

# CAPITOL TIMES MAGAZINE



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A LEGACY  
OF PURPOSE.**

**THE VISION  
THE VALUES  
THE AMERICAN  
DREAM**

**TRUMP'S**  
Fight for Election  
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Why the White  
House Is Making  
the SAVE Act a  
National Priority

**AMERICA'S  
GREATEST  
PROMISE**

The Enduring  
Power of the  
American Dream

**RED PLAY  
BOOK**

The Growing Debate  
Over Socialism,  
Communism, and  
America's Future

*An Exclusive Interview*

# RICHARD XIA

*From Humble Beginnings to Building a Legacy:  
Shares the Personal Journey Behind His American Dream.*

PRESENCE



# CAPITOL TIMES

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**Anil Anwar**

### **Associate Editor**

**David Colbert**

**Saba Jenn**

### **Creative Director**

**By Saba Jenn**

### **Front Cover**

**RICHARD XIA**

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# Editor's Note

## The American Dream Endures

America has never been defined by comfort or convenience. It has been defined by courage, faith, hard work, personal responsibility, and the belief that every individual—regardless of where they begin—has the opportunity to build a better future. That enduring promise remains the foundation of the American Dream.

This issue celebrates that spirit through the remarkable story of Richard Xia, whose journey from humble beginnings to entrepreneurial success reflects the determination, perseverance, and vision that continue to shape our nation. His story reminds us that success is earned through sacrifice, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

We also examine some of the most important national conversations facing America today. From the continuing debate over election integrity and the SAVE Act to the growing discussion surrounding socialism, communism, and the future direction of the United States, our goal is to provide thoughtful reporting and informed perspectives on issues that matter to our readers. At Capitol Times Magazine, we believe a free press carries both freedom and responsibility. Our mission is to highlight the people, ideas, and principles that strengthen America while encouraging respectful dialogue about the challenges ahead. Whether covering public policy, business leadership, faith, or the values that have guided this nation for generations, we remain committed to independent journalism and meaningful storytelling.

The American Dream is not merely a chapter in our nation's history. It is a living promise that continues to inspire entrepreneurs, workers, veterans, families, immigrants, and every citizen striving to build a better tomorrow. Protecting the freedoms that make that dream possible is a responsibility shared by every generation.

Thank you for your continued support of Capitol Times Magazine. We are honored to have you as part of our growing readership across the United States and beyond. We hope this edition informs, inspires, and renews your confidence in the enduring strength of the American Dream.



**Anil Anwar**  
*Editor-In-Chief*







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## A Capitol Times *Interview* with **RICHARD XIA** ★ ★ ★

Vision shapes history. Throughout the modern era, the world's greatest innovators have transformed ambitious ideas into projects that redefine how people live, work, and build for future generations. Richard Xia belongs to that tradition of visionary leadership.

As President of Da Vinci Development Group (DVDG), Founder of EcoVerve Energy Solutions, President of Fleet Financial Group, and Board Director and Senior Partner of Xingchuan Open-ended Fund Company, Richard Xia has dedicated his career to advancing large-scale urban development, clean energy, intelligent infrastructure, aerospace mobility, and AI-powered agriculture. His interdisciplinary background spans architecture, civil engineering, industrial management, financial economics, economics, and computer information systems, bringing together engineering precision with long-term strategic vision.

Over more than two decades, Richard Xia has led projects across the United States, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, developing concepts that integrate smart cities, net-zero energy systems, vertical farming, intelligent transportation, sustainable architecture, and next-generation infrastructure. His work reflects a commitment to combining technological innovation with environmental responsibility while addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization, energy security, and economic development.

Among his signature initiatives is HuaXia Celestial City, a comprehensive vision for future urban ecosystems that integrates artificial intelligence, clean energy, advanced agriculture, and intelligent infrastructure into a unified development framework. His organizations are also advancing projects involving vertical bio-farms, urban air mobility, distributed clean energy systems, and smart city technologies designed to support more resilient and sustainable communities.

***This exclusive Capitol Times interview is not about Richard Xia's businesses or development projects. Instead, it offers readers a rare look into his personal life—his upbringing, family, values, struggles, inspirations, and the life experiences that shaped his American Dream.***





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 01

*Richard, thank you for joining Capitol Times for this exclusive interview. Millions of people see success, but very few know the story behind it. We'd like to begin at the very beginning. Richard, every extraordinary journey begins somewhere. Take us back to your childhood. What was life like growing up, what kind of family surrounded you, and what are the moments from those early years that continue to shape your life today?*

## • RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I was blessed with a beautiful childhood, and I was the eldest child in my family. From the beginning, my mother poured almost all of her energy, imagination, and love into raising me. Only now, looking back as an adult and as a parent, do I understand the scale of what she gave.

She later told me that even while she was pregnant, she spent a great deal of time reading novels and beautiful works of Western literature. Perhaps those stories were the first music my mind ever heard - the rhythm of language reaching me through my mother before I had even entered the world.

After I was born, she noticed very early that I seemed to think in an unusual way. I showed a strong memory, an instinct for logical relationships, and a sensitivity to language. When I was only two or three years old, she began reading to me constantly. She searched local bookstores and larger national bookstores for every children's book she could find. Night after night, before I went to sleep, she sat beside me and opened another world.

To a small child, those evenings felt simple: my mother was beside me, a book was open, and the whole world was safe. But today I realize that she was doing far more than reading stories. She was building the architecture of my mind.

She gave me language before I understood the power of language. She gave me imagination before I knew imagination could become invention. She gave me the ability to see things inwardly before they existed physically - a capacity that later became essential to my work as a designer, engineer, developer, and entrepreneur.

By the time I entered the tuo'er suo, an early-childhood nursery, I could already read whole books aloud, word by word. I would sit among the other children and tell them stories. In many ways, that was the beginning of my life as a public speaker. From preschool and kindergarten, through school, university, business presentations, and eventually major EB-5 fundraising ceremonies, I was always comfortable standing before people and communicating an idea. Long before I ever addressed bankers, investors, engineers, or public officials, I had practiced before an audience of children.

My memory also developed in a way that has remained with me throughout my life. I do not always remember information as a sequence of letters or numbers. I often remember it as a complete picture - a living image containing relationships, positions, expressions, and details.



Years later, during my doctoral studies in New York, a management-science professor conducted an experiment in class. He briefly projected a matrix of information and then covered it after only a few seconds. There were four students in the class, and he asked each of us to reconstruct what we had seen.

*To everyone's surprise, I was able to reproduce almost every detail.*

When the professor asked how I had done it, I explained that I had not memorized the information one symbol at a time. I had stored the entire matrix as a picture. Two classmates felt that this gave me an unfair advantage, and they complained that testing memory in this way was discriminatory because my mind processed information differently.

In the next class, the professor spoke with calmness and dignity. He explained that he was responsible for teaching the class and had to be allowed to teach in the way he believed would help students learn.

I still remember that moment. It was not merely an interesting classroom story. It reminded me that people do not all think in the same way, and that difference should not automatically be treated as wrongdoing. Sometimes the ability that makes a person unusual is the same ability that allows that person to create something unusual.



## QUESTION 01 / CONTINUED

Even today, I can remember business negotiations from decades ago almost as live pictures. I remember what was said, where people were sitting, how they expressed themselves, and what positions they took. Sometimes this ability is a gift. Sometimes it is exhausting, especially when people later try to change the history of a conversation that remains vivid in my mind. But I know where that gift began: beside my mother, with an open book.

*Another childhood moment shaped my character in a completely different way.*

When I was about seven years old, I was playing hide-and-seek in a construction site where work had stopped. A security woman found me, took my key, and escorted me home. I was terrified. I thought I had committed such a serious offense that my parents would punish me severely.

When we arrived, my mother looked at my frightened face and sent me into the bedroom. Then she turned to the security woman and asked only one question:

*"Did my son damage anything?"*

*The woman answered, "No."*

My mother then asked, "If he damaged nothing, why did you need to frighten him and escort him home in this way?"

I can still see the security woman's expression. Her mouth opened, but she had no answer. My mother told her that unnecessarily frightening a child could leave a lasting psychological wound. Then she closed the door.

*Afterward, she came to me and asked, "Why didn't you run away?"*

*I said, "She took my key."*

*My mother replied:*

*"A key is not important. I can make you another key."*

*I have remembered those words for my entire life.*

My mother was not teaching me to ignore legitimate rules or escape responsibility. She was teaching me not to confuse authority with justice, fear with guilt, or convention with truth. She taught me to ask: Was anyone harmed? Was anything damaged? What is the real purpose of the rule? Is there a better way?

That lesson became part of my approach to innovation. I learned not to accept "this is how it has always been done" as the final answer. I learned to explore the outer boundary of what was possible without abandoning responsibility. In architecture, engineering, finance, and development, that willingness to think differently allowed me to combine disciplines and create solutions that others initially considered impossible.

*When I look back now, I understand that my childhood gave me two priceless gifts.*

*My mother gave me books, which opened my mind.*

*And she gave me courage, which kept my mind free.*

Everything I later designed, built, imagined, or fought to preserve began before the first foundation was ever poured. It began with a little boy beside his mother, listening to stories before sleep.





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 02

*Parents often shape our character long before we realize it. Tell us about your mother and father. What values, sacrifices, and life lessons did they pass on to you, and how do those lessons continue to influence your decisions as a businessman, a father, and a leader?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

My mother was like an angel in my childhood.

She almost never punished me. The only times she felt she had no choice were when I placed myself in real physical danger - climbing a chimney, standing near the outer edge of a high terrace, or swimming in places that were not meant for swimming. In those moments, her fear as a mother overcame her gentleness, and she would ask my father to give me a serious lesson.

But even then, I understand now that it was never anger. It was terror - the terror of a mother imagining that she might lose her child.

Her devotion was expressed not through grand speeches, but through thousands of small sacrifices. During my school years, she would ride her bicycle for approximately two hours round-trip from her workplace to our home so she could prepare a homemade lunch for the family. Then she would return to work.

*She did this day after day.*

As a child, I saw lunch on the table. I did not see the distance she had traveled, the exhaustion in her legs, the time she had surrendered, or the weather she had ridden through. Children often receive love without understanding its cost. Only when we become older do we begin to calculate the miles.

My mother taught me that love is not merely an emotion. Love is work. Love is repetition. Love is doing something difficult for another person so consistently that, to them, it begins to feel natural.

She also taught me to give everything I could to those who trusted me. She believed that genuine selflessness could make a person almost "unconquerable under heaven" - not because no one could attack you, but because fear and selfishness would no longer control your decisions.

*My father shaped me in a very different but equally powerful way.*

He was an extraordinarily talented engineer and a true workaholic. He believed that performing his work to the highest possible standard was almost a sacred duty. He often left for work before dawn and sometimes did not return until after midnight. There were periods when I barely saw him.



As a child, I sometimes felt his absence. As an adult, I came to understand that his absence was also a form of sacrifice. He was carrying the responsibility of providing for the family and honoring the work entrusted to him.

I remember learning in elementary school the famous story of an American engineer who was called to diagnose a problem in a very large General Electric machine. The engineer studied the equipment and placed a small chalk mark at the precise location where the repair was needed. He charged \$10,000.

When people complained that a single chalk mark could not possibly be worth that amount, he explained that the chalk mark itself was worth one dollar; knowing exactly where to place it was worth \$9,999.

*I excitedly told my father this story.*

His response was completely characteristic of him. He said, "What is so extraordinary about that? I can do the same thing on an even larger machine."

He was not boasting in the ordinary sense. He genuinely believed that mastery came from total dedication. To him, expertise meant understanding a system so completely that one precise decision could solve what appeared impossible to everyone else.



## QUESTION 02 / CONTINUED

That lesson stayed with me. In development, the most valuable contribution is not always the most visible one. Sometimes it is recognizing where to acquire land, how to position a building, how to combine functions, how to restructure financing, or how to change one design decision that transforms the economics of an entire project.

The value is not in making a mark. The value is in knowing where the mark belongs.

My parents also taught me courage through their own life together. My mother's family opposed their marriage, so after graduating from college, my parents left their hometown and traveled far away to begin again in a place where they had no established foundation.

*Together, they built a new life.*

Their story gave me an almost instinctive optimism about going somewhere unfamiliar and beginning from nothing. When I later traveled thousands of miles from China to the United States, I was continuing a journey they had already begun in another form. They had taught me that home is not only the place where you were born. Sometimes home is the place two people create through courage, loyalty, and work.

*These lessons deeply shaped the way I approached business.*

When I entered the EB-5 field, I understood that immigrant investors were not ordinary financial investors. Many were placing a major portion of their family savings into a project while also placing their immigration future in the hands of people they barely knew. I believed the project sponsor should carry the greatest burden, not the immigrant family.

That is why I tried to design my projects differently. I invested my own capital before asking others to believe. I relied on a vertically integrated development and construction team with whom I had worked for many years. I chose not to use my regional center to sponsor unrelated third-party projects that I could not directly control. I worked to reduce unnecessary layers of financing and professional costs that could erode project value. I wanted the underlying real estate and development work to protect the immigrant families, rather than allowing their capital to become the first and easiest money sacrificed when difficulties arose.

