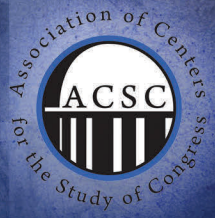
The Divided State of America:

How can we get work done even when we disagree?

A Discussion Guide for Community Dialogue

Developed by the Association of Centers
for the Study of Congress



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This discussion guide for community dialogue was prepared by the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC) in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. The partnership fulfills an ACSC goal to provide its member institutions training and experience in establishing civic engagement programs that foster public deliberation on important issues that come before Congress and the nation. As a three-year project, Phase I provided training and helped establish National Issues Forums through various ACSC-member congressional centers. In Phase II, the participating congressional centers named and framed an issue of importance to ACSC through the deliberative dialogue process. Project products are this issue guide and support materials for public deliberation that can be shared with ACSC members and others.

In 2003, ACSC was founded as an independent alliance of institutions and organizations that support a wide range of programs designed to inform and educate students, scholars, policy-makers, and members of the general public on the history of Congress, the legislative process, and current issues facing Congress. ACSC encourages the preservation of material that documents the work of Congress, including the papers of representatives and senators, and supports programs that make those materials available for educational and research use. The association welcomes the participation of institutions and individuals committed to the goal of promoting a better understanding of Congress.

The work of this project furthers the study of Congress and its relationship with those it represents and nurtures robust public dialogue and deliberation, pillars of representative democracy. At the same time, the project has brought ACSC members together for a common purpose, and together they have accomplished more than they might have achieved as individual organizations. The overarching desire is for ACSC congressional centers to build something together with potential to be enduring and valuable. In addition to their own objectives, most of the centers participated to support ACSC in this goal.

Seven centers completed both phases of the project—Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center (University of Oklahoma), John Joseph Moakley Archive and Institute (Suffolk University), Claude Pepper Library (Florida State University), W. R. Poage Legislative Library (Baylor University), Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies (University of Georgia), South Carolina Political Collections (University of South Carolina), and John C. Stennis Center for Public Service. Geographically, the centers represent the states of Oklahoma, Massachusetts, Florida, Texas, Georgia, South Carolina and Mississippi.

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This work is the result of a collaboration with the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Any interpretations and conclusions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, its staff, directors or officers.

ORDERING INFORMATION

Copies of this book and support materials may be ordered from the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress at www.congresscenters.org. The discussion guide may also be downloaded from the association's web site.

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INTRODUCTION

America today is a house divided on many fronts. We are increasingly partisan in our politics. We are prone to spending time with people who think like we do. We avoid talking about public affairs with our relatives, co-workers and neighbors for fear of alienating people close to us.

Many of our media outlets amplify our differences and fuel polarization. Our lawmakers are increasingly stymied in their attempts to reach agreement on critical bills that affect our jobs, safety and future. Our deep divisions seem intractable at times.

Yet many Americans believe that we can and must find ways to address pressing public issues that are critical to our quality of life and the future of our country. The overarching question posed by this discussion guide is a practical one: How can we get work done even when we disagree?

By "work" we mean the multitude of tasks that make it possible for Americans to live in a civil and productive society. It includes how we listen and talk with each other, treat one another and make decisions together. This work happens everyday and everywhere, from our schools and communities to our nation's capitol.

This guide was developed by the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. It is based on interviews, focus groups and surveys of local citizens that were conducted by the Centers, materials from the Centers' collections and analysis of research and news accounts related to the issue.

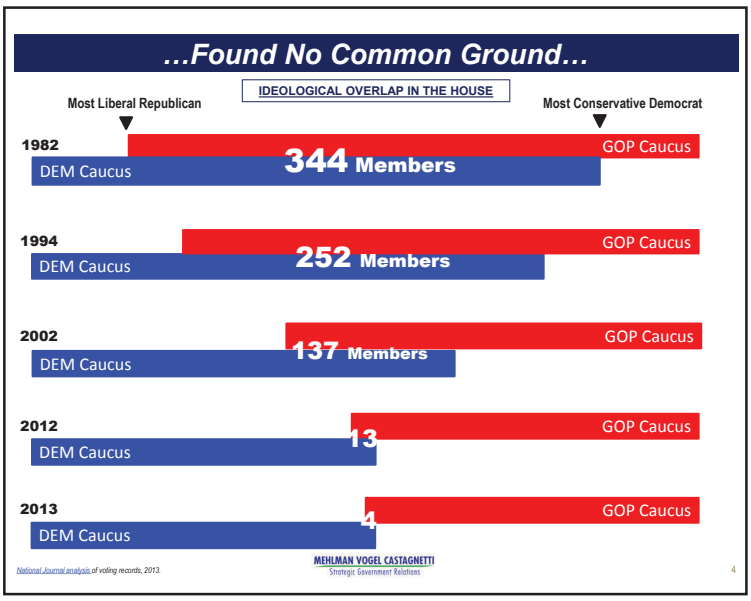
When differences become divisive

Living with differences is at the heart of democracy. Our diverse experiences, talents and perspectives bring strengths—as well as challenges – to public life. When differences intensify and are sustained over time, they can lead to polarization of opinion and behavior among both individuals and institutions.

Political observers say we're more polarized now than we've been since the Civil War.[1] [2] [3] [4] Over the past forty years, the political middle has nearly disappeared, with the number of moderates in the House of Representatives declining from 344 (79 percent) to only 11 (less than 3 percent), based on an analysis of *National Journal* vote rankings.[5]

People in communities echo that sentiment as they talk about feeling increasingly discounted, segregated and excluded based on their beliefs.

"When I think about how people accomplish tasks or achieve goals in this community, I see very segregated groups of people," said a man from Florida who was interviewed for this guide. "There is a sense of hostility among the various demographic groups that work separately to better their own portion of the community instead of working all together for the greater good."



Courtesy of Bruce Mehlman, Mehlman Vogel Castagnetti, Inc., 2013.

"I feel that if you are in any way conservative you are ostracized in my community," said a woman from Georgia. "It's not so blatant that you are shunned. It's more about not being able to find common ground to engage each other and generate trust. I am pretty much left out of things. The burden of creating that bridge is left to me, but the lack of reciprocating is not encouraging."

"Many of my politically moderate friends and family feel marginalized by the dominant conservative ideology," said a man from South Carolina. "If you're not a Christian, if you don't wear your religion or business affiliations on your sleeve, and if you aren't a member of certain organizations, you will not be taken seriously."

The divisions are fortified by what a woman from Delaware called "the labeling games: Tea Party, Liberals, Occupiers, Right-wingers, Right-to-Lifers and Feminists." The labels are reinforced in the media and absorbed into our collective language and behavior.

