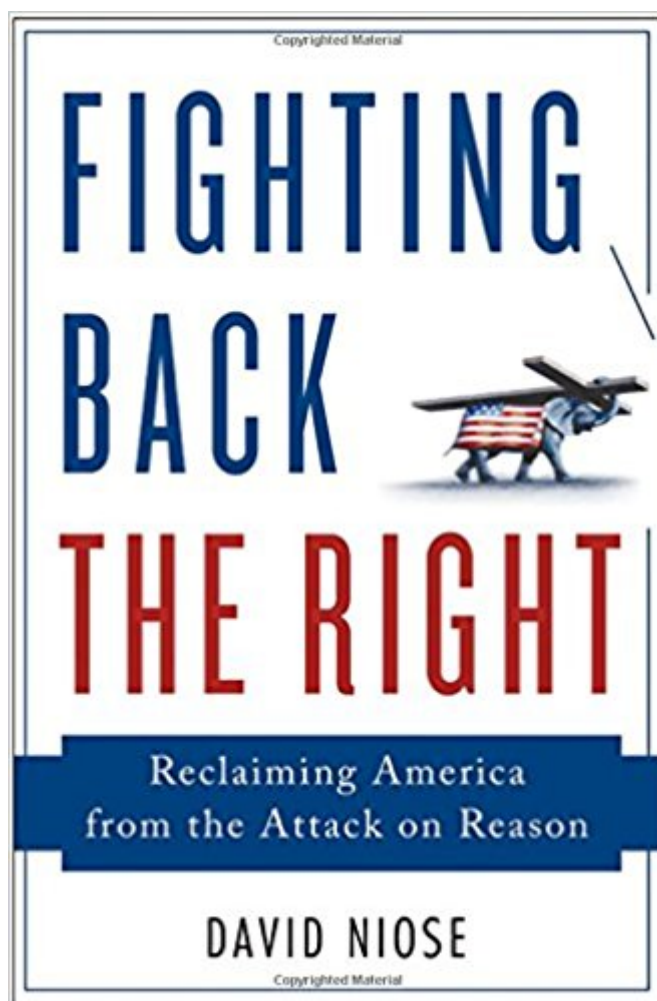


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# Fighting Back The Right: Reclaiming America From The Attack On Reason



## Synopsis

The political scene is changing rapidly in America. The religious right is on the defensive, acceptance of gay rights is at an all-time high, social conservatives are struggling for relevance, and more Americans than ever identify as nonreligious. What does this mean for the country and the future? With these demographic shifts, can truly progressive, reason-based public policy finally gain traction? Or will America continue to carry a reputation as anti-intellectual and plutocratic, eager to cater to large corporate interests but reluctant to provide universal health care to all its citizens? *Fighting Back the Right* reveals a new alliance in the making, a progressive coalition committed to fighting for rational public policy in America and reversing the damage inflicted by decades of conservative dominance. David Niose, Legal Director of the American Humanist Association (AHA), examines this exciting new dynamic, covering not only the rapidly evolving culture wars but also the twists and turns of American history and politics that led to this point, and why this new alliance could potentially move the country in a direction of sanity, fairness, and human-centered public policy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Fighting Back the Right is unabashedly secular, unapologetically progressive and unquestionably long overdue. David Niose outlines a vision of a fairer and freer society, one anchored in reason and science. Niose’s insightful analysis exposes both the pro-corporation, anti-government right that seeks a radically scaled down, "do-nothing" state and the zealous social

conservatives who yearn to run the lives of others, showing us that what they offer is weak tea indeed. Most satisfyingly, Niose provides a strategy for creating real change – if only we'll follow it.

– Rob Boston, Director of Communications, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and author of *Taking Liberties: Why Religious Freedom Doesn't Give You the Right to Tell Other People What to Do*

– “Fighting Back the Right offers a clear look at the missteps that have allowed fear, religious policies, and greed to overwhelm critical thinking, evidence-based policies, and logic at every level of government. David Niose provides a plan to escape the morass we are in--do we have the will to try?”

– Amanda Knief, author of *The Citizen Lobbyist*

– “In his direct, clear-eyed analysis, David Niose ably diagnoses America's problem as the demise of human-centered public policy. He then zeroes in on its cause as a toxic combination of anti-intellectualism, religious fundamentalism, corporatism and ineffectual democracy. But he doesn't leave us dangling. Niose provides a way forward and a toolkit for social repair that includes a more vocal and public secular community. This is a must-read for anyone who thinks America has taken leave of its senses and wants to know what to do about it.”

– Robyn Blumner, Executive Director, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science

– “This book is a powerful call for government of, by and for the people in the 21st century--not gods and not private corporations, whether religious or secular. Stirring!”

– Jamie Raskin, professor of law, American University Washington College of Law, and Maryland State Senator

– “Why do they hate reason? In *Fighting Back the Right*, David Niose catalogues the damage wreaked by right-wing anti-intellectualism over two centuries, and proposes strategies to reverse it. An ambitious and invigorating book.”

