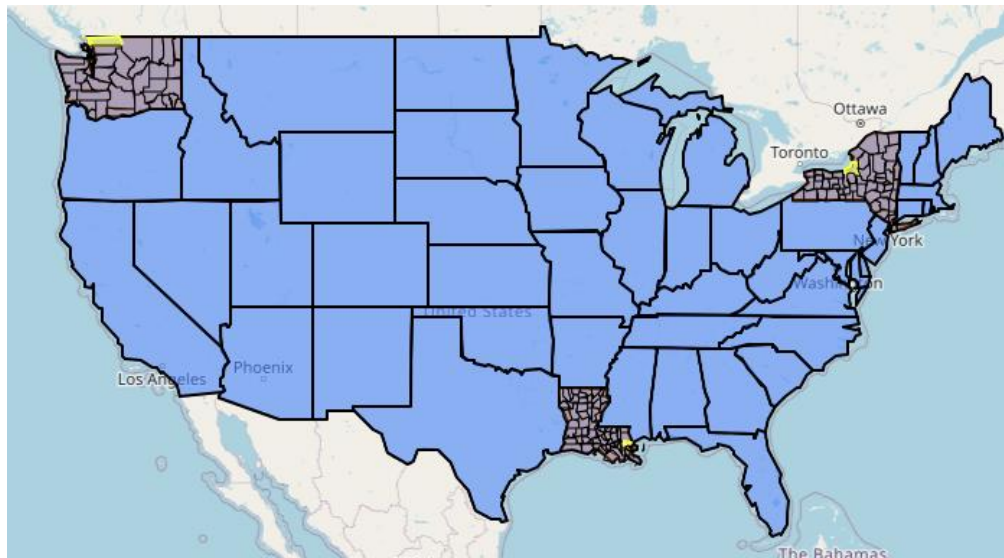
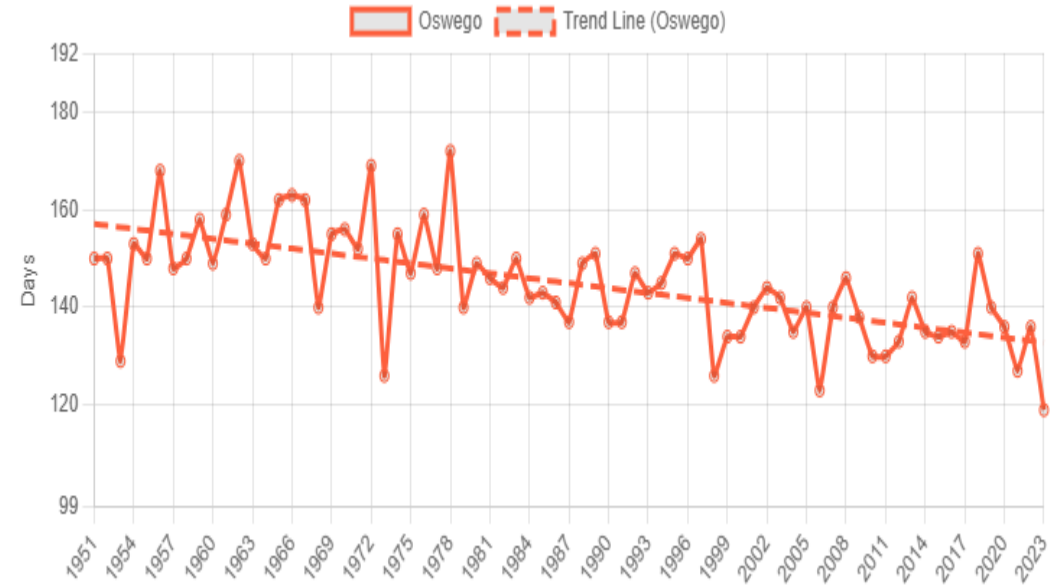
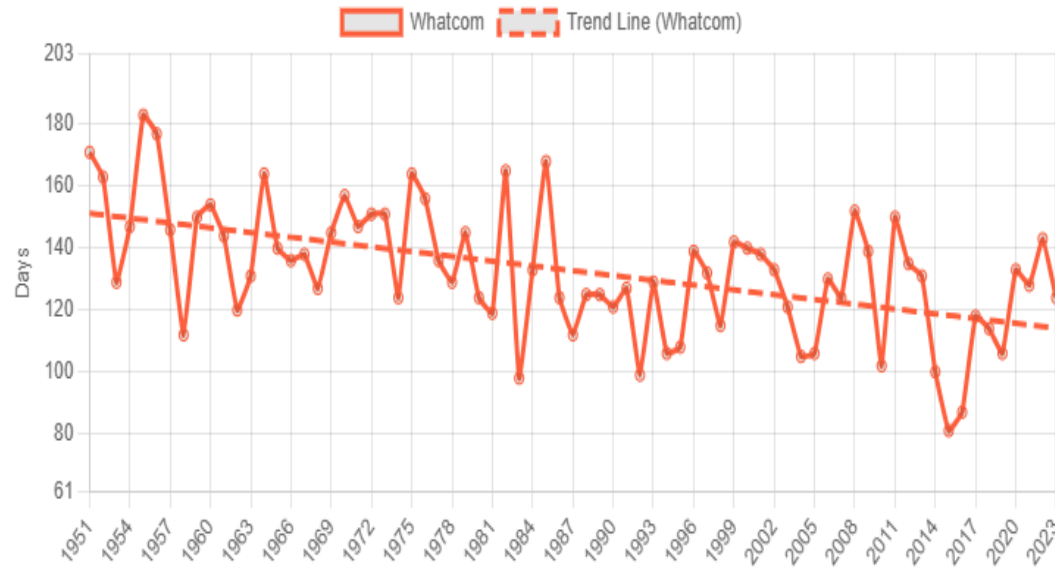


