**2024 CENTER FOR RENEWING AMERICA** 

# ANNUAL REPORT



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#### INTRODUCTION

### 2024: A Transformative Year

he year 2024 will be remembered as transformational for the Center for Renewing America. Guided by its mission to put God, country, and community at the center of the policy debate in Washington, the Center worked diligently to reshape national policy debates, advance paradigm-shifting policies, and lay the groundwork for an America First agenda in the next administration.

In 2024, CRA examined the failures of the Biden Administration and offered effective solutions in a wide range of policy areas, including trade, border security, and foreign policy. Demonized by virtually every major media outlet in America, CRA's policy prescriptions were widely recognized by members of Congress and policymakers at the state level.

On the national stage, the Center for Renewing America saw its legal arguments over border security vindicated in the courts, and successfully injected an invasion framing of the crisis at the southern border into the mainstream. CRA also gained national attention for its call to reestablish historical Constitutional powers of the Presidency, such as impoundment.

As a result of the work of its scholars, the Center experienced significant institutional growth. After raising record levels of financial support, CRA President Russ Vought was nominated in December of 2024 to be President Trump's Director of the Office of Management and Budget. With the news of Vought's departure, the Center named Eric Teetsel—a leader in the conservative movement—to lead the organization as Chief Executive Officer.



A core objective of the Center for Renewing America, since its inception, has been to shift the paradigms of conservative orthodoxy, especially on issues such as the Constitutional powers of the President. As part of its

efforts to bolster the policy agenda of a future conservative administration, the Center made this a prime directive for policy work in 2024.

But in 1974, Congress overstepped its authority and stripped the Presidency of this power through passage of the unconstitutional Impoundment Control Act.

POLICY ISSUES / LEGAL

### The President's Constitutional Power of Impoundment

by Mark Paoletta, Daniel Shapiro
September 10, 2024

Since America's Founding, it has been understood that Article II of the Constitution vests the President with authority to decline to spend the full amount of an appropriated fund. This power, known as impoundment, was regularly exercised for nearly 200 years. In 2024, CRA scholars Mark Paoletta and Daniel Shapiro resurrected this argument on the national stage through an in-depth study titled *The President's Constitutional Power of Impoundment*. Their arguments will help equip the President to control federal spending by

using this Constitutionally mandated executive power.

Given the extensive delays experienced during President Trump's first administration in getting Senate approval of the President's nominees, the Center also argued in 2024 in defense of the presidential power to make recess appointments. As CRA scholar Jeff Clark and Anthony Licata argued in their widely read brief, the President retains unfettered discretion to select every Officer to be considered by the Senate for confirmation.

Finally, the Center continued to champion presidential power to institute "Schedule F" through executive order. This commonsense policy directive would put deep-state actors on notice by reclassifying federal employees involved in policy decisions as at-will employees. In other words, complacent bureaucrats or, worse, deep-state actors could be held accountable for refusing to carry out the President's agenda.

I believe that the loss of impoundment authority
— which 200 years of presidents enjoyed — was the original sin in eliminating the ability from a branch on branch to control spending.

- RUSS VOUGHT NPR, November 2024

Perhaps no focus of the Center has brought more consternation from major media and the think tank establishment than CRA's paradigm-shifting work to restore Constitutional authority to the presidency. Despite detractors, CRA Chief Executive Officer Eric Teetsel has reiterated the Center's continued efforts to advance policies that strengthen and defend the constitutional powers of the President.





Since its founding, the Center for Renewing America has led the charge to stop the invasion of our southern border, and to reestablish American sovereignty.

In January 2024, the Center filed an amicus brief in the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals defending Texas's right to declare an invasion to stop the border crisis. In March of 2024. Senior Fellow Ken Cuccinelli and Adam Turner published their policy brief, *The* U.S. Military May

Be Used to Secure the Border, spelling

out the authority border state governors have under Article I, Section 10, to declare an invasion and use the national guard to enforce immigration laws.