Not every decision I made was understood by outsiders. Some of the methods I used were unconventional because I was trying to solve problems that conventional structures had not solved. But the principle came directly from my mother: when people trust you, you must give them everything you can.



From my father came the second principle: whatever you undertake, understand it deeply and perform it to the highest standard you can reach.

As a businessman, those lessons tell me that capital is never just a number. Behind money are families, years of labor, dreams, and trust.

As a father, they remind me that children may not immediately understand our sacrifices, just as I did not initially understand the miles my mother traveled or the nights my father worked. But they will eventually remember the example.

*And as a leader, I try to carry both of my parents within me.*

*My mother gave me the heart to protect people.*

*My father gave me the discipline to master difficult work.*

Together, they taught me that leadership is not standing above others. It is carrying more weight so that the people who trusted you do not have to carry it alone.



QUESTION 02 / CONTINUED

*My mother gave me the heart to protect people,  
my father gave me the discipline to master different work.*





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 03

*Family relationships often define who we become. Tell us about your brothers and sisters. What was it like growing up together, what memories stand out the most, and how have those relationships influenced your journey through life?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I have one younger sister, four years younger than me.

Her life almost ended shortly after it began. When she was born, she became extremely ill - so seriously ill that the hospital appeared to have exhausted the available options. Eventually, a chief doctor with knowledge of traditional Chinese herbal medicine found a treatment that helped save her.

Because she had come so close to death, my parents gave me a responsibility that became deeply rooted in my identity. They told me that I must always take care of my sister and protect her.

*I was still a child myself, but I accepted that responsibility with complete seriousness.*

We attended the same elementary school. Because she was four years younger, her classes sometimes ended before mine. She would come to my classroom and sit with me until I finished. I can still picture her there - a small child quietly waiting beside her older brother, completely certain that she was safe because I was present.

Wherever she went, if she encountered a problem, I was the person she called. I tried to stand in front of whatever frightened or troubled her. When I graduated from college and she was preparing for her college-admission examinations, I became her personal tutor. I helped her study and later continued helping with portions of her university coursework.

One of my favorite memories is from when I was learning to ride a bicycle. She was the first person willing to sit on the back.

*Think about the trust in that small act.*

I was still learning. I was not fully stable. I could have fallen. Yet she climbed onto the bicycle because she believed her brother would carry her safely.

Throughout my life, many people have evaluated me after seeing accomplishments, projects, credentials, or plans. My sister believed in me before there was anything to evaluate. She trusted me while the bicycle was still wobbling.

*That kind of faith gives a person psychological strength that cannot be measured.*

For many years, I believed my role was to protect her. But life has a beautiful way of reversing the responsibilities we think are permanent.



After she came to the United States, she helped me enormously. During periods of business uncertainty, and especially through the long years of legal and regulatory conflict, she remained stable and supportive. She helped me, supported our parents, and gave me a place of emotional certainty when so much around us felt uncertain.

She did not need to make grand declarations. Her presence itself said, "I am still here. I still know who you are."

*That is one of the greatest gifts another human being can give.*

Growing up with my sister taught me that protecting another person can become a source of happiness. When I could solve a problem for her, help her study, or make her feel secure, I often felt happier than when I achieved something for myself.

Over time, that instinct expanded beyond my immediate family. It influenced how I thought about investors, employees, communities, cities, and eventually the future of humanity. I began to believe that the highest purpose of intelligence or success is not simply to elevate oneself. It is to create greater safety, opportunity, and happiness for others.

*My sister taught me that lesson without ever formally teaching it.*

*And now, looking back, I understand something that moves me deeply:*

When we were young, my parents told me to protect my little sister because her life had once been fragile.

*I tried to do that for many years.*

But during the most difficult periods of my own life, when my confidence, work, and future were being tested, she became one of the people protecting me.

*I thought I had been appointed to carry her.*

Only later did I realize that we had been given to one another so that neither of us would have to travel through life alone.

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 04

*Every immigrant has a story that begins with hope, uncertainty, and courage. Walk us through your journey to America. What inspired you to come, what challenges did you encounter during those early days, and what kept your dream alive when success seemed far away?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I did not come to the United States merely to change my address. I came because I wanted to enlarge what I could understand - and, through that understanding, enlarge what I might one day build for the world.

My education began in architecture and civil engineering. I then studied industrial management in China. Those disciplines taught me how physical things are conceived, engineered, constructed, organized, and operated.

But as I studied development and industry, I came to realize that buildings and infrastructure do not exist in isolation. They are shaped by capital, markets, public policy, human incentives, and economic cycles. A technically excellent project can still fail if the financial structure is wrong. A brilliant social vision may remain only a drawing if no one understands how to finance and implement it.

I became convinced that economics and finance were essential if I truly wanted to change the world.

*That conviction led me to America.*

I still remember my visa interview at the United States Consulate in Shanghai. The visa officer looked at my background in engineering and architecture and asked why I wanted to pursue economics, which appeared so different from my previous studies.

I told her that the United States had the most advanced economic education and the deepest experience with market economics, macroeconomics, and the financial systems that influence the entire world. I explained that if I wanted to understand how large ideas become real, I needed to study those systems at their highest level.

*She smiled and issued my visa.*

*That smile opened a door that changed my life.*

I came to the United States with full scholarship support and pursued doctoral study in economics. Later, as technology began transforming every industry, I understood that computer information systems would become another essential language of the future. I continued my doctoral studies in New York in that field as well.

The challenge was not simply mastering new academic subjects. It was learning how to bring several worlds together while building a new life in a country where I had no established professional identity. I had to learn new institutions, build relationships from the beginning, and prove that a person trained in one field could cross into another without losing depth.

*Architecture taught me to imagine space.*

*Civil engineering taught me how physical systems stand.*

*Industrial management taught me how organizations function.*

*Economics and finance taught me how resources move.*

*Computer information systems taught me how data, technology, and intelligence can connect everything.*

At the time, these disciplines may have appeared separate. In my mind, however, they were pieces of one future.

That belief kept my dream alive. Whenever the road seemed uncertain, I reminded myself that I was not collecting degrees for prestige. I was assembling the intellectual tools required to become a true master developer - someone capable of understanding a project from the first concept through engineering, financing, construction, operation, and long-term social impact.

Years later, when people in the Middle East asked me how someone could be trained to become a master developer, I told them that no single discipline was enough. A person must understand the physical, managerial, financial, and technological dimensions together. Otherwise, important decisions are made too late - after the design has already created financial problems, or after the financing has already compromised the engineering.

Today, that same interdisciplinary journey shapes my vision for integrated urban agriculture and net-zero development. I imagine vertical farming systems that can produce many times more food per unit of land while reducing transportation, chemical dependency, energy waste, and environmental harm. I imagine buildings not as isolated objects, but as living systems that can produce food, conserve energy, recycle resources, support communities, and improve human health.



QUESTION 04 / CONTINUED

*Those ideas grew from the education I received across two countries.*

China gave me an engineering foundation, cultural depth, discipline, and respect for thousands of years of accumulated wisdom.

America gave me access to advanced economic thought, technology, open inquiry, and the freedom to combine fields that other people kept separate.

The immigrant journey is often described as leaving one world behind and entering another. That was not my experience.

*I did not leave one world behind.*

I carried it with me, and America gave me the opportunity to connect it with another.

What kept my dream alive was the belief that these two worlds did not have to compete inside me. They could work together. Chinese cultural imagination, engineering discipline, American professionalism, economic innovation, and technological possibility could become one integrated force.

*I came to America searching for knowledge.*

What I found was the possibility of synthesis - the possibility that everything I had studied, everything my parents had taught me, and everything I had dreamed might one day come together in service of a future larger than myself.



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 05

*Millions of people around the world continue to believe in the promise of America. From your own remarkable journey, what does the American Dream truly mean to you? Looking back, how has your understanding of that dream evolved, and what would you say to those who are still pursuing it today?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

To me, the American Dream is real.

It is not always simple. It is not a guarantee that life will be fair, that every institution will understand you, or that hard work will protect you from every setback. The American Dream does not mean that a person will be spared hardship.

*It means that hardship does not have to speak the final word.*

I came to the United States as an international student with full scholarship support. America gave me the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies in economics and later computer information systems. I was able to study ideas ranging from Adam Smith and the foundations of market economics to emerging information technologies that were reshaping the modern world.

That education did more than prepare me for a profession. It gave me the confidence to cross professional boundaries.

When I began pursuing my first real-estate development, I approached a bank for acquisition and construction financing. The bank's chief executive was surprised to learn that I had studied both architecture and civil engineering. She told me that most professionals remained in their specialized fields and that very few were willing to accept the risk and responsibility of becoming developers.

*She asked me to show her my diplomas.*

Once she saw my background and reviewed the project, her team began evaluating the financing. That first development became successful and received recognition for its contextual architectural design.

*For me, that experience represented the American Dream in a very concrete form.*

A banker did not ask whether my family had been established in New York for generations. She did not ask whether I had inherited a development company. She looked at my education, my preparation, the project, and my willingness to accept responsibility.

*She was willing to consider what I might become.*



Later, when I was competing to acquire the land for a much larger project, the owner required a bank commitment letter. Many other buyers were interested. I contacted a New York banker whom I had previously met and spoke with her by telephone for approximately four hours.

*At the end of that conversation, she said, "Richard, I'm sold."*

The next morning, before traveling to Manhattan, she visited my first project. The following day, she brought her supervisor. After touring the building, they asked how quickly I needed the commitment letter.

*I said, "Two weeks."*

*They told me they could issue it within forty-eight hours.*

*I was astonished and asked why they were willing to move so quickly.*

They told me that they had seen something distinctive in my first project. They believed the way I approached design and development created value that competitors could not easily reproduce. Then they said something I have never forgotten:

*"Land is worth nothing without the people behind it."*

That sentence touched me deeply because it captured the best spirit of America. The bank was not merely lending against a parcel. It was investing its confidence in human capability.



## QUESTION 05 / CONTINUED

Before I had any involvement with EB-5 financing, I invested approximately \$8 million of my own capital into the land and obtained more than \$10 million in bank financing. I placed my own resources and reputation behind the project before asking immigrant families to place their trust in it.

Then the financial crisis came, and traditional construction lending largely stopped. We had to search for another path, which eventually led us to establish a regional center and use EB-5 financing.

That journey taught me that the American Dream is not a straight road. Sometimes the door you expected to enter closes, and you must build another door without abandoning the destination.

America gave me an opportunity to develop a significant project only a few years after arriving in New York. It allowed an immigrant student - someone without generations of inherited connections - to transform education into design, design into a building, and a building into credibility.

*That is extraordinary.*

As I traveled internationally, I often told people, "If you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere." New York tests every dimension of a person: intelligence, endurance, negotiation, creativity, financial discipline, emotional strength, and the ability to recover from rejection.

*But over the years, my understanding of the American Dream changed.*

When I was younger, I thought the dream was primarily about what America might allow me to achieve.

Today, I believe the deeper question is what I can return to America for the opportunity it gave me.

*The dream is not only the right to rise. It is the responsibility to lift.*

It is not only the freedom to create wealth. It is the obligation to create value - for employees, investors, neighborhoods, cities, and future generations.

It is not enough for an immigrant to say, "America gave me a chance." We must ask, "What did I do with that chance? Did I make the country stronger? Did I create something useful? Did I protect the people who trusted me? Did I leave behind more opportunity than I received?"

My own journey has included extraordinary opportunity, but it has also included profound conflict, misunderstanding, and pain. There were moments when I felt that the very system I admired could not see the full picture of what I had tried to build.



*Yet even then, I did not stop believing in America.*

*Why?*

Because America is larger than any one conflict, institution, judgment, or moment. It contains people willing to listen, teachers willing to recognize a different mind, bankers willing to believe in an immigrant's ability, professionals willing to examine new ideas, and communities capable of reconsidering what they once misunderstood.

*The American Dream survives through those people.*

To every young immigrant, entrepreneur, student, or family still pursuing that dream, I would say this:

*Do not come to America only asking what America can give you.*

*Come prepared to give America something it did not have before you arrived.*

Bring your history, your culture, your education, your imagination, your discipline, and even your suffering. Turn them into something that creates value for others.

*Be grateful, but do not be passive.*

*Be ambitious, but do not become selfish.*

*Take risks, but never forget the people whose trust travels with you.*

*When one path closes, study why it closed, strengthen yourself, and build another.*

QUESTION 05 / CONTINUED

The American Dream remains alive whenever a teacher recognizes talent that does not fit the ordinary pattern; whenever a banker sees a person behind a piece of land; whenever an immigrant converts gratitude into contribution; and whenever someone continues building after the world has told them to stop.

*For me, the dream is no longer simply about succeeding in America.*

It is about becoming worthy of the opportunity America gave me - and using that opportunity to build a future in which other people can dream even more boldly than I did.