Season length in days

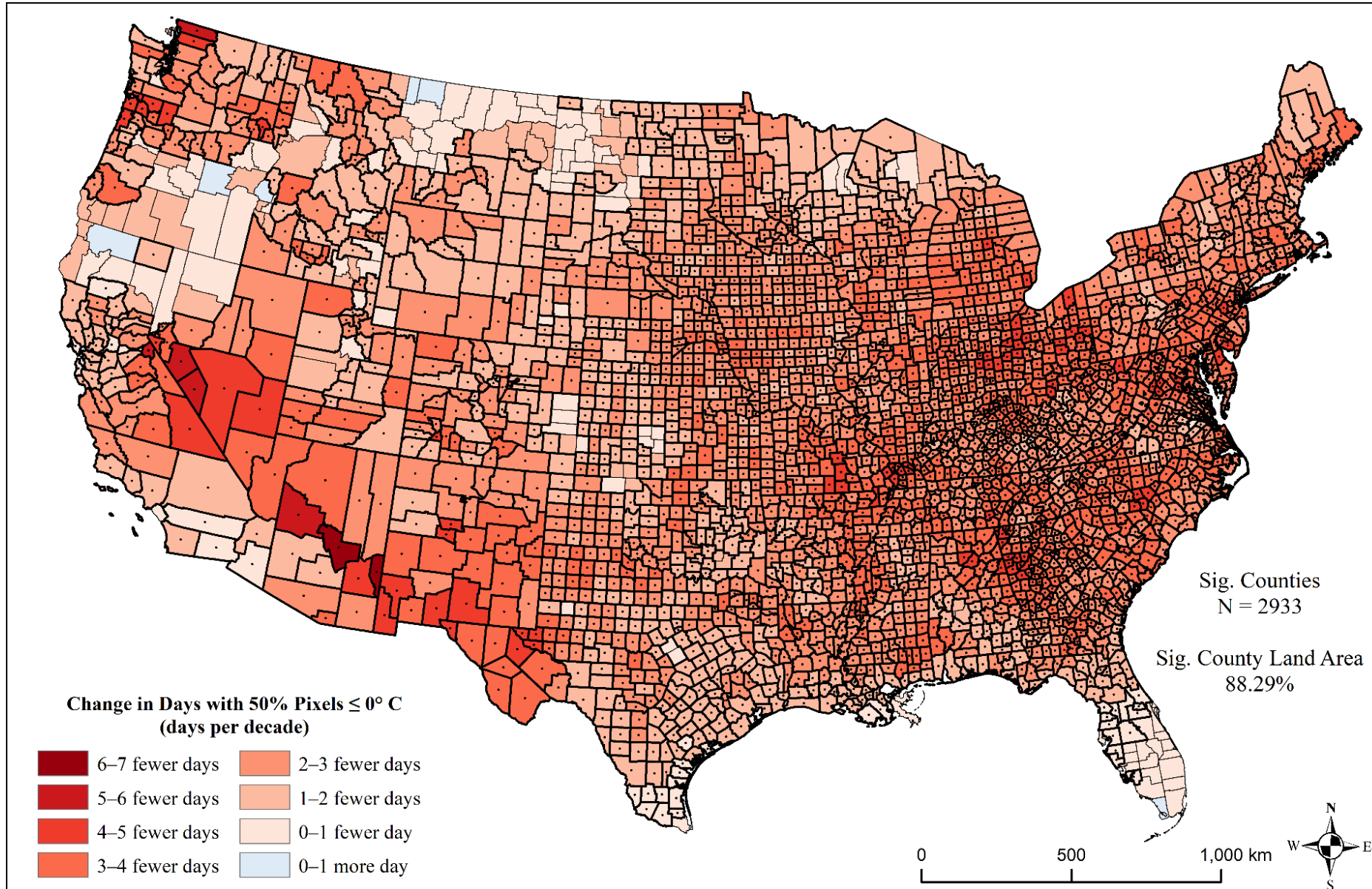


Days each year from 1st to last observation of storm in category X or higher, 1971-2023 (Jan-Mar re-assigned)
Slopes and p -values shown with category 1–4 from quantile regression (conditional median)

Freeze Days Decreasing Across the U.S.



