

My thoughts on sharing the planet and an invitation to help,

My name is Chris Florquist, and I am a candidate for President of the United States. What follows is a description of how I think about the role to which I apply and what I believe are the challenges we face as a world, inhabited by many people and nations. Here, I will not make an argument for my capability to fill the role, as that is the opportunity that democracy affords its citizens in review of their candidates for public service.

Citizens get to decide - freely - who they believe most fit for each public service role. In the process of their analysis, I, as an equal member of the United States, am incentivized to demonstrate that capability through words, thoughts, and actions.

As fellow members of the United States, and as equal global members in our humanity, sharing resources, hopes, dreams and the future, I invite your critique forthwith.

Part 1 - Introduction

I want to begin with my experience of life below the veneer of the ideas that I discuss with other people just to make it through my day. I want to begin with the ongoing - sometimes positive, sometimes challenging - narrative in my head. I want to begin with the story I tell myself to keep everything together and try to gain a semblance of order and explanation for my life - a life that never follows script.

The description begins with the continuous reference to the concept of the other, the idea of the world outside of me. Everything outside of me is what defines my life, and I compare myself to everything and everyone else. Every day, even now, I can't believe this is the structure of what I have to face in life. "It" isn't explicit or necessarily easily defined. It's just the sense that life is always so hard and others are either oblivious to this reality or appear to be acting to make my life more difficult, often for their own gain. Yet, I don't want to be wrong. I don't want tomorrow to be unknown. I don't want to feel like everyone else is missing what I am seeing. I don't want to feel like asking a question that I'm scared may open up the reality that I was born to fail. I don't want to admit that I feel like I am right about something somewhere but that I have no clue how to explain it or show other people. And this experience happens over and over every day in each decision I make. In the midst of this malaise, I don't see that my efforts can drive economic growth, are driving my own growth, or are making my life better. The results of my well-meant actions are obscured by all the things I don't know, the things I feel like I get wrong, the things I think other people are missing.

In so many ways, this internal conversation defines my daily experience of my humanity, and the motivations that make up my understanding of life. Each of us appears to have an explicit goal - to enjoy life - in whatever way our individual makeup prescribes, and it is the motivating factor behind our actions. The biggest question each of us faces is how to achieve those goals and whether truth to reality, when your reality also exists, is a compelling reason for whether we achieve our goals or not.

I'm writing this letter because I don't have an answer for tomorrow that excludes you. You may be reading this letter because you feel the same. I need you to make my tomorrow better, and I would argue that the same is equally true for you. I don't know what it looks like, but I know it includes both of us.

To put it a different way, I am faced with the question of whether the space I inhabit is random or whether there is some consistent, universal process that defines the path that leads to success. Within this question, I think I have found a useful definition of truth. This definition of truth is made more complicated by the fact that I don't come to the world as a result of my own singular capability, and any enjoyment in life comes through interaction with other people. I need you, yet I can't help but see my needs directly through the prism of myself. My own self-consciousness and "truth" are seemingly in constant competition for primacy with those of the people around me.

The limitations to my self-awareness create opportunities for my own unintended or intentional exploitation and the transfer of anxiety internal to my existence via controlling the lives of those around me. I don't realize the cost to myself, experienced through my relationships with others, when I don't face my responsibilities for existence directly. However, the fact of my existence also provides freedom to create a future - with others, with you - by finding future opportunities greater than those, which I could have unearthed on my own. In this potential future, my individual talents and goals become useful to those around me. Philosophers called this existential space "the state of nature," but it means, practically, that life is a lot easier when I agree to abide by rules applying to each of us for the good of all of us. The invention of society stepped in to define this space with rules, evermore sophisticated over time and agreed upon by those around me. And in our creation of these shared rules, the more these rules facilitate my underlying human needs and shared traits, the more philosophers deemed these rules just.

The concept of justice and its application to my daily life brings me to the question of whether I achieve my desires long-term by being truthful to our combined reality, as seen through the prism of self.

I will use my own experience as the prism for the following analysis of the question, asking for your evaluation to determine whether these moments explain those that we share equally as humans and the discussion of which often goes unsaid.

As a child, I was consistently told some version of, “yes, we do gain something of a better life by being truthful.” And the idea that truth was the path to happiness made sense to me intuitively. Yet the people telling me that this idea was true had little money, no influence, middling personal success, and I lacked respect for them.