*The dream is not only the right to rise. It is the responsibility to lift.*





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 06

*Every successful person experiences moments when everything seems uncertain. Looking back over your life, what was the most difficult chapter you faced, how did you overcome it, and what did that experience teach you about perseverance and resilience?*

◆ RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

The most difficult chapter of my life has been the long SEC enforcement action and the years of uncertainty that followed it.

I understand that legal disputes must be decided through evidence, procedure, and the courts. There are facts, interpretations, and legal conclusions that I continue to dispute, and an interview is not the place to turn those disputes into a legal brief. But I can speak honestly about what the experience felt like as a human being.

It felt as though a life I had spent decades building was frozen in a single night.

The investigation began years before the lawsuit. At first, I remained confident. I had spent my life studying systems, documenting decisions, engineering buildings, and trying to create value. I believed that if people examined the projects carefully, they would see the physical work, the jobs, the land, the construction, and the investor-protection philosophy behind what I had done.

Then the enforcement action arrived with an asset freeze. It occurred at a moment when we were trying to move a major project forward. Accounts were restrained, construction was interrupted, professionals became uncertain, and decisions that had once belonged to the development team were suddenly subject to an entirely different process.

A project is not just concrete and steel. It is a living network of people, timing, permits, contracts, cash flow, records, and trust. When that network is frozen, damage does not wait politely for the legal system to finish. Weather continues. Taxes continue. Buildings continue to age. Investors continue to need documents. Employees continue to have families. Every month has consequences.

The hardest part was not the loss of control over money or property, although that was painful. The hardest part was watching the purpose of my work become separated from the story being told about it.

I had believed that the projects were designed to protect immigrant families - families who were not simply seeking a financial return, but trying to create a lawful future in America. I had invested my own capital, built with a team I knew, and tried to avoid structures that placed immigrant money behind excessive layers of debt and fees. Yet during the litigation, I felt that the physical reality of the projects and the human reality of those families were often reduced to allegations, labels, and numbers.

A court file can describe millions of dollars in a few lines. It cannot show a mother waiting for an immigration decision. It cannot show a father explaining uncertainty to his children. It cannot show the years a family spent saving, the anxiety behind every letter, or the meaning of a green card to someone who crossed an ocean for a different future.



## QUESTION 06 / CONTINUED

There were moments when I felt almost completely alone. Requests for resources to defend myself or preserve the projects did not produce the relief I hoped for. Lawyers changed. Strategies changed. People who had once spoken with certainty became cautious. The system seemed enormous, while my ability to respond felt smaller each day.

I would be dishonest if I said I never cried, never felt exhausted, or never wondered how much more a person could carry.

*But resilience is not the absence of pain.*

Resilience is allowing yourself to feel the pain without allowing the pain to decide who you become.

What kept me moving was first my family. My sister, who once trusted me while I was still learning to ride a bicycle, remained beside me when the road became unstable again. My wife, my children, my parents, and friends reminded me that a legal description of a person is not the whole person.

What also kept me moving was the physical reality of the work. Buildings do not argue. Foundations do not change their testimony. Steel, concrete, environmental remediation, design drawings, and completed construction remain where they were placed. Whenever the public story felt overwhelming, I returned in my mind to the actual sites and the thousands of decisions that had made them possible.

*I also kept designing.*

Even when accounts were frozen and projects were interrupted, my imagination was not frozen. I continued developing ideas for net-zero vertical farming, clean energy, and integrated cities. I traveled, met people in other countries, and asked how the knowledge I had accumulated could still serve humanity.

That mattered enormously. If I had allowed the litigation to become the entire definition of my life, then the litigation would have won something deeper than a legal position. It would have taken my future.

*I refused to give it that power.*

This chapter taught me that perseverance is not repeating the same action blindly. It is preserving the same purpose while adapting the path. Sometimes perseverance means fighting. Sometimes it means negotiating. Sometimes it means remaining silent long enough to listen. Sometimes it means beginning a completely new design while the old one is under attack.

It also taught me not to let suffering turn into hatred. Hatred narrows the mind, and I have spent my life trying to expand mine. I continue to believe that the American system has the capacity to examine itself, correct mistakes, and allow fuller truths to emerge. That belief has been tested, but it has not disappeared.

When I look back on these years, I do not see only what was taken from me. I see what was revealed.

I learned who would stand beside me when there was nothing obvious to gain. I learned how deeply I loved the people and projects entrusted to me. I learned that identity cannot be frozen by an order, and purpose cannot be liquidated by a difficult season.

*Most of all, I learned this:*

*You do not discover the strength of a foundation on the day the building opens.*

*You discover it when the storm arrives.*



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 07

*Success in business is one thing, but building a family is another. How has becoming a father changed your perspective on life, leadership, and success, and what lessons have your children taught you along the way?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

Becoming a father changed the scale of every question in my life.

Like every parent, I wanted to give my daughter the best education, the safest environment, and every reasonable opportunity I could provide. At first, I thought that if I worked hard enough and built enough, I could create a nearly perfect life for her.

But as she grew older and became more educated, I noticed something that troubled me. The more she learned about the world, the more worried she sometimes became. She wondered whether the work people prepare for today will still exist twenty or thirty years from now. She questioned whether education was leading toward security or simply preparing young people to enter an increasingly uncertain system.

*Her questions forced me to look beyond my own career.*

A child can live in comfort and still fear the future. A family can have food on the table and still worry about what is in the food, where it came from, how much energy was consumed to produce it, and whether the planet can continue supporting the same system for another generation.

I began to feel that being a father could not mean only protecting my own daughter. It had to mean helping create a world in which her generation would not inherit problems we were too busy, too divided, or too unimaginative to solve.

I often think that human civilization rests on two fundamental foundations. The first is food - the value of survival. The second is energy - the value that makes development possible. When food is unhealthy, inaccessible, or environmentally destructive, human health and dignity suffer. When energy is wasteful, polluting, or politically unstable, every other system becomes fragile.

That is why I became increasingly committed to developing a net-zero-energy vertical farming model. My hope is to create systems that can produce natural, nutritious food close to where people live, in controlled environments, with far less land, transportation, pesticide use, and energy waste.

I know that one invention cannot solve every human problem. But fatherhood gave urgency to the work. It transformed sustainability from an interesting professional objective into a personal promise.

During my work abroad, I met people who spoke about water contamination, food insecurity, and the pain of watching their hometowns suffer environmental damage. I remember one banker quietly telling me that a polluted place we were discussing was his own hometown. The sadness in his voice stayed with me. Environmental harm is never an abstract chart to the person whose mother, child, or community must drink that water.

My children have taught me that leadership must be measured by the future it leaves behind.

A leader can complete a building and still fail if the building consumes more than the earth can give. A businessman can create profit and still fail if the next generation inherits anxiety, pollution, and scarcity. A father can provide materially and still fail if his children do not feel that the future is worth believing in.

*So my definition of success changed.*

I no longer want only to tell my daughter, "I built a successful company" or "I completed a remarkable building."

*I want to be able to tell her:*

*"Daddy saw a problem that frightened your generation, and he spent his life trying to repair it."*

My daughter taught me that children are not simply the recipients of our wisdom. They are also the people who expose the limits of our thinking. Their questions reach places adults have learned to avoid.

Because of her, I dream of an Eden-like future not as a fantasy, but as an engineering responsibility: communities where clean energy, healthy food, water, housing, and human dignity are designed together.

I may never see the entire vision completed in my lifetime. But fatherhood taught me that we do not build only for the years we will personally occupy.

We build for the people who will arrive after us and ask what kind of ancestors we chose to be.

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 08

*Who inspired you the most growing up? Whether it was a family member, teacher, entrepreneur, or public figure, what made that person such an important influence in your life?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

My parents formed the deepest foundation of my character. My mother taught me imagination, courage, and selfless protection. My father taught me discipline, engineering mastery, and respect for work performed at the highest level.

Later in life, Steve Jobs gave modern language to something I had already learned from them: the belief that the invisible parts matter.

I was deeply moved by his Stanford commencement speech and by the message to remain hungry, curious, and unafraid to appear naïve before the future. I also loved the story he told about craftsmanship - that if you are building a fine cabinet, you do not use inferior wood on the back simply because no one will see it. The craftsman knows it is there.

*That idea describes how I feel about engineering and architecture.*

A building is not truly excellent because the lobby photographs well. Its character is found in the parts most people will never notice: the depth of the foundation, the strength of the concrete, the acoustic performance of the glass, the waterproofing behind the wall, the coordination of systems above the ceiling, and the decisions that prevent future occupants from ever knowing how many problems were solved before they arrived.

I tried to apply that standard to every corner of my work. On one project, I developed a customized glazing configuration intended to achieve exceptional sound isolation, approximately 51 decibels. We used very high-strength concrete, around 10,000 PSI in portions of the structure. We designed foundations extending roughly sixty feet in places because I believed the unseen support had to be worthy of the visible ambition.

Some people may call that perfectionism. For me, it is respect - respect for the people who will live in the building, for the professionals whose names are attached to it, and for the future that must maintain it.

Steve Jobs inspired me because he did not treat design as decoration. He treated it as the integration of technology, human experience, and moral seriousness about the work.

That is also what I learned from my father. The chalk mark may be small, but knowing where to place it requires a lifetime.

And it is what I learned from my mother. A book read to a child at night may seem invisible to the world, but it can shape everything that child later sees.



*The people who inspired me most all taught the same lesson in different languages:*

*What no one sees may be the truest measure of who you are.*



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 09

*What inspired you to come to the United States? Tell us about that decision, the emotions you experienced, and what dreams you carried with you when you arrived.*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

America attracted both my mind and my imagination.

Intellectually, I wanted to study economics, finance, technology, and the systems that had made the United States such an influential force in the modern world. Emotionally, I was drawn to the scale and beauty of the country itself.

Before coming to America, I had traveled widely in China. I loved mountains, remote landscapes, and the feeling that nature could make human problems look smaller and human possibility feel larger. When I saw images of the American West - its canyons, deserts, forests, and immense open sky - I felt an almost physical desire to experience it.

I did not arrive carrying only a plan for a degree. I carried the dream of discovering a country through both study and movement.

Later, I traveled to places such as Zion National Park in Utah. I backpacked, climbed, and descended through difficult terrain. On one journey through the Subway route, I moved too slowly because I kept stopping to take photographs. Darkness came before I could leave the valley, and I had to remain there overnight without a signal and without the comfort of a normal shelter.

*It was challenging, lonely, and unforgettable.*

That night taught me something about America and about myself. The landscapes that had attracted me were not simply beautiful pictures. They demanded humility. They did not care about degrees, titles, or plans. You had to read the terrain, conserve your strength, accept uncertainty, and keep moving toward daylight.

*Those lessons later became metaphors for my life.*

When I came to the United States, I dreamed of combining architecture, engineering, economics, management, and technology into a new kind of development practice. I wanted to build projects that were not only large, but intelligent; not only profitable, but useful; not only American or Chinese, but informed by the best of both civilizations.

I also dreamed of freedom - the freedom to move across disciplines, to ask unconventional questions, and to create something that did not yet have a familiar category.



There was excitement, but there was also uncertainty. Every immigrant knows that feeling. You are moving toward possibility while leaving behind the people, language, habits, and places that once made the world predictable.

But my parents had already shown me that a person can travel far from home and build a new life through courage. Their example traveled with me.

I came to America carrying knowledge from China, faith from my family, and a dream that the two worlds could meet inside the work I would create.

*I did not know what the path would look like.*

*I only knew that I wanted to walk it fully.*

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 10

*What do you remember most about your first weeks in America? What surprised you, what challenged you, and what made you believe this country could become your home?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

What I remember most is how quickly the unfamiliar began to feel possible.

During my first weeks, I was searching for an apartment, preparing the paperwork so my wife could join me, meeting professors, speaking with students, and trying to understand the practical rhythm of a new country. Everything was new - the systems, the conversations, the streets, the expectations - but I did not feel the deep strangeness I had expected.

*Instead, I felt as though I had arrived at another home.*

*That feeling surprised me.*

Perhaps it came from the university environment, where people from different places gathered around ideas. Perhaps it came from the openness of people willing to speak with a newcomer. Perhaps it came from the fact that I had spent years imagining America before I reached it, so the country felt both new and strangely familiar.

The practical challenges were real. I had to establish a household, understand rules I had never encountered, communicate within a different academic culture, and prepare for my wife to cross the same distance I had crossed. An immigrant's first days are filled with documents, addresses, phone calls, forms, and small uncertainties that can make an ordinary task feel enormous.

*But beneath all of that, I felt excitement.*

I was not being asked to erase the person I had been in China. I could carry my education, culture, poetry, engineering discipline, and family history into this new environment. America could become home not because it replaced my first home, but because it gave me room to connect the two.

*A home is not only a place where you know everything.*

*Sometimes it is a place where you sense that your future is allowed to begin.*

In those first weeks, before I had built a company, acquired land, or completed a building, America already felt like that kind of place to me.