Trends in Freezes Across the Lower 48



Nuclear Winter: Global Consequences of Multiple Nuclear Explosions

R. P. Turco, O. B. Toon, T. P. Ackerman
J. B. Pollack, Carl Sagan

Concern has been raised over the short- and long-term consequences of the dust, smoke, radioactivity, and toxic vapors that would be generated by a nuclear war (1-7). The discovery that

quantities of sooty smoke that would attenuate sunlight and perturb the climate. These developments have led us to calculate, using new data and improved models, the potential global environmen-

exchange and would inherit the postwar environment. Accordingly, the longer-term and global-scale aftereffects of nuclear war might prove to be as important as the immediate consequences of the war.

To study these phenomena, we used a series of physical models: a nuclear war scenario model, a particle microphysics model, and a radiative-convective model. The nuclear war scenario model specifies the altitude-dependent dust, smoke, radioactivity, and NO_x injections for each explosion in a nuclear exchange (assuming the size, number, and type of detonations, including heights of burst, geographic locales, and fission yield fractions). The source model parameterization is discussed below and in a more detailed report (15). The one-dimensional microphysical model (15-17) predicts the temporal evolution of dust and

“

THOSE WHO CANNOT
REMEMBER THE PAST ARE
CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.

— George Santayana

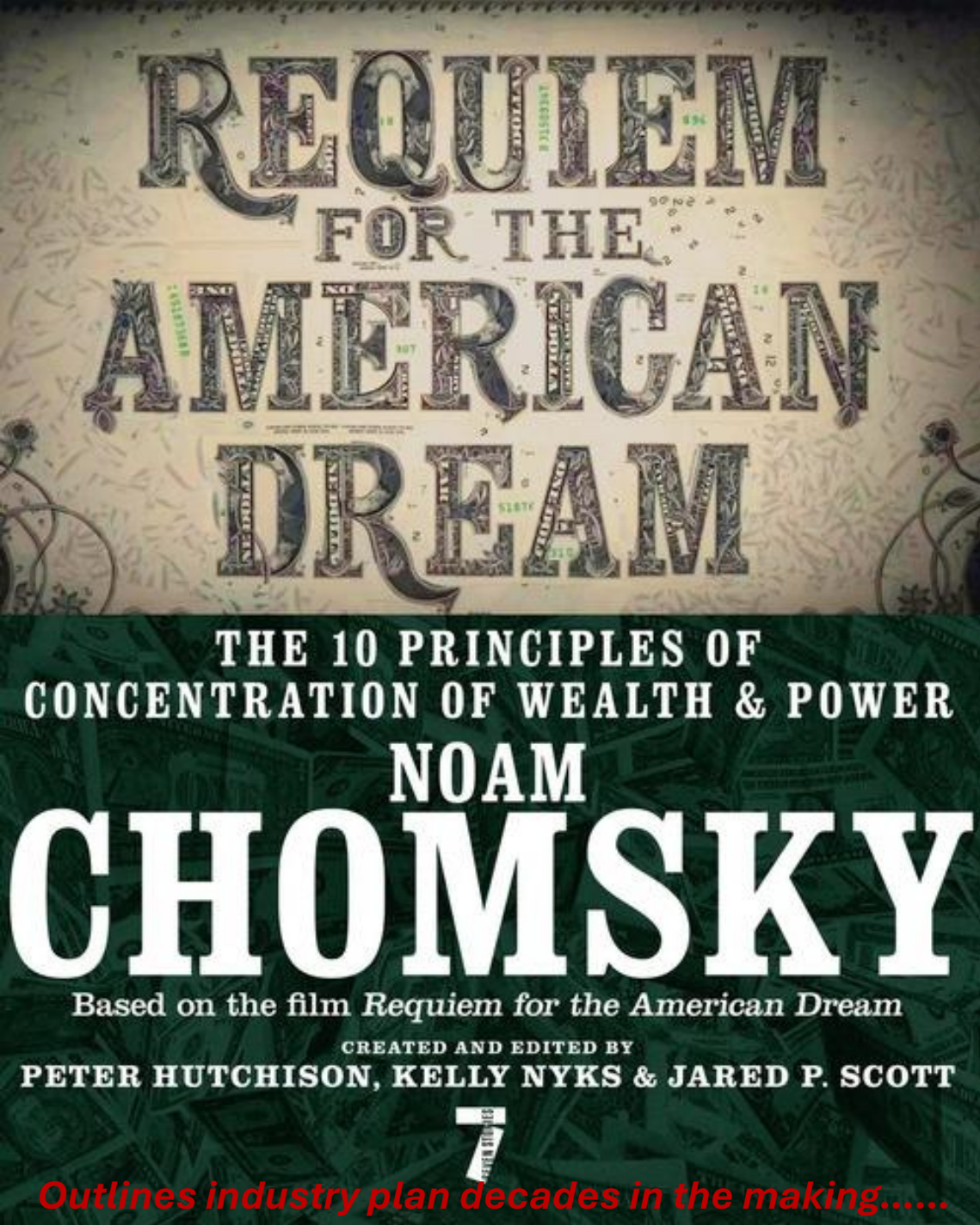
@therandomvibes

What's Happening? Why? What Now?

Adrienne Katner, D.Env., M.S.

Associate Professor

Environmental Health, Climate
and Sustainability



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Principles of Concentration of Wealth and Power

- Reduce democracy
- Shape ideology
- Redesign the economy
- Shift burden onto poor and middle class
- Attack solidarity of the people
- Let special interests run the regulators
- Engineer election results
- Use fear and power of the state to keep rabble in line
- Manufacture consent
- Marginalize the population

Incomplete List of Some of Trump.2's EOs with Public Health and Civil Rights Impacts

- [Keeping Education Accessible and Ending Covid-19 Vaccine Mandates in Schools](#) (February 15, 2025)
- [Establishing the National Energy Dominance Council](#) (February 14, 2025)
- [Establishing the President's Make America Healthy Again Commission](#) (February 13, 2025)
- [Implementing The President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative](#) (February 11, 2025)
- [Protecting Second Amendment Rights](#) (February 7, 2025)
- [Imposing Sanctions on the International Criminal Court](#) (February 6, 2025)
- [Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias](#) (February 6, 2025)
- [Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports](#) (February 5, 2025)
- [Withdrawing the United States From and Ending Funding to Certain United Nations Organizations and Reviewing United States Support to All International Organizations](#) (February 4, 2025)
- [Unleashing Prosperity Through Deregulation](#) (January 31, 2025)
- [Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schooling](#) (January 29, 2025)
- [Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families](#) (January 29, 2025)
- [Protecting Children From Chemical And Surgical Mutilation](#) (January 29, 2025)
- [Reinstating Service Members Discharged Under The Military's COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate](#) (January 27, 2025)
- [Restoring America's Fighting Force](#) (January 27, 2025)
- [Council To Assess The Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (January 24, 2025)
- [Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence](#) (January 23, 2025)
- [President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology](#) (January 23, 2025)