I had no idea how to reconcile justice and truth with personal benefit.

My own experience of the question regarding the value of truth remained mostly internal to me. I thought about it, but the words I used to describe my thoughts to others and the ways in which I was taught to “get ahead” never seemed to directly reconcile to truth.

I lived in a democracy, but the underlying tenets of its creation were rarely explicitly utilized as a guide for my daily life in society. I never really saw how applied truth, seen through the prism of democracy, enhanced my humanity and therefore my opportunities for achieving my goals.

I wasn't taught to make choices in my daily life that considered the practical benefit to both myself and someone else in equal measure, despite the fact that democracy is predicated on this concept. In its place, a different mindset began to take hold - one that looked purely at improving the probabilities of achieving my goals without respect to the legitimacy of the intellectual approach and governing legal framework, agreed upon by all via the Constitution, that afforded me the opportunity to consider a path to my own goals in the first place.

The only area of analysis where I utilized the concept of truth was in my assessment of other people's actions who stood in the way of the path I saw for myself. At those moments, I could find truth or, most often, untruth pervasive in the actions of every opponent to my goals - both real and imagined. The resulting intellectual action on my part was designed merely to invalidate their point of view rather than consider its legitimacy for myself as well.

The possibility of achieving my goals without manipulating other people's perception diminished as I grew. The appearance I gave counted for much more than the substantive results of my actions. Of course, people affirmed me for being good, but the people who received the acclaim, the positions, the opportunities I wanted, didn't achieve them by directly playing by the rules. They achieved them by appearing to play by the rules and accusing others of the opposite.

As a result of this mindset, every action drew internal conflict regarding truth and over time, the mosaic of my internal thought processes came more clearly into view.

Challenging questions resulted.

Is it possible to survive, much less thrive, by reconciling action to truth? What is truth? Is it objective? What about subjectivity of truth?

At that moment in my life, these topics were usually relegated to consideration of some abstract version of religion and philosophy, but they seemed to have significant practical effects on people's happiness, or rather, the absence of happiness in their lives. Pain and suffering accompanied situations where the absence of truth and the obfuscation of reality was more pervasive and widespread. The fair and just application of laws was equally but positively correlated in the experience of human life.

Somehow, though, I kept thinking back to what would have defined the experience of life in the state of nature. In the most general form of the consideration, I would have retained control of all facets of my existence. I would have the ability to determine my path, and no one could legitimately stand in the way. So, if this really was the possibility that the state of nature held, then why did society evolve so consistently across the planet, and why did democracy become its most defining iteration to date in terms of attempting to further personal achievement of goals?

The constant threat of personal attack, the likelihood of someone walking off with the product of one's efforts in the middle of the night, with no recourse, the inability to become proficient at any one function of life because of a need to do all of them, save theft from someone else - each day - made the likelihood of achieving one's desires in a state of nature sufficiently difficult to consider without some method of ordering human interactions.

This order, codified across the world in laws and practices and social expectations for adherence to those laws and of different types of philosophies, is where I found myself. There were no future, practical, uninhabited spaces on the planet. There were no far-off lands to dream about and to reasonably believe of an equal, new beginning. There were no indigenous peoples to conquer, or whose lands to take, without a news crew, blogger, or child with a smartphone broadcasting it to the world. The future was the product of my mind, and the primary limitations to the current achievement of our desires were the rules forcing me to work together fairly.

In the midst of that future, for which I couldn't plot a direct path without someone else's existence intersecting, I was faced with an uncomfortable choice: find a way to work together, while learning how and when it is possible to trust the person next to me to do the same, or concede my future to nothing but anger and distrust of the people I meet tomorrow, hoping that someone or something will magically solve or, more ideally, eliminate the conflicts and people I increasingly felt I had no capacity to solve for or with whom I was resigned to never understand.

Still, the knowledge and technology I possessed and the self-consciousness afforded me by previous efforts of progress, ensured that I had the opportunity to view the future as a set of positive outcomes that could follow from my deliberate, rational action in conjunction with the person next to me.

In the midst of my fear of the unknown, I spent time looking for the space of the what-if - looking for something to explain what had just happened in my life, directly or indirectly, and to reconcile its explanation to something I could convince myself that I already knew. The effect was to experience life as though I was not a party to its events at all. This approach, repeated, insulated me from the realization of my passivity's effect on reality and the slow decline into atrophy of my strength to execute on my dreams.

