



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Civics for Change

Know the system to change the system.

Welcome

Tonight's Hosts:

Terry Mumford, Caz Margenau, and Jenny Okamoto
Leadership Development, Building Bridges for
America



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



Supporting grassroots
organizers, candidates,
and causes.

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www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

WHERE WE STAND

Democrats believe that the economy should work for everyone, health care is a right, our diversity is our strength, and democracy is worth defending.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA ACTION FUND

Our Mission

Building Bridges mobilizes and empowers networks of relational grassroots organizers to create an equitable and informed electorate.

Our Values

We recognize that the effort adds value, regardless of the result.

We are committed to the development of a broad and inclusive coalition.

We conduct our actions and are informed by the legacy of Pete Buttigieg's 2020 Campaign's Rules of the Road.

Our Vision

A just and equitable democracy, safeguarded by an informed and engaged electorate, where everyone is valued and belongs.

Respect Belonging Truth Teamwork Boldness Responsibility Substance Discipline Excellence Joy





Political Organizing Classes

8 free and accessible courses and workbooks for volunteers.



- *Civics 101*
- *Civics for Change*



- *Say This, Not That...*
- *Grassroots Organizing for Change*
- *Local Leaders and Precinct Chairs*



- *How to Be Politically Active*
- *Conversations that Break Through*
- *Pop the Disinformation Bubble*



Maximize your volunteer effort.

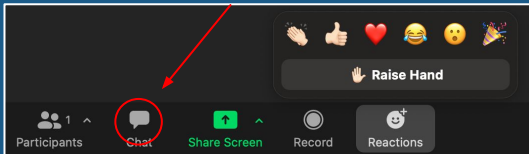
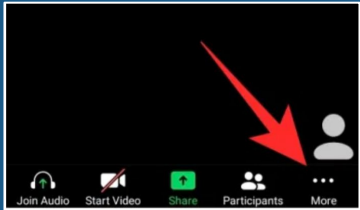
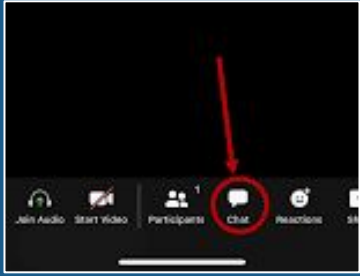
2024 Session I
Every Thursday
1/11 - 2/29

2024 Session II
Every Thursday
3/21 - 5/19

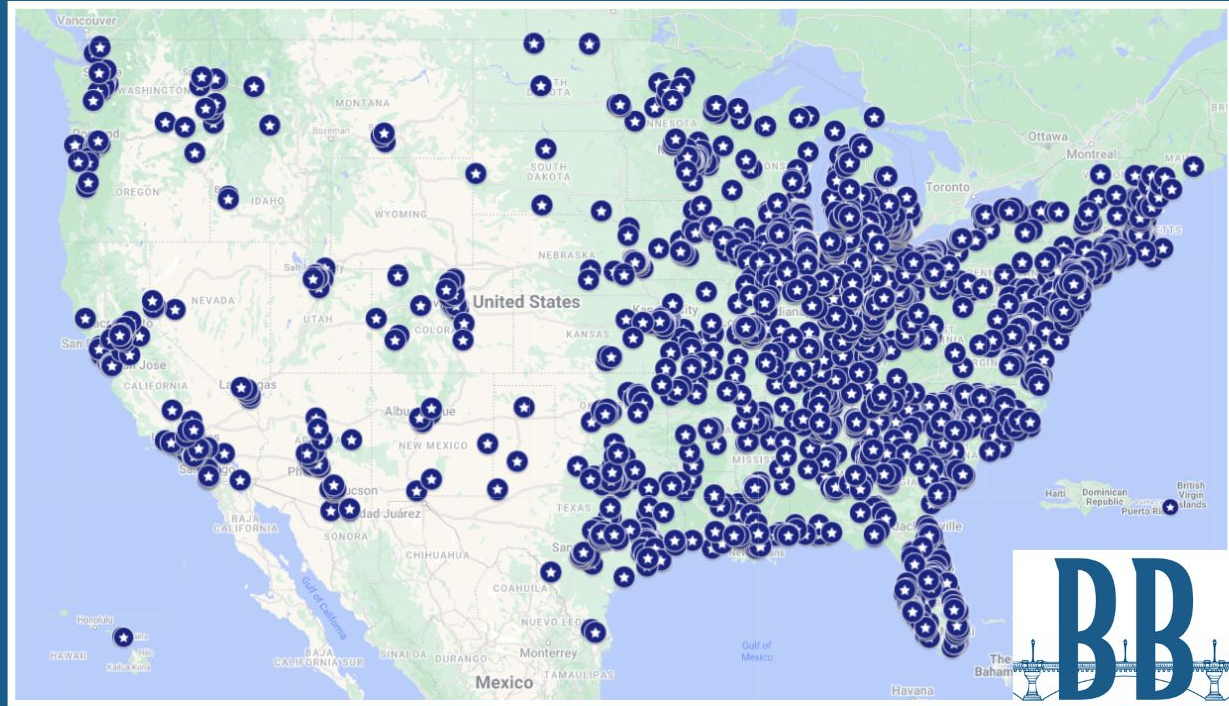
2024 Session III
Every Thursday
5/30 - 7/25 (skip 7/4)