– Katherine Stewart, author of *The Good News Club: The Christian Right's Stealth Assault on America's Children*

– “Too many opponents of mindless conservatism think that they have to pander to religion to make their case. Whether it's a cynical tactic to get taken seriously by the religious, or a heartfelt conviction that only religion can provide moral justification to politics, David Niose shows they're wrong. This is an important contribution to current debates on politics, religion, and meaning.”

– Steven Pinker, Johnstone Professor of Psychology, Harvard University, and author of *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*

– “Fighting Back the Right is a long, sobering and unflinching look at what is happening in this country. Deeper still, David Niose provides the philosophical context for helping to understand why these things are happening. *Fighting Back the Right* serves as a clarion call for how to enact majoritarian, progressive and common-sense public policy.”

– David Cobb, 2004 Green Party presidential nominee and co-founder of *Move To Amend*

– “With clarity and passion, David

Niose makes a powerful case for why politics needs secularism--and why secularism needs politics.

—Greta Christina, Author of *Coming Out Atheist: How to Do It, How to Help Each Other, and Why and Why Are You Atheists So Angry?* 99 Things That Piss Off the Godless

—“Not only is Dave Niose without question one of the most important writers on secularism, atheism and Humanism in America today, *Fighting Back the Right* shows why he deserves to become one of the best known voices in American progressive politics, regardless of your religious affiliation or lack thereof. In the 21st century, reasonable people of all beliefs and backgrounds must fight harder and smarter than ever for a better and more enlightened society. I look to Dave to help lead us to that promised land, and you should too.

—Greg M. Epstein, Humanist Chaplain at Harvard University and author of *Good Without God*

—“A lucid, sharp, and unabashedly secular salvo in the culture wars.

—National Memo

—“*Fighting Back the Right* is a searing and provocative indictment of the right-wing’s war on America’s secular values. Timely and powerful, it’s a refreshing jolt of cerebral clarity. Niose outlines a blueprint for restoring rational, progressive public policy.

—CJ Werleman, author of *Crucifying America: The Unholy Alliance Between the Christian Right and Wall Street*

—“It is change we need, not only in culture war terms, because as we watch our world collapse around us in drought and wildfire and other natural disasters, rising sea levels and water shortages, and see the dearth of pragmatism directed at the dangers of global warming, we realize that without a change in our own thinking, no effective answers will be forthcoming....This makes David Niose’s *Fighting Back the Right* more important than ever. Read it. Challenge your assumptions, and help reclaim America from the attack on reason.

—Hrafnkell Haraldsson, *Politicususa*

David Niose has spent the last decade immersed in secular-progressive politics and the culture wars. He has served as president of two Washington-based advocacy groups—the American Humanist Association and the Secular Coalition for America—and litigated cases across the country on behalf of church-state separation and equal rights. He is the author of *Nonbeliever Nation: The Rise of Secular Americans*, as well as the popular *Psychology Today* blog “Our Humanity, Naturally,” and has been featured on Fox News, MSNBC, the Associated Press, The National Journal, The Christian Science Monitor, BBC, and many other media outlets. He is currently Legal Director of the American Humanist Association.

*Fighting Back the Right: Reclaiming America from the Attack on Reason* by David Niose

"Back the Right" is a compelling plea for secularists to take the lead in taking back America. This is a beautifully lucid narrative that emphasizes rational and human-centered policies in order to take back America. Legal Director of the American Humanist Association and author of the excellent book *Nonbeliever Nation: The Rise of Secular Americans*, David Niose provides readers with a treat. This powerful 256-page book includes the following fourteen chapters: 1. Corrupt Blessings, 2. Real-World Change, 3. Of People and Humans, 4. The Boomer Bust, 5. No Corporations in Foxholes, 6. "Our Son of a B\*\*\*\*", 7. Fair to All, 8. New Traditions, 9. Same Old Deal, 10. A Higher Common Denominator, 11. Impossible Vigilance, 12. Sarah Palin's Massachusetts, 13. Taking Control, and 14. Reason for Winning.

Positives:

1. Well-written and well-cited book for the masses. Lucid and smooth prose.
2. An important topic handled with expertise.
3. Direct yet respectful tone throughout.
4. Great use of history, sound logic and reasoning to make cogent points throughout.
5. Very focused on the main theme of this book, "A central premise of this book is that we owe the dismal state of affairs in America to the failure of rational, human-centered public policy to gain traction--and that this failure is a direct result of a multipronged attack on reason."
6. Discusses the roots of irrationality in our politics. "Religious fundamentalists frequently back policies that obstruct equality for women, gays, racial minorities, and religious minorities, as well as in economic anti-egalitarianism, where the support of religious conservatives enables policies favoring corporate interests and the wealthy and disfavoring the poor and middle class."
7. Does a wonderful job of defining terms. "The word 'freethought,' however, is not defined as giving license to believe any idea that is suggested but instead refers to a philosophical view that is more disciplined, holding that opinions should be based on reason, logic, and evidence."
8. Makes a compelling case for change. "The American system needs major change, even radical change, but the modern progressive movement must operate within the framework of the real world, not theory."
9. A look at how corporations became nonhuman "people". "The issue of corporate personhood vaulted to the front pages in 2010, when the Supreme Court ruled on *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, holding that certain political spending restrictions aimed at corporations violated First Amendment free speech protections. In fact, however, the problem of corporate personhood goes back to the nineteenth century, when the nature of corporations began to change radically, evolving from extremely rare and highly regulated legal entities to a common and largely unregulated business model." "If this is government "for the people," it's for corporate people."
10. The Moral Majority and its impact.
11. An interesting brief list of tyrannical regimes that we somehow backed.
12. The facts about economic mobility.
13. Eye-opening comments regarding corporate power. "Corporations have an interest in shaping society in a way that will maximize their pursuit of profit, and they will naturally