At moments of pause, when the implication of my undertakings flooded to the fore of my consciousness and demanded me to reconcile my internal compass with the effect of my actions, I shuddered and recoiled, attempting to explain my life's events in ever more rigid and simplistic terms, for fear that the admission of my own inability to reconcile my life would begin the process of imploding what I previously believed was a coherent and accurate explanation for my world, but which, at that moment, seemed to be invalidated at every turn of truthful acceptance of the state of my life.

I had become a spectator in my own personal story - watching the events through television and the internet, commenting on the proceedings that would define my future

- as though I had no hand in the outcome. When this happened, truth became the adversary to my actions, to my goals and to the reconciliation of my life because it forced me to admit to my own need for others, despite having no way to determine how to work with them successfully. The laws I initially sought so desperately to help achieve my goals now had become limiting factors to my own personal dreams. Where would I go from there?

This brings us to my goals and existing unanswered questions currently.

As a member of this American society, I expect a world that makes sense to not just me, not just in its stated value of opportunity, but also in providing a practical probability of achieving each person's dreams. I demand confirmation that kindness, love, and supporting others in their pursuit of their dreams results in everyone being better off.

I am eternally thankful that I was born into a country that counted this view as primary to its founding. I am lucky, potentially to the point of massive unfairness, to have been born into a democracy at a time when real limitations to opportunity are still imposed on anyone not lucky enough to have been gifted this opportunity.

I struggle with reconciling this fact - that I received an unearned benefit - and its implication for justice. How can this be just? What makes this fair? What makes this acceptable for someone who might have just as much or more talent than I do but, because of a different circumstance, may never grace the world with the genius they hold inside?

The answer is nothing. None of us picked the moment or terms of our birth. I have found no way around these questions, in all of their past, unsatisfactory outcomes and the pain inflicted as a result.

This limiting of our collective capability happens daily, across all points of discrimination, following from our consistently human struggles with achieving our own desires in parallel with those of others.

I don't have a great answer. In fact, I resent the insufficiency of the best answer I could muster so far - accessing the whole of human knowledge available - that, regardless of where we begin, we each have a responsibility to solve for the equality of others in the space we were given from this moment forward. Progress can't occur unless I do right by those around me in the very process of that progress.

Historically, our individual humanity has shown progress in this regard, and, even now, we are making progress. This progress has and will give us the best possible chance at our desires. I still hold out hope that the future may hold an even better way to achieve each of our desires and, thus, want to ensure that I grant the future the scope of its possibility.

For Americans, I am confident that the continued growth of democracy holds the answer to this question - that the people around me, given the freedom to work together and the perspective of their neighbor's virtue, will create a focal point of informed insistence on equality and the application of its principles to our lives via laws and policies. For those around the world - in democracies and societies defined differently, as Americans - we can be an example of how to achieve those goals and be a partner in achieving yours.

By our government's construction, our citizens drive our future and create the progress that we ask our government to support and protect. The Congress is elected with an imperative to plan for the future and define the space for administration of the laws and policies they enact on our behalf. Whether I have a reasonable chance at eating food today or acquiring clothing tomorrow results largely from the construction of rules that were previously promulgated via policy. The opportunities that I face tomorrow will be different precisely because of just policy or unjust policy.

As such, the judiciary is called upon to ensure the justice of these laws - reconciled to the traits that make us most human - and to ensure that fairness for each of us grows with time. The cabinet secretaries of the administrative branch have responsibilities that encompass the full spectrum of our citizens lives, and, within their roles, they administer the rules created to protect our citizens' hopes, dreams, and opportunities for their future.

Through this prism, the role of President of the United States is not the most important position in America. Everyone else's actions directly drives society into the future. In simple terms, the role of the President consists of guiding the thinking of the American people with respect to the world around them, as they guide their representatives in Congress to create bills that will affect their lives for years to come. The State of the Union address and the power of the veto serve as tools to guide this process to its best outcome for each citizen. The value of the Presidency lies in the responsibility afforded its centrality to the daily mechanics of our current lives. The economic and informational interconnectedness of our existence and the practical reality that the United States possesses the world's reserve currency guarantee that each person who

lives on the planet has a set of choices that are affected by the President's outlook for humanity and a capability for considering others' needs as a measure of meeting one's own.

