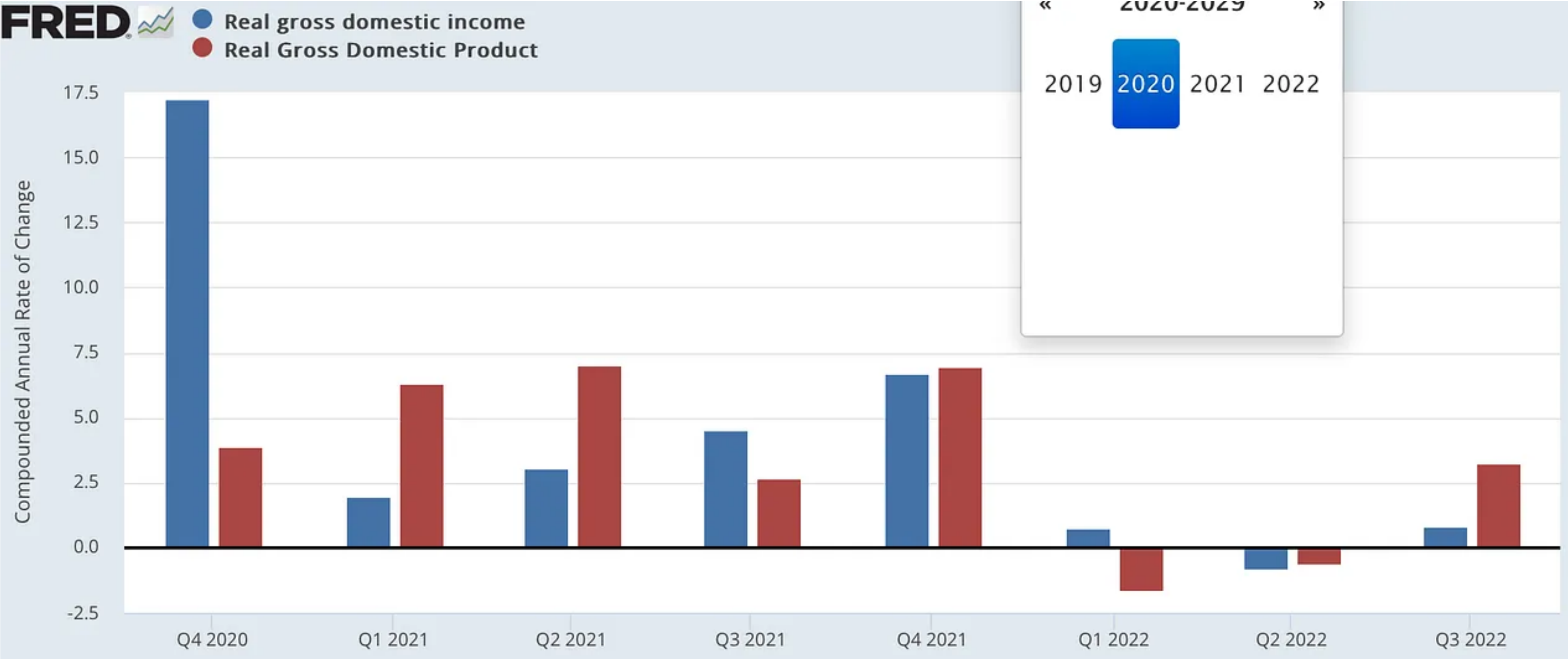**CONDITION: Gross Domestic *Product* & Gross Domestic *Income*:**

These two should be exactly the same. That they are not makes understanding the current state of the economy… rather difficult:

FOCUS: Why Oh Why Can't We Have a Better Press Corps?: Yet Another Semafor/New York Times Edition:

In the end, the internet threat did not lead to a better American press corps than we had back in the days of Izzy Stone. In fact, I think it is somewhat worse. Fox News and company are clear to me. But it is not clear to me why the mainstream is not better. I only know that is it not.

For example: McConnell's aim since election day 2008 has been to deny Democratic presidents any legislative victories whatsoever. The business of the country can, he thinks (with notably rare exceptions) be done when a Republican is in the oval office. Legislative gridlock is the first step to painting the Democratic president as a failure, and then winning congressional majorities and the presidency:

Michael Grunwald: 'Biden says that during the [2008-2009] transition, he was warned not to expect any cooperation on many votes. "I spoke to seven different Republican Senators, who said, `Joe, I'm not going to be able to help you on anything,'" he recalls. His informants said McConnell had demanded unified resistance. "The way it was characterized to me was: `For the next two years, we can't let you succeed in anything. That's our ticket to coming back,'" Biden says. The vice president says he hasn't even told Obama who his sources were, but Bob Bennett of Utah and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania both confirmed they had conversations with Biden along these lines…

And then last week we had:

Steve Clemons: As is so often the case, Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. got what he wanted: 'The Senate minority leader ignored the jeering from his right and helped push through the $1.7 trillion omnibus bill that rained billions more on the Pentagon than the White House had requested, secured aid for Ukraine, and kept down domestic spending…. It was part of a successful strategy to pursue some of his own self-interested goals, like keeping centrists happy so they would protect the filibuster…

But what McConnell wanted was gridlock—"we can't let you succeed in anything. That's our ticket!"