More to come!

Locate the chat feature.



Say  hello in chat!
Where are you joining us from?



Friendly Norms

- Please introduce yourself in the chat, where are you from, and campaigns and organizations you are working with. Is this your first Building Bridges session?
- Enter questions and follow-up requests in the chat
- Q & A at the end. Everyone will be on mute until then.
- Meeting will be 1-hour
- Thank you for joining us!

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Civics for Change



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FOR AMERICA

Civics for
Change



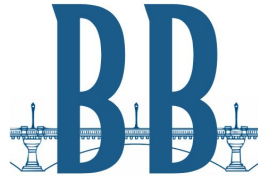
**DOWNLOAD THE
STEP BY STEP
COURSE WORKBOOK**

DOWNLOAD FILLABLE PDF

PRINTABLE DOWNLOAD

Terry Mumford

Partner, Law Firm – Lobbyist and Governmental Benefits
Associate University Counsel
Dep. Director, Legislative Services Agency
Legislative Director, Governor's Office
Chief Legal Counsel, House of Representatives



Let's Effectively Reach Out to our
Policy Makers!

Why this topic? Policy Maker Contact v. Voter Contact

- This presentation is for the more experienced organizer and advocate -- you want to hone your skills and focus on specific ways to persuade government policy makers.
For a Civics primer, check out “Civics 101”
- This is a presentation for optimists -- those who believe that we can make politics and government better.

Why don't people reach out to policy makers to express an opinion?

→ Give us your ideas in the chat

Why don't people reach out to policy makers to express an opinion?

- They are unsure about the source of the problem or about what to work on.
- They don't know whom to contact or how to reach the right person.
- They don't know what to say.
- They think "it doesn't matter."

“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”

Alice Walker, First African-American Woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Literature

“The secret is not to allow the fact that you
can't do everything keep you from doing
something.

Something, then rest.
Something, then rest.”

Glennon Doyle, Author

“You can’t win the lottery if you don’t
buy a ticket.”

What's the Work Tonight?

Understand the Basics

The primary resource is "A Governmental Cheat Sheet". We will overview the workbook – to address how to find the right policy maker.

Identify Specific Issues

The workbook helps you identify 1-2-3 issues, campaigns, and causes, that motivate action.

Communicate to Effect Change

Then let's address specific issues and how to communicate effectively.

Check out "Civics for Change" workbook, download at www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com. This presentation refers to the workbook.

What's the Work Tonight? (cont)

Turning Polls Into Action -

Q: If a policy is widely popular (or unpopular), why are elected officials not supporting it (or opposing it)?

A: Because their constituents haven't effectively expressed their support or opposition

- Your vote
- Direct contact = Our focus in this training

What's Your Role?