- [Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#) (January 21, 2025)
- [Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism And Restoring Biological Truth To The Federal Government](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Establishing And Implementing The President's "Department Of Government Efficiency"](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Protecting The American People Against Invasion](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Declaring a National Energy Emergency](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Protecting The Meaning And Value Of American Citizenship](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Unleashing American Energy](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Holding Former Government Officials Accountable For Election Interference And Improper Disclosure Of Sensitive Governmental Information](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Clarifying The Military's Role In Protecting The Territorial Integrity Of The United States](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Withdrawing the United States from the World Health Organization](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Putting America First In International Environmental Agreements](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Restoring Freedom of Speech and Ending Federal Censorship](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Ending the Weaponization of the Federal Government](#) (January 20, 2025)
- [Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions](#) (January 20, 2025)

Incomplete List of Some of Trump.2's EOs with Public Health and Civil Rights Impacts

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Trump Administration promised to weaken or eliminate regulations on air and water pollution, prioritize energy production and withdraw from Paris Climate Accord.

This is expected to result in increased emissions of air pollution and greenhouse gases, which would lead to environmental degradation and exacerbation of climate change effects.

- [Reinstating Service Members Discharged Under The Military's COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate](#) (January 27, 2025)
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Just Few of the New Executive Cabinet Members

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA Administrator

Nation's top administrator of environmental laws

Confirmed by Senate (56-42) on Jan. 29



Lee Zeldin

Former Congressman with a thin record on environmental issues

Department of the Interior

Interior Secretary

Oversees management of substantial amount of public lands, wildlife, natural resource development

Confirmed by Senate (79-18) on Jan. 30



Doug Burgum

Governor of North Dakota with longstanding ties to fossil fuel companies

Office of Management & Budget

Director of OMB

Situated within the White House and oversees the federal budget, federal rulemaking, and the federal workforce

Confirmed by Senate (53-47) on Feb. 6



Russell Vought

Coauthor of Project 2025 and budget director from Trump's first term

Department of Energy

Energy Secretary

Responsible for managing U.S. nuclear infrastructure and carrying out national energy policy

Confirmed by Senate (59-38) on Feb. 3



Chris Wright

CEO of Colorado-based fracking company Liberty Energy. Has never worked in government or held public office

Constitutional Crisis

- **Domination of media**
 - Spreads disinformation
 - Selecting reporters allowed into WH Press room
- **Hide data and information**
 - Lack of transparency & info
- **Eliminate oversight and accountability**
 - Firing Inspectors General, etc
- **Dismantle checks and balances**
 - Party allegiances trump branch roles



Trump is merely executing campaign promises. Unlike his first term, he is now allied with groups with a plan for dismantling checks and balances.