He could not get gridlock, because gridlock was unacceptable to the unified Democratic caucus.

So McConnell settled. And then was double-crossed by Manchin, or fell victim to wishful thinking. He thought that he had killed all components of Build Back Better in exchange for allowing CHIPS to go forward, and then found himself watching not just CHIPS but the IRA go down the tracks.

And yet Steve Clemons portrays it as McConnell's "successful strategy".

Is he dumb? Is he in the tank?

I really do not know why he has to burnish the image of Mitch McConnell as all-controlling Svengali.

At least with Maggie Haberman, we don't have to wonder why she does what she does:

> **Cassidy Hutchinson**: ˜His phone is ringing. I look down at his phone. It's Maggie Haberman calling him. And I looked at Stefan, and I said, "Stefan, did you tell Maggie Haberman that we were meeting with the committee today?"
>
> And he's like, "No, no. Maybe that's not what she's calling me about."
>
> And I said, "Stefan, did you tell Maggie that we were meeting with the committee today?"
>
> And he said, "No, no, but I should probably answer to see if she knows, right? I should answer."
>
> And I said, "Stefan, no. I don't think you should answer that call. She probably wants to know if we met with the committee today."
>
> He said, "Cass, I'm just going to answer. It will just be 2 seconds. I just want to find out what she's going to talk to me about."
>
> He answers. I can't hear what she's saying, but I hear Stefan say, "Yeah, yeah, we did just leave her third interview. You can put it out, but don't" don't" don't" don't" make it too big of a deal. I don't think she'll want it to be too big of a deal. All right. Thanks."
>
> And I said, "Stefan, was that Maggie Haberman asking about my interview?"
>
> And he said, "Yeah, but don't worry. She's not going to make it a big deal."
>
> I said, "Stefan, I don't want this out there."
>
> He said, "Don't worry. Like, Maggie's friendly to us. We'll be fine."
>
> So I was just like, "Whatever" …

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MUST-READ: & We Have a Rainy Season Here in California!

Hooray!

[NWS Bay Area 🌉 @NWSBayArea](#)
[Preliminary (not official) rainfall🌧, totals looking back 48 hours, ending 6 am this morning. #cawx](#)

48HR Precip Totals (in)			
Mount Tamalpais RAWS Marin 2338ft		4.76	
Manchester	4.57	Soquel	4.57
Manchester	4.46	Napa Justin-siena Hs	4.43
2 E Fetters Hot Spring	4.28	Rohnert Park	4.22
Santa Cruz	4.18	Ross	4.16
Austin Creek--Russian River	4.04	Santa Cruz	3.99
Soquel	3.99	Windsor	3.93
Fairfax	3.92	Graton	3.90
Occidental	3.78	Cazadero	3.73
Kentfield	3.68	Windsor	3.68
Ben Lomond Mountain (raws)	3.67	Boyes Hot Springs	3.63
UC-DAVIS MARINE LAB BODEGA 6 WSW CA US	3.59	Felton	3.47

1 ENE Windsor	3.44	Sebastopol	3.40
Sebastopol	3.39	Woodacre Raws	3.37
Oak Ridge	3.36	Felton	3.36
Mill Valley	3.31	Cloverdale	3.29
Mill Valley	3.27	Santa Rosa	3.24
Los Gatos	3.16	Santa Rosa	3.15
Sonoma	3.12	Lagunitas	3.10
Mill Valley	3.05	Kenwood	3.03

valid as of Wed Dec 28th 06:31 am - NWS San Francisco Bay Area
photo by: Brian Garcia

2:43 PM â^™ Dec 28, 2022

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BRIEFLY NOTED:

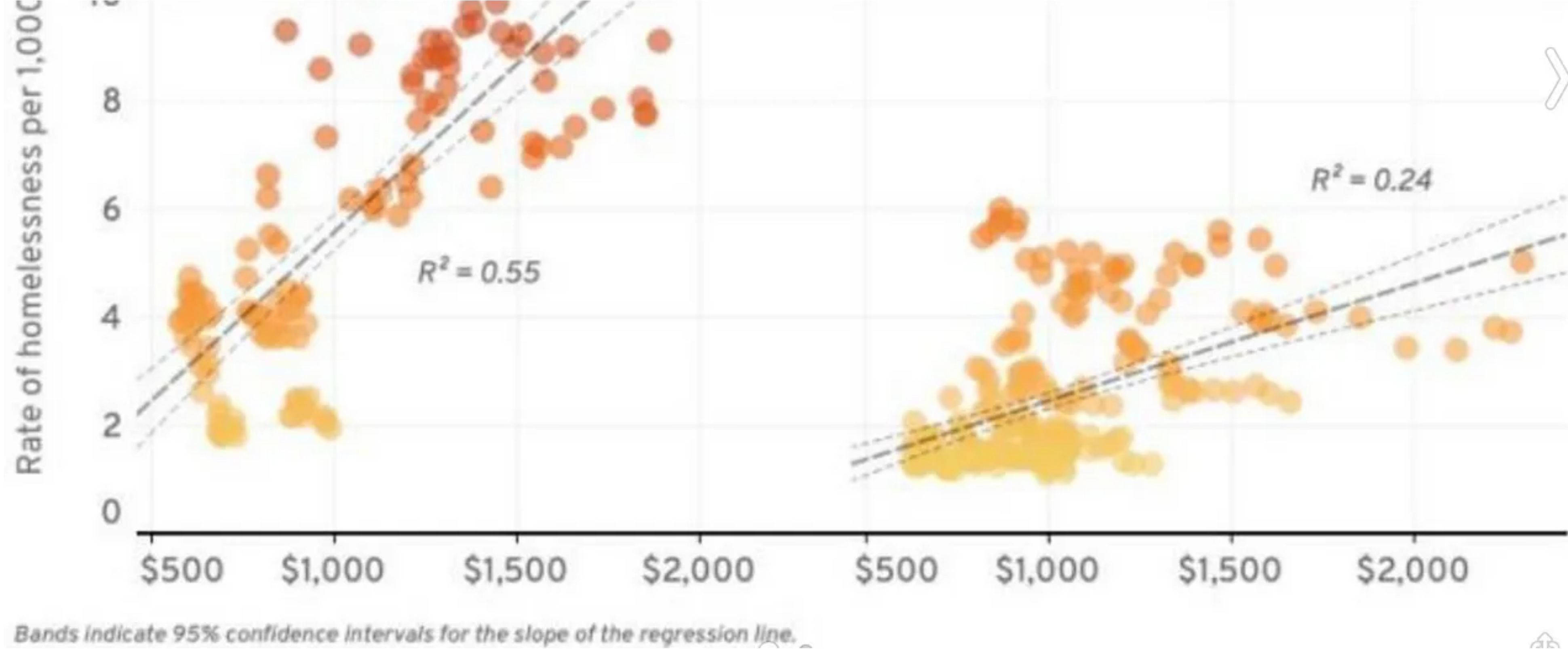**ONE AUDIO: Near-Term AI Forecasts:**

Unfortunately paywalled:

Ben Thompson: An Interview with Daniel Gross and Nat Friedman about ChatGPT and the Near-Term Future of AIâ€¦ â€˜DG: [The] fundamental issueâ€¦ [is] Iâ€™m sayingâ€¦ the final wordsâ€¦ but thereâ€™re all sorts of things Iâ€™m not saying because I have a model of a world, of the listener, of Natâ€¦. Iâ€™mâ€¦reasoning throughâ€¦ word-by-wordâ€¦. These modelsâ€¦ were just trained on the final output by humans, not on the actual reasoningâ€¦. And soâ€¦ they lack a real fundamental piece of our psyche. We can see hintsâ€¦ [of] how valuable this isâ€¦ [in] examples ofâ€¦ thinking step-by-step...

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ONE IMAGE: Homelessness & Apartment Rents:

Median contract rent versus PIT count (per capita)

Dashed lines indicate a linear regression of per capita PIT counts onto median contract rent between 2007 and 2019 for a sample of U.S. regions.

Median contract rent in 2019 dollars

Cities

Counties

Rate of homelessness per 1,000

$R^2 = 0.24$

$R^2 = 0.55$

Bands indicate 95% confidence intervals for the slope of the regression line.

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Very Briefly Noted:

- **Brooke Masters:** Three ways Big Tech got it wrong: 'Racing for scale with buggy, money-losing products doesn't work in most sectors…

- **Adrian Daub:** It's a Festivus Debunking!: 'Whether you teach… or study… work in IT at Stanford… you can absolutely use the word "American"…. If you are responsible for putting standardized language on official Stanford websites, maybe you should consider using the more precise term "US citizen". And maybe also avoid the word "tr**ny". All of this can be gleaned from the document the *WSJ* so gleefully shared…

- **Sam Hammond:** How to profit off AI: 'Education seems especially exposed to disruption by near-term large language models.... So why not create an adaptive AI tutor?... Higher education may face the hardest reckoning.... If AIs can make anyone a good writer... many existing sources of status distinction will likely wither away.... No one should expect unemployed coal miners to "learn to code," almost anyone can "learn to prompt"...