Super Volunteer – Some of Us – A campaign resource, a leader of other volunteers, an advisor

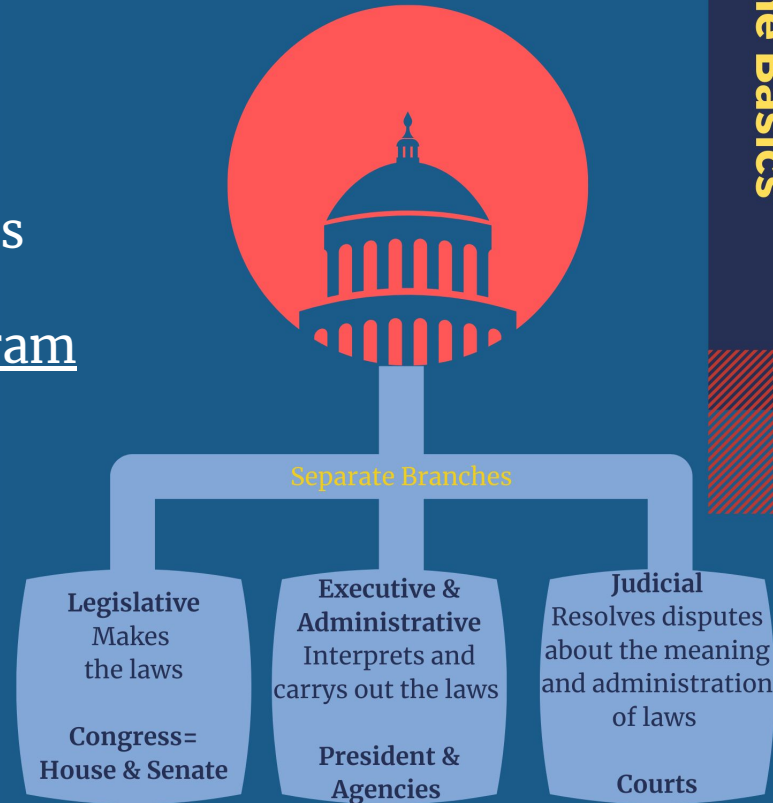
“Just” A Volunteer – Most of Us – Phone banking, canvassing, postcard writing, yard sign distributing, “lit” dropping

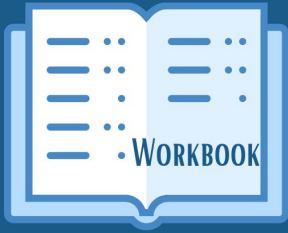
Trusted Voice – All of Us – Friends, family, colleagues trust us to give them good advice because we understand civics

Concerned Citizen – All of Us – A communicator with policy makers

THE GOVERNMENT

To understand the basics of our Constitution, federal and state legislation, consult our materials on “Civics 101” – <https://www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com/courses/civics-101>





Governmental Cheat Sheet – Step 1

In Your Workbook, identify the jurisdiction where you will be an advocate – This will also help you and your friends as you support candidates and GOTV

Jurisdiction = the official power to make legal decisions and judgments.

Getting Started – Cheat Sheet

Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction refers to a geographical area or a subject matter where government exercises authority. Legislative, executive, and judicial actions are effective within specific jurisdiction. Policy makers in those jurisdictions will be the most responsive to your message/request.

Legal Responsibility

Identify the person, elected or appointed body, or agency who is responsible for the law affecting your members.

Administration

After a law is passed, focus on executive and administration agencies that administer the law(s).

Your Jurisdiction

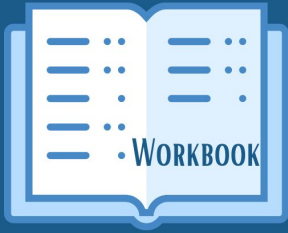
Step 1

Preparing your cheat sheet.

This sheet will help you identify the specifics about your area (jurisdiction) and will vary depending on the issue(s) you are addressing. Get started by filling in what you know and fill in the blanks later.

| | |
|---|-------|
| State | ----- |
| County | ----- |
| City, Town, Village or Unincorporated area | ----- |
| School District | ----- |
| Special Service District (sewer) | ----- |





Governmental Cheat Sheet – Step 2

In your Workbook, identify the policy makers you may contact – if they are on the ballot, make a note of that as well!

Your Policymakers

Step



You can search online and find this information.

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| U.S. Senator (1) | name, party, contact info. |
| U.S. Senator (2) | name, party, contact info. |
| U.S. Representative | name, party, district, contact info. |
| Governor | name, party, contact info. |
| State Senator | name, party, district, contact info. |
| State Representative | name, party, district, contact info. |
| Mayor | contact information |
| County Commissioners | contact information |
| City/Town Council | contact information |
| School Board Member | contact information |

More “Jurisdictions” and “Policy Makers” to Identify for 2024 and Beyond

At the State Level:

- Secretary of State
- Treasurer
- Attorney General
- CFO

At the Local Level:

- Judges
- Township Trustee, Advisory Board

Take Note

Be Credible -- Before you begin your advocacy around an issue, make sure you have the correct information.