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 11

*Starting over in a new country is never easy. What obstacles did you encounter during those early years, and how did you overcome them?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE



The first time I came to New York City, the airplane circled above LaGuardia Airport while waiting to land. I looked down at the enormous city spread beneath me, and one thought entered my mind with great force:

*"I do not know a single person down there."*

*For a moment, I felt profoundly alone.*

There are millions of lights in New York, but when none of them belongs to someone who knows your name, the city can feel darker than an empty field.

Yet almost immediately, the engineer and economist inside me began to see something else. Manhattan is an island. Queens and Brooklyn are part of Long Island. The city had faced land constraints for generations. That physical limitation created an extraordinary imbalance between demand and supply.

*Loneliness and opportunity arrived through the same airplane window.*

Within my first week in New York, I had already begun looking at land and studying the possibility of development.

The obstacles were obvious. I had no established network, no inherited development company, and no long local history that a banker could review. I was moving from doctoral study into one of the most demanding real-estate markets in the world. I had to prove that interdisciplinary knowledge could become execution.

I overcame those obstacles by studying the city the way I would study a complex machine.

I looked at land, zoning, infrastructure, neighborhood patterns, financing, construction, and design not as separate matters, but as connected variables. I spoke with bankers and professionals. I showed them not only ambition, but preparation. I used my background in architecture and civil engineering to demonstrate that I understood what I was asking others to finance.

The first opportunity did not come because the city became less difficult. It came because I learned to make my preparation visible to people who could recognize it.

Years later, during the most difficult periods of legal conflict, I remembered that flight over LaGuardia. I even wrote about it to the Court. I had once believed that the moment before landing was the loneliest point of my life. Later, I experienced a different kind of loneliness - the feeling of being surrounded by institutions, filings, and decisions while struggling to make my full story understood.

QUESTION 11 / CONTINUED

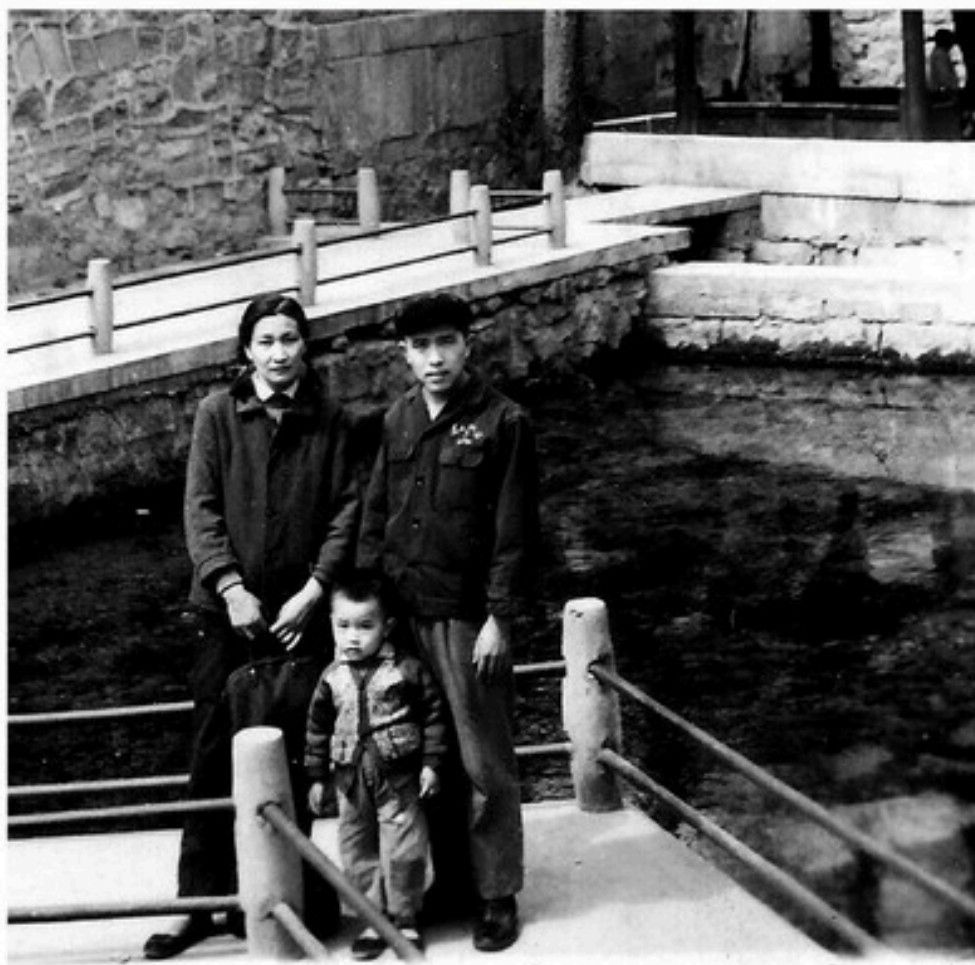
*But the memory also gave me strength.*

I survived the first landing. I built relationships where there had been none. I found land where others saw only scarcity. I turned a city of strangers into a place where I could create.

*Starting over taught me that loneliness is not always evidence that you are lost.*

*Sometimes it is simply the silence before a new life begins to answer you.*

*Loneliness and opportunity arrived through the same airplane window.*





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 12

*Looking back, was there one moment when you realized your dream was beginning to become reality? What happened, and why was that moment so meaningful?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I do not have one single moment when I can say, "That was when the American Dream became real."

*For me, almost every moment in America has been part of the dream.*

It began when I first landed at the Detroit airport. My travel was delayed, and I became stranded in Memphis. I encountered a group of people who admired Elvis Presley and seemed to insist that I acknowledge Elvis before they would help direct me to a restaurant. It was confusing, funny, and completely American. My first lesson in navigating the country apparently involved music history.

Then there was the university, the professors, the students, the long drives across the country, the mountains, the first time I saw New York, the first parcel of land, the first construction drawing, the first banker willing to listen, the first building rising from the ground, and the recognition that followed its completion.

*Each moment carried a different form of arrival.*

Even the difficult chapters have been part of the dream, because the dream was never only comfort or applause. It was the privilege of participating fully in a society large enough to test everything I believed about myself.

*When a banker said, "Richard, I'm sold," the dream was real.*

When my first project stood where there had once been only an idea, the dream was real.

When I traveled through an American canyon and had to wait for daylight, the dream was real.

When I faced litigation and still found people willing to stand beside me, the dream was real.

I have learned that a dream is not a finish line. It is a way of living with attention and gratitude.

The danger of waiting for one great moment is that we may fail to recognize the thousands of smaller moments that made it possible.

*So I do not look back and choose one day.*

I look back at the whole journey - the joy, the work, the uncertainty, the building, the falling, and the rising - and I say:



*"I was living the dream even when I did not yet know what the next page would say."*

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 13

*From your own remarkable journey, what does the American Dream truly mean to you? Has your understanding of that dream changed over the years, and do you believe it is still alive for future generations?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

The American Dream is alive, but it is not automatic.

When I was younger, I understood it mainly as opportunity: the chance for a newcomer to study, work, take risks, build, and rise without being permanently limited by birthplace or family background.

I still believe in that opportunity. My own life is evidence of it. I came as a scholarship student, entered fields outside my original training, found bankers willing to evaluate my ideas, acquired land, and built in New York only a few years after arriving.

*But today my understanding is deeper.*

The greatest strength of the American system is not that it never makes mistakes. No human system can promise that. Its greatest strength is the capacity for self-correction.

People can speak, appeal, report, organize, challenge, teach, vote, litigate, investigate, and reconsider. Institutions can be questioned. Decisions can be reviewed. New evidence can be heard. A society capable of correcting itself can remain alive even after it has wounded some of the people who believed in it.

That capacity is one reason talented people continue coming to America. They are not attracted only by wealth. They are attracted by the possibility that ideas can compete, that newcomers can contribute, and that the future is not entirely owned by the past.

My own faith in that system has been tested. There have been moments when I believed that important facts, intentions, and human consequences were not fully understood. But the answer, in my view, is not to abandon the American Dream. It is to insist that America continue becoming worthy of it.

The dream belongs to future generations only if we protect the conditions that make it possible: education, openness, lawful process, scientific curiosity, fair opportunity, and respect for the dignity of people who begin with no established power.

Young people should not inherit the American Dream as a slogan. They should inherit it as a responsibility.

They must ask not only, "What can I achieve?" but also, "What can I improve? What system can I make fairer? What problem can I solve? Whose opportunity can I enlarge?"

*America renews itself through newcomers, but newcomers must also renew America.*



*So yes, I believe the dream is alive.*

It is alive every time a student crosses an ocean with more courage than certainty. It is alive every time a teacher recognizes an unfamiliar kind of intelligence. It is alive every time a banker examines the person behind the land. It is alive every time a society chooses correction over pride.

*The American Dream is not the promise that we will never fall.*

It is the promise that falling does not remove our right - or our duty - to rise again.



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 14

*Looking back over your journey, who were the people who believed in you before the rest of the world did, and how did their encouragement help shape your future?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

There were many people who believed in me before the world had any reason to do so.

My mother believed first. She bought books before anyone knew what I would become. She listened to me speak before there was an audience. She defended my mind before I had learned how to defend it myself.

My father believed through expectation. He did not flatter me. He showed me, by the way he worked, that mastery was possible and that I had no excuse to perform carelessly.

My sister believed while I was still learning to balance a bicycle. That may be the purest form of trust I have ever received.

My wife believed not only in the projects, but in the person who kept returning home carrying their weight. A spouse experiences ambition differently from the public. The public sees announcements, buildings, and achievements. A spouse sees the worry after midnight, the silence after a difficult call, and the cost of continuing.

My professors believed in the way my mind worked. They allowed me to cross disciplines and did not insist that a person trained in engineering must remain only an engineer. One professor defended the legitimacy of teaching students whose minds processed information differently. That moment gave me confidence not to apologize for seeing systems as pictures.

*Then there were the bankers.*

One asked to see my diplomas and, after reviewing my background, allowed her team to consider financing my first development. Another listened to me for four hours, visited my project, brought her supervisor, and said she could provide a commitment letter in forty-eight hours.

They did more than lend money. They lent credibility at the moment when credibility was the thing I possessed least.

Many architects, engineers, contractors, advisers, and other professionals also believed. Some gave time, ideas, introductions, and effort before asking what they would receive in return. They recognized that I was not trying merely to complete another ordinary building. I was trying to integrate design, engineering, finance, culture, and sustainability into something more complete.

*During the years of litigation and uncertainty, the meaning of belief changed.*



It is easy to believe in someone while the building is rising and the future appears bright. It is much harder to believe when the newspapers, court filings, and public narrative create fear.

*That is when certain people revealed extraordinary character.*

My family remained. Friends remained. Professionals continued listening. Ellen Young, a pioneering Chinese American public servant and a friend with a generous heart, supported me in practical ways during some of the hardest periods, including when legal costs became overwhelming. Others helped quietly, without seeking recognition.

*When someone helps you before the outcome is known, that is more than support.*

*It is faith.*

Their encouragement shaped my future because it prevented temporary circumstances from becoming my permanent self-image. When the world around me became uncertain, they returned me to the person they had known before the conflict.

*No life is built by one person alone.*

We often celebrate the individual at the ribbon-cutting, but behind that person stand those who read the first book, carried the first lunch, offered the first loan, answered the late-night call, or simply said, "I still believe you."

I am standing today because many people lent me courage before the world lent me credibility.

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 15

*Was there ever a time when you questioned whether your dream would come true? What kept you moving forward when the road seemed uncertain?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I have questioned many things in my life.

I have questioned whether a particular financing would close, whether a project would receive approval, whether a negotiation would succeed, whether a court would understand an argument, and whether the next step would arrive in time.

But I have never truly questioned whether the dream itself would come true, because I have always felt that I was already living inside it.

The dream was never only the completed building or the final recognition. It was the opportunity to study, to travel, to create, to encounter difficulty, and to use every part of myself in the process.

Some moments were high points. Some were exhausting periods of work. Some were painful. But all of them belonged to the same journey.

I have learned that the larger the accomplishment, the larger the waves that may rise around it. A person who never enters deep water may never face a powerful wave, but he also never discovers how far he can swim.

*What kept me moving was purpose.*

I knew that I was capable of creating value for communities and imagining systems that could benefit far more people than myself. Once you see a possibility clearly, it becomes difficult to abandon it merely because the road is uncertain.

My family kept me moving. My parents' courage, my sister's trust, my wife's endurance, and my children's questions all reminded me that my life was connected to something larger than my own comfort.

My education kept me moving because it taught me that every problem has structure. Even when the answer is not visible, there are variables that can be understood, relationships that can be mapped, and another path that can be designed.

*Faith kept me moving as well.*

For me, faith is not certainty that everything will happen according to my schedule. Faith is the decision that the purpose remains worthy even when the evidence around you is dark.

I may become tired. I may need to change direction. I may need to accept that a particular plan has failed.

