



Appreciate America's progress

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Kudos to Robert Samuelson for a healthy dose of reality in Saturday's Daily News.

If you were to take what many of the current candidates are saying about America at face value, you might conclude the country is quickly going to hell in a handbasket.

In fact, after listening to their cynical ramblings, you would probably believe our best days are behind us and our inevitable demise is just around the corner.

We may as well grab our canned goods, load our shotguns and head for the basement to brace for the imminent chaos that's obviously a foregone conclusion.

Really? Things have never been worse? I'll bet if you could have spent some time with my grandparents you might have a different perspective on how "bad" the state of affairs is in 2016.

Consider what Samuelson has to say about what America was like in 1915:

"Adjusted for inflation, men's wages were about a third of what full-time workers earn now. The average work week in manufacturing hovered around 50 hours. Less than a third of homes had electric lights. Less than a fifth of the adult population were high school graduates. Life expectancy at birth was 54.5 years."

I know judgments about quality of life always entail some subjectivity, but I'm also fairly certain if we could be magically transported back in time 100 years, most of us would find living conditions infinitely worse than they are now.

So the next time you hear some aspiring politician moaning about how our nation is headed in the wrong direction, keep in mind that for even the worst off among us, circumstances are infinitely better than they were a few short decades ago.

We need to spend more time counting our blessings and less time inventorying our grievances.

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