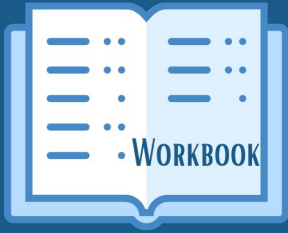
Is the issue addressed by legislation or the administration of a law or policy by the executive or administrative agencies that implement it?

Who are the agencies or people with jurisdiction over that issue?

How do your family, friends, and colleagues figure out who is THEIR representative?

Focus Your Efforts - Before you support or oppose a candidate.

Make sure you understand their jurisdiction



Issue Identification Worksheet

Step 3

In Your Workbook, Define Your Key Issues

Identify your issue(s)

Identify

Now is the time to identify the issues or campaigns that are motivating you to take action. This list will change, but it is a good exercise to plan your advocacy.

State your issue in positive terms. Avoid repeating the “opposition’s” wording.

Identify Your Issue(s)

Step



Issue Identification

Now is the time to identify the issues or campaigns that are motivating you to take action. This list will change, but it is a good exercise to plan your advocacy.

Write down two important issues in each category

Issues that affect you/your members in an immediate and practical way (examples: "The roads in my area are all broken and are causing damage to my car." "I want my son to get his COVID shot, but it is not available")

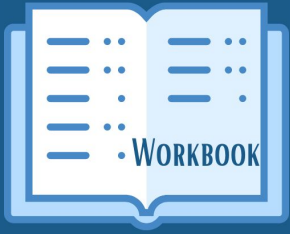
- 1.
- 2.

Issues that affects the community in which your organization operates (examples: "I think school vouchers harm public schools" "I am concerned about homelessness in my area" "I am concerned about voting rights in federal elections"

- 1.
- 2.

Are there organizations working on these issues?

What are some terms to use consistently and positively to describe your issue?



Let's Tie It All Together – Step 4

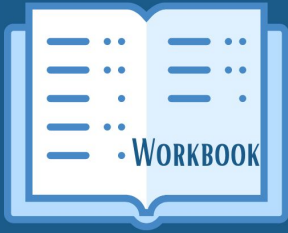
In Your Workbook, Plan Your Advocacy

Who Should You Talk To? What Should You Say? Where?

- Who is in charge?
- What is the best way to explain the issue?
- How to make your views known?

The Process

If you are leading a group, walking your members through this step-by-step approach will help them confidently reach out about an issue or law.



Worksheet

Step



This exercise will answer several important questions:

- Who is in charge
- What is the message
- Where to deliver it

We encourage you to use your own words, make it personal and keep the message simple. See the following pages for sample issues.

Who is in charge?

-
-

Identify, frame and formulate (what we can all agree on)

-
-
-

My Message?

Where to "deliver" my message

-
-
-

Bringing it Together

Walking your members through this step-by-step approach will help them confidently reach out about an issue or law.

Who is in charge?

- For each issue identify the individual, group, or agency that has jurisdiction. **Refer to your Governmental Cheat Sheet.**
- Make sure your group knows who should be contacted.
- Reach out to those who are FOR and AGAINST your POV

Identify, Frame, and Formulate

At the Organizational Level -- Super Volunteer

Develop your organization's summary of the issues and positions on the issue. What is your purpose? What are your goals? How will you achieve those goals?

As an advocacy organization, you compile information--facts, figures, status of legislation. You may work with other organizations to share resources.

Go to our Training Page - "How to Be Politically Active" and "Say This, Not That" will provide great insights on how to identify, frame, and formulate your message

Identify, Frame, and Formulate

For Your Group -- Super Volunteer, Volunteer, Trusted Voice

Assist in developing communications that will connect with policy makers. Develop uniform and consistent explanations for the issue, suggest frames for the issue, encourage personal stories. Communicate positively! Here are tips:

- Explain why you are concerned
- Identify the issue - “Good roads” “Fair Healthcare” “Better Schools” “Women’s Rights”
- Frame the issue around your values - “Hard worker” “Family” “Democracy” “Freedom” “Fairness”
- State how you are affected personally
- Ask for a specific action

Make Your Views Known

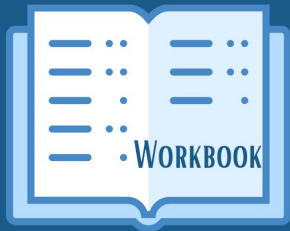
At the organizational level, make your presence known!