Gridlock, shutdown and loss of public confidence

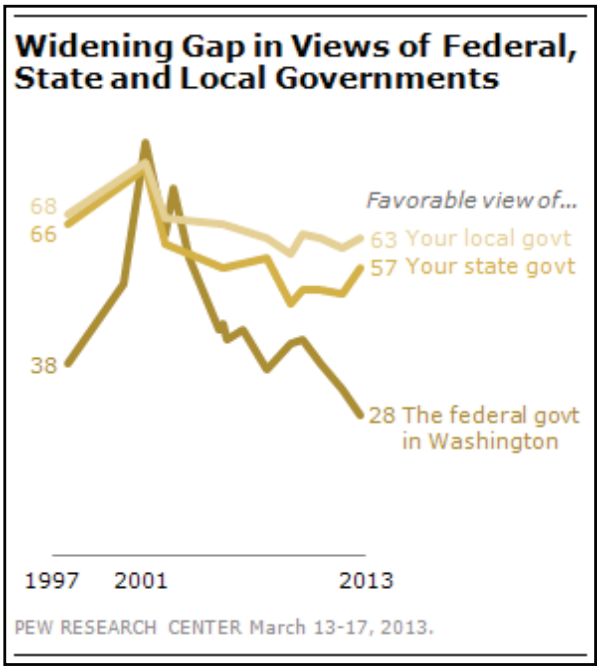
Polarization is undermining our ability to make public decisions at all levels. The 112th Congress (2011-2012) holds the distinction of being the least productive Congress on record, passing only 283 bills (50 bills fewer than the previous record low)[6] and finishing with a public approval rating of 18 percent.[7] Critics cited the failure to take timely action on a host of issues, including disaster relief for Hurricane Sandy victims, immigration reform, measures to reduce climate change and resolution of the federal budget crisis.[8]

When Congress failed to reach agreement on a federal budget in early 2013, across-the-board budget cuts (called "sequestration") were applied, without deliberation about their merits or consequences. Congressional disputes over the new federal budget beginning October 2013 resulted in a 16-day government shutdown, the furlough of federal workers, suspension of most services and a reduction in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Observers on both sides of the aisle say that Congress has changed dramatically "from a culture of legislating to a culture of campaigning," according to a report by the Bipartisan Policy Center and Woodrow Wilson Center. The shift in culture, they said, "has taken its toll on all aspects of the

Federal workers protest 16-day government shutdown, October 2013. Photograph by Keith Ellison, Minneapolis, MN. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

[Baldy cartoon depicts American political parties] [Atlanta, Ga.: *Atlanta Constitution*, circa 1959] Clifford H. (Baldy) Baldowski Editorial Cartoons. Courtesy of Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, The University of Georgia.



Pew Research Center, "Widening Gap in Views of Federal, State and Local Governments," March 13-17, 2013. http://www.people-press.org/2013/04/15/state-govermnents-viewed-favorably-as-federal-rating-hits-new-low/

institution, from committee bill markups and floor amendment debates, to conference committees and civility. The regular order of deliberative lawmaking has given way to winning at all costs, and bipartisan compromise is rare."

City councils and state legislatures are not immune from the nation's increasing divisiveness. And, like Congress, their favorable ratings by the public have declined during the last decade and a half.[9]

However, people's concerns about their state and local governments are far less than their concerns about what goes on in Washington. Almost two-thirds of Americans (63 percent) gave favorable ratings to their local governments, and over half (57 percent) rated their state governments favorably. Both Republicans and Democrats leaned toward the favorable side.

In contrast, the favorable ratings for the federal government fell to an all-time low of 28 percent. Favorable ratings among Democrats (41 percent) were higher than among Republicans (13 percent) and Independents (27 percent).

An erosion of trustworthy news

Americans' distrust of the news media is at an all-time high, according to a 2012 Gallup poll. Sixty percent of those polled said they don't trust newspapers, radio and television to report the news fully, accurately and fairly.[10]

"It is a short step from misinformation to mischief as we have seen repeatedly in recent policy debates," said Thomas Patterson, Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. "It's nearly impossible to have sensible public deliberation when large numbers of people are out of touch with reality."[11]

With the burgeoning of news online and via cable, many people are struggling to make sense of the

information overload and know which sources to trust. Some say that the dramatic changes in the news industry have eroded the critical role of professional journalists.

"Journalists are our chief sense-makers," said Patterson. "We need them to help us understand the world of public affairs beyond our direct experience. They cannot make up for glaring defects in others, including our educators and political leaders. Yet, as journalist Walter Lippmann noted, democracy falters 'if there is not steady supply of trustworthy and relevant news.'"

Disengaged citizens

Too many citizens are missing from public life altogether due to time, resources or attitudes. A woman from Georgia said, "I think many people are too busy with their own lives to worry or care. It is hard to think about 'we' when 'me' is so much at the forefront out of necessity or habit."

Others say that disillusionment with politics is driving people away, particularly among younger adults. In the 2012 national election, only 38 percent of young adults (ages 18 to 24) said they voted, compared to 63 percent of their parents' generation (ages 45-64).[12]

"This generation is not apathetic," argued Jed Ipsen, a University of Minnesota political science student, in a *New York Times* op-ed. "In fact, we volunteer in record numbers. This generation of Americans believes that it can best make a difference through these individual acts of volunteerism, rather than wade in murkier political waters. Our generation overwhelmingly rejects the current style of politics as a contact sport. We do not want to 'crossfire' and we do not want to play 'gotcha.'"[13]

Alienation and violence

"We have lost our sense of community, of oneness," wrote Ed Smith, former editor of *The Denver Post*, following the mass shooting at an Aurora movie theatre. "Our deep partisanship over public policy issues — taxation, environmental regulation, and yes, gun control — is spilling over into a nation split into camps. Not only are the people we disagree with wrong about policy issues, they're wrong about life. They are the other."[14]

This extreme alienation fuels movements that support violence against those viewed as "the other." Social networks, websites, forums and blogs promoting violence, anti-Semitism, homophobia, hate music and terrorism rose to 15,000 in 2012, an increase of 50 percent over the past three years.[15] More than 1,000 hate groups have been documented that target racial, religious and other minorities.[16]

WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Americans are deeply concerned about our dividedness. They worry that "polarization and isolation will keep this country from ever grappling with the terrible crises before it," as one survey respondent expressed. At the same time, many of the people who participated in the surveys and interviews indentified pockets of progress and signs of hope in their communities.

This guide explores different approaches to getting work done in our communities and our nation, even when we disagree. It offers three options as starting points for the dialogue. Although not mutually exclusive, the options reflect different ways of thinking about the problem.

OPTION 1: Revitalize cooperation

According to this view, we accomplish more by working with – instead of against – each other. The problem is we don't have the time, habits or public space needed to address our shared concerns and build the trust necessary to make decisions together. We should do more to "reach across the aisle" in our communities, states and nation.

