

Gallup: U.S. “Well-Being” Declines Under Trump, Especially for the Poor

By [Eric Zuesse](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

On January 10th, Gallup listed their [“Top Well-Being Findings of 2017”](#), and three findings pertained to the entire U.S. (the others pertained only to sub-populations):

[Americans’ well-being declines in 2017](#)

[U.S. uninsured rate rises](#)

[Exchange purchasers rate their health coverage less positively](#)

In 2017, Trump’s first year in office, there was “a reversal of the three-year upward trend” of Americans’ well-being. This time, it went down, instead of continued flat or else went up again.

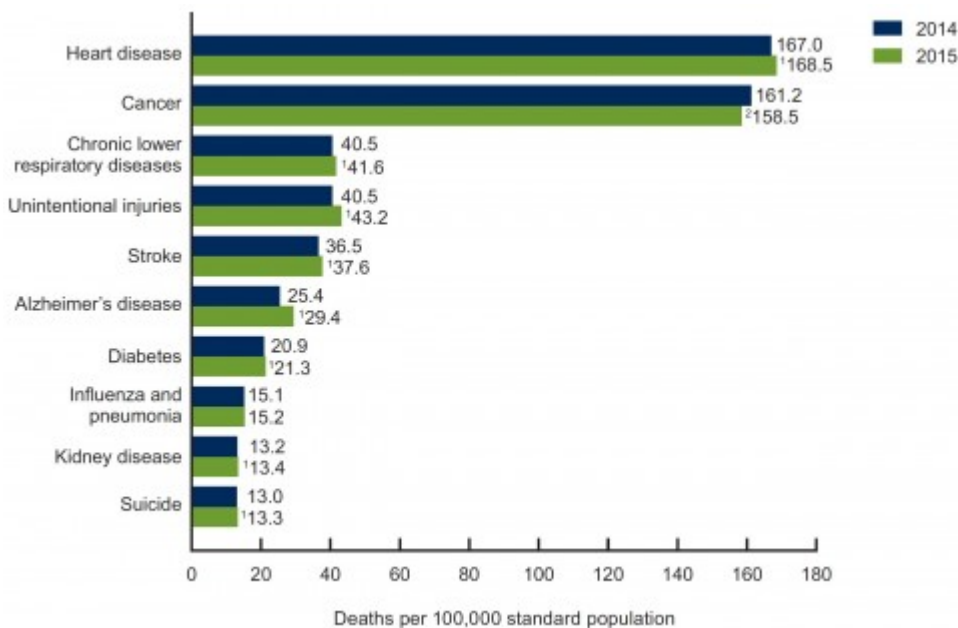
Of course, nothing affects well-being or happiness as much as health does, and the U.S. is perhaps the sickest of all advanced industrialized countries. On 21 February 2017, the *Washington Post* had bannered [“U.S. life expectancy will soon be on par with Mexico’s and the Czech Republic’s”](#) and reported that

“Life expectancy at birth will continue to climb substantially for residents of industrialized nations — but not in the United States, where minimal gains will soon put life spans on par with those in Mexico and the Czech Republic, according to an extensive analysis. ... ‘Notable among poor-performing countries is the USA,’ the researchers wrote, ‘whose life expectancy at birth is already lower than most other high-income countries, and is projected to fall further behind, such that its 2030 life expectancy at birth might be similar to the Czech Republic for men, and Croatia and Mexico for women.’ ... It is the only one without universal health insurance coverage and has the ‘largest share of unmet health-care needs due to financial costs,’ the researchers wrote.”

The U.S. has by far the world’s highest-cost healthcare, both on an absolute basis and also as a percentage of GDP. It also has extremely unequal distribution of wealth. So: a great many Americans simply can’t afford the healthcare they need; they put up with their unattended or under-attended ailments and disabilities. This, in turn, decreases America’s productivity.

On 8 December 2016, that same newspaper had already headlined [“U.S. life expectancy declines for the first time since 1993”](#) and reported that

“For the first time in more than two decades, life expectancy for Americans declined last year — a troubling development linked to a panoply of worsening health problems in the United States. ... Its findings show increases in ‘virtually every cause of death. It’s all ages. ... This is unusual, and we don’t know what happened,’ said **Jiaquan Xu**, an epidemiologist and lead author of the study. ‘So many leading causes of death increased.’”



Age-adjusted death rates for the 10 leading causes of death. (Source: CDC/NCHS/HHS/NVSS)

So: one might consider Gallup’s latest findings — both of declining well-being, and of declining health-insurance coverage — to be in line with what’s to be reasonably expected in America.

The percentage of Americans without health insurance rose to 12.3% in 2017, from the prior year’s 10.9%. At the beginning of Obama’s Presidency, that figure had been 14.6% uninsured. While Obamacare was being drafted-and-debated in Congress; that figure rose to reach 18.0% uninsured by the time the exchanges opened in October 2013, because many Americans were not renewing their insurance policies; they were instead hoping for better deals to become available under Obamacare. Then, the uninsured percentage gradually declined down to the 10.9% who were uninsured by the time when Obama left office.