*But I do not ask the ocean to become calm before I continue.*



*I ask myself to keep swimming.*



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 16

*Every extraordinary achievement demands sacrifice. Looking back, what has been the greatest sacrifice you've made in building the life and career you have today?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I have difficulty using the word sacrifice to describe my own work, because I have loved it so deeply.

I once saw a sentence on the wall of a restaurant that said, in essence, that if you choose work you love, you may never feel that you worked a day in your life. That idea describes much of my journey.

Architecture allowed me to use the beauty I had absorbed from literature and the thousands of Chinese poems and classical verses I could remember. Engineering allowed me to turn imagination into something that could stand. Development allowed me to coordinate talented professionals from many disciplines and many countries. Economics and technology allowed me to understand how ideas could become systems.

When I reached the point where I could direct an entire development - from land and financing to structure, glass, operation, and public experience - I felt enormously fortunate. I was not merely doing a job. I was using almost every part of the mind my parents had helped develop.

So when people ask what I sacrificed, my first answer is: I do not feel that I sacrificed. I feel that I was given an extraordinary opportunity to do the work I loved.

*But with age comes a more honest understanding.*

What I did not experience as sacrifice may have been sacrifice for the people who waited for me.

My father worked before dawn and returned after midnight, and as a child I barely saw him. I later repeated some of that pattern in my own way. There were long hours, travel, negotiations, emergencies, and years when projects demanded nearly every available part of my attention.

My wife and children lived with the consequences of that commitment. My parents watched me face risks they could not control. My sister carried concern that I sometimes tried to hide from her.

*Time is the one resource no successful project can refinance.*

That may be the greatest sacrifice surrounding my journey - not a thing I gave up alone, but the time and peace my family gave so I could continue the work.



The years of legal and business disruption brought another kind of loss. Assets could be frozen, accounts restricted, projects delayed, and plans interrupted. But even then, I did not feel that my life had stopped. Friends and family supported me, and I continued developing larger ideas for other parts of the world.

*The assets were frozen.*

*The imagination was not.*

If I could speak to my younger self, I would not tell him to love the work less. I would tell him to remember that the people at home are also part of the project, even when their names never appear on a drawing.

I would tell him that perfection in a building should never require absence from the lives that make the building meaningful.

*So I still hesitate to call my journey a sacrifice.*

*But I now understand that love for work does not erase its cost.*

*It only makes us more responsible for honoring the people who helped pay it.*

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 17

*Today, what role does your family play in your life? How do they keep you grounded despite the demands of leading international businesses and ambitious projects?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

My family is the place where titles disappear.

In business, people may see a developer, engineer, strategist, or founder. In a legal case, people may see a name in a caption. In public, they may see projects, numbers, plans, or controversy.

*At home, I am a son, a brother, a husband, and a father.*

*That difference keeps me grounded.*

My family has lived through the rises and falls of my business life for so long that very little surprises them anymore. They have seen ambitious projects begin, financing become uncertain, opportunities appear, crises interrupt, and new ideas emerge from the middle of difficulty.

I have always tried to reassure them, to keep them healthy, hopeful, and emotionally bright. But the truth is that their steadiness has often been the thing reassuring me.

My parents remind me where I came from. My sister reminds me of trust that existed before achievement. My wife reminds me that the private cost of ambition is real. My children remind me that the future is not an abstraction.

*Family prevents ambition from becoming a substitute for humanity.*

A project can be redesigned. A financing can be replaced. A legal strategy can change. But a year in a child's life cannot be returned, and the worry carried by an aging parent cannot simply be refinanced later.

*That understanding has become more important to me over time.*

My family also gives meaning to my international work. When I speak about clean food, sustainable energy, humane cities, and a safer future, I am not speaking only as a businessman. I am speaking as someone who wants his own family - and every family - to inherit a world that feels less frightening.

*For many years, I thought my role was to carry everyone else.*

*Now I know that they have been carrying me too.*

They keep me grounded because they do not ask first whether I won, raised money, completed a project, or persuaded a room.



They remind me, simply by being there, to remain the person they loved before any of those things existed.



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 18

*What values and life lessons do you hope your children will carry with them long after they're grown, and what kind of example do you strive to set every day?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

The first lesson I hope my children carry is that technical excellence alone is not enough.

For much of my career, I believed that if a project was economically sound, beautifully designed, structurally advanced, operationally efficient, and beneficial to the community, then its value would eventually be obvious. I concentrated on architecture, engineering, finance, information systems, construction, and operations.

*I paid far less attention to the political and civic world than I should have.*

Over time, I learned that even a good idea can be delayed, misunderstood, or prevented from helping people if it is not connected to public understanding, lawful institutions, political awareness, and community trust.

I want my children to understand that citizenship is not a spectator activity. They should pay attention to how decisions are made, who is affected, what incentives are operating, and whether vulnerable people have a voice. They should not assume that being correct in a technical sense is enough. They must also learn to communicate, organize, listen, and participate.

*The second lesson is to think in multiple dimensions.*

The world's problems are connected. Food affects health. Energy affects food. Housing affects employment. Transportation affects families. Immigration affects labor, dignity, and national identity. A solution that improves one category while damaging three others is not a complete solution.

That is why I have imagined integrated development models - including vertical cities and cross-border economic zones - where clean agriculture, commerce, housing, energy, and transportation can be designed together. In a humane border region, for example, people might be able to work with dignity near their families rather than being forced into choices that separate spouses, parents, and children. American communities could benefit from productive labor and locally made goods, while workers could maintain a stable family life.

Whether that precise model is ever built is less important than the principle behind it: design systems around human beings, not merely around administrative categories.



*The third lesson is to protect people whose trust makes them vulnerable.*

My mother taught me that selflessness creates a kind of strength. My sister taught me the meaning of being responsible for someone more fragile. My work with immigrant investors taught me that financial decisions can carry immigration, family, and emotional consequences far beyond the balance sheet.

I want my children to ask, whenever they hold power: Who bears the risk? Who has the least ability to recover? Who is not in the room?

*The fourth lesson is to remain curious enough to cross boundaries.*

They should not allow a degree, title, profession, or nationality to become a cage. The most important future solutions will often be found between disciplines. I want them to learn deeply, but never narrowly.

*Finally, I hope they learn from both my achievements and my mistakes.*

I do not want to present myself to them as a perfect man. A perfect example is often less useful than an honest one. I want them to see that courage includes revising your strategy, that faith includes enduring uncertainty, and that responsibility includes admitting what you would do differently.

*The example I strive to set is not that a person must always win.*

QUESTION 18 / CONTINUED

It is that a person must keep serving a worthy purpose without surrendering compassion, curiosity, or integrity.

Long after my children are grown, I hope they remember not only what I tried to build, but why:

| So that families could remain together.

| So that food could be healthier.

| So that energy could be cleaner.

| So that fear would occupy less space in the lives of the next generation.

*The example I strive to set is not that a person must always win.*





**ANIL ANWAR** : After traveling the world and building projects across continents, what does the word "home" mean to you today?

**RICHARD XIA** : Home has changed meaning many times in my life. At first, home was the place where my mother read to me before sleep, where lunch appeared after a bicycle journey I did not yet understand, and where my little sister came to sit beside me because she believed I could protect her. Later, home was the country I left and carried with me - its language, poetry, engineering discipline, family memory, and thousands of years of cultural imagination.

Then America became another home. It was the place where I studied, where my wife joined me, where I found land, built buildings, raised a family, and learned both the generosity and the difficulty of the American Dream.

As I traveled and worked across continents, home became less connected to ownership and more connected to responsibility.

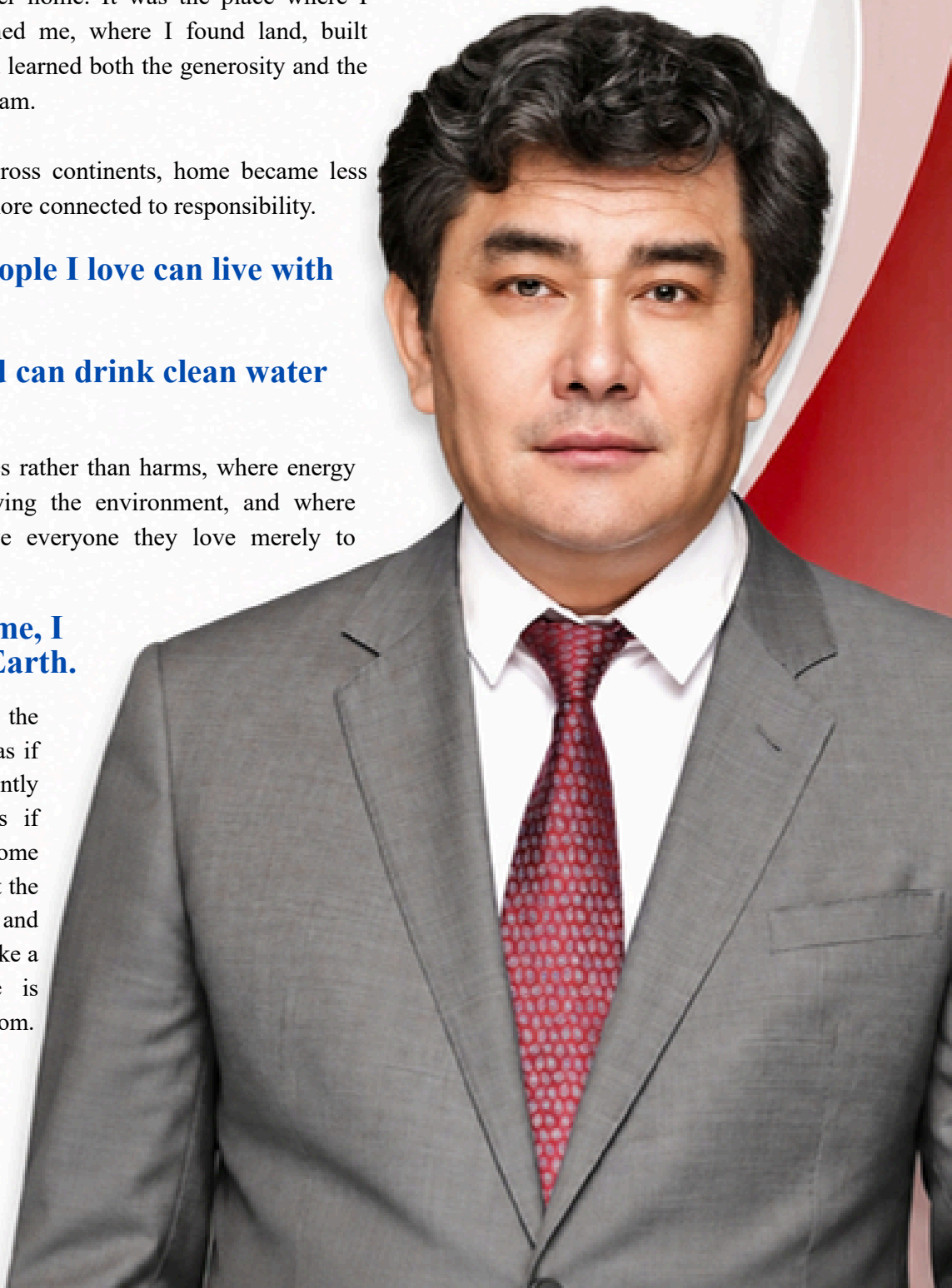
**Home is where the people I love can live with dignity.**

**Home is where a child can drink clean water without fear.**

Home is where food nourishes rather than harms, where energy supports life without destroying the environment, and where people do not have to leave everyone they love merely to survive.

**Today, when I say home, I ultimately mean the Earth.**

We speak of countries as if the atmosphere stops at a border, as if polluted water remains obediently inside one jurisdiction, or as if hunger in one place cannot become instability somewhere else. But the planet is one connected home, and humanity has been treating it like a building in which everyone is responsible only for his own room.



HOME / CONTINUED

My dream is to help restore the Earth toward a more pristine condition through clean energy, local food production, and integrated cities that work with nature rather than against it.

I call that vision an Eden - not because I imagine a world without work or difficulty, but because I imagine a world where human intelligence is finally used to protect the garden that made human life possible.

After traveling so far, I have learned that home is not merely where I return.

Home is what I am responsible for leaving habitable to those who come after me.

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 20

*When you were younger, success may have meant one thing. Today, after everything you've accomplished, how do you personally define success?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

When I was younger, success meant proving that I could do something extraordinary.

It meant mastering difficult subjects, entering a new country, persuading a banker, acquiring land, and turning drawings into buildings. I wanted to demonstrate that one person could combine architecture, engineering, economics, management, and technology in a way that created uncommon value.

There was nothing wrong with that definition. A young person often needs to prove that the dream is possible before he can ask what the dream is for.

*Today, I define success differently.*

*Success is the amount of value your life creates for other people.*

It is not the square footage of the building, but whether the building improves the community around it.

It is not the size of the transaction, but whether the people who trusted you are safer because of it.

It is not the number of countries in which you work, but whether your work reduces suffering, protects the environment, and gives the next generation greater confidence in the future.

Success also means creating systems that can continue helping people without depending permanently on your presence. A true legacy should not collapse when the founder leaves the room.