However, the American Constitution has only two requirements for such a candidacy: a person must be born in the United States and must be over 35 years old. That these are the only qualifications required to be eligible for this role - with this level of responsibility - left me considering why the Founders would leave something so important so simply defined.

Even more, the American Founders left the future direction of the country open in the same manner: undefined with respect to the composition of its future citizens and inclusive of the prospect that those who came to America would become an inextricable part of its fabric - people whose hopes and dreams were as real as those who today inhabit every country on earth and who held inside them the future, even if no one around them knew it yet.

Our nation's nascent test of equality defined life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as foundational principles that supported each individual in a new country embarking on that future. The future at the time of the ratification of the Constitution was full of unknowns, and shackled with inconsistencies. The United States espoused freedom and the equality of all men, yet discounted Black Americans as three-fifths of a person and traded them as property, while it took from women their right to vote without acknowledging that women were entitled by reality to vote in the first place.

The only explanation I could muster for such confidence was that the Founders believed the future was defined by the capability of each of us to improve. The hope for comfort, hope for love, and hope for reconciliation of the personal questions surrounding the achievement of our desires that have driven us since humanity's inception were constant - that the humanity they so rigorously analyzed for flaws, for capabilities, and for motives when they set out to construct a Constitution was always primary. Ours was a government by the people, for the people.

We are still just people, and often we forget that our democracy incorporates a bedrock of our consciousness: that each of us is part of a greater whole.

How the president can frame the future accurately for the United States and with truthful adherence to the dreams of all people and their collective reality worldwide will

determine how effectively everyone else will make the dreams of those around them real, and in doing so, make their own lives better.

Simply, my goal is to enable us, as Americans, to forge better legislation and become more full participants in the democracy that intertwines and guides our lives.

Part 2 - Execution

What follows is my framework for solving a problem, as the President, defined within the powers enumerated in the Constitution and consistent with the goal of democracy.

The Constitution is a functional document at its core, a framework for creating the practical space for creativity, innovation and humanity to flourish. In its construction, the Constitution outlines a set of rules that govern processes which explicitly assume our own individual willingness to solve a problem, rather than violate each other's opportunity as a matter of course. Our Constitution was constructed to facilitate human growth. Were it otherwise, there would be many more explicit rules defining what cannot be done. Instead, powers were enumerated expressly for the purpose of defining the inevitable - and unpredictable - manifestation of human ingenuity in pursuit of solving for our own needs, understanding that the resulting action need only take place consistently with the foundational principles of democracy. Defining the problem of forging better legislation through this prism illustrates the simple brilliance of the American Constitution. Separation of powers is more about the potential for growth built into the structure than it is about the check on another's encroachment. A check on another branch's power is fundamental to reducing the likelihood of eroding individual freedoms, but, more practically, the structure endows every citizen with a nearly unfettered opportunity for growth if we each live up to the primary implication of democracy's function: to do right by one another.

Doing right by one another makes inclusion across the fabric of our citizenry, and those who hope to become members of our citizenry an explicit requirement, not only for reconciliation of our exercise of democracy, but also as a necessity for its innovation. We are an amalgam of unique individuals, sharing identical needs, organized around the concept of a shared fate in the hands of the person next to us and as a group - indivisible from itself. Solving for our needs necessarily means the person next to us must have the best chance at solving for their needs.

Thus, how we, at once both public servants and citizens, forge better legislation becomes a problem defined on multiple levels. We must account for the fact that our public

service is equally about guiding a constituency and existing as a member of that same constituency. We have a responsibility to frame the broader problem as we see it for others, as they see it for us, and to apply the solution equally to ourselves.

The construction of our Constitution means that any challenge we choose to face is defined with the expectation of an outcome that elicits hope, experienced emotionally, executed upon with action derived analytically: logical and rigorous - logical with respect to the best data available at this moment in time and rigorous with respect to its reconciliation to the most aspirational elements of our humanity. Any other framework defined raises the question of why we would be undertaking the effort to consider a solution at all.

Whenever we move forward towards an improvement of an existing circumstance, I begin with defining the relevant first principles. First principles are ideas that are necessarily true in their application to each human, through the prism of our consciousness and constrained against the biology that gave us awareness of life. Framing a problem with respect to first principles ensures that every additional inquiry, every additional piece of data is reconciled to the underpinning elements that define the inquiry. Intellectually, this is equal to anchoring my analysis to something larger than my own cognition. The reality that any problem I solve is defined in an area larger than myself is straightforward, looking only at the reality that my birth wasn't a function of me at all. This means that, to understand any problem to which I dedicate time to solve, I must account for variables that are present in addition to myself.