OPTION 2: Stand up for what you believe

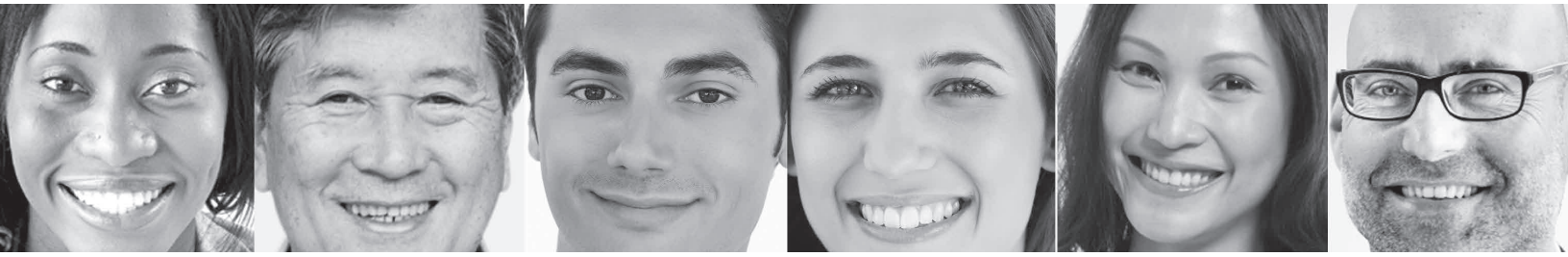
According to this view, we must speak our minds and uphold our principles. We should advocate for what is right, not what is expedient. Too many people are willing to give in to compromise instead of standing up for what they believe. Rather than minimize our differences, we should revitalize free speech and the practice of fair and honest debate.

OPTION 3: Bring more people in

According to this view, too many people are shut out of public life. We need people at the table who represent the diversity of our communities and nation in order to effectively address public problems. We should create new rules that guarantee the inclusion of all segments of American society in public and political life.

OPTION 1

Revitalize cooperation



"I see a vital need for the political center in order for our democracy to flourish and to find solutions that unite rather than divide us. We must return to an era of civility in government driven by a common purpose to fulfill the promise that is unique to America."[17] *- Olympia Snowe, former United States Senator from Maine*

According to this view, we accomplish more by working with – instead of against – each other. The problem is we don't have the time, habits or public space needed to address our shared concerns and build the trust necessary to make decisions together. We need more connections among individuals, organizations and public officials and a greater willingness to take action on matters of public concern, even when we disagree.

The dramatic changes in American society have created both opportunities and challenges to cooperation. For example, the Internet and social media have revolutionized our access to ideas, information and each other. At the same time, we're inclined to pick and choose sources of information that support our own opinions and limit our consideration of others.

Another challenge to cooperation is the chilling effect of big money from special interest groups to influence elections. The Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Citizens United vs. the Federal Election Commission* prohibits the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations, associations or labor unions. The infusion of these expenditures – for or against a lawmaker's position – makes it harder to compromise with people across the aisle for fear of retaliation.

Cooperation is at the heart of an effective democracy, say supporters of Option 1. Every generation has had to grapple with its own divisive issues. History shows that many of these issues were resolved when people chose to reach out and work with people with whom they disagreed.

Leading with cooperation

Former presidents have often used their influence to support goals they share with their successors, even when it means crossing party lines or overcoming personal resentments, according to Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy in their book *The Presidents Club.*

"They have relinquished power, but not influence," Gibbs and Duffy said of former presidents. "And so their influence becomes a piece of the sitting president's power. They can do more together than apart, and they

Former President Herbert Hoover (right) confers with President Harry Truman on his findings concerning the world food situation as representatives of 18 nations met to form an international emergency food council to chart the fight against hunger, June 20, 1946. Photograph by Harris & Ewing, Everett Collection Inc/Alamy.

all know it; so they join forces as needed to consult, complain, console, pressure, protect, redeem."[18]

One such case was the unlikely alliance formed by President Harry Truman and former President Herbert Hoover to avert mass starvation in Europe after World War II. Hoover, who organized the food relief effort following the first World War, had been exiled from politics after he was defeated by Franklin D. Roosevelt and widely blamed for the Great Depression.

Nevertheless, Hoover immediately offered his help to the newly inaugurated President Truman after FDR's death in 1945. Truman eventually accepted the offer, despite the long-standing hostility between Hoover and FDR. At Truman's request, Hoover spent two months traveling to countries affected by the war to assess their food needs and to help Truman craft an effective response. Hoover accepted a second assignment from President Truman in 1947 to head a commission to reorganize the executive branch of the federal government. The commission's recommendations led to a streamlined, more efficient post-war government.

The two men differed deeply on many issues. Hoover continued to oppose the New Deal policies of the Democrats, and Truman continued to blame the Republicans for the Depression during his presidential campaign in 1948. Yet, the men remained partners on matters of mutual concern.

"Across a devastated Europe, a hundred million people were at risk of starvation," said Gibbs and Duffy. "Truman was determined to help them. Hoover was the man who knew how, and from that simple equation an alliance was born. Together, Truman and Hoover probably saved more lives than any two players on the stage of the twentieth century."

Crossing the aisle to save Social Security

Since its creation in 1935, the Social Security program has been a source of controversy in American politics. In 1981, when President Ronald Reagan proposed steep cuts in benefits to keep the program solvent, he found no allies from either party in Congress. So he tried another tactic and appointed a bipartisan commission to recommend solutions to the problem.

The 15 commission members met monthly for most of 1982. By their last meeting in December, they had gathered data and agreed on the scope of the problem. But they failed to make any recommendations. It appeared that the work would end in stalemate.

In early January, two senators – Republican Robert J. Dole of Kansas and Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York – kept the issue in play. Just before the commission was to expire, Mr. Dole wrote an op-ed published in *The New York Times* that suggested an openness to compromise. Mr. Moynihan responded by walking across

the Senate aisle that morning, tapping Mr. Dole on the shoulder, and asking, "Are we going to let this commission die without giving it one more try?"[19]

The exchange led to meetings of the two senators, along with commission Chairman Alan Greenspan, Social Security expert Robert Ball, and Republican Representative Barber Conable. Dubbed "the gang of five," they crafted a set of recommendations that were approved by the commission by a vote of 12 to 3. With leadership from both parties in Congress and support from the president, the recommended reforms were adopted as part of the Social Security Amendments of 1983.

Bi-partisan group at first anniversary of the ADA signing. White House photograph (b38_f6), July 26, 1991, Robert J. Dole Papers. Courtesy of the Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas.