### Cuccinelli to Newsmax: States Will Lose Federal Money Over Fighting Deportations



By summer of 2024,
Texas Governor Greg
Abbott had adopted
a similar strategy;
declaring an invasion
and installing river
buoys as a floating
barrier to prevent
illegal passage across
the Rio Grande. A
lower court attempted
to force Texas to
remove the barriers,
but this was struck
down by the 5th Circuit

Court of Appeals. As Cuccinnelli said at

the time, this was a "complete victory" for the Center and a vindication of its policy work.

In their primer U.S. Deportations -A

As CRA analysis detailed, population changes will transform our national culture and represent a deliberate policy of replacing citizens with subjects.

POLICY ISSUES / SECURE BORDERS

### Primer: Federal Law Does Not Criminalize the Conduct of State Officials When They Act to Repel an Invasion



Longstanding & Normal Process, CRA Senior Advisor Wade Miller and Policy Research Associate Nikolaus Schuster documented how Biden's reversal of Trump's immigration policies caused more than 10 million illegal entries during his administration. This, coupled with CRA scholars' examination of Biden's disastrous "parole in place" immigration policy, exposed the Biden Administration's amnesty as another name for millions of illegal aliens.

In addition to tackling the border invasion, CRA scholars sparked a national debate on the merits of the socalled "Great Replacement Theory," a topic previously thought to be off-limits to mainstream discussion but critical to understanding the flood of illegal immigration into the United States. By tying the concepts that the Great Replacement Theory describes to whitenationalist and anti-Semitic violence, the establishment had positioned itself to condemn any recognition of ongoing U.S. demographic transformation as racist.

At the close of 2024, the incoming Trump Administration will inherit a crisis of U.S. sovereignty in the form of an active invasion

of the United States' southern border. Yet, with the policies championed by the Center to repel the invasion at state and federal levels and deport illegal aliens, the U.S. could once again be a fully sovereign nation.

When we have policies in place as we have had under Joe Biden and Kamala Harris that are incentivizing illegal immigration, that creates a profit center for dangerous Mexican cartels to traffic human beings.

#### - ERIC TEETSEL

Center for Baptist Leadership Podcast, December 16, 2024



In 2024, the Center for Renewing America devoted significant staff time and resources to producing policy reports and bulletproof analysis making the case for a new direction in American trade policy.

Free trade is not free, especially in a world in which most other nations subsidize their industries and engage in protectionist practices. Yet, for decades the D.C. uniparty advanced so-called "unfettered" trade policies in pursuit of cheap



materials and consumer goods, enriching our geopolitical adversaries and ensuring wages remain low for American workers. As the Center documented this year,

### One Pager: The Risks of Tariffs Have Been Inflated

by CRA Staff June 18, 2024

the long term consequences of opening the American markets to the world without

**POLICY ISSUES / HEALTHY COMMUNITIES** 

### Tariffs and American Sovereignty

by Micah Meadowcroft

September 17, 2024

protections, especially to China, are now clear, hollowing out America's industrial base and depressing the wages of the many for the benefit of the few who could take advantage of globalization.

President Trump challenged this status quo in his first administration through the use of tariffs, most notably those placed on Chinese imports, which were met with bipartisan approval and subsequently continued by the Biden-Harris administration.

Thanks, in part, to the work of CRA scholars, the national conversation on trade policy has shifted to focus on the plight of American workers. Tariffs do not end trade between nations, but shape its contours and effects. By raising import prices, a tariff increases the competitiveness of American producers. The potential for increased profits for domestic producers protected by the tariff prompts new investment in production, which can create new jobs.

The Center's proposals, including an endorsement of a universal 10

percent tariff similar to the one proposed by former U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, are now being considered at the highest levels of government.

America now stands ready to confront the global trade imbalance with our allies and adversaries alike, boost wages, and once again put American workers first.

In Washington, a new consensus has started to emerge, as figures in both parties conclude that developed nations need industrial policy and protectionisms like tariffs to meet the challenges of the moment.

> - MICAH MEADOWCROFT American Compass, September 18, 2024

# Shaping the Narrative to End Forever Wars

In 2024, CRA maintained its critical role in shaping policy discourse about the United States' involvement in the war in Ukraine. As the conflict escalated and the risk of nuclear confrontation grew, CRA's principled stance—emphasizing peace through negotiation and a pragmatic prioritization of American national interests—was clearly the only path forward.