Institutional Checks and Balances are Failing

- **Legislative Branch**

- Aligned with GOP in Executive and Judicial Branches
- Trump wields power over those in midterm elections

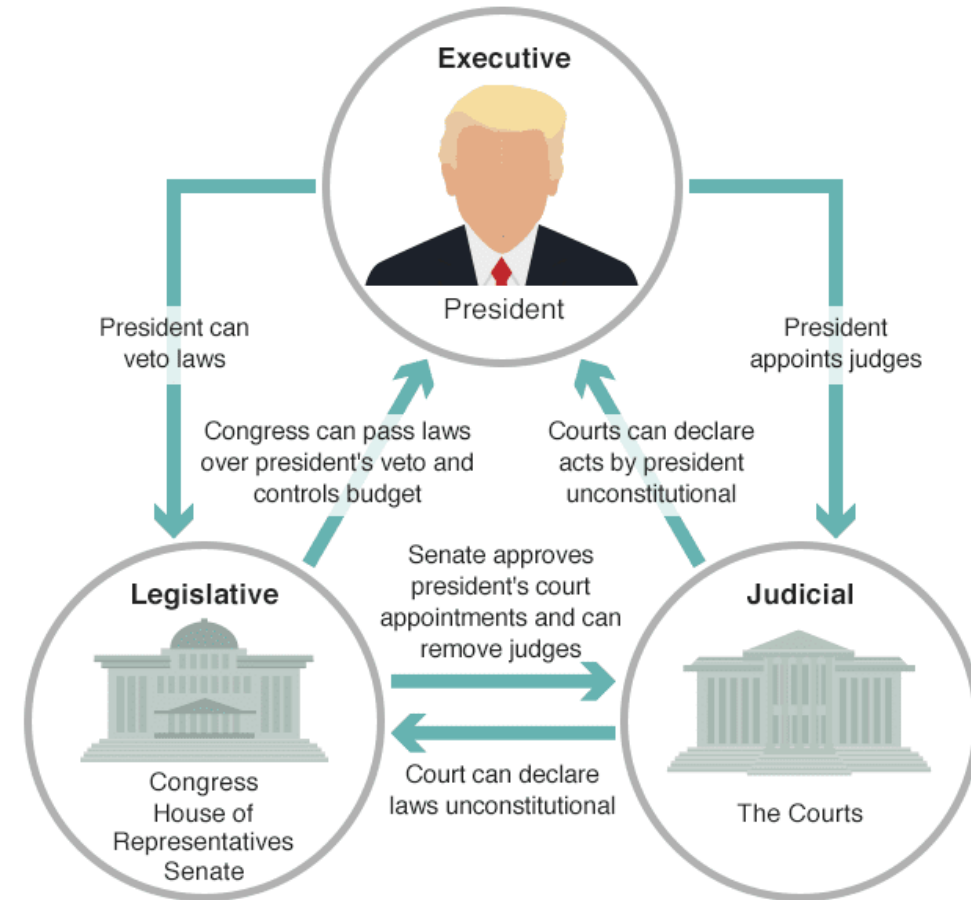
- **Supreme Court**

- Conservative rulings demonstrate agenda to change administrative law and attack bedrock statutes
- Ruled President has immunity from criminal prosecution for “official” acts
- Ruled they need no ethical oversight- can police themselves
- Historic rulings limit federal regulatory authority & curb prosecutorial discretion