try to do so unless stopped." "In essence, we have created a class structure whereby humans are second-class citizens in a society in which nonhuman people are the first-class."14. Rebuking the myth of supporting traditions and our heritage. "Far from adhering to tradition, today's conservative extremists are blazing a new trail that reflects the wishes not of the founders, but of the corporate entities that now control the economy and, for practical purposes, the political system."15.

Correcting right-wing semantics. "In right-wing semantics, the principle of liberty is often used to justify public policy that leaves corporations unregulated and the rich untaxed while dismantling social safety nets."16. The rise of Elizabeth Warren. "Warren was seen as the obvious person to lead the newly created bureau, but financial institutions, the GOP, and even some Democrats with Wall Street connections (such as Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner) opposed her. As a result she never led the agency, but revenge was sweet when she was elected to the Senate to sit among the lawmakers and power brokers who had obstructed her nomination."17. Excellent examples that clearly show the conflict of interest between corporations and society. "As if we needed more proof that privatized prisons are a bad idea, consider the scandal that became known as 'kids for cash,' in which two Pennsylvania judges were convicted in 2011 in a scheme to funnel children to two for-profit prisons in return for kickbacks."18. Makes a compelling case for a new strategy. "Thus, the first step in any strategy for long-term progressive success in America must be to educate the population about the nature of corporations and to initiate a discussion about their proper role in society." "The Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United ruling made one fact very clear: Americans will never control corporate power without a constitutional amendment."19. Presents five key strategies to long-term success.20. Well-cited book with plenty of notes and a formal bibliography. Negatives: 1. Lack of visual supplementary material that would have added more value to this wonderfully written book. 2. Perhaps a tad repetitive but you leave with no doubt on what the main points are. In summary, this is an excellent book. There is a direct correlation between how much I like a book and how much I highlighted it; and I highlighted this book a lot. In a lucid and direct manner, David Niose makes a compelling case that secularists need to take the lead in retaking America from the right and provides guidelines on how best to achieve such goals. I really enjoyed this book, I highly recommend it! Doubt: A History: The Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson Further recommendations: "Nonbeliever Nation: The Rise of Secular Americans" by the same author, "Attack of the Theocrats: How the Religious Right Harms Us All--and What We Can Do about It" by Sean Faircloth, "God's Defenders: What They Believe and Why They Are Wrong" by S.T. Joshi, "The Republican Brain: The Science of Why They Deny Science- and Reality" by Chris Mooney, "Republican Gomorrah: Inside the

Movement that Shattered the Party" by Max Blumenthal, "Society without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell Us About Contentment" by Phil Zuckerman, "Why Are You Atheists So Angry? 99 Things That Piss Off the Godless" Great Christina, "Doubt: A History: The Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson" by Jennifer Hecht, "The Conservative Assault on the Constitution" by Erwin Chemerinsky, "Why the Religious Right Is Wrong About Separation of Church and State" by Rob Boston and "American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America" by Chris Hedges.

A reasonable common sense approach to taking back our country from the corporations, religious right, lobbyists, et.al which has effectively silenced a significant portion of our populace.

Progressives must find their voices in the various segments of our society and proudly acknowledge the roles we have too long abdicated to the religious minority, being wrongly convinced that A strong majority of Americans are deeply religious when, in reality, they are not!

Niose makes the case that corporate power is relentlessly self-interested and must be permanently restrained through a Constitutional amendment. A cultural shift is needed to reject the anti-intellectualism that serves corporate interests. Secular visibility would pave the way to a return to reason.

This book highlights the problems of anti-intellectualism and anti-egalitarianism, and what can be done to combat them. I never realized how much influence corporations have in America, and how little human-centered policy matters to the right. I recommend this book, especially in light of the upcoming presidential election.

I totally enjoyed reading this book. Best book of the summer for me. The best strategy book for progressives and free thinkers I have read.

This book should be required reading for the United States. It's wonderful!

Intelligent analysis of the history of American anti-egalitarianism. Not wordy and moves quickly. Easy to read but thought provoking. Though Mr. Niose paints a dreary picture of American politics, his purpose is not to make us liberals depressed, rather he attempts to wake the public up with facts to provide an environment that nurtures critical thinking. An amazing interpretation of the Baby

Boomers generation and how they shaped the current politics. The relationship of extreme Christianity and corporations is well explained. A brief history of the corporation was an eye opener. The Founders myth is destroyed in a completely new way.

Great book with concrete solutions to work towards.

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