However, the Biden Administration's approach-marked by an ill-defined endgame and significant financial commitments-blurred the line between supporting a military ally and becoming a co-belligerent in the conflict. This aimless position ignored the reality of frontline dynamics, needlessly prolonged the suffering of millions of people, and put billions more at risk around the world. As Americans suffered from domestic crises, the Biden Administration shunned its own countrymen and poured billions of dollars into prolonging this precariously futile conflict.

Senior Fellow Sumantra Maitra's report, *A Possible Path to Peace in Ukraine*, emphasized the need for direct negotiations between Ukraine and Russia and offered a practical framework for de-escalating the conflict. Maitra highlighted steps like freezing territorial lines, creating demilitarized zones, and securing guarantees of Ukrainian neutrality from NATO and Russia. His analysis underscored that ignoring Russia's non-negotiables risks prolonged war and global instability, while pragmatic diplomacy can secure a durable peace.

The Center's recommendations for immediate ceasefire negotiations, territorial compromises, and a neutral Ukraine—backed by guarantees from both NATO and Russia—were circulated in policy circles and drew congressional attention to the need for a realistic approach to ending the conflict.

One of the major ways in which the recent Ukraine supplemental fails to recognize this essential reality is that it does nothing to encourage America's allies to fulfill their obligations to ensure global stability.

- ERIC TEETSEL

World Magazine, April 22, 2024

# Advancing A Dormant NATO Framework

As the war in Ukraine drags on, Americans have increasingly questioned the wisdom of underwriting Europe's defense at the expense of addressing challenges closer to home. CRA has been at the forefront of fostering this ideological shift, with its "Dormant NATO" framework challenging entrenched assumptions about the alliance's indispensability and emphasizing the importance of placing America First in all aspects of foreign policy. Throughout 2024 our "Dormant NATO" policy position was thrust into the mainstream with coverage in publications such as The Financial Times, Foreign Policy Magazine, Foreign Affairs, and Real Clear Defense.

This framework calls for a NATO that operates as a true defensive alliance: finite in its membership, restrained in its military activities, and focused solely on deterring clear and immediate threats. Through halting provocative expansion of NATO membership, scaling back U.S. troop deployments, and curtailing the supranational NATO bureaucracy's scope, Dormant NATO envisions a Europe that assumes greater responsibility for its own security while allowing America to prioritize its core strategic interests.

In particular, CRA Research Director Micah Meadowcroft has emphasized that reducing America's overall participation in NATO military exercises would directly promote this shift toward European-led defense. In his report, *Interoperability and Military Exercises in Dormant NATO*, Meadowcroft described how the Dormant NATO framework would balance strategic burden shifting with the need for continued Atlantic security. By limiting U.S. participation to select exercises that reinforce interoperability, the United States could focus on its most pressing security challenges while ensuring Europe remains capable of defending itself.



As global power dynamics shift and the Indo-Pacific becomes a critical global theater, the need to recalibrate America's commitments in Europe has become undeniable. The Dormant NATO framework reflects many of the principles CRA has continuously championed: prioritizing American sovereignty, advocating for strategic burden shifting over burden sharing, and resisting the ideological expansionism of progressive neoliberalism.

RUSS STEVE MATT VOUGHT BANNON GAETZ

CLETA HARRY ED CHARLIE MITCHELL MACDOUGALD MARTIN BURNHAM



# EARLESS at the POINTOFATTACK

the Jeff Clark story

SEPTEMBER 16

CENTER FOR RENEWING AMERICA PRESENTS A FILM PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY KINGSLEY WILSON FILMED 8 EDITED BY LOWELL PRODUCTIONS CINEMATOGRAPHY TIFFANY COUTRIS GRAPHIC DESIGN BILANDER MEDIA



## CRA Documentary: Fearless at the Point of Attack

In 2024, the Center for Renewing America released *Fearless at the Point of Attack: The Jeff Clark Story*, a powerful documentary chronicling the relentless persecution of CRA Senior Fellow Jeffrey Clark, a former Assistant Attorney General who became a target of illicit lawfare for his efforts to defend election integrity during the 2020 presidential election.