"Just a few months ago, there was legitimate alarm that social security would soon run out of money," said President Reagan at the bill-signing ceremony. "On both sides of the political aisle, there were dark suspicions that opponents from the other party were more interested in playing politics than in solving the problem. Political leaders of both parties set aside their passions and joined in that search. None of us here today would pretend that this bill is perfect. Each of us had to compromise one way or another. But the essence of bipartisanship is to give up a little in order to get a lot."[20]

Changing the rules of engagement

Lester Bates understood the importance of cooperation as the mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, during the Civil Rights era. The son of a tenant farmer, with only a third-grade education, Bates founded a profitable insurance company and eventually entered politics. After losing a tight race for governor, he won election as mayor of South Carolina's capital city in 1958.

One of his key strategies as mayor was to include all stakeholders when he established the Columbia Community Relations Council to help the city navigate the challenges of integration. The council was initially comprised of segregated committees, then combined, to help orchestrate peaceful race relations in Columbia.

In 1965, *Newsweek* magazine wrote that Columbia had, "liberated itself from the plague of doctrinal apartheid." While many contributed to the effort, Bates' leadership is widely recognized as a major factor in the peaceful integration of Columbia, one of a handful of large Southern cities to integrate without violence.[21]

Thirty years later in Boston, local leaders sought cooperation as an alternative to violence following the 1994 murders of two receptionists at abortion clinics by an anti-abortion gunman. Six women from pro-life and pro-choice organizations agreed to participate in four top-secret meetings convened by the Public Conversations Project to examine ways to prevent such violence in the future.

"Our talks would not aim for common ground or compromise," they wrote six years later in an article they co-authored for *The Boston Globe*. "Instead, the goals of our conversations would be to communicate

openly with our opponents, away from the polarizing spotlight of media coverage; to build relationships of mutual respect and understanding; to help de-escalate the rhetoric of the abortion controversy; and, of course, to reduce the risk of future shootings."[22]

The four meetings led to more than five years of private dialogue, much of it contentious, as the six women explored their own beliefs, their assumptions about their opponents and the implications of their public behavior toward each other. While they didn't change their positions on the issue, they did increase their understanding and respect of each other. Before long, their constituents and the media noted a different tone in how they spoke about their opponents.

Restoring respect and nonviolence to abortion debate (left to right): Barbara Thorp, Melissa Kogut, Madeline McComish, Nicki Nichols Gamble, Frances X. Hogan, Anne Fowler. Staff photograph by Barry Chin, January 28, 2001, *The Boston Globe.*

"In this world of polarizing conflicts, we have glimpsed a new possibility," they wrote, "a way in which people can disagree frankly and passionately, become clearer in heart and mind about their activism, and, at the same time, contribute to a more civil and compassionate society."

Potential drawbacks of Option 1?

People who have concerns about Option 1 say that cooperation can lead to compromises that keep the peace in our relationships at the expense of making tough decisions about what's really best for our community and country. Also, cooperation for the greater good is a noble goal, but the reality is that elected officials have to raise large amounts of money – much of it from powerful special interest groups – in order to get and stay in office.

OPTION 1

What should we do to revitalize cooperation?

The preceding stories illustrate how people with opposing perspectives can still come together to get work done. In most cases, their success involved building relationships and a willingness to consider opposing views. The people involved recognized urgent problems that needed to be addressed and put practical solutions above partisan ideology.

What implications do the stories have for the issues we now face in our communities and nation? Consider the following examples and others that come to mind.

OPTION 1 DISCUSSION

- √ What are the pros and cons of this option?
- √ Which actions are likely to have the greatest impact?
- √ Which actions are most do-able in terms of time, resources and public will?
- √ What trade-offs would each action involve?

1. Individuals could seek, consider and talk about views different from their own among their families, communities and political groups.
2. Civic and faith groups could sponsor nonpartisan public forums where people with different views can have constructive conversations about public problems and what to do about them.
3. Voters could ask candidates for public office about their history of working across party lines to get work done on public issues, and highlight their bipartisan experience in voter guides.
4. Individuals, organizations and government could provide more support for noncommercial news outlets, where the coverage of issues isn't affected by the opinions or expectations of advertisers.
5. Congressional leaders could institute a five-day workweek, with three weeks in Washington and one week at home. Currently, most members of Congress are in Washington from Tuesday to Thursday, which limits the time they have to work, socialize and build trust with each other.
6. The Federal Elections Commission could outlaw separate leadership political action committees (LPACs) and limit members of Congress to one PAC. This would help dampen the influence and divisiveness of big money from special interests.

OPTION 2

Stand up for what you believe

"Always vote for principle, though you may vote alone, and you may cherish the sweetest reflection that your vote is never lost." [23] - *John Quincy Adams, Sixth President of the United States*

According to this view, we must speak our minds and uphold our principles. Rather than minimize our differences, we should revitalize the practice of fair and reasoned debate. Too many people are willing to give in to compromise instead of standing up for what they believe. We should advocate for what is right, not what is expedient.

More and more people are checking out of public life, and that's hurting our communities and our country. Some feel they can't make a difference when up against powerful lobby groups that have more money and influence with decision-makers. Others are fed up with the rancor and disrespect they witness in the national media and their own town halls among people who disagree. The more people abdicate their role as citizens, the more power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few.

Standing up for what one believes requires courage and tenacity. It may mean taking an unpopular position. It demands time and energy, sometimes over many years. And the ultimate outcome may not be fully apparent in one's lifetime. But supporters of Option 2 insist that holding true to one's beliefs is what makes our nation great and our communities strong.

Building movements

Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, Jr., and David Richmond knew that if things were going to change in their community, more people had to take a stand. After their classes one day in February 1960, the four black college freshmen walked downtown

Ronald Martin, Robert Patterson, and Mark Martin stage sit-down strike after being refused service at a F.W. Woolworth luncheon counter, Greensboro, North Carolina, United Press International photograph, 1960, *New York World-Telegram & Sun* Photograph Collection. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-ppmsca-08095.

to the F.W. Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina. They sat down on the stools at the all-white lunch counter and ordered coffee.

When the waitress refused to serve them, they opened their books and began studying. The store manager hoped the students would eventually get bored and leave. But the students remained quietly at the lunch counter until the store manager decided to close the store early.

"I can tell you this," McCain recounted years later. "I was fully prepared mentally not to ever come back to the campus. I thought the worst thing that could happen to us is we could have had our heads split open with a night stick and be hauled into prison."[24]

The four men had planned their protest without telling anyone. After their action at the lunch counter, they worked on recruiting other students to the cause. They returned daily to the Woolworth counter, and by the fourth day, the group of student protesters had grown to 300. The sit-in spread to the Kress store down the street. Counter-protesters heckled the students, but there were few physical altercations.

