



GLOBAL PROGRESS

New Ideas for the Future
of the Progressive Movement

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Center for American Progress



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A Future Built on Global Progress

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Today, progressives across the world

are confronting similar challenges—from promoting middle-class growth to combatting climate change and advancing inclusive politics. Developed countries such as the United States face stagnant wages, a disappearing middle class, and a resurgence of grassroots populism on both sides of the political spectrum.

In 2009, the Center for American Progress created the Global Progress initiative, a network of like-minded think tanks across the globe that sought to advance progressive policy ideas. The idea behind the initiative was simple: Progressives in America and around the world could benefit from a more systematic approach to sharing ideas, knowledge, and best practices in order to respond to global challenges. While each country is unique, in a globalized world, many of our problems are not: We can learn from each other.

For the past eight years, the Global Progress initiative has brought together the founders of the global progressive movement with current and future leaders to discuss how progressives can overcome obstacles and lead a new, global progressive movement. From Washington to

Amsterdam, Paris to Sydney, the Global Progress initiative has led discussions with world leaders, intellectuals, activists, and like-minded think tanks to shape a progressive agenda for the 21st century. By committing to more inclusive politics, we can help build sustainable societies where prosperity is shared more equitably and governments work better for their people. The essays in this volume support our progressive vision and offer a road map for the future.

The world stands on the cusp of a new, global progressive movement. People around the globe are dissatisfied with their governments and eager for change, and many have turned once more to progressivism. In Europe, for example, where austerity once prevailed, the rise of new leaders such as Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has shown that modern center-left politics can inspire voters and deliver real change. And in Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has led a new movement of inclusive and inspirational politics to end more than a decade of conservative power. We are convinced that Trudeau and Renzi will become paragons of the progressive movement. And at this crucial moment in American politics as progressives look to build on the achievements of President



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Barack Obama, we hope this global reflection on the future of progressive politics provides a fresh perspective on debates in the United States.

Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Ricardo Lagos, and Helle Thorning-Schmidt reflect on how their experience in office and the renewal of progressive governance can help leaders around the world—particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Americas—as they confront new challenges. Matteo Renzi, Justin Trudeau, Sigmar Gabriel, and Lodewijk Asscher address the complex emergence of new populist anti-politics, the need to tackle rising inequality and promote opportunity, and the importance of developing a more open and inclusive politics. Finally, Andrew Little, Bill Shorten, and Jonas Gahr Støre show us the importance of a value-based agenda while reminding us that a progressive approach to creating inclusive and prosperous societies is not only more just, but also more effective.

Every contribution touches on at least one of the three core challenges facing today's progressives: economic inequality, institutional reform, and political renewal. The future success of the global progressive movement depends upon our ability to confront these challenges in new and convincing ways.

First, when it comes to the economy, progressives need to show that we can respond to rising inequality, increased global competition, and technological innovation in a way that rebuilds and strengthens the middle class. The institutional dilemma requires progressives to use our passion, energy, and creativity to make government responsive, effective, and transparent. The political dilemma requires progressives to defend our values and fight for what we know is right, to renew our spirit and retool our efforts, and to rebuild our movements to meet the needs of a new century. If more and more people lose faith in economic opportunity and the chance to prosper—for themselves and their children—it will undermine progressive policies.

In 2014, the economic dilemma led the Center for American Progress to establish the Inclusive Prosperity Commission. Chaired by former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence H. Summers and U.K. Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Ed Balls, the commission studied the causes of wage stagnation in advanced economies and made recommendations to address the growing problem. These included ensuring full employment and fair wages for every worker through more investments in infrastructure and support for renewable energy coupled with a

strong minimum wage; rewarding companies that share profits with workers at every income level; and modernizing employment laws to limit the ability of firms to cut costs by classifying workers as subcontractors instead of full-time employees with benefits.

The commission also advocated for making markets work in the public interest and the long term by reforming corporate governance to ensure that workers—not just shareholders—benefit from increased productivity. Raising workers' skill levels is also critical to increasing growth in the long term and the employment and life opportunities of workers themselves. That's why the commission also called for improvements to early learning and childhood education, schools, universities, vocational training, and apprenticeship programs. Finally, the commission argued that progressives need to push for essential public investments in infrastructure in order to keep pace with our growing population and economies and to help our societies meet the new demands of the global information age.

We must also address political reform to ensure the sustainability of the progressive cause. Many people have lost faith in political answers, and over time, this cynicism has undermined trust in government too. To build support for these improvements, progressives need to show that we have ideas for improving how governments work. This brings us to the second challenge—institutional reform. Progressives need to outline a new vision for modern government in the 21st century, one that embraces citizens' call for greater transparency and provides a foundation for smarter and more effective decision-making, and leverages

the latest innovations in information and communications technology and big data. In the United States, tackling campaign finance rules will also be a crucial element of this renewal and essential to ensuring that government works for everyone, not just for special interests.

With the rise of big data and the reach of social media, progressives have an opportunity to make government more responsible, effective, and transparent. By making public information and services more readily and easily available, governments can restore public confidence and grow a new generation of engaged citizens.

New technologies are already revolutionizing how governments respond to social challenges and deliver public goods. By embracing these advancements, governments can cut waste and streamline bureaucracy.

But just as online communications, social media, and increasing demands will force a revolution in government, they will also change how progressives *do* politics and hopefully help us rise to the third challenge—political renewal. Barack Obama's 2008 victory ushered in a new wave of progressive leaders with new communications tools to help them reach a wider audience. They have opened their parties to new supporters, new ideas, and new ways of doing things. The leadership primary process adopted by the Italian Democratic Party and the French left are just two good examples of such experiments and have raised the profiles of young leaders such as Prime Minister Renzi and French Prime Minister Manuel Valls.



Tony Blair speaks at the Global Progress meeting at the United Nations in New York, December 2010.

In many political cultures, there is resistance to such change from both old party elites and rank-and-file members. Change is disruptive, but resistance to change is a risky strategy. Many young people no longer view organized politics or traditional political parties as the best route to improving their lives or engaging with the issues they care about. When mainstream political parties seem exclusive, elitist, and out of touch, they sow the seeds of populism. Yet as the contributions to this volume illustrate, progressives can overcome the wave of cynicism and anti-politics that has engulfed parties on

both sides. By demanding institutional reform, inclusive politics, and inclusive prosperity, progressives can unify a movement for change.

The Global Progress initiative at the Center for American Progress will continue to play its own small part to revive progressive governance across the globe. By fostering dialogue and working with a new generation of leaders, the global progressive movement will build on the progress we have made. And together, we will secure the progressive future our children deserve.

ABOUT THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS

The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country.

ABOUT CANADA 2020

Canada 2020 is Canada's leading, independent, progressive think tank working to redefine the role of the federal government for a modern Canada. We do this by hosting events, producing original research, and starting conversations about Canada's future. Our goal is to build a progressive community of people and ideas that will move and shape governments in the future.

ABOUT GLOBAL PROGRESS

Global Progress is an international network of progressives foundations, think tanks, and leaders committed to the exchange of ideas, research, and best practices that help promote an economic vision for shared prosperity and an inclusive approach to politics. The annual Global Progress summit brings together progressive leaders from across the globe.