US Supreme Court

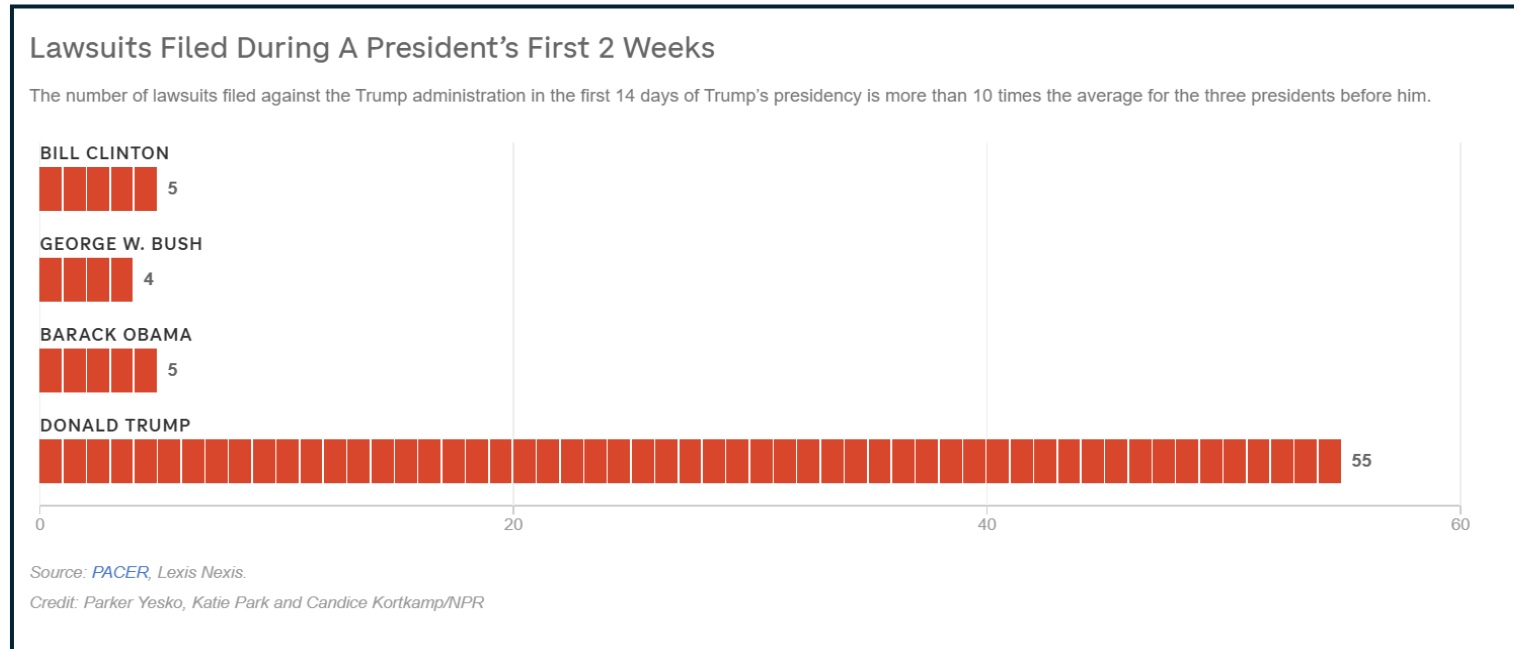
Checks and balances on the US government



Democrats on the Counter Attack:

Strategy 1: Lawsuits

- Multistate lawsuits against the federal government during the Trump administration, 2025
- Success of lawsuits depends on a conservative Supreme Court with no ethical oversight
- **Civil Society and mass mobilization has been successful before at putting a check on a backsliding democracy**



Strategy 2: Mass Demonstrations

Trump, After G.O.P. Criticism, Reverses Cuts to 9/11 Survivors' Program

About 20 percent of the World Trade Central Health Program's staff had been terminated amid President Trump's slashing of the federal work force.

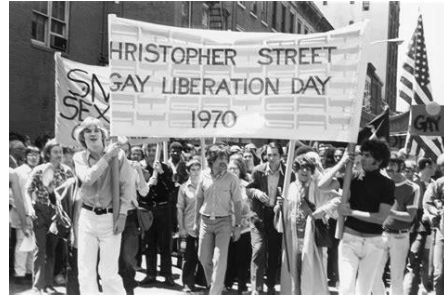
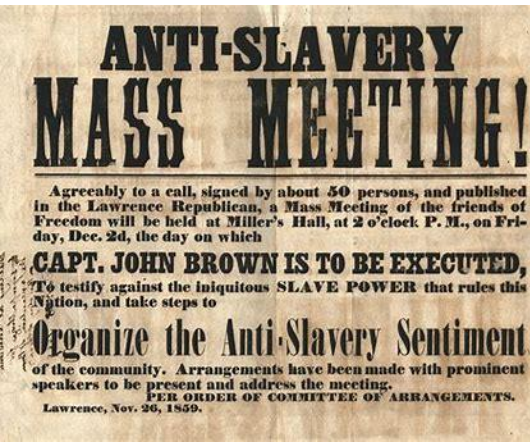


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WASHINGTON POST / IPSOS, FEB 13-18 / +7.2 PM

Some People-Power Movements in U.S. History



- Anti-colonial movement
- Enslaved rebellions
- Abolitionist movement
- Labor movement
- Suffragette movement
- Civil Rights Movement
- Feminist movement
- Anti-nuclear movement
- Anti-Vietnam War protests
- Farm workers' movement
- AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)
- Disability rights movement
- Environmental movement
- Occupy Wallstreet
- Black Lives Matter movement



- LGBTQ+ rights movements
- Me Too movement
- Women's March
- 2020 Protect the Results
- 2025 'Not My President'



Strategy 3: Play Dead?