- Share brief policy statements with policy makers.
- Start talking to policymakers.
- Look for opportunities to speak in person (town halls), send emails, and write letters.
- Help your members deliver their communications – email, letter, phone call, personal meeting.
- Develop specific recommendations on where/how to communicate
- Make sure your members include contact information, indicate they are a constituent

Make Your Views Known, cont.

Consider all options for communicating with the policy maker

- Make phone calls – Be prepared to speak to a “live” person or leave a voicemail. Before the call, write down, rehearse what you will say.
- Send email, letter, and/or postcard
 - ◆ U.S. Senators and Representatives
 - Email forms on their websites
 - Postcards delivered more quickly in D.C.
 - Mail can be sent to district offices
 - ◆ Avoid form letters and postcards – or personalize them.
- Write an op-ed for local “paper”, trade publication, or blog. Mention policymaker by name
- Speak in-person – at public meeting, town hall



Example



Issue #3 Voting Rights

Who is in charge?

Federal Voting Rights = Federal Legislation

- My 2 U.S. Senators
- My Congressperson (Representative)

Identify, frame and formulate (what we can all agree on)

- Look at advocacy groups (ie Fair Fights, Let Them Vote) for talking points, look for consistency and positive messages.

My Message?

- U.S. Senators
 - I am a long term resident in our state. I have voted in every election since I was allowed to. Voting rights are the foundation of our democracy.
 - I believe in fairness, and that means that everyone should vote. Therefore polls should be open for longer hours and more days to more people can vote with out taking off work.
 - I urge your to support the For the People Act to protect voting rights.
- Congressman (Representative)
 - (if support) Thank you for supporting the For the People Act, I hope you will continue to work for voting rights.
 - (if no support) I am sorry you voted to oppose the For the People Act. I believe in fairness. The Act will protect fair elections. Please reconsider your opposition.

Where to "deliver" my message

- Send email or letter, and or write an op-ed (mention officials by name)
- Attend a town hall, speak if public testimony is permitted

Bringing it Together

Using Civics for Change

Be Present! Be Positive! Be Repetitive!

- In our representative democracy, policy makers must hear from their constituents to affect their decisions
 - Don't allow policy makers to only hear one POV
- The facts DON'T speak for themselves!
 - Explain YOUR "why"
 - Do not demonize your opponents
- Beyond your direct contacts, how can you influence policy makers?
 - Reach out to reporters
 - Write op-eds for local papers
 - Organize your Facebook group
- Provide a sustained flow of information/contacts -- once is never enough

Let's Do This -The "Always" Rules - Every communication

- My name is Terry Mumford, Street Address ZIP CODE, email
- I am your constituent. I have supported you (by vote and/or donation). [Mention any point of contact]
- I want you to take [action] on [Bill number] or specific issue.
- [There are 3 things I want to say about this] - Topic sentence
- This affects me personally - here's my story
- Summarize and restate your request
 - ◆ Express appreciation for support
- Thank you

Let's Do This -- Never Say!

- I will never vote for you!
- You are an idiot!
- I bet you won't even read this letter!
- Your capitalist masters won't let you do what's right!
- You must hate veterans!
- You don't care about people like me!

Never Say – On a serious note

- “When you are arguing against the other side, do not use their language. Their language picks out a frame, and it won’t be the frame you want.” – George Lakoff
- “When you repeat a lie, even to debunk it, you help to strengthen and spread the lie. When you negate a frame, you evoke the frame. Remember this when someone provokes you with an absurd lie. Are you falling into a trap?” – George Lakoff
- Don’t start with a slogan. “Let’s start with what is true.” – Barack Obama

What do you want to write/call/talk about?