If one invention makes healthy food more accessible, if one development model keeps families together, if one clean-energy system reduces environmental damage, or if one young immigrant gains courage from my story, that is success.

*The more lives that are strengthened by the value we create, the greater the success.*

At this stage of my life, I do not want merely to be known as someone who built impressive things.

I want to know that, because I lived, some part of the world became more livable.





ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 21

*Beyond your buildings, companies, and achievements, what kind of legacy do you hope to leave for your family, your community, and future generations?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

The legacy I hope to leave is not a single building or company.

*It is a way of thinking.*

Humanity often approaches problems one dimension at a time. We treat food as an agricultural issue, energy as an engineering issue, housing as a real-estate issue, health as a medical issue, immigration as a political issue, and poverty as an economic issue.

*But in real life, these systems are connected.*

Food depends on water, land, transportation, energy, labor, and climate. Housing determines access to work, education, health, and family stability. Energy influences nearly every cost in civilization. A solution that lowers one cost while increasing pollution, displacement, or illness is not truly efficient. It has merely moved the burden somewhere less visible.

*I want future generations to think in multiple dimensions from the beginning.*

Agriculture has been practiced in fundamentally similar ways for thousands of years: crops depend on seasons, large areas of land, weather, transportation, and long supply chains. I believe controlled-environment agriculture and vertical hydroponic farming can allow us to produce far more food per unit of land, close to where people live, with less transportation, fewer chemicals, and better control over nutrition and water.

The energy question must be solved at the same time. The Earth contains enormous thermal and renewable-energy resources. Geothermal systems, solar technologies, storage, efficient envelopes, and integrated district systems can allow buildings and farms to operate with much lower environmental impact.

That is the thinking behind my vision for an Eden Celestial City and net-zero Biofarm: agriculture, housing, commerce, mobility, water, data, and clean energy designed as one living system rather than as separate industries fighting one another.

I do not claim that every technical problem is already solved. Innovation must be tested, measured, improved, and made economically practical. But the first step is changing the question.

Instead of asking, "How can we make the existing system slightly less harmful?" we should ask, "How would we design the system if human health, family dignity, and the Earth's long-term balance were requirements from the first day?"



*For my family, I hope the legacy is courage joined with service.*

For my community, I hope it is proof that an immigrant can bring knowledge from one civilization, learn from another, and create something that belongs to both.

For future generations, I hope it is a replicable model - not a monument to one person, but a system that allows many people to live more peacefully with the Earth.

The greatest legacy would be a world that no longer needs to remember who first proposed the idea because the idea has become ordinary life.

ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 22

*When future generations read about Richard Xia many years from now, what do you hope they understand - not only about your professional achievements, but about your values, your family, and the legacy you hope to leave behind?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

I do not want future generations to remember me only through square feet, project values, companies, court records, or professional titles.

Those things may help describe what happened, but they cannot explain why I lived the way I did.

I hope they understand that before I was a developer, I was a little boy listening to his mother read. Before I protected investors, I was an older brother told to protect a sister whose life had once been fragile. Before I became an engineer, I watched a father leave before dawn because he believed work was a duty. Before I spoke about the American Dream, I was an immigrant looking down from an airplane at a city where he did not know one person.

*I hope they understand that my professional life grew from those family lessons.*

*The books gave me imagination.*

My mother's defense of a frightened child gave me the courage to question rules without abandoning responsibility.

*My father's chalk-mark story gave me respect for mastery.*

My sister sitting on the back of a bicycle gave me a lifelong understanding of trust.

*My wife and children gave the work a future beyond myself.*

I also hope future generations understand that I was not a perfect person and did not travel an easy road. I made difficult decisions. I entered complicated fields. I was praised, doubted, supported, accused, and tested. Some people saw innovation where others saw irregularity. Some saw protection where others saw risk.

*I hope history will examine the full human and physical record with fairness.*

But more than that, I hope the future makes many of our present problems look ancient.



I hope children someday find it astonishing that we once burned enormous amounts of energy to transport fragile food thousands of miles while people in the neighborhoods along the route lacked access to fresh nutrition. I hope they are amazed that agriculture depended so heavily on weather, chemicals, and limited seasons when food could be produced locally in controlled, clean environments.

I hope the idea that healthy food was too expensive for many families sounds to them like an antique tragedy - something humanity finally became intelligent enough to leave behind.

If future generations read my name, I hope they do not conclude merely that Richard Xia wanted to build large projects.

*I hope they understand that I wanted to enlarge the definition of development itself.*

Development should mean more than increasing property value. It should mean increasing the value of human life.

And perhaps, many years from now, the most meaningful thing they can say about me will be very simple:

*"He was given love, knowledge, and opportunity - and he spent his life trying to return them to the world in a larger form."*



ANIL ANWAR / INTERVIEWER

QUESTION 23

*Richard, your journey reflects perseverance, vision, and opportunity. If you could speak directly to every young dreamer, immigrant, entrepreneur, or family working toward a better future, what message would you leave them about courage, hard work, faith, family, and the enduring promise of the American Dream?*

• RICHARD XIA RESPONSE

To every young dreamer, immigrant, entrepreneur, student, parent, or family trying to create a better future, I would begin with this:

*Do not underestimate the power of the small things that formed you.*

A book read by your mother may become the imagination with which you redesign a city.

*A father's long working day may become the discipline that carries you through a crisis.*

A younger sister trusting you on a bicycle may teach you more about leadership than any business school.

A spouse waiting through another difficult night may be the reason you remain human when the world measures you only by results.

A child's worried question may become the beginning of an invention meant to protect a generation.

We often imagine that courage arrives as a dramatic feeling. Most of the time, it does not.

*Courage is leaving home while still loving it.*

Courage is entering a classroom where your mind works differently and refusing to believe that difference is a defect.

Courage is calling a banker when you have no inherited name to offer, only preparation and conviction.

*Courage is looking at a closed door and asking whether another door can be designed.*

*Courage is continuing after your story has been reduced to something you do not recognize.*

My mother once told me that a key was not important because another key could be made. I have carried that lesson through my entire life.

*Do not let the loss of one key convince you that every door is closed.*



Hard work is also important, but work alone is not enough. Work deeply. Learn the visible and invisible parts. Understand the foundation, not only the facade. Become so familiar with your craft that, like the engineer in my father's story, you know where the mark belongs.

But do not worship work so completely that you forget the people who are waiting for you at home.

I loved my work and rarely experienced it as sacrifice. Only later did I understand that the people beside me had sacrificed time, peace, and certainty so I could continue. Honor them while you still have the opportunity. A successful project cannot repay a childhood you were too busy to witness.

Faith does not mean believing that the road will be easy or that every institution will understand you.

Faith means believing that a worthy purpose remains worthy during the dark part of the journey.

There will be moments when the world appears to have decided who you are without hearing everything you hoped to say. There will be contracts that fail, partners who change position, institutions that misunderstand, and waves much larger than the ones you expected.

*Do not allow those moments to make you small.*

Learn. Adapt. Defend the truth lawfully. Listen even when listening hurts. Correct your own mistakes. Refuse to let suffering become hatred.

## QUESTION 23 / CONTINUED

A storm can reveal the weakness of a structure, but it can also reveal the strength of its foundation.

*Keep your family close.*

The world may know your title, but your family knows your heart. When applause disappears, they remember the person who existed before the achievement. When accusation appears, they remember the life that existed before the headline. Their love does not remove responsibility, but it can return you to the strength required to carry it.

*And remember that the American Dream is not a private escape from difficulty.*

*It is a public promise of contribution.*

America gave me education, opportunity, professional trust, and the freedom to combine fields that other people kept separate. It also gave me tests I never imagined. Through both the generosity and the pain, I have continued to believe that the country's greatest strength is its capacity for self-correction and renewal.

The dream remains alive whenever a newcomer is judged by preparation rather than ancestry; whenever a teacher recognizes an unfamiliar kind of intelligence; whenever capital supports creation rather than merely extracting value; whenever institutions choose truth over pride; and whenever success enlarges opportunity for someone else.

*Do not ask only, "How can I become successful?"*

*Ask, "Whose life will become better if I succeed?"*

*That question will protect you from empty ambition.*

*Create value for your family, but do not stop there.*

*Create value for your neighborhood, your country, and people you may never meet.*

Design food systems that nourish rather than poison. Build energy systems that develop civilization without destroying the Earth. Create cities that allow families to remain together. Use technology to increase human dignity, not to make human beings feel unnecessary.

The more value you create for others, the more fully you enter the meaning of the American Dream.

I crossed an ocean carrying knowledge from China, hope from my parents, trust from my sister, love from my family, and an unfinished vision of what the future might become.

*I have experienced extraordinary opportunity. I have also experienced years that brought me to tears.*

*But tears do not mean the dream has failed.*

*Sometimes tears are the price of finally understanding how much the journey has meant.*

So to every person still standing at the beginning, or standing in the middle of a storm, I leave this message:

*Keep your mind open.*

*Keep your work honest.*

*Keep your family near.*

*Keep your faith larger than your fear.*





QUESTION 23 / CONTINUED

*And make your dream useful to someone besides yourself.*

One day, I hope the ideas I carried will no longer belong to me. I hope they will have become clean energy, healthy food, humane cities, opportunity, and hope in the lives of children I will never meet.

*That would be the greatest American Dream I could ever achieve.*

*The more value you create for others, the more fully you enter the meaning of the American Dream.*





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In the sweltering July heat of 2026, President Donald J. Trump took to the East Room of the White House for a primetime address to the nation. The message was blunt, unapologetic, and overdue: American elections belong to American citizens—and only American citizens. The centerpiece of that address, and of the White House’s legislative agenda this summer, is the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, better known as the SAVE Act or SAVE America Act.

For years, elites in Washington, the media, and left-wing advocacy groups have dismissed concerns about election integrity as conspiracy theories or “voter suppression.” Trump’s second administration is treating those concerns as the national security and democratic legitimacy crisis they are. The SAVE Act is not a peripheral bill. It is the White House’s top election priority because the alternative—continuing a system of self-attestation, mass mail ballots, and porous voter rolls—invites chaos, foreign interference, and the slow erosion of public trust.

The SAVE Act amends the National Voter Registration Act of 1993

to require documentary proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections. Acceptable documents include a U.S. passport, a REAL ID-compliant identification indicating citizenship, a certified birth certificate paired with photo ID, military identification with birth records, naturalization certificates, or other specific federal documents. States must verify citizenship using federal databases such as the Department of Homeland Security’s SAVE system and Social Security Administration records. Non-citizens found on the rolls must be removed. The bill also requires photo identification at the polls and sharply restricts no-excuse mail-in ballots, limiting them to cases of illness, disability, military

“

## PRESIDENT TRUMP’S FIGHT FOR ELECTION INTEGRITY

*WHY THE WHITE HOUSE IS MAKING THE SAVE ACT A NATIONAL PRIORITY*

”



service, or travel. Criminal penalties apply for knowingly assisting non-citizens in registering or voting, and for election officials who process applications without the required proof.

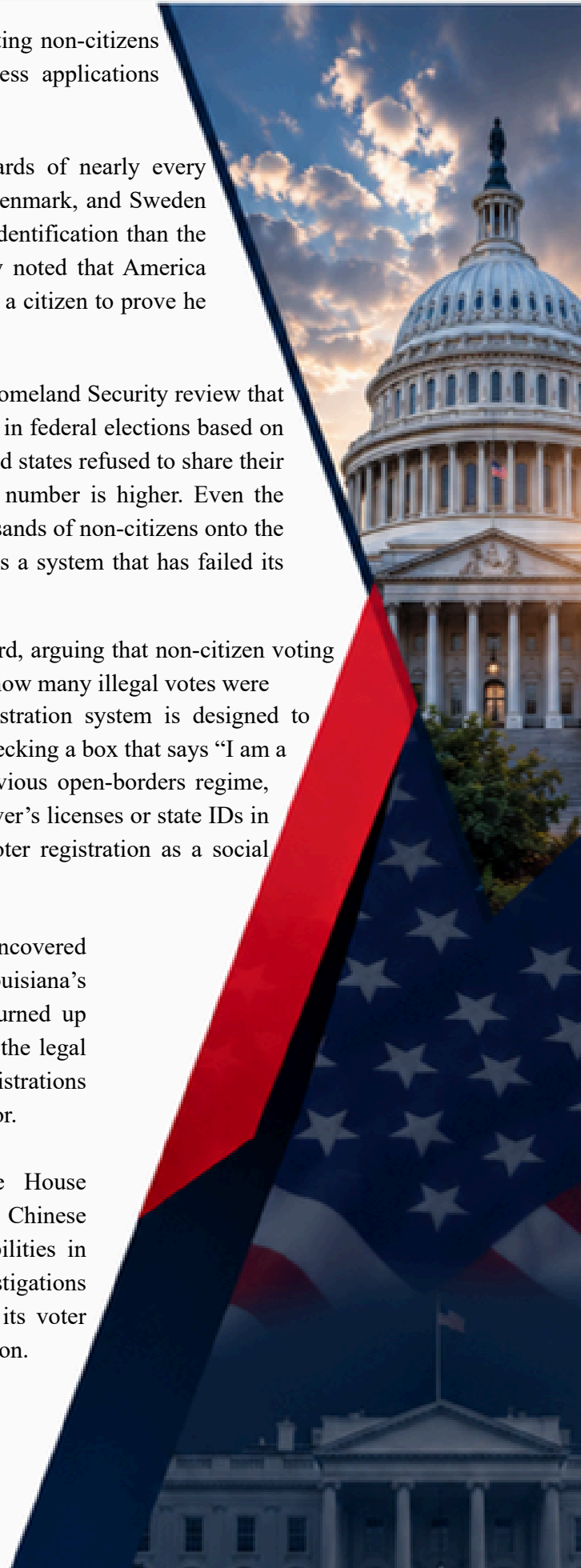
These are not radical demands. They are the baseline standards of nearly every serious democracy on earth. India, Brazil, Germany, Canada, Denmark, and Sweden all tie voter eligibility more tightly to verified citizenship and identification than the United States currently does. The White House has repeatedly noted that America lags behind peer nations in basic election protections. Requiring a citizen to prove he is, in fact, a citizen is not suppression. It is sovereignty.