Jeff Clark's story is one of courage in the face of extraordinary adversity. After standing firm in his role as Assistant Attorney General and fulfilling his duty to provide legal counsel to President Trump, Jeff became the target of a politically motivated witch hunt from former Special Counsel Jack Smith—a campaign rife with partisan motivations and a disregard for due process.

Over the course of nearly two years, Jeff was subjected to contempt charges, invasive dawn raids, indictments, and attempts by the D.C. bar to strip him of his law license—all intended to punish Jeff for fulfilling his duties to President Trump.

Through candid interviews with prominent conservatives, including Steve Bannon and Matt Gaetz, *Fearless at the Point of Attack: The Jeff Clark Story* chronicles Jeff's resilience and underscores the weaponization of

America's justice system against conservatives fighting for the truth.

Since its release, the documentary has garnered more than 36,000 views and continues to climb. The Center remains committed to clearing Jeff's good name in his ongoing legal battles and ensuring this powerful story reaches as many viewers as possible.

Before dawn a large group of armed federal agents.. raided Jeff Clark's home. Now, what did Jeff Clark do wrong? What he did wrong was call for an investigation into voter fraud.

- TUCKER CARLSON Fox News, June 2022



For decades America's legal system has tilted the scales in favor of political elites, progressive ideologues, and entrenched bureaucracies, while ordinary citizens are held to stricter standards. Most recently this evolved into an aggressive campaign of legal intimidation known as "lawfare" against anyone who stood up to this corrupt system.

In 2024, the Center for Renewing America fought back by identifying real instances of corruption and abuse of power on the left and using the same legal tactics and maneuvers to hold those responsible accountable. One such effort was a formal ethics complaint that called for an investigation of Representative Jamie Raskin for possible violations of federal financial disclosure laws. Representative Raskin failed to disclose his wife's *Reserve Trust* stock, which was valued at over \$1 million and had exceeded the disclosure threshold.

In addition to filing the ethics complaint, CRA Senior Fellow Adam Candeub filed an *amicus curiae* brief in the Supreme Court case *NetChoice v. Paxton*, defending Texas's efforts to prevent social media platforms from silencing conservative viewpoints under the guise of corporate policy. Americans have the right to express their beliefs without fear of being silenced by powerful tech monopolies, and we'll continue to

contest any illicit efforts to undermine the founding principles of free speech.

Finally,
CRA backed
Texas's state
sovereignty
in Texas v.
U.S. Federal
Government,
filing a brief
affirming
Texas's
constitutional

authority

PRO NEWS EXCLUSIVE

ADAM CANDEUB HOPES TO
FINISH TECH BATTLES TRUMP
STARTED

to define the border crisis as an invasion. The Constitution recognizes that states retain the inherent right to defend themselves against foreign encroachments, including non-military invasions like mass illegal immigration. CRA argued that Governor Greg Abbott's actions to secure Texas's borders were

consistent with the state's duty to protect its citizens, and align with states'

inherent right to defend their citizens when the federal government fails to act.

As previously mentioned in this report, a lower court attempted to force Texas

to remove the barriers, but this was struck down by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. As CRA's Ken Cuccinnelli said at the time, this was a "complete victory" for the Center and a vindication of its policy work.





Citizens for Renewing America is a national 501c4, and sister organization to the Center for Renewing America, that is dedicated to fighting for legislation and policies that advance the America First agenda. Its mission is to renew an American consensus of a nation under God with unique interests worthy of defending that flow from its people, institutions, and history, where individuals' enjoyment of freedom is predicated on just laws and healthy communities.

One of Citizens for Renewing America's major accomplishments was the appointment of President Russ Vought as policy director of the 2024 Republican National Convention's Platform Committee. Vought was chosen based on his years of experience at the highest levels of the conservative movement and track record of effectively advancing President Trump's agenda in his first Administration.

This influential committee works with representatives from every state to determine the core principles and values of the GOP. As policy director, Vought had a direct impact on steering the policy agenda of the GOP to new paradigms on trade, foreign policy, and immigration in the course of a major election year.

Another important policy that Citizens influenced involved the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), a Bush-era warrantless surveillance program that was set to lapse on April 19, 2024. FISA Section 702 allowed for the collection of electronic communications within the USA of non-U.S. persons sending communications from abroad.

