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Notes from editor (not for publication):

Hi, Elayne — I fixed some inaccuracies in direct quotes. Note the creepy viral right-wing catchphrase is “normalize liking your husband.” Also, please note spelling of Sotomayor.

I Google every single proper name, every single proper noun, every single direct quote — even ones that I’m convinced are correct. I’m wrong often enough that I do this for every single piece I edit for the paper. Especially since you send your good work to multiple publications, some of which I know don’t have the time or resources to check, I urge you, with all fondness and in the spirit of all the values of truth and rationality that you so eloquently articulate in your work, to do the same.

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Reclaiming our time and treasure

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 We must recapture our better selves and restore values
3 and policies that are commendable, achievable, humane, and
4 compassionate — before it’s too late

####END SUBHED####

5 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

THERE IS A NEW URGENCY in the air, and it's palpable:
grounded in collective anxiety and a plea for a return to a civil
society free of fear, oppression, oligarchs, and megalomaniacs
who defy laws and ignore the Constitution.

We've had enough of the dystopian nightmare
propagated by an authoritarian regime rife with abuse and
massive corruption. The threat of creeping totalitarianism is
glaringly obvious, and we are waking up to what that means.

The difference between civil societies and our
governance today couldn't be starker.

Civil societies don't have their highest court tilt so far
right that they treat their country's highest leader like a king with
absolute power. They have humane policies grounded in social
justice so that people have basic human rights. They pass laws to
provide housing, universal healthcare, childcare, quality
education, and other issues that are poverty driven.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor made this clear
in her compelling dissent in the 2025 SCOTUS decision for
[Trump v. Slaughter](#), which gave our president outrageous power
in what is supposedly a democracy. She noted that the president
and the policy-making people behind him disregard the
Constitution along with settled precedent.

(It should be noted that three Supreme Court justices
appointed by the current president committed perjury in their
confirmation hearings when they said they would adhere to
precedent and then proceeded to ignore or reverse it.)

Here is part of what Justice Sotomayor wrote:

"The Court gives the President a power unknown even to
the English Crown against which the Founders revolted[.] [...] "It
also means respecting precedent — not as a wooden exercise,
but out of a recognition that, whatever our confidence in the
theories of the present moment, the wisdom of our founding
document does not belong to today's Justices alone."

* * *

40 ONE EXAMPLE OF precedent that has been battered is the
41 overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. What civilized nation arrests and
42 jails women who have suffered a miscarriage or lets them die for
43 lack of urgently needed medical care? What parliamentary
44 would think that women who have abortions should be jailed or
45 executed, as both of which some right-wing legislators in the U.S
46 have expressed?

47 According to [Pregnancy Justice](#), over 400 prosecutions of
48 women have taken place since the fall of *Roe v. Wade*. Charges
49 include child neglect, endangerment, violation of abuse laws,
50 and substance abuse during pregnancy. Every one of those
51 charged suffered arrest and trauma (both physical and
52 psychological) instead of receiving the care they needed.

53 Eugenics is also making a comeback here. The basis of
54 eugenics in the early 20th century was Hitler's desire to have a
55 completely Aryan race, based on discrimination against people
56 he thought were inferior and shouldn't be allowed to procreate.

57 Followers believed in "planned breeding and racial
58 improvement." It resulted in involuntary sterilization, segregation,
59 isolation, poverty, and the Holocaust — the "final solution."

60 The idea led to baby breeding among German women,
61 who were rewarded for having lots of pregnancies.

62 Today, we are seeing pro-natalist propaganda fostered by
63 politicians, white supremacists, and Christian nationalists. A
64 group of right-wing women recently held an annual "Leadership
65 Summit" in which they proclaimed that all women need to
66 "normalize liking your husband."

67 Their playbook is the Heritage Foundation's Project
68 2025.

69 * * *

70 HOW DID WE BECOME a country that terrorizes and arrests
71 thousands of innocent immigrants, legal residents, and citizens
72 and physically, sexually, and emotionally abuses them, deports
73 them, and incarcerates them in our version of concentration
74 camps, where they are separated from their children, denied

75 healthcare, decent food, access to family, lawyers, or
76 Congressional oversight? How civilized is that?

77 These people have been called “vermin” and other ugly
78 invectives by this administration, which fails to understand how
79 much immigrants contribute to our lives, our economy, and our
80 cultural diversity. I suggest that those who are troubled by vermin
81 need to look in their own closets.

82 Then there’s the issue of gun violence, which just keeps
83 on growing and shocking people who live in civil societies. In
84 June, the Supreme Court struck down a law in Hawaii that barred
85 gun owners from carrying handguns in public places. On June
86 30, the court also agreed to hear arguments in its next term in a
87 case that will determine whether assault-style weapons like AR-
88 15s can be banned in response to mass shootings.

89 Former U.S. Rep. Gabby Gifford, who was shot in the
90 head while campaigning for her seat several years ago, has
91 declared gun violence an American crisis. Her organization’s
92 website reports that 46,000 Americans die annually from gun
93 violence. That’s 125 a day.

94 What civilized nation would have people advocating for
95 guns on the streets and in public places?

96 Her organization, the Giffords Law Center to Prevent
97 Gun Violence, puts it this way: “Gun violence has become an
98 inescapable facet of American life. While families and
99 communities across the country are regularly torn apart by
100 bullets, the burden isn’t spread equally, particularly when it
101 comes to the daily drumbeat of gun violence.”

102 * * *

103 ALL OF THIS, AND MORE, is why we must reclaim our time
104 and treasure and rejoin the civilized countries of the world whose
105 values and policies are commendable, achievable, humane, and
106 compassionate — before it’s too late.

107 The time has come for us to recapture our better selves
108 and to restore our values that are demonstrated in personal acts,

109 and our policies that bring back the history, meaning, and
110 brilliance of the Constitution.

111 We know what we must do come November.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

112 **ELAYNE CLIFT** (elayne-clift.com) has written this column
113 about women, politics, and social issues for two decades.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

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####END LOGLINE####