- Federal and/or State
 - ◆ Abortion rights legislation
 - ◆ Gun safety legislation
 - ◆ Ukraine
 - ◆ _____
- State only
 - ◆ Election access legislation
 - ◆ Protection of LGBTQ+, trans kids
 - ◆ Wetlands protection
 - ◆ _____
- State and/or local
 - ◆ Police reform
 - ◆ Education policy
 - ◆ _____

Let's Create a Strategy – Reproductive Rights

- Who should I contact? –
 - ◆ For federal legislation
 - Your 2 US Senators (and/or candidates)
 - Your US Representative (and/or candidates)
 - ◆ For state legislation
 - Your state representative (and/or candidate)
 - Your senator (and/or candidate)
 - Your governor
- Refer to your cheat sheet!
 - ◆ Reinforce with others to get these contacts right

Let's Create a Strategy, cont.

- What should I say? – Follow the rules –
 - ◆ Name, address, zip code, constituent
 - ◆ 3 points
 - ◆ Personal story
 - ◆ Request for action
- Where/how should I deliver my request – Phone, email, snail mail, op-ed, in-person

Let's Create a Strategy, cont.

→ Tips:

- ◆ But what about social media? – Facebook, X (Twitter), Threads – “Here’s what I just sent to my state rep”
- ◆ Modify form letters
- ◆ Petitions aren’t enough
- ◆ Communicate with those who support you and those who don’t
- ◆ Follow the same approach in written and verbal communications

Terry's Sample Letter – Federal Legislation

- Who:
 - ◆ Senator Todd Young
 - ◆ Senator Mike Braun
 - ◆ Congressman Andre Carson
- How do I find them?
 - ◆ Their websites provide contact information and email portal
- Who am I?
 - ◆ Constituent, Lifelong Hoosier, [Address]
 - ◆ Wife, mother, grandmother – 75 years old

Terry's Sample Letter, cont.

- Point #1 -- Why am I writing?
 - ◆ For nearly 50 years, abortion rights have been protected by the US Constitution. Women and their doctors have known what the rules are.
 - ◆ The Dobbs decision takes away that right and takes away the freedom for doctors and people who can get pregnant to make personal, medical decisions.
 - ◆ I support federal legislation that would include the same rights and protections that were found in prior Supreme Court decisions (Roe and Casey). The most important thing to me is to preserve the protections for the mother before viability and the fetus after viability.

Terry's Sample Letter, cont.

- Point #2 - Women's health and reproductive rights are complicated issues. We should continue the protections that have developed over the decades to deal with many scenarios.

- ◆ I am very worried about protections for
 - women who use IVF to conceive a child
 - women with ectopic pregnancies and other pregnancies where the fetus is a danger to the woman's health.
 - women who are the victims of rape and incest.
- ◆ I want women to continue to have access to the so-called "morning after pill", which some confuse with abortion.

Terry's Sample Letter, cont.

- Point #3 - Civil rights must be protected
 - ◆ The Dobbs decision calls into question other important civil rights - contraception, marriage equality, educational equality.
 - ◆ Congress should take a stand to make sure that these rights are also protected.

Terry's Sample Letter, cont.

→ Action Requested

- ◆ Preserve the protections that have been in place for decades so that patients and their doctors have the freedom to make reasonable, good-faith medical decisions
- ◆ Preserve civil rights that we have come to rely on to protect individual liberties

Resources - To Help You Communicate Effectively - Reproductive Rights

- ACLU - Communications Guide (for Indiana)
https://www.letstalkabortionindiana.org/?utm_source=launch&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=LTAA
- Act for Women (WHPA)
<https://actforwomen.org/take-action/>
- The Guttmacher Institute - <https://www.guttmacher.org/>
- Jill Filipovic - Get to Work. Get Informed. Get Brave. -
<https://jill.substack.com/p/get-to-work-get-informed-get-brave?s=r>

Resources - To Help You Communicate Effectively - Gun Safety and More

Gun Safety

- Moms Demand Action - <https://momsdemandaction.org/>
- Everytown for Gun Safety - <https://www.everytown.org/>
- President Biden's Position - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Bipartisan-Safer-Communities-Act-SAP-1.pdf>

More

SCOTUS Blog (Independent Analysis)
<https://www.scotusblog.com/>

Basics – Write an Op-Ed or LTE

Purpose of an Op-Ed or LTE – use the local media to get your message out. Policy makers and their staff pay attention! You can also support a candidate with an Op-Ed or LTE