The Greensboro demonstrations were covered by newspapers, radio and television. Soon students in Winston-Salem, Durham and Raleigh were holding local sit-ins. The movement spread to Tennessee, Mississippi and Virginia.

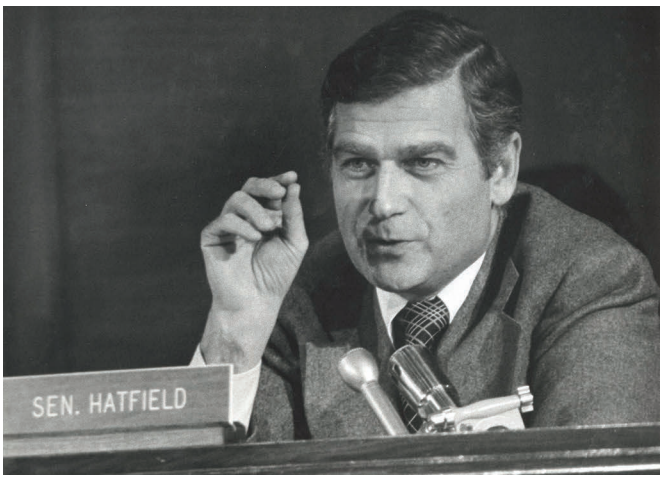
"We didn't want to put the world on fire, we just wanted to eat," said Blair (who now goes by the name Jibreel Khazan). "But behind it, I feel we did have the idea that this would catch on. We were hoping it would catch on and it would spread throughout the country, but it went even beyond our wildest imagination."[25]

The Greensboro sit-ins lasted three weeks, until city officials offered to help negotiate an agreement. The demonstrations resumed in April after the negotiations failed, with an estimated 1,200 local college students picketing various businesses. Many stores gradually began to integrate. The Woolworth lunch counter was integrated on July 25, 1960, when it served lunch to three of its black employees, four years before the passage of the Civil Rights Act.

Breaking ranks

Taking a stand isn't limited to opposing the actions of people with whom we have deep and long-standing differences. Acting on one's beliefs can also put people at odds with their allies, undermine their group's agenda and damage their own careers.

"I pray for the integrity, justice, and courage to vote the correct vote, not the political vote," the late Senator Mark Hatfield said early in his career.[26] It was a prayer that would guide the Oregon Republican throughout his political life, sometimes to the chagrin of his party.



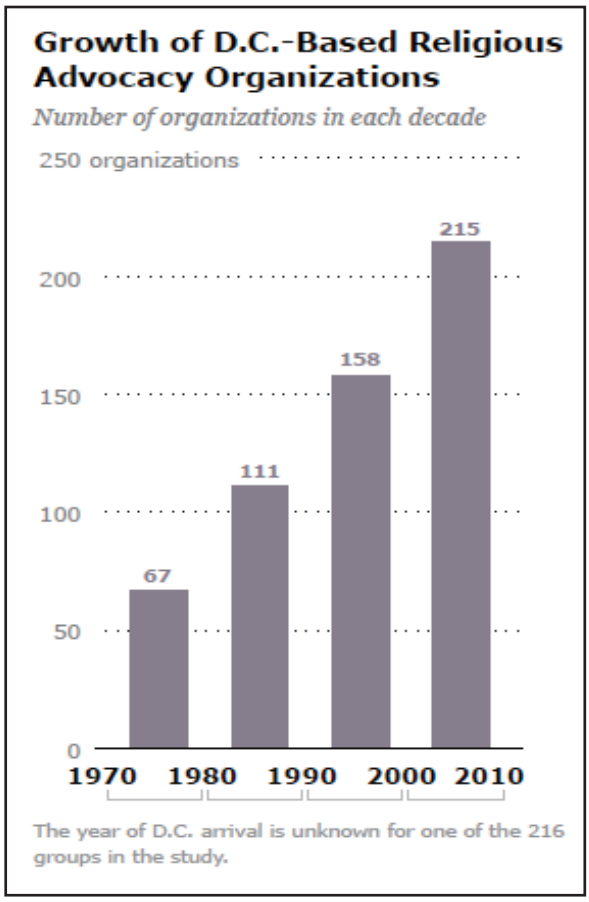
Senator Mark O. Hatfield (R-Oregon), who broke with his party on the Balanced Budget Amendment in 1995, Mark O. Hatfield Papers. Image courtesy of Willamette University Archives and Special Collections.

Among his most-remembered votes was the one he cast on the Balanced Budget Amendment in 1995. He had just been reappointed chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee after Republicans regained control of the Senate during the 1994 elections. The proposed legislation was a critical piece of his party's "Contract with America" authored by Georgia Representative Newt Gingrich.

Hatfield went on record against the amendment two weeks prior to the vote. While he shared his party's goal of a balanced budget, he objected to the means, calling the constitutional amendment a gimmick and fearing the repercussions it would have on federal support for social programs.

The Senate leadership, encouraged by House passage of the bill by a wide margin and the promise of crossover votes from Democrats in the Senate, wasn't worried. But as the margin narrowed, Majority Leader Robert Dole and others began to pressure Hatfield to reconsider. Hatfield didn't relent. He was the only Republican to vote against the measure, and the bill failed by one vote to garner the two-thirds of votes needed to pass.

Senate Majority Whip Trent Lott and other Republican senators called for Hatfield to be stripped of his chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee. Hatfield retained the chairmanship, but chose not to run for another term.



Pew Research Center, "Lobbying for the Faithful," November 2011.http://www.pewforum.org/2011/11/21/lobbying-for-the-faithful-exec/

When Hatfield died in 2011 at the age of 89, he was remembered by people on both sides of the aisle as a man of integrity. Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon), who interned for Hatfield during the 1970s, said his early mentor "inspired many to public service, encouraging them to work to do what is right, rather than what is convenient or popular."[27]

Acting on faith

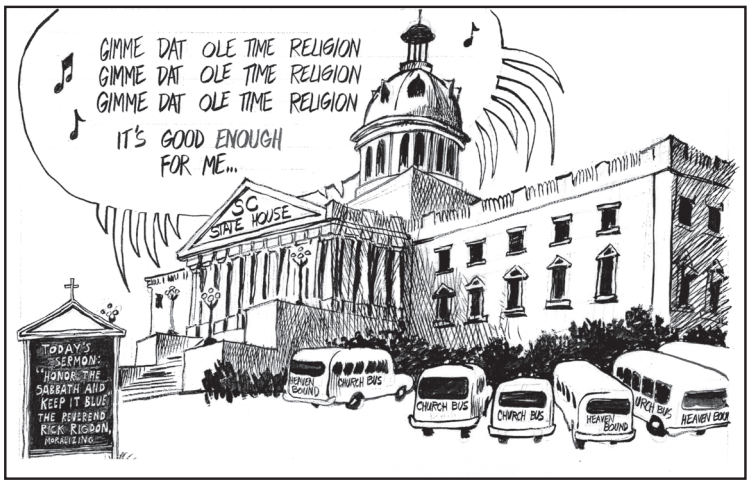
Faith is a powerful motivator for many Americans to stand up for what they believe.