Democracy, as a concept, applied in context of our lives is equal to a first principle within this definition. It accounts for the individual humanity alive within the structure of the challenge that we are tasked to improve. Democracy allows us to correct for our initial default of consciousness, that it is simpler to find cause and effect for a problem I experience through your behavior, rather than to ask what role I played. The easier path, in the short term - the more emotionally gratifying path - is to find your blame, identify the negative effect on me, and then construct a solution that directly implicates you in the process.

This approach is both hugely consistent in producing a distinct solution in my favor and always insufficient to solving the problem underlying my emotional experience of its consideration.

I have to see your capability - and my own - through the mistakes we each have made and through the experiences we have never had ourselves. As an additional first

principle, this idea is equal to the reality that our beginning is never equal to our end, and perspective into each of us and our needs will always make our lives better.

Applying this first principle is neither simple nor comfortable, but if we follow logically from the construction of our Constitution and its belief in the power of the future, then the goal in life, or the construction of happiness, is not that we experience less pressure, it's that we become more capable of handling it.

As a result, the organization, construction, and administration of public policy within the bounds of American democracy revolves around the following question for each of us: what if the world isn't built for me? And if it is possible to have been built for me, how can it be made to facilitate my dreams? Each of us faces this question individually, but by necessity of our sharing of the planet, we have to answer it together, in purely practical terms. To put it a different way, where have you tried to make your life goals real, but you have found that the choices you had didn't lead you in that direction? In so many cases - but not all cases - these experiences are a result of previous policy applied to our current lives. Sometimes, however, we simply have not - until a particular moment - possessed enough information to consider a higher level of the policy question at hand. This result is the practical effect of actually living, as opposed to the more benign experience of simply being alive, where the future - realized within our next human interaction - frames a question answerable only by something inside us yet unapplied, in combination with someone else's evidencing of the same. The consideration of policy and its effect into the future, for each piece of information we learn as a result of our interactions with one another, elicit a new question, and a new policy opportunity arises to make our world better.

We find ourselves in a situation that will test everything I believe is true in this letter and challenge our faith in the person next to us. More personally, it will challenge our fear of making the wrong decision, hurting the person next to us - and ourselves - and demand that we face our greatest fears.

Our path forward, both as a country and as a community of countries, only occurs by working together. Our first principle, in this immediate future we face and every future moment to come, is that anything less than solving for everyone doesn't guarantee us a solution at all. To put it positively, the future will be better - we just have to give it the space to materialize that reality, through the innovations and people we have not yet met or the talents they have not yet shown are possible.

We are all economic actors - we are all capable of something new and previously unseen that will change the world. The challenge we face is that the future doesn't tell us in the

present who or when this positive impact to the world will arrive or in what form. As such, our solutions to each problem must include an explicit recognition of the opportunity presented by someone we would least expect to provide us the path forward. This realization means that the person next to us - the person we have only seen for what choices they were given previously - has unlocked potential yet to be demonstrated. Our job, as members of a democracy and members of this world who have a chance to make our own lives better, is to unlock the capability of those around us.

In our democracy, unlocking economic opportunity by unlocking latent demand - limited by discrimination - is one of the great growth options we currently possess. Our construction of government requires us to bear the risks of the unknown. It is a feature that means we will never be comfortable, but it also means that we will always possess the basic framework for interpreting reality that allows us to innovate, where that innovation comes from solving for another person's need. Payment for that innovation comes from the economic growth generated by that solution, consumed by the buyer of that innovation. If we simply seek out human need for which a solution is demanded, we enforce upon ourselves a virtuous cycle of learning and growth that is felt by our clients, our families, and, finally, each of us. As a democracy, our policies themselves become defined by finding ways to solve shared problems while addressing the economic effects of discrimination that will be the foundation of the economic gains that will occur first.

Through economic choices that those around us experience from policy so defined, we ensure the opportunity for each of our citizens to apply their uniqueness to the process of governing. Each person's citizenship becomes active, and each person's latent talent becomes an asset for investment into the future. When our opportunities for participation are enhanced, our legislators have the feedback they need to do their jobs better. They have more opportunity to find the shared needs of their constituencies, they have a stronger belief in the direction on which their constituencies need them to act, while combining the personal perspective their position affords with the visibility of the needs their responsibility demands they address.