- **John Ganz:** What Makes Fascism Fascist?: 'Conservatives tend to emphasize the patriarchal and staid parts of traditional masculinity"the stern but beneficent father... but the fascists' cult of masculinity... explicitly centers violence and war.... Authoritarian conservatives... [prefer the]] break with constitutional legality... to originate within the existing Élite...

- **Matt Yglesias:** Why hasn't technology disrupted higher education already?: 'The past couple of centuries have seen a steady increase in the market demand for certain kinds of skills…. People want… training to earn a better living, and education as a formal process is a very useful motivational crutch...

- **Casey Newton:** How Elon botched his war on bots: 'All of this is, to say the least, a fluid situation…. But I'd rather risk being out of the loop than give any of my best work to Gab Jr. The Twitter we once knew as dead, and what replaced it is well on its way toward becoming a smoking ruin...

- **Paul Campos:** The wrong path: 'Here is somebody in their mid-30s, whose net worth is currently down to $2.5 million, who is devastated by the realization that they'll never be able to afford a $10 million house on a W-2 income…

- **Eric Jones:** Preface and acknowledgements - The European Miracle: 'Oscar Wilde expected to be met at the Pearly Gates by St Peter bearing an armful of sumptuously bound volumes and declaring, "Mr Wilde, these are your unwritten works". I have often felt that *The European Miracle* would turn out to be among St Peter's armful for me...

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Â¶s:

Ã‰milio Torres: [â€˜Those whoâ€™ve followed me](#) for the past year know that Iâ€™ve published lots of critiques of longtermismâ€”but very little about Effective Altruism (EA), out of which longtermism emerged. Well, buckle inâ€¦. EA is, frankly, a massive griftâ€¦. The EA community has so much money that the Centre for Effective Altruism, cofounded by MacAskill, even bought a â€œpalatial estateâ€ in Oxfordshireâ€¦ on the market just last year for *Â£15 million*â€¦. This is what EA isâ€¦. Just donâ€™t fall for the grift...

John Ganz: [The Dishonorable Society, Part 1](#): â€˜Dylan Rileyâ€™s formula for fascism requires a strongâ€”indeed overflowingâ€”civic life, and a lack of effective political leadership: in a kind of perverse form of democratic demand, society calls for a strong, technocratic leadership to replace parliamentary immobilism and govern directly in its interest. As Riley writes, â€œThey therefore attempted to replace political struggle, and representative institutions, with a form of nonpolitical interest representation. In this sense fascist regimes were never exactly rightist or leftist; they represented instead a distinctive rejection of politics as suchâ€ â€¦

David French: [The Oddly Intense Anger Against Volodymyr Zelensky](#): â€˜An astonishing outpouring of raw vitriol.... Donald Trump Jr. called Zelensky an â€œ[international welfare queen](#).â€ â€¦ Carlson said that Zelenskyâ€”who wore fatigues similar to the ones heâ€™s worn since the conflict startedâ€”â€œ[dressed like the manager of a strip club](#).â€ â€¦ Matt Walsh told his 1.2 million Twitter followers that Zelensky was a â€œ[grifting leech](#).â€ â€¦ Turning Point USA President Charlie Kirk, [said Zelensky](#) is â€œthe perfect person for DC. Barely can speak English, an actor, and totally corrupt.â€ â€¦ Partisan polarization doesnâ€™t just explain the fact of right-wing opposition to Ukraine; it also explains its raw intensity. Simply put, itâ€™s not about Ukraine. Itâ€™s about you. A key reason why the new right hates Zelensky is that the new right hates *you*. You are the real enemy, and anything or anyone you like, they will hateâ€¦. Polarization against the Democrats, against the Republican establishment, and against traditional Reagan conservatives like meâ€¦

Michael Strain: [The Myth of Income Stagnation](#): *Many economists, journalists, business leaders, and elected leaders (from both parties) believe that for a large share of households, real (inflation-adjusted) income has not increased for decades. But new data from a nonpartisan, independent arbiter show that what everyone seems to know just isn't so:* â€˜Median household income from market activitiesâ€¦ from 1990 to 2019â€¦ grew by 26%â€¦ in line with wage growthâ€¦. The bottom 20% of households enjoyedâ€¦ market income growth of 51% and after-tax-and-transfer income growth of 74%â€¦. While inequality of post-tax-and-transfer income did rise by 7% from 1990 to 2019, all the increase occurred between 1990 and 2007, before the explosion of political and media interest in inequality. Since 2007, inequality has fallen by 5%...
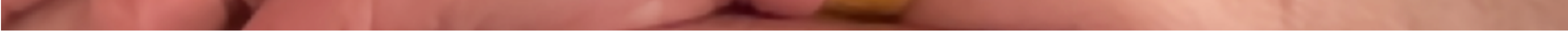
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