"Religion deals with ultimate matters, what we value and how we see the world," said Russell Moore, President of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "So religious people must be involved in public policy matters because as citizens of this republic we have a responsibility to care for the good of our neighbor and maintain the common good of the nation. And the nation has an interest in seeing that believers are involved in the process. What religion shows us is that the state isn't ultimate and the culture isn't ultimate. There are ultimate priorities beyond those things that help to shape and form the virtue of the citizens."[28]

While the nation's founders provided a framework for the separation of church and state, most citizens are inclined to integrate their faith with public life. Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans say that religion is important in their daily lives, compared to 27 percent in the United Kingdom and 17 percent in Sweden.[29] Only 16 percent of Americans report being unaffiliated with any religion, while 78 percent report being Christian and 5 percent belong to other religions.[30]

Religious organizations that lobby in Washington, D.C., have increased five-fold since 1970, according to researchers at the Pew Research Center's Religion and Public Life Project. They identified more than 200 religion-related advocacy groups that spent a total of $350 million annually working on about 300 policy issues.

"Religious advocacy organizations in Washington reflect the pluralism of religion in America," the authors found. "They are diverse in many other ways as well, including their organizational structure, their issue agendas and their primary advocacy methods."



[Gimme Dat Ole Time Religion] [Greenville, SC: *Greenville News*, April 28, 1980] Kate Salley Palmer, News Group Chicago, Inc., Field Newspapers Syndicate, Kate Salley Palmer Papers. Courtesy of South Carolina Political Collections, The University of South Carolina Libraries.

The most common domestic policies addressed include the relationship between church and state, civil rights for religious and other minorities, abortion, capital punishment, end-of-life issues, domestic violence, fatherhood initiatives and the definition of marriage. Most of the advocacy groups also work on international issues, including human rights, debt relief and other economic issues, and the promotion of peace and democracy.

Potential drawbacks of Option 2?

People who have concerns about Option 2 caution that, in remaining true to our own convictions, we may overlook or refuse to consider other worthwhile ideas for addressing public problems. And while the power of individuals may be felt close to home on local issues, it is far more difficult when it comes to state and national issues where big money and special interests dominate decision-making.

OPTION 2

What should we do to stand up for what we believe?

The preceding stories illustrate different ways that people, individually and collectively, have stood up for what they believed rather than accept the status quo or cave in to pressure from others. They were focused and steadfast in their convictions. They were more concerned about doing what was right than what was popular.

What implications do the stories have for the issues we now face in our communities and nation? Consider the following examples and others that come to mind.

OPTION 2 DISCUSSION

- √ What are the pros and cons of this option?
- √ Which actions are likely to have the greatest impact?
- √ Which actions are most do-able in terms of time, resources and public will?
- √ What trade-offs would each action involve?

1. Individuals could create or join groups of people who support the same causes to promote and take action on issues they care about.

2. Faith groups could more actively engage their members in advocating for public policies that are aligned with their religious beliefs.

3. Schools and universities could promote debate classes and clubs to teach students how to engage in reasoned arguments and be more effective advocates for what they believe in.

4. Legislative bodies could strengthen the use of extended debate, including the filibuster, to ensure the rights of all members to have their positions fully heard.

5. Advocates could increase their use of social media, radio talk shows and letters to newspaper editors to promote their positions on public issues. Efforts to further regulate or limit the media should be opposed in order to protect freedom of speech for all Americans.

6. Individuals and organizations could contribute to political action committees (PACs) that support candidates whose views are aligned with theirs and who are willing to take a stand on important issues.

OPTION 3

Bring more people in

"In the end, the American dream is not a sprint or even a marathon, but a relay. My mother fought hard for civil rights so that instead of a mop, I could hold this microphone."[31] *- San Antonio Mayor Julian Castro*

According to this view, too many people are shut out of public life. Discrimination persists for many of us, based on race, gender, age, income, disability and sexual orientation. The underrepresentation of these voices in the public arena undermines our ability to make sound, credible decisions and to get work done. We should create new rules that guarantee the inclusion of all segments of American society in public life and the political process.

Earning a place at the political table is often an ongoing, uphill fight. It took suffragists more than 50 years to convince Congress to grant women the right to vote. Ground gained in voting rights by people of color and the poor during the 1960s is being eroded by the introduction of burdensome voter ID requirements. Young adults who have spent their entire lives in the U.S. face the threat of deportation because their parents were unauthorized immigrants.

The public arena is more than political. Efforts to bring more people in must also encompass fair treatment in the workplace, access to public facilities and services, and the recognition of marriage rights for all Americans, according to supporters of Option 3. They say our nation's history and current events reinforce the late Martin Luther King's belief that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

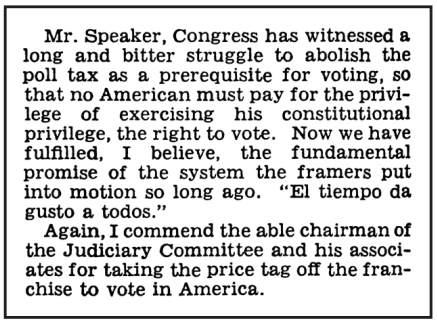
Breaking down barriers to voting

Jeannette Rankin was 34 years old before her home state of Montana gave women the right to vote. Rankin became active in the women's suffrage movement while studying at the University of Washington, continued her work in New York, and marched with thousands of suffragists in the nation's capital before the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson in 1913. She returned home to work for women's suffrage in Montana, which passed in 1914.

Jeanette Rankin, a Republican from Montana and first woman elected to Congress in 1916. Photograph by Matzene, Chicago, 1917. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-66358.

Two years later she ran on the Republican ticket for the U.S. House of Representatives. Defying the odds, she traveled her large, rural state by train, giving campaign speeches at depots, on street corners and in one-room schoolhouses. The Missoula newspaper projected her the loser on the evening of the election. But after all the votes were counted, Rankin had secured one of the two at-large seats, becoming the first female member of Congress.

The legal right to vote and actually being able to vote are two different things, as many Americans have learned. For example, by the early 1900s all of the former Confederate states had imposed poll taxes designed to keep non-white and poor white citizens from voting. Liberal Democrats in Congress advocated for abolition of the poll tax as part of the New Deal.



Mr. Speaker, Congress has witnessed a long and bitter struggle to abolish the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting, so that no American must pay for the privilege of exercising his constitutional privilege, the right to vote. Now we have fulfilled, I believe, the fundamental promise of the system the framers put into motion so long ago. "El tiempo da gusto a todos."