Truth and fairness become the primary tools used to evaluate our legislators' performance and - more broadly - each elected official's performance of their job. When we reconcile every action to solving for everyone - when we solve for anyone - honest mistakes explicitly define forward progress, and learning is not only a result of this process of policy-driven opportunity, it is each citizen's measurement for evaluating whether a public servant continues in their role.

More broadly, truth and fairness create an explicit premium on applied information for each of our elected officials. We can't hope to anticipate the future if we don't first know how to analyze our present. Each moment, someone on the planet is making a decision that will affect the lives of the people around them. Each of us changes the future every time we take an action. Truth and fairness in our actions ensure that the information we transfer to those around us is usable for their own desires and relevant for the problems they are tasked to solve. These problems we face are always equally defined as economic transactions and personal successes, and we are - always and everywhere - demanders and suppliers of the tools that someone else needs.

As such, our experience of economic transactions fits more than a simple demand and supply narrative. Our individual cognition is a narrative defined by an internal battle by competing ideas and their application through the prism of our humanity. We begin so many mornings questioning some of our simplest thoughts, asking whether we should send a message, worried that we might take the wrong action at our job or with our family and friends, concerned that our lack of knowledge, or someone else's perceived expertise, makes our capability and contribution unnecessary - or worse - detrimental to those to whom we dare to contribute. This narrative becomes paralyzing because there are so many ways to respond, and we can't make sense of the implication of any of the ideas. Our economic contribution takes on the weight of failure, defined by avoiding the very thing we feel most strongly will be beneficial. We hesitate because someone might question our approach or point out a variable we missed or, worse, make a mockery of us publicly.

Yet, the need we each have for help doesn't abate under these terms - it only magnifies. The capability we have to solve doesn't evaporate, it only atrophies. Under no circumstances do we lose our drive for making the world around us better, we merely face larger impediments to solving for another built up by our own fear, owing to the lack of opportunities that would have previously defined the realization of our capabilities, that fear transferred to the person next to us through our inability to do anything else for relief.

These impediments act on our initial desire to solve for each other but become inverted, where soon we believe that we need someone else to solve for us out of our own inherent weakness. The many interpersonal and indirect experiences we accumulate suggest that being truthful and honest to self is no longer survivable. We turn to espousing and applying ideas that merely fill the emotional space of living, without actively asking at what cost to our unique humanity and the loss of the future experience of our applied humanity on those we love the most. It is much easier to see others' strengths and

talents, as well as their inconsistencies and errors, than to find our own. Inside our own heads, the narrative of self, without awareness, becomes a battleground for our identity. It drives us to seek a solution that creates affirmation from another, rather than awe at the new question that we presented them in the midst of extracting the next bit of us in pursuit of a solution to a problem of which they were not aware.

There is a return on our investment on the person next to us. It is an economic relationship and it is not zero-sum in the space of human experience. The more we expend effort following from our internal capabilities on the people around us, the more we become aware of our value. This experience gives us a framework to fairly consider whether or not our value is being compensated, not in terms of how much money we collect at that moment, but from the economic return to society that is tracked in terms of currency transferred to us in payment for a met need.

Conversations are requisite in a democracy and vital in human transactions. The flows of information move from citizens, to legislators, to the executive branch, to the courts, and around in the form of demand and supply transactions. When we have yet to remove barriers to information flows, we possess an opportunity to gain ground quickly in pursuit of progress. The construction of our Congress demands that information make it to our legislators' hands, and, the more relevant information that makes it into their hands for dutiful application to the future, the greater our opportunity for consideration of those questions that we often just accept - having concluded there is nothing more that we could do, either out of indifference, lack of knowledge, or exhaustion from our day.

In our daily lives, we rarely understand the full extent of the factors that lead to a piece of legislation that becomes a law, without having visibility on the starting framework and a view of the rationale - from first principles - that resulted from deliberation. The aggregation of our individual demand and supply, represented in the concept of an economy, embedded in the construction of a policy, is sufficiently complicated that we have a tendency to avoid its discussion, sensing that the impending feelings of failure and wrongness are going to materialize soon. Yet, perspective on the legislative body's deliberative function, informs our understanding of how to educate our representatives on the reasons for our needs.

