



The Death of Conscious Governing: Will We Survive America’s Moral Division?

An Op-Ed written by Dr. Rhonda L. Hamilton, submitted April 16, 2025

In a world characterized by rapid change and unprecedented challenges, the need for conscious governance, in my opinion of course, has never been more pressing. As citizens, we find ourselves at a critical juncture where the policies and decisions of our leaders seem to profoundly and alarmingly impact not only our immediate circumstances but also the future of our communities, our nation, and the planet. We must continue to advocate for a moral leadership style that is rooted in empathy, equity, and sustainability—an approach that should transcend the present face of America’s partisan governance.

Consider the pressing issues of climate change, social inequality, and systemic injustice. Every day, these challenges remind us that America’s democratic ideals represent for many, simply a vehicle to justify the advancement of fixed power over the long-term healthy well-being of our citizens and what was once a coveted nation. We witness the devastating effects of this mindset: rising sea levels threaten coastal cities, marginalized communities suffer from lack of access to basic resources, threats of the whitewashing of their history, and the gap between wealth and poverty continues to expand. In light of these realities, it is clear that our governance must evolve to address not just the symptoms of these problems, but their root causes as well.

Furthermore, we must recognize that governance should not exist in a vacuum. Leaders are reflections of the values and priorities of the societies they serve, the entire society as a whole, regardless of one’s political choices and ideologies. Thus, it is imperative for citizens to engage actively in the political process—not as passive observers, fearful or oppressed victims, but as informed advocates demanding integrity, compassion, and accountability from those with positions in power. This means participating responsibly in local and national elections, holding town hall meetings, and utilizing platforms to voice our concerns and aspirations for a better future.

Conscious governance—where leaders actively consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their decisions rather than prioritize financial gains, and harmful political agendas over the welfare of its constituents, seems to be morally dead, at present, at least given America’s current Commander in Chief’s, along with members of his base, behavior.

The moral division that has been created in our society as a result of the “unhealthy” politics that are being permeated and crippling our society does not come without far-reaching ramifications. America’s current oligarchy styled agendas that are operating with questionable and demeaning standards creates the

susceptibility of being corrupt and exploitable. As a dedicated professional of mental health oversight in the nation's capital for the better part of a decade, my front-line observations of failed governance and its imposed implications of trauma influences my assessment of the existence of unhealthy insecurities, and unchecked mental health realities for many who have been elected to lead.

To quote the Huffington Post, racism is a mental health crisis, thus we appear to be an American society that has failed to reconcile the presence of addictive and unhealthy behaviors associated with the need to feel superior, winning at all costs, exerting cruelty towards others, and racist ideals as the catalysts for breeding diminished behavioral and mental health expressions.

Attacking "DEI", mocking the service of captured and slain American soldiers who have sacrificed for our country's freedom while many serving at the forefront of our country's leadership have never truly served anyone but themselves, with the luxury of also enjoying the safety net of bankruptcy filings for failed business endeavors, demonstrates, in my opinion, quite dysfunctional and improper, mentally suspect behavior.

One of the first steps in recovery from addictive behaviors, we are taught, is admittance. It would be refreshing if our flawed elected leaders took that 1st step towards admittance so that our country's true healing could begin. Damaged and hurt people will seek to destroy and hurt others. I am a proud daughter who is protective of the legacy of a deceased American army veteran, and unashamed descendant of many proud and determined souls who not only helped to build this nation as enslaved persons but did so while navigating the scraps that were handed to them, amidst sacrificing their dignity to produce generations of law-abiding, and educationally secure American citizens.

Frederick Douglass's legacy of endurance, intelligence, and connection to both the struggles and triumphs of African Americans is heavily embedded in all facets of my Washington, D.C. upbringing and it fuels my defense of what many view as a city that only houses the federal government, congressional lawmakers, historical illustrations and landmarks. In fact, Washington, D.C. is home to 700,000 citizens of diverse cultures and backgrounds, who all stand on the shoulders of generations of slave descendants who not only contributed to the development of the city but also formed a "culture" that is DC. Our artistic expressions, our fight for civil rights, our principled understanding of who we are as D.C. natives is undeniably unable to be "erased" nor should it ever be disregarded. Our nation's history must not continue to be marred by the missteps of men who seek to "remake" history in their own selfish images or misguided understandings. Black history is American history and to seek to remove it or otherwise diminish it, is unamerican.

Conscious governing must not die, not if we as Americans seek to preserve the moral fortitude and proper mental health of our nation. As engaged citizens, we must advocate for policies that reflect these values and demand that our leaders uphold their moral responsibilities. Together, we can shape a future that prioritizes community and citizen well-being that nurtures the planet we all share. Let us act now to fight for a governance model that truly serves all people and safeguards the legacy that we leave for generations to come. ****Your Voice Matters: Demand Conscious Governance Today!****

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