In his July 16 address, President Trump cited a Department of Homeland Security review that identified approximately 278,000 non-citizens registered to vote in federal elections based on state voter rolls and public records. Because several Democrat-led states refused to share their full voter files, the White House correctly notes that the true number is higher. Even the partial figure is damning. A system that allows hundreds of thousands of non-citizens onto the rolls—whether through error, fraud, or deliberate negligence—is a system that has failed its first duty.

Critics immediately rushed to “fact-check” the number downward, arguing that non-citizen voting remains rare. That misses the point entirely. The question is not how many illegal votes were successfully cast last cycle; the question is whether the registration system is designed to prevent illegal registration in the first place. Self-attestation—checking a box that says “I am a citizen”—is not verification. It is an invitation. Under the previous open-borders regime, millions of illegal aliens entered the country. Many obtained driver’s licenses or state IDs in sanctuary jurisdictions. When those same jurisdictions treat voter registration as a social service rather than a sacred civic duty, the results are predictable.

Heritage Foundation tracking and state audits have repeatedly uncovered non-citizens on rolls and, in some cases, casting ballots. Louisiana’s secretary of state found hundreds. Georgia and Utah audits turned up smaller but still illegal numbers. Even one illegal vote cancels the legal vote of an American citizen. Hundreds of thousands of registrations create the opportunity for far more. The SAVE Act closes the door.

Foreign adversaries have noticed the vulnerability. White House documents released alongside the president’s address detail Chinese acquisition and exploitation of American voter data, vulnerabilities in electronic voting and ballot-counting systems, and specific investigations into registration irregularities. A nation that cannot guarantee its voter rolls are limited to its own citizens is a nation open to manipulation.





Trump's focus on election integrity did not begin in 2026. It was forged in the contested aftermath of 2020 and refined through four years of relentless attacks on the idea that elections must be secure. Upon returning to the White House, the president made clear that restoring confidence in the ballot box was non-negotiable. The SAVE Act, first advanced in the House and passed there in 2025, became the concrete expression of that commitment.

House Republicans have advanced the measure multiple times. The Senate remains the bottleneck, thanks to the 60-vote filibuster threshold and the familiar hesitation of a handful of Republicans more concerned about process complaints than principle. Some senators warn of implementation challenges for rural voters or married women whose names no longer match birth certificates. Those concerns are real—and addressable. The bill already contemplates affidavits under penalty of perjury and accommodations for the disabled. States can and should help citizens obtain the necessary documents. What cannot be compromised is the principle itself: only citizens vote.



Left-wing groups and Democratic leaders frame the SAVE Act as an attack on democracy. Their preferred system—same-day registration, unrestricted mail ballots, automatic registration through motor-voter agencies, and minimal verification—maximizes turnout while minimizing accountability. That system benefits parties and candidates who rely on high-volume, low-scrutiny voting. It does not benefit the citizen who works a full day, shows up to vote, and expects his ballot to count equally with every other legal ballot.

Claims that millions of Americans lack the documents needed to prove citizenship are overstated and often deliberately so. Most Americans already possess a passport, birth certificate, or REAL ID. For those who do not, the solution is to help them obtain the documents—not to abandon the requirement. Married women who changed their names have long navigated the same paperwork for passports, Social Security, and bank accounts. The idea that asking for proof of citizenship is uniquely burdensome for voting is political theater.

The deeper objection is philosophical. Progressives have spent decades expanding the concept of “democracy” to mean maximum participation, even by non-citizens in some local elections. Conservatives still believe democracy means government by the consent of the governed—the governed being citizens. The SAVE Act draws that line clearly.

Midterm elections approach. Trust in the process remains fragile after years of polarized claims and counter-claims. The White House is right to treat the SAVE Act as urgent. Attaching it to must-pass funding legislation is a legitimate legislative tactic when the alternative is indefinite delay. Senate conservatives allied with the president understand this. Those who prefer endless process objections risk becoming the defenders of a status quo that invites skepticism.

Election integrity is not a partisan luxury.

It is the precondition for every other policy debate. Without confidence that only citizens decide American elections, the legitimacy of the winners—and the willingness of the losers to accept results—erodes.

President Trump's administration has chosen to confront that erosion head-on rather than manage it with soothing rhetoric.



## THE SAVE ACT IS STRAIGHTFORWARD.

- ☒ Prove you are a citizen.
- ☒ Show identification.
- ☒ Cast a ballot that can be verified.

These are the rules of a serious republic. The White House has made them a national priority because the alternative is continued vulnerability, continued doubt, and the slow death of public faith in the one process that binds the nation together.

**CONGRESS SHOULD PASS  
THE BILL.**

**THE AMERICAN PEOPLE  
HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH.**





# AMERICA'S GREATEST PROMISE

## The Enduring Power of the American Dream

By David Colbert



As the United States approaches its 250th birthday, a familiar dirge rises from the progressive left: the American Dream is dead. Bernie Sanders calls it a “nightmare.” Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and her allies insist the system is rigged by billionaires, systemic racism, and capitalism itself. A recent Gallup poll commissioned with the Milken Center found that only 46 percent of Americans still believe everyone has the opportunity to achieve it—down from 51 percent just two years earlier. Democrats are three times more likely than Republicans to declare the Dream a failure. Yet the data, the lived experience of millions, and the stubborn reality of American achievement tell a different story. The American Dream is not dead. It is under assault—from the very forces that claim to champion the little guy. Its enduring power lies precisely in the principles the left seeks to dismantle: individual liberty, free enterprise, personal responsibility, the nuclear family, and the rule of law. These are not nostalgic relics. They remain the greatest engine of human flourishing the world has ever known.

James Truslow Adams coined the phrase in 1931: a dream of a land “in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” Not according to identity group. Not according to government redistribution. Not according to the latest academic theory of equity. According to ability and achievement. That promise is written into the Declaration’s assertion of equal creation and unalienable rights, and into a Constitution designed to limit government so free people can rise.

Conservatives still hold to this definition. Liberals have quietly rewritten it. As the Heritage Foundation has documented, the left now treats the Dream as a demand for equal outcomes engineered by the state. Income inequality becomes the mortal sin; mobility and rising living standards are dismissed as inconvenient facts. Focus on inequality, Heritage argues, “embraces a very different American Dream” that prioritizes egalitarianism and statism over opportunity.

The evidence that the traditional Dream still works is overwhelming. Absolute material progress continues. Inflation-adjusted post-tax-and-transfer incomes have risen substantially across the distribution. Poverty, properly measured by consumption rather than the flawed official rate, has fallen dramatically. Low-income households today enjoy amenities—air conditioning, multiple televisions, vehicles, smartphones—that would have astonished the middle class of 1960. The United States still leads the world in per-capita GDP, innovation, and the creation of world-beating companies. Twenty of the 25 largest global firms are headquartered here.

Immigrants understand this better than many native-born Americans. Foreign-born adults are more likely to define the Dream as opportunity rather than security, more likely to believe hard work gets you ahead, and more optimistic about the future. They are living proof. Nearly half of the 2025 Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or their children. Elon Musk arrived from South Africa and built Tesla and SpaceX. Sergey Brin fled the Soviet Union as a child and co-founded Google. Hamdi Ulukaya, a Turkish immigrant, turned a shuttered yogurt plant into Chobani and employed thousands. These are not anomalies. They are the American system working as designed.

Yes, absolute mobility—the share of children who earn more than their parents—has declined from the extraordinary rates of the post-World War II generation. Raj Chetty’s well-known research found the figure falling from roughly 90 percent for those born in 1940 to about 50 percent for those born in the 1980s. That is a real challenge. But it is not proof the Dream is dead, nor is it primarily the result of “greed” or “rigged capitalism.” Relative mobility has remained more stable. And the drivers of the decline are cultural and policy failures the left refuses to confront.

The most devastating is the collapse of the family. Out-of-wedlock births have soared from about 10 percent in 1970 to over 40 percent overall and nearly 70 percent among Black Americans. Children raised in intact, married households have dramatically higher odds of upward mobility, educational attainment, and escape from poverty. The welfare state, expanded massively since the 1960s, has subsidized single parenthood and penalized marriage. It has spent trillions while trapping generations in dependency. Able-bodied adults who do not work, or work only sporadically, cannot climb. The culture of work itself has eroded; media and elite messaging often treat industriousness as optional or even oppressive.

Public education has failed the poor most of all. Despite doubled real spending per pupil, proficiency rates remain dismal, especially for minority students. Teachers’ unions protect mediocrity and resist choice. Occupational licensing has exploded, blocking entry into trades that once offered ladders for the non-college-bound. Zoning and land-use regulations drive up housing costs in the very coastal metros that preach equity while pricing out the working class. A regulatory state that costs the economy trillions annually and a fiscal trajectory of unsustainable debt both mortgage the future of the next generation.



Then there is the cultural poison of grievance ideology. Identity politics teaches young people that their fate is determined by race, gender, or historical grievance rather than character, effort, and choices. DEI regimes in corporations and universities actively discriminate against the competent in the name of equity. This is the opposite of the American Dream. It replaces the color-blind ideal of Martin Luther King Jr. with a neo-racial hierarchy. It tells strivers that the game is fixed against them—precisely the message that discourages the hard work the Dream requires. As Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute has warned, the claim that the Dream is dead, repeated by populists of left and right, risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

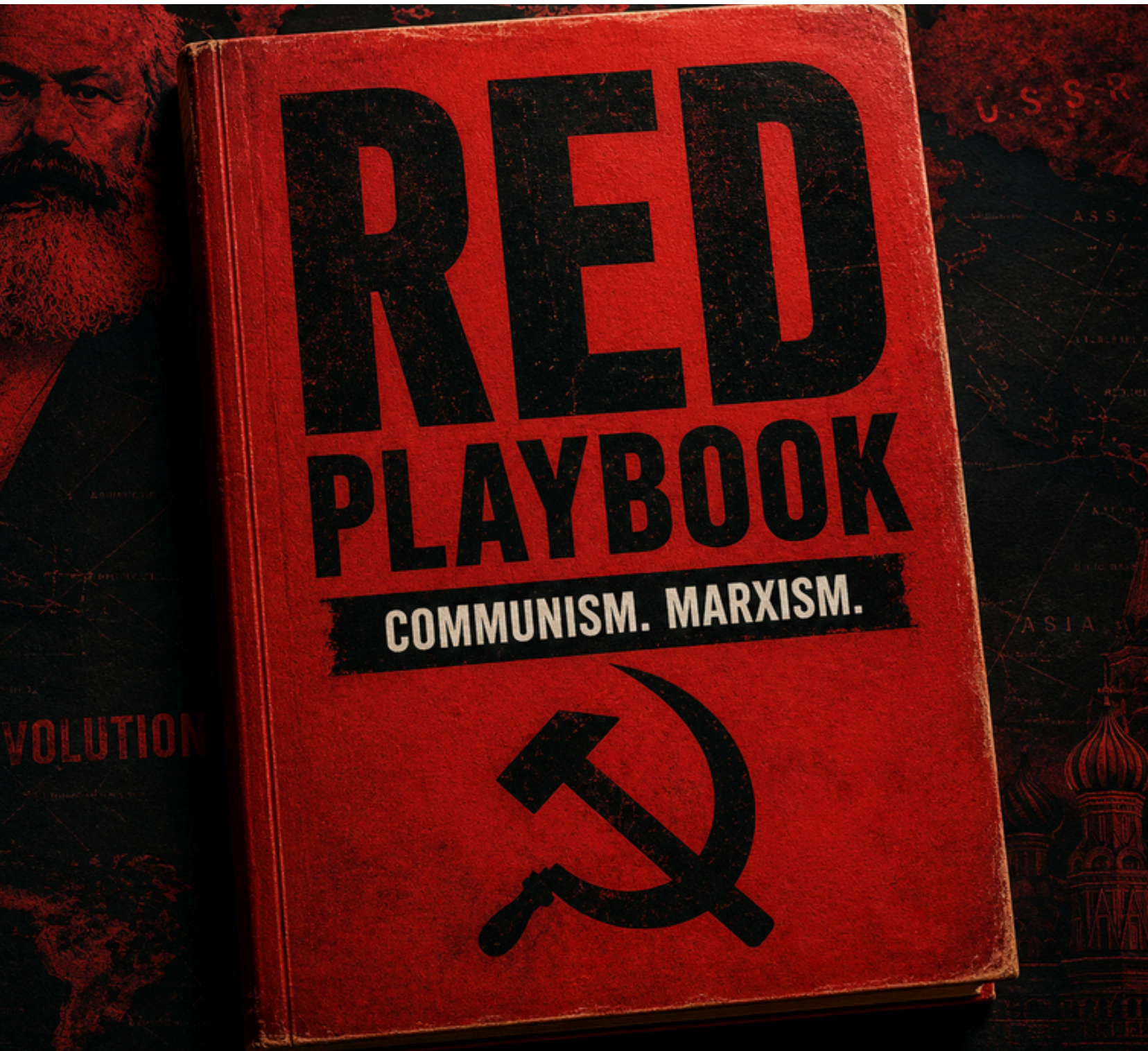
The left's preferred solutions—higher taxes, more redistribution, industrial policy that picks winners, open borders without assimilation, and ever-expanding bureaucracy—worsen the problem. They expand the state that already crowds out private initiative. They weaken the family and the work ethic. They treat Americans as clients rather than citizens. History shows that societies which prioritize equality of outcome over equality of opportunity stagnate. Venezuela, Cuba, and the late Soviet Union are not models; they are warnings.