This required perspective can be obtained by analyzing the first principles of economic growth. Actual economic growth is generated when a joint solution to a defined problem provides a product or service to another human for consumption at a cheaper cost for the same value or where the product or service solves a problem that had previously

been unsolved. Each daily action, no matter how small or obscure, which meets another's needs can quickly be reconciled to these requirements for economic growth. These requirements are identical in every industry, and they are indicative of where we hold the opportunity for progress in all its facets - either removal of barriers to participation in life, through the application of our desires measured in economic terms or through concerted, deliberate coordination of resources, consistent with the principles of democracy, truth, and fairness.

The current questions we are tasked with solving, in our economy and the environment in which we exist, challenge the hope that simply being us is sufficient to achieve economic progress as defined. Regardless of how we, as Americans and as a world, have arrived at this moment in time, this is our best analysis, and we wish we were wrong about its scope - but experience informs us all otherwise. This new challenge, unconsidered until it presented itself, has arrived. We possess more knowledge at this point in human history than any period prior, and how we proceed will not be a product of imposing an idea and demanding that people follow it. Progress will be experienced by inviting ourselves to review - honestly and with openness - the data we have generated that leads to asking the bigger questions implied about our existence on the planet.

Our personal challenges, which are being manifested with each passing day at seemingly larger and larger rates, matter because you share this reality with me that the hopes we have yet to solve are still real. We don't want to live in a world where we live a less fruitful, less enjoyable, less free life. We don't want to live in a world where we deride, damage, and threaten people with whom we disagree. We don't want to live in a world where we stop trying to learn, stop trying to mine the greatness within us for fear that someone will attack us. We don't want to live in a world where we attack each other for being honest. And we don't want to live in a world where we forget that so much of life is pain, and it is the person next to us who has the best possible chance of making that life more joyous and less painful. The alternative, upon consideration, leads to asking whether anything matters at all, while our hopes relentlessly inform otherwise.

Democracy implies that no one person has nearly enough information to accurately guide the whole of us into the future. Personally, I have tried to prepare for this role with knowledge that wouldn't otherwise be readily available from other people. I spent much of my time on understanding human interactions and experiences through the prism of economics, finance, behavioral psychology, philosophy, and some physics and biology. In short, I spent time applying conceptual models to human problems. On nearly every subject, there are so many more people in the United States, and in the world, who have

far more knowledge, experience, and talent in this area than me. Further, my need for their information, both in a role as a public servant as well as a private citizen is why democracy's utility, its inherent problem-solving on the part of its citizens as they participate in life, only increases into the future. Another way to frame this entire concept of democracy is that in every other part of life, save my own monopoly on personal experience, I know less than the people around me. This isn't a detriment; it is a benefit.

In the role of President, I can provide perspective, to the best of my ability, on what choices we each face as citizens. I can provide perspective on how the work of our Congress and our Courts, in the service of our dreams, is accurate to the principles underpinning our application of democracy. I can demand that the administrators and secretaries execute on their mandates with primary focus on the benefit of each American. I can inform those nearest me about my own hopes and dreams as a citizen, where my performance as president is defined by theirs, trusting that those tasked with advising me are looking at each of us, no matter where we live on the planet, as opportunities waiting to be made real. I can answer those questions that arise from the efforts of those whose life's work is informing the public - through the practice of journalism - in the context of my honesty to self, with respect to traits we all share. My own uniqueness will guide my understanding of how we are indivisibly alike.

You're going to read this letter and hopefully have thoughts that you feel will make you sound crazy, that make you think something you hope to be true for you, could be. This is the moment that you have found the origin of you, somewhere inside. Every thought that you have previously identified as crazy is valid. It is a reference to a space that is you. Your thought may not be perfectly framed, it may not have enough information, it may not be fully formed. You may not be able to even verbalize it. But it is a reference to you, and this space of you is where we begin to find the innovation and creativity to solve the problems we face today and certainly tomorrow. Regardless of whether you are in the midst of a life that would suggest few of your hopes are possible, know that somewhere, deep down, the reference to you and your dreams is correct, and the space to make it real exists. It might take years. It might wind and weave through a set of experiences you could never anticipate. But this is life - your life, my life, and the unknown path that we take together anchored by our dreams - that makes tomorrow hopeful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Florquist". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "C" and a stylized "F".

Chris Florquist
Candidate for President of the United States