Biding time, Carville wrote, was “a wiser approach than we pursued in the first Trump administration, when Democrats tried and failed at the art of resistance politics. We voiced [outrage](#) on social issue after social issue. We spun ourselves up in a [tizzy over an investigation into Russia](#). We fought Mr. Trump at every corner, on every issue imaginable and muddled up our message in an unwinnable war. We were saved only by his lousy governing and a lot of effort on our side finding good candidates to run for the House and Senate in 2018. Sometimes the most powerful thing we can do is retreat on the immediate battlefield — and advance in another direction.”

James Carville: It's Time for a Daring Political Maneuver, Democrats

Feb. 25, 2025



Damon Winter/The New York Times

DOGE cancels federal contract for 9/11 research

Researchers working on the Career Firefighter Health Study received notice last week of the CDC contract's termination.

Greg Sargent / February 19, 2025

WORSE AND WORSE

Oops: Trump-Musk Cuts Just Wrecked an NIH Org Championed by GOPers

Republicans once lavished praise on an NIH center that deals with Alzheimer's. Donald Trump and Elon Musk are hobbling it. What will those Republicans say now?

Medicare and telehealth: more restrictive rules could hit patients in 2025

BY **RICHARD EISENBERG**
January 10, 2025 at 7:17 PM CST



cmaj jamc
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► [CMAJ](#). 2017 Jun 12;189(23):E812–E813. doi: [10.1503/cmaj.1095437](#)

Massive cuts to science and medicine in Trump budget

[Roger Collier](#)¹

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PMCID: PMC5468112 PMID: [28606984](#)

Trump Cuts Target Next Generation of Scientists and Public Health Leaders

A core group of so-called disease detectives, who track outbreaks, was apparently spared. But other young researchers are out of jobs.



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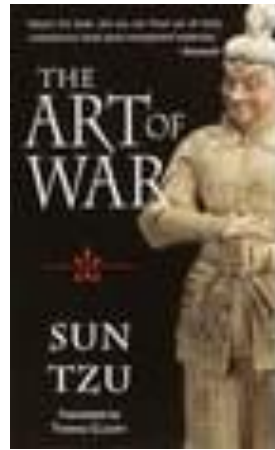
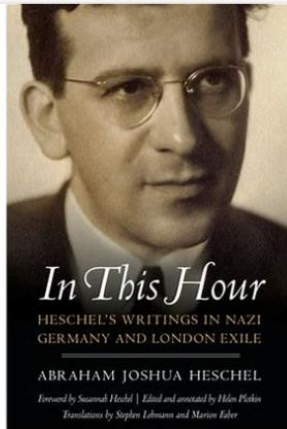
Social Security top official resigns after dispute with DOGE over access to sensitive data

SSA's acting commissioner resigned over refusal to allow access to sensitive government records, however, she was quickly replaced by the manager in charge of SSA's anti-fraud office, until Trump's appointee to lead the agency, Frank Bisignano, is confirmed by the Senate