Obama’s plan had increased the percentage of Americans with health insurance from 85.4% when he entered office, to 89.1% by the time he left office. He had promised “universal coverage” — everyone would have health insurance under his system (100%, just like in all other developed nations) — but never attained higher than 89.1% who were insured; and this figure was flatlining at that level by the time he left office. (He also had promised, during his campaign, that there would be a “public option” in his plan, but never even tried to include it, once he became elected to the Presidency; only private insurance companies were allowed into his exchanges; his plan was actually [drawn-up by insurance company lobbyists and executives, with Obama’s choice of conservative U.S. Senator Max Baucus’s staff, who were working with Obama’s personal agent, Nancy-Ann DeParle, who herself was a former healthcare executive.](#))

Now, since he has left office, the uninsured percentage has suddenly started rising again,

this time from 10.9% to 12.3%, an increase of 12.3/10.9, or a rise of nearly 13%, since Obama left. Perhaps this indicates Trump’s success toward destroying Obamacare, but the rest of Trump’s destruction of it has already been included in his and the Republican Congress’s tax-overhaul law ending the requirement to purchase health insurance — the “insurance mandate” — because that termination will de-fund the federal subsidies that had enabled the insurance companies to make profits without having to soar their premiums even more than they did. The insurers won’t be receiving these federal government subsidies. Obama showed that he had believed in Government bailing-out and subsidizing Wall Street and insurance companies but not in Government bailing-out or subsidizing their victims; his policy-proposals showed that he believed more in “trickle-down” economics than in “percolate-up” economics. So, now, Obamacare is doomed — the insurers will increase premiums even more, and thus more and more people will refuse to buy insurance. Even the modest improvement that Obama and the Democrats had achieved in American health care is being reversed by the Republicans.

The only consistent winner in all of this is America’s wealthiest, who — for example — own the insurance companies (which now will be funding especially heavily the Democratic Party’s nominees). America’s needy are being placed under even more pressures than they were under before. Instead of a neoliberal Democratic Government, America now has an even more neoliberal Republican Government. Neoliberalism is trickle-down economics, and [Republicans are even more committed to it than are Democrats](#). (Neoconservatism is the foreign-policy complement to neoliberalism: in the old terminology, it was called “imperialism,” and its domestic-policy complement was called simply “capitalism”; but, now, we have instead “neoconservatism” and “neoliberalism” — and both parts of conservatism are more now than under Obama.)

This brings us to the last of the three major Gallup findings about Americans’ welfare during 2017: [“Exchange purchasers rate their health coverage less positively.”](#) It reports that satisfaction with health insurance was 74% for people who had purchased from an Obamacare exchange, and 81% for all others, and was especially high for the two main socialized portions of America’s health insurance: Veterans’ health care, and Medicare. It was, however, the lowest for Medicaid, the socialized system specifically for the poorest and sickest people — the neediest of all, who are treated as being the worst of all by America’s Government, even though almost all of them were born to poverty and/or genetic diseases, etc.

Quality of Coverage, by Source

Overall, how would you rate your primary health insurance coverage -- as excellent, good, only fair or poor?

	Purchased from exchange	Purchased elsewhere
	%	%
Coverage is excellent/good	74	81
Coverage is fair/poor	26	19

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Whereas India has its [“Dalits”](#), America has its poor. Regardless whether they’re male, female, white, black, Hispanic, or whatever, they’re despised by America’s Government — and even more so by Trump’s than by Obama’s. In Indian terminology, America now has an

even more anti-Dalit Government than it did previously. More clearly than ever, after the period of FDR's progressivism ended with **Ronald Reagan** in 1980, the poor have now become America's "untouchables."

Even politically active Blacks, feminists, homosexuals, and other oppressed categories, are more concerned to represent their own ethnicity or other oppressed group, than to represent all of the oppressed — the poor in every group, and the victims of all types of bigotry.

Progressivism thus has no active constituency in the United States — not even at the grass roots; and it has only enemies at the well-funded organized political level. This is why both of the existing political Parties are conservative (neoliberal and neoconservative), and compete for support only amongst the wealthiest, who are the source of both neoliberalism and neoconservatism.

Gallup's latest report documents the direction that America's Government currently is heading, which is simply conservative (neoconservative+neoliberal). Although only a minority of America's voters are conservative, a vast majority of America's wealth is owned by conservatives, if for no other reason than that they were *generally* born far richer than the poor were (or than any of the professional advocates for the poor are). (And, of course, any of the born-poor who became the exceptions who managed to rise into America's aristocracy tend to be overwhelmingly conservative because they think they did it by being superior to the many who did not. [Wealth produces conservatism](#). Furthermore, the wealthy are also [less compassionate, more psychopathic, than the non-wealthy](#). Though they are actually among the worst, they think that they are among the best. And they've got the money to hire plenty of agents to promote their view.)

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Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).

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