Citizen's research indicated the program had engaged in mission creep and had targeted U.S. citizens. While FISA Section 702 was renewed, several reforms were implemented in Congress that mirrored

suggestions in the fact sheet.

In 2024, CRA's model legislation was cited by legislators around the country in the implementation of age verification laws to protect children online. CNN cited the Center as "one of two groups responsible" for laws that resulted in Pornhub "blocking users in more than a dozen states in response to a wave of laws requiring it to verify the age of its users."

The United States military exists to fight and win our nation's wars on behalf of our Constitutional representatives, as they seek to provide for the common defense and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity. With this in mind, Citizens for Renewing America made a concerted effort in 2024 to craft policy that will strengthen our armed forces and purge it of the woke agenda, which has reduced morale and combat effectiveness.

In March of 2024, Citizens for Renewing America released *Model Legislation:* Vehicles for Restoring the United States Armed Forces, an outline breaking down in great detail the various programs related to CRT, DEI, gender radicalism, personnel, programs, admissions, recruitment, contracts, promotions, and other aspects of woke ideology that must be completely eliminated from the military.

In 2023, CRA Senior Fellow Adam Candeub helped coauthor the report *Model Legislation for Age Verification of Social Media* on behalf of Citizens for Renewing America. This important and detailed document outlined legal mechanisms that empower parents to take control of their children's social media activity.

It delved into ways big tech companies could be held accountable for the content posted on their platforms, promoting age requirements for social media use, parental consent, enforcement mechanisms for violations, and several other important components.

In 2024, CRA's model legislation was cited by legislators around the country in the implementation of age verification laws to protect children online. In Texas, Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a brief with the Supreme Court asking it to uphold House Bill 1181, a Texas law requiring pornography companies to institute age-verification measures to safeguard children from obscene online material.

The primary political battlefield for advancing every part of the America First agenda -- securing our borders, defeating Wokeism, reducing the size of government -- is the federal budget. There is only one organization with the institutional knowledge necessary to fight that battle. That is Center for Renewing America.

#### - BEN JUDGE

The America Fund

# CRA by the Numbers in 2024











**\$7 MILLION**TOTAL RAISED



**LEADERSHIP TEAM** 

Eric Teetsel

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Eric Teetsel came to CRA from the Heritage Foundation, where he was Vice President of

Government Relations. Teetsel has a long record of experience in government at the federal, state, and local levels. He was Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, where he previously held the roles of Legislative Director and Special Assistant.

Before his time in the Senate, Teetsel served as President of the Family Policy Alliance of Kansas; Director of Faith Outreach for the Marco Rubio presidential campaign; and Executive Director of the Manhattan Declaration for life, marriage, and religious freedom; among other roles. Teetsel graduated from Wheaton College and holds a master's in education from Azusa Pacific University. Originally from Kansas, he and his wife live in Virginia with their four children. You can follow him on X at @EricTeetsel.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

#### Ashlea Frazier

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Ashlea served as Chief of Staff at the White House Office of Management and Budget under

Director Russ Vought. In that role, she managed the largest agency in the Executive Office of the President while also overseeing agency staff transitions and implementing policy priorities of President Trump.

Prior to joining the Administration, Ashlea was the Director of Operations and Programs for Hillsdale College in Washington, D.C., where she oversaw operations, budget, and staff, with a focus on bolstering the scholastic mission of the college in Washington, D.C., as well as building relationships on Capitol Hill. Ashlea also worked for The Heritage Foundation's Center for American Studies as the Program Manager. In the 2012, 2016, and 2024 election cycles, Ashlea served with the Official Proceedings team at the Republican National Convention, where she was responsible for interfacing with VIP program participants, U.S. Secret Service, and RNC staff to ensure smooth transitions for the Convention.



**LEADERSHIP TEAM** 

Wade Miller

SENIOR ADVISOR

After deploying into combat theatres three times in Iraq and the Horn of Africa, Wade became involved

in the Tea Party movement at home. Wade brought his understanding of the conservative grassroots to Heritage Action for America, working as a Senior Regional Coordinator covering the South Central portion of the United States, including his home state of Texas.