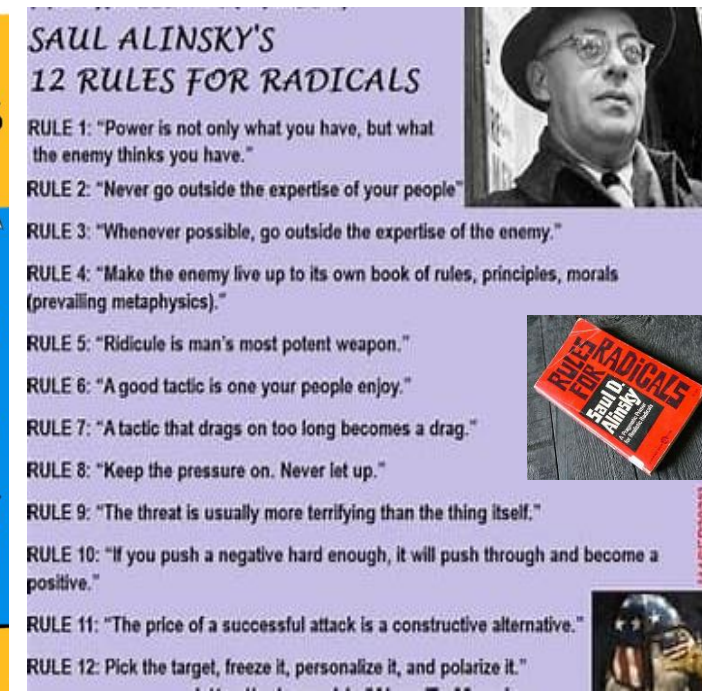
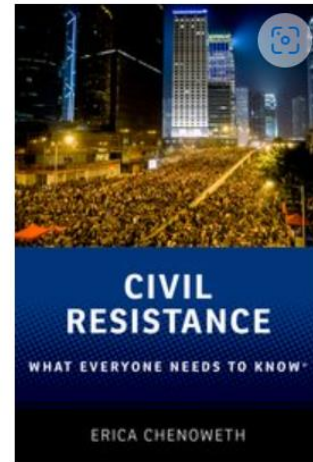
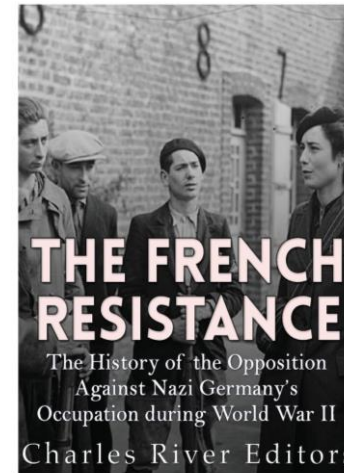
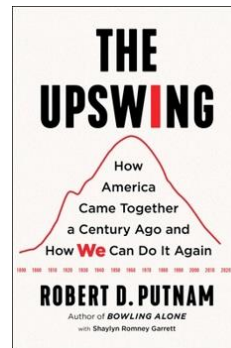
By **Lynn Cavanaugh** | February 18, 2025 at 12:21 PM

Non-Violent Resistance Resources

- [A Paradise Built in Hell by Rebecca Solnit](#)
- [Dictators and Democrats | Princeton University Press](#)
- [Pro-Democracy Organizing against Autocracy in the United States: A Strategic Assessment & Recommendations](#)
- [Nonviolent Action Lab](#)
- [A Force More Powerful Documentary](#)
- [Bringing Down a Dictator](#)
- [Database of Nonviolent Campaigns: Global Nonviolent Action Database](#)
- [International Center on Nonviolent Conflict \(ICNC\)](#)
- [Albert Einstein Institution](#)
- [Training for Change](#)
- [In This Hour Abraham Heschel](#)
- [Beautiful Trouble](#)

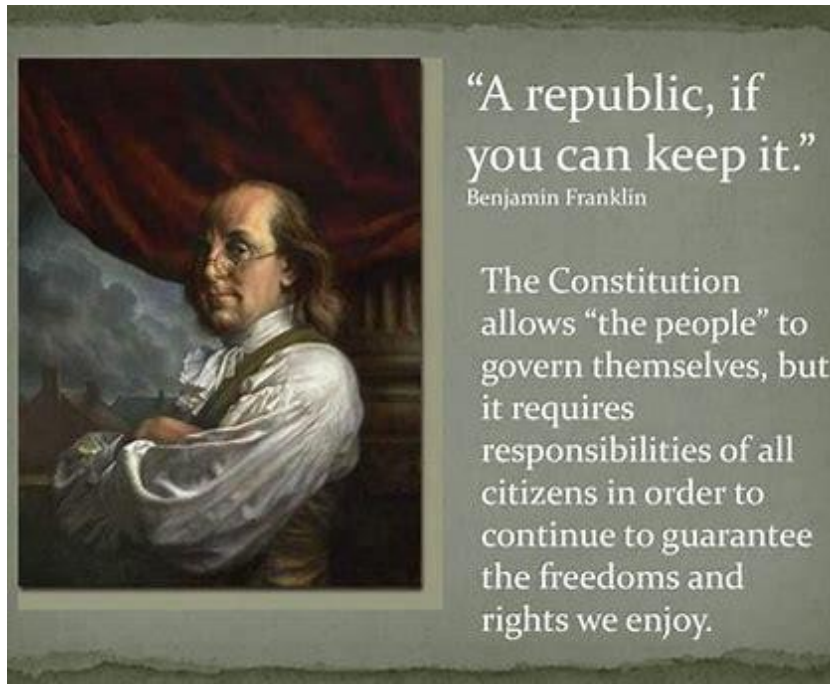


- [Ted Talk \(\[Erica Chenoweth\]\(#\)\)](#)
- [Crowd Counting Consortium & Data Dashboard](#)
- [How Hitler Dismantled a Democracy in 53 Days - The Atlantic](#)
- [Rules for Radicals](#) by Saul Alinsky
- [The Art of War](#) by Sun Tzu
- [Indivisible, A Practical Guide to Democracy on the Brink](#)
- [Robert Putnam Upswing](#)



If We Don't Want to Repeat History → Learn from It

We don't have kings in America-
our oath is to our constitution



White House posted this picture
of Trump as King on Feb 19, 2025