What, then, preserves the Dream? First, restore economic freedom: cut the regulatory thicket, reform occupational licensing, and allow housing markets to function. Second, reform the safety net so it is temporary and work-oriented, ending marriage penalties. Third, break the education monopoly with school choice so every child, regardless of zip code, can acquire the skills the modern economy rewards. Fourth, celebrate and protect the cultural foundations: marriage, delayed gratification, patriotism, and assimilation for legal immigrants who come to become Americans, not to transform America into a balkanized collection of grievances.

Then there is the cultural poison of grievance ideology. Identity politics teaches young people that their fate is determined by race, gender, or historical grievance rather than character, effort, and choices. DEI regimes in corporations and universities actively discriminate against the competent in the name of equity. This is the opposite of the American Dream. It replaces the color-blind ideal of Martin Luther King Jr. with a neo-racial hierarchy. It tells strivers that the game is fixed against them—precisely the message that discourages the hard work the Dream requires. As Michael Strain of the American Enterprise Institute has warned, the claim that the Dream is dead, repeated by populists of left and right, risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The American Dream has never been a guarantee of equal results. It has always been a promise of equal dignity under law and the freedom to rise as far as talent and effort allow. That promise is why people still risk everything to reach these shores. It is why, even amid declining confidence in universal opportunity, 78 percent of Americans still say the Dream is important to strive for and nearly 70 percent believe they personally can achieve it.

As we mark 250 years, the choice is stark. We can listen to those who declare the Dream a cruel myth and demand ever more power for the state to “fix” it. Or we can recommit to the principles that made it real: limited government, free markets, strong families, and a culture that honors work and achievement. The Dream endures not because government delivers it, but because free people pursue it. That is America's greatest promise. It is still ours to keep—or to squander.



# RED PLAY BOOK

The Growing Debate Over Socialism,  
Communism, and America's Future



For generations, the United States stood as the world's leading defender of free markets, constitutional government, private property, and individual liberty. During the Cold War, Americans understood the difference between freedom and totalitarianism because millions had witnessed the consequences of communist rule across Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, North Korea, and the Soviet Union. Today, however, a new ideological debate is reshaping American politics. Increasing numbers of younger Americans express favorable opinions toward socialism, while progressive politicians increasingly embrace policies that conservatives argue expand government control over the economy and everyday life. Polling also shows that many Americans believe the nation has drifted away from its founding principles, fueling a broader national debate over the future of the American experiment.

For conservatives, this is not merely another election issue. It is a battle over the nation's identity.

## A Generational Shift

Recent polling has revealed a significant generational divide. While older Americans generally retain favorable views of capitalism, younger voters are more divided. Surveys conducted by the libertarian Cato Institute found that younger Americans express greater openness toward socialism than previous generations, and a notable minority even view communism favorably. Other national polling similarly shows ideological differences between generations, though support varies depending on how questions are phrased and what respondents understand by the terms *"socialism"* and *"communism."*

Conservatives argue that these trends reflect a growing lack of historical understanding. Millions of Americans under the age of thirty never experienced the Cold War, never watched the Berlin Wall fall, and never lived under the constant threat of Soviet nuclear confrontation. To many younger voters, socialism is associated with expanded government services rather than with the authoritarian systems that ruled much of the twentieth century.

Critics of socialism contend that this distinction is dangerous because economic systems and political power often become closely linked. They argue that history demonstrates how concentrated government control over the economy can also concentrate political authority.



## The Conservative Warning

Across conservative institutions—including policy organizations, commentators, and elected officials—a consistent message has emerged: America's greatest strength has always been individual freedom rather than centralized government.

The Heritage Foundation recently argued that America faces challenges involving declining patriotism, weakened civic identity, and renewed ideological conflict over the nation's founding principles. Heritage scholars contend that preserving constitutional government requires strengthening civic education, national identity, and respect for America's constitutional traditions.

Many conservatives believe that socialism fundamentally changes the relationship between citizens and government. Rather than government serving the people, they argue, socialism gradually makes citizens increasingly dependent upon government programs, regulations, and bureaucracies.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly framed socialism and communism as incompatible with the American constitutional system, warning that expanding federal power threatens economic liberty and individual freedom. During the 2026 political debate, Republican leaders have continued emphasizing this contrast while criticizing the growing influence of democratic socialist candidates within parts of the Democratic Party.





## Capitalism Built the American Dream

The American Dream has never promised equal outcomes. Instead, it promised equal opportunity under the law. That distinction remains central to conservative philosophy.

From Silicon Valley innovators to family-owned farms across the Midwest, American capitalism has rewarded innovation, entrepreneurship, investment, and hard work. While no economic system is perfect, conservatives argue that capitalism has lifted more people out of poverty than any alternative in human history.

Private enterprise produced revolutionary advances in medicine, transportation, communications, computing, and artificial intelligence. It rewarded risk-taking and competition rather than political loyalty.

## The Historical Record

History remains central to the conservative critique.

Throughout the twentieth century, communist governments exercised extensive state control over economic activity while severely restricting political freedoms. Countries including the former Soviet Union, Maoist China, Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge, North Korea, Cuba, and Eastern European communist states experienced varying degrees of political repression, censorship, and economic hardship under authoritarian rule.

Historians continue to debate specific historical interpretations and casualty estimates across these regimes. However, there is broad scholarly agreement that many communist governments engaged in widespread political repression and large-scale human rights abuses.

Conservatives argue that these historical experiences should remain part of public education whenever socialism or communism is discussed.



## Why Are Young Americans Listening?

Conservatives acknowledge that frustration exists.

Housing costs have increased.

College debt remains significant for many graduates.

Younger Americans face higher living expenses and economic uncertainty.

Those concerns are genuine.

The disagreement centers on the solution.

Progressive politicians frequently argue that larger government programs, expanded public spending, and increased regulation can address these challenges. Conservatives instead argue for policies that encourage economic growth through lower taxes, deregulation, energy production, workforce development, educational choice, and private-sector investment. The debate therefore is not whether problems exist. It is whether more government or more economic freedom offers the better answer.

## Education and Civic Knowledge

Many conservatives believe America's educational system has increasingly emphasized criticism of the nation's failures while giving less attention to its constitutional achievements and democratic institutions.

They argue that students should learn honestly about slavery, segregation, and discrimination while also understanding the Constitution, separation of powers, religious liberty, federalism, private property, and the extraordinary expansion of freedom that followed the nation's founding.

Without historical context, conservatives warn, younger Americans may underestimate the importance of constitutional protections that previous generations fought to preserve.





## Faith, Family, and Freedom

Conservatism traditionally views economic freedom as only one pillar of American society.

Strong families.

Religious liberty.

Local communities.

Personal responsibility.

Limited government.



These principles are often presented together rather than separately. Recent polling also suggests that many Americans continue placing high importance on religious freedom and constitutional rights, issues that remain central to conservative political priorities. Conservatives argue that preserving these institutions reduces dependence upon centralized government by strengthening civil society itself.

## The Political Landscape

America's ideological divide continues to widen.

Research from Pew shows that highly engaged conservative voters increasingly describe themselves as MAGA supporter supporting smaller government, stricter immigration policies, traditional social values, and free-market economics. At the same time, progressive activists continue advocating expanded government involvement in healthcare, education, housing, labor policy, and wealth redistribution.

This growing polarization is unlikely to disappear soon.

Instead, it is becoming one of the defining political questions heading toward America's next generation of elections.



## The Real Red Play Book

For conservatives, the phrase "Red Play Book" is not merely political rhetoric. It represents a warning against expanding centralized government authority beyond constitutional limits. Critics of socialism argue that history repeatedly demonstrates how excessive government control can diminish economic freedom, weaken private enterprise, and increase political dependence on the state. Supporters of democratic socialism reject that characterization, arguing instead for stronger social safety nets within democratic institutions. The disagreement reflects fundamentally different visions of government's proper role.

Conservatives maintain that America's success has never depended on government planning.

It depended on free citizens.

Free markets.

Free speech.

Private property.

Religious liberty.

And constitutional limits on government power.

## America's Choice

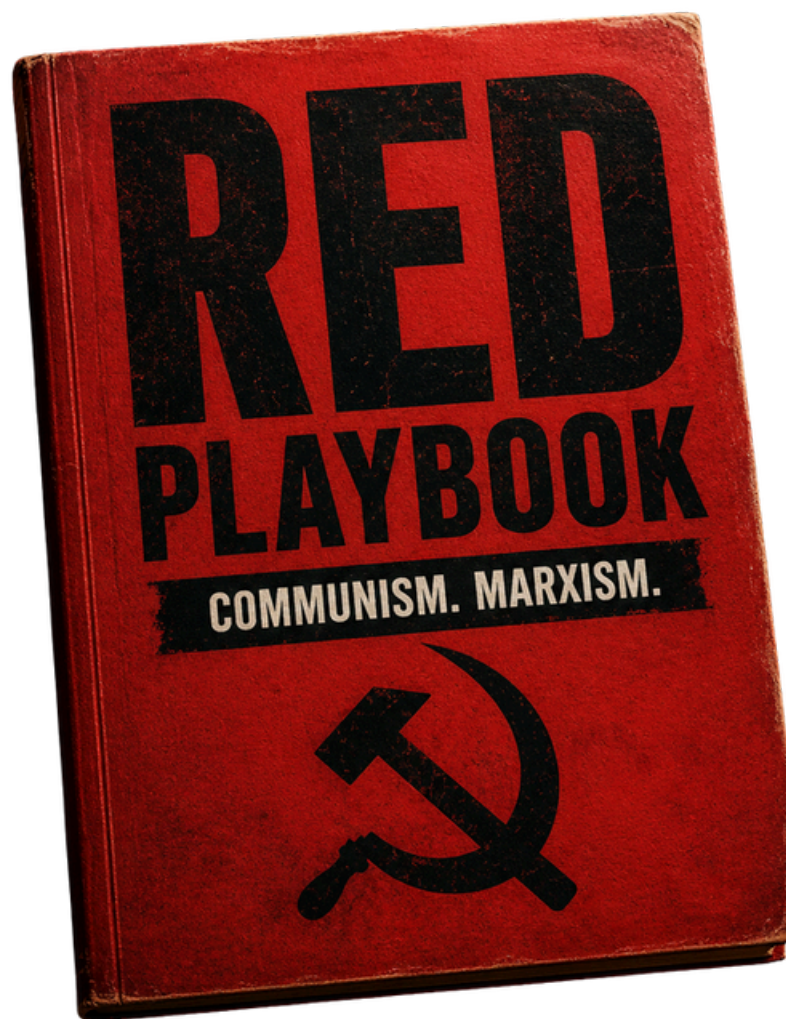
As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary, Americans increasingly ask whether the nation remains faithful to its founding ideals. Polling suggests many believe the country has moved away from those principles even while remaining optimistic about America's long-term future.

That debate will shape elections.

It will shape education.

It will shape economic policy.

Most importantly, it will shape the next generation of Americans. The question facing voters is larger than Democrats versus Republicans. It is whether America will continue emphasizing constitutional liberty, free enterprise, and limited government—or embrace a larger role for government in directing economic and social life. Conservatives believe the answer should remain clear. The American Dream was never built by government decree. It was built by free people pursuing opportunity under the Constitution. That, they argue, remains the strongest playbook America has ever written.





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