Wade also served as Political Director for Senator Ted Cruz during the 2018 Senate campaign cycle. Most recently, he served as Chief of Staff to Congressman Chip Roy. Wade lives in Virginia with his family. He is a graduate of University of Texas at Dallas.



**DEVELOPMENT TEAM** 

#### **Heather Cordasco**

ADVISOR TO THE CEO

Heather is a highly skilled and results-driven fundraiser with ten years of experience in

nonprofit development, donor relations, and strategic fundraising campaigns, securing major gifts, and cultivating long-term donor relationships with a proven track record of exceeding fundraising goals. Prior to CRA Heather represented the Capital Research Center, the American Red Cross, and the Family Foundation of Virginia. Heather has a bachelor's degree in English from Nyack College and a master's degree in communications from Liberty University.



**DEVELOPMENT TEAM** 

Ashlee Noland

ADVISOR TO THE CEO

Ashlee is a performance-driven, C-suite experienced professional with over 15 years of

success in development, operations, fundraising, and advocacy across both for-profit and non-profit sectors. Renowned for her leadership in non-profit fundraising, Ashlee excels in building strategic partnerships and incorporating innovative management techniques to drive increased revenue and productivity.



### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE I: FIGHT FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENCY

The Center for Renewing America will advance Constitutional arguments that ensure the President has Constitutionally-granted powers to advance his agenda, including the legal justification to restore the President's constitutional power of Impoundment.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE II: SECURING THE BORDER

CRA will leverage all available policy resources, legal frameworks, media broadcasts, social media platforms, and Hill outreach to forcefully make the case for President Trump's plans to stop the invasion at our southern border and conduct mass deportations of illegals.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE III: CUTTING WASTE AND ENDING THE WEAPONIZED BUREAUCRACY

CRA scholars will be advancing policy proposals to end waste, fraud, and abuse at USAID, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Education, Office of Personal and Management, and dozens of other woke and weaponized federal agencies.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE IV: ENDING ENDLESS WARS

Over the past three years, CRA has been instrumental in changing how conservatives think about funding the endless war in Ukraine and defense of Western Europe. In 2025, the Center will continue to advance its "Dormant NATO" policy proposal and call for a draw down in the conflict in Ukraine.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVE V: BUILDING AN AMERICA FIRST ECONOMY

In 2025, the Center will work with the Administration to provide the research and policy ammunition necessary to win Congressional support and public opinion for trade policy that puts American workers first. CRA scholars will make the case for tariffs that boost American manufacturing, raise wages, and promote our national sovereignty.

# From the Desk of Eric Teetsel

Dear Friends.

Almost 20 years ago, when a friend suggested that I consider leaving graduate school to take a job in Washington, my first question was, "What's a think tank?"

Those words sprung to mind when my friend and mentor Russ Vought called me last summer with an offer to join the Center for Renewing America as Chief Executive Officer. With the keen sense for which he is known throughout Washington, Russ saw that President Trump was going to be re-elected and that he might have the opportunity to serve him again. But that would mean leaving CRA.

In just a few short years after launching in 2021, CRA was having national impact on the policy front and was punching far above its weight in political battles to advance an America First agenda. If President Trump was re-elected, CRA would be needed more than ever.

As a supporter of our work, you understand the vital role we play in developing ideas that change America, such as gutting the woke and weaponized government, stopping the invasion at the border, and reestablishing the Constitutional powers of the presidency. When we play our role well, an idea that begins on a white board will seep its way into the consciousness of the conservative movement and the policy agenda of a president.

Under President Trump with Russ as Director of the Office and Management and Budget, the possibility of American renewal is on the horizon. I am humbled by the opportunity to lead the most important think tank in America during this unprecedented time.

As we look forward to 2025, we must remember that renewal requires transformation, and transformation won't happen exclusively within the walls of an Administration. The Center's unparalleled policy team, our tactical work on Capitol Hill, and proven approach to shaping national narratives will be critical to transforming our politics and renewing our nation.

Friends, the Center was built for such a time as this.

Thank you for your generous support of our work in 2025 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Eric Teetsel

Chief Executive Officer

Center for Renewing America





**AMERICARENEWING.COM**