Again, I commend the able chairman of the Judiciary Committee and his associates for taking the price tag off the franchise to vote in America.

From Claude Pepper speech before the U.S. House congratulating Congress on the passage of the Voting Rights bill, clipping, August 11, 1965. Courtesy of Claude Pepper Library, Florida State University Libraries.

Voting Rights Act signed, August 1965. Claude Pepper shaking hands with President Johnson as Ralph Abernathy and Martin Luther King, Jr. look on. Courtesy of Claude Pepper Library, Florida State University Libraries.

"Being citizens of the United States, do not those citizens have a right to vote for Federal officials?" U.S. Senator Claude Pepper (D-Florida) asked during a speech to the Senate in 1942. "That being then a Federal right, a Federal franchise, a Federal privilege, indeed, a Federal obligation, can any other sovereignty burden the enjoyment of that right?"[32]

The efforts of Pepper and others failed when Southern Democrats threatened to withhold their support of other New Deal initiatives. It wasn't until the ratification of the 24th Amendment to the Constitution in 1964 that the poll tax was abolished for federal elections. A Supreme Court ruling two years later extended the prohibition to state elections as well.

Modern-day deterrents to voting include state-imposed voter ID laws, the weakening of federal protections under the Voting Rights Act and the disenfranchisement of people with felony convictions.

"My state of Alabama, like a number of states, permanently disenfranchises you if you have a criminal conviction," said Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the national Equal Justice Initiative. "Right now in Alabama, 34 percent of the black male population has permanently lost the right to vote. We're projecting in another 10 years the level of disenfranchisement will be as high as it's been since prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. And yet, we seem to be very comfortable with this. The politics of fear and anger have made us believe that these are problems that are not our problems. We've been disconnected."[33]

Old enough to fight, old enough to vote

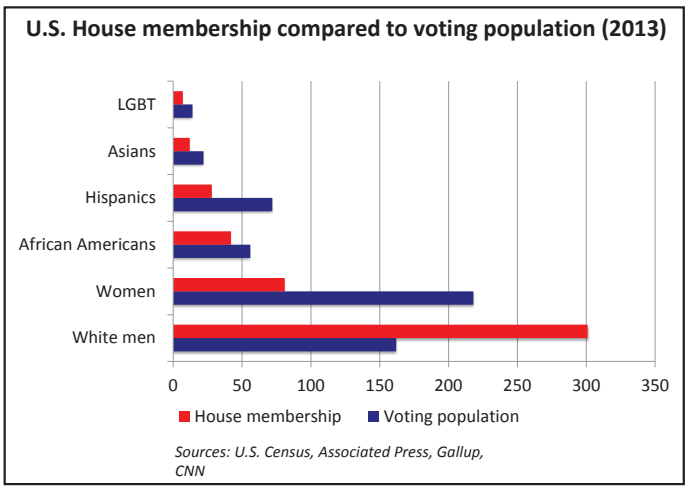
Bringing people into the political arena at a younger age strengthens our democracy and builds habits of citizenship, say supporters of Option 3.

"I believe that our young people possess a great social conscience, are perplexed by the injustices which exist in the world and are anxious to rectify these ills," Senator Jennings Randolph (D-West Virginia) said when the 26th Amendment was ratified in 1971, giving 18-year-olds the right to vote.[34] Randolph had introduced an amendment 11 times since 1942. The slogan "old enough to fight, old enough to vote" originated during World War II when Congress lowered the age that men could be drafted to 18. It later became a rallying cry for Vietnam War-era advocates for lowering the voting age.

Today, many youth rights advocates are calling for the vote for 16- and 17-year-olds. The 26th Amendment says that states may not set the voting age higher than 18, but does not prohibit setting it lower. The National Youth Rights Association points out that teens under 18 work, pay income and sales taxes, hold driver's licenses and can be tried as adults in court. They say it's only fair that 16-year-olds have the right to vote and better for society to instill the habits of democracy early on.

Takoma Park, Maryland, is the first jurisdiction in the nation to extend voting rights to citizens under 18 years old. In May 2013, the City Council amended the city charter to allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in city elections.

War Room [Atlanta, Ga.: *Atlanta Constitution*, July 21, 1971.] Clifford H. (Baldy) Baldowski Editorial Cartoons. Courtesy of Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, The University of Georgia.



Graph by Julie Pratt, 2014.

Electing more people from underrepresented groups

Voting is essential – but not sufficient – to assure that all interests are represented when public decisions are made. We need more people in elected and appointed positions who reflect the diversity of our citizenry, according to Option 3. Without them, our public policies lack credibility and are difficult if not impossible to sustain.

"We're half of the people, we should be half of the Congress," Jeannette Rankin said after being the first woman to win a seat in Congress in 1916. Nearly a century later, however, women comprise only 20 percent of the Senate and 18 percent of the House.[35]

The demographics continue inching toward greater diversity, according to an analysis of the 113th Congress. Of the 94 new members (82 representatives and 12 senators), there were four African Americans, five Asian Americans, 10 Latinos and 24 women, and a shift in which white males no longer make up the majority of House Democrats.[36]

To achieve a more representative Congress and state legislatures, we need to create a more even playing field, according to Option 3. We need to limit the influence of big money from large special interest groups who channel their contributions to candidates that support their view *and* have the best chances of winning. In addition, states need to reform their redistricting laws to prevent the gerrymandering of voting district boundaries to give unfair advantage to powerful groups.

The politics of full inclusion

To be fully participating citizens, Justin Dart argued, people have to be respected and included in all aspects of society – social, economic and political. Dart is most often remembered for his leadership in advocating for the Americans with Disabilities Act. Enacted in 1990, the ADA outlaws discrimination against people with mental or physical disabilities in employment, public services, transportation, public accommodations and telecommunications.

Dart was born in 1930 into a life of privilege, the grandson of the founder of the Walgreen Drugstore chain. His life took an unexpected turn when he contracted polio at the age of 18 and survived as a wheelchair user. He went on to build several successful international companies, while also advocating for the rights of people with disabilities.

[Two ADAPT activists, hands clasped and arms raised, protesting in front of the U.S. Capitol], circa 1990. Photograph by Tom Olin, Mark Johnson Papers, Georgia Disability History Archive. Courtesy of Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, The University of Georgia.

Inspired by the historic civil rights legislation of the 1960s, Dart saw the disability movement as part of larger campaign for social justice and inclusion that encompassed women, people of color, and gays and lesbians.[37] One of his favorite quotes came from Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Another campaign for full inclusion is reaching what many call a tipping point for Americans who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transvestite (LGBT). In June 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex couples were entitled to federal benefits and also cleared the way for same-sex marriage in California by refusing to hear an appeal of a lower court decision supporting marriage rights. The number of states with laws that recognize same-sex marriages increased to 18, plus the District of Columbia. And in November 2013, the U.S. Senate passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA), which would make it illegal to discriminate against LGBT individuals in the workplace.

Potential drawbacks of Option 3?

People who have concerns about Option 3 say focusing on our differences could stir up more controversy and make it even harder to make progress on public issues. In addition, making it easier to participate in public life does not guarantee that people will actually roll up their sleeves to help get work done.

OPTION 3

What should we do to bring more people in?

The preceding stories illustrate the ways that Americans are breaking down barriers to bring more people into public life. These champions for inclusion view full participation as a basic right of individuals, one that must be guaranteed by law and supported in communities. Without this, public decisions will lack credibility and be difficult, if not impossible, to sustain.

What implications do the stories have for the issues we now face in our communities and nation? Consider the following examples and others that come to mind.

OPTION 3 DISCUSSION

- √ What are the pros and cons of this option?
- √ Which actions are likely to have the greatest impact?
- √ Which actions are most do-able in terms of time, resources and public will?
- √ What trade-offs would each action involve?

1. Federal, state and local governments could make it easier for more people to vote through early voting, eliminating voter ID requirements, allowing people with felony convictions to vote and lowering the voting age to 16.

2. Schools could do more to engage students in public life through action-oriented civics education, where students work with diverse community members to address local problems.

3. Community organizations could help people from all walks of life participate in civic activities by providing childcare, transportation and accessible locations where all feel comfortable and safe.

4. Congress could pass immigration reforms that create a pathway to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants and provide relief from the threat of deportation.

5. States could revamp their redistricting laws to discourage gerrymandering of districts for political gain and to protect a more diverse range of views in district-based voting.

6. People and organizations could give more time, money and support to candidates from underrepresented groups, including women, people with disabilities, people of color and LGBT individuals.

Option 1: Revitalize cooperation We accomplish more by working with – instead of against – each other. The problem is we don't have the time, habits or public space needed to address our shared concerns and build the trust necessary to make decisions together. We should do more to "reach across the aisle" in our communities, states and nation.	***Concerns about this option*** *Cooperation can lead to compromises that keep the peace between people at the expense of making tough decisions about what's best for our communities and country.*
Examples of actions	***Potential trade-offs***
Individuals could seek, consider and talk about views different from their own in their families, communities and politics.	*People may be perceived as being disloyal to their own political or social group.*
Civic and faith groups could sponsor nonpartisan public forums where people with different views can have civil conversations about critical issues and what to do about them.	*Diverse groups take longer to reach agreement about what, if any, action to take than do groups of like-minded people.*
Voters could ask candidates for public office about their history of working across party lines to get work done on public issues, and highlight their bipartisan experience in voter guides.	*Political parties could become less effective if the distinctions between them were blurred or ignored.*
Individuals, organizations and government could provide more support for noncommercial news outlets, where the coverage of issues isn't skewed by the opinions or expectations of advertisers.	*The news outlets would have to abide by the expectations of government agencies that provide funding.*
Congressional leaders could institute a five-day workweek, with three weeks in Washington and one week at home in order to give members more time to work, socialize and build trust with each other.	*Members of Congress would have less time at home with constituents and be more likely to lose touch with local issues.*
The Federal Elections Commission could outlaw separate leadership political action committees (LPACs) and limit all members of Congress to one PAC. This would help dampen the influence and divisiveness of big money from special interests.	*Limiting candidates' fundraising options would give an unfair advantage to those with personal wealth.*

Option 2: Stand up for what you believe According to this view, we must speak our minds and uphold our principles. We should advocate for what is right, not what is expedient. Too many people are willing to give in to compromise instead of standing up for what they believe. Rather than minimize our differences, we should revitalize free speech and the practice of fair and honest debate.	***Concerns about this option*** *In remaining true to our own principles and convictions, we may overlook or refuse to consider other worthwhile ideas for addressing issues and solving problems.*
Examples of actions	***Potential trade-offs***
Individuals could create or join groups of people who support the same causes to advocate on issues they care about.	*Groups of like-minded people may curtail a broader understanding of the issues and undermine the group's advocacy efforts.*
Faith groups could more actively engage their members in advocating for public policies that are aligned with their beliefs.	*Some faith congregations could become divided over political issues.*
Schools and universities could promote debate classes and clubs to teach students how to engage in reasoned arguments and be more effective advocates for what they believe in.	*The competitive nature of this form of discourse could contribute to further polarization.*
Legislative bodies could strengthen the use of extended debate, including the filibuster, to ensure the rights of all members to have their positions fully heard.	*Extended debate can delay or prevent public officials from making decisions on critical issues in a timely manner.*
Advocates could increase their use of social media, radio talk shows, and letters to newspaper editors to promote their positions on public issues. Efforts to further regulate or limit the media should be opposed in order to protect freedom of speech for all Americans.	*People can make unfounded and damaging claims without being held accountable.*
Individuals and organizations could contribute to political action committees (PACs) that support candidates whose views are aligned with theirs and who are willing to take a stand on important issues.	*PACs enable large contributors to gain political influence without being publicly identified.*

Option 3: Bring more people in According to this view, too many people are shut out of public life. We need people at the table who represent the diversity of our communities and nation in order to effectively address public problems. We should create new rules that guarantee the inclusion of all segments of American society in public and political life.	***Concerns about this option*** *Focusing on our differences could stir up more controversy and make it even harder to get work done in timely and efficient ways.*
Examples of actions	***Potential trade-offs***
Federal, state and local governments could make it easier for more people to vote through early voting, eliminating voter ID requirements, allowing people with felony convictions to vote and lowering the voting age to 16.	*Stronger federal rules would undermine state rights, while state and local rules create unequal voting rights for Americans that hinge on where they live.*
Schools could do more to engage students in public life through action-oriented civics education, where students work with diverse community members to address local problems.	*Students may have to forego participation in other valuable school activities.*
Community organizations could help people from all walks of life participate in civic activities by providing childcare, transportation and accessible locations where all feel comfortable and safe.	*Some people may see such efforts as trying to stack the deck in favor of a particular party or position.*
Congress could pass immigration reforms that create a pathway to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants and provide relief from the threat of deportation.	*Relaxing the restrictions on immigration may encourage more people to enter the country illegally.*
States could revamp their redistricting laws to discourage gerrymandering of districts for political gain and to protect a more diverse range of views in district-based voting.	*Stricter redistricting rules could limit the creation of special districts to improve the odds of electing candidates of color.*
People and organizations could give more money and support to candidates from underrepresented groups, including women, people with disabilities, people of color and LGBT individuals.	*People may choose demographics over ability when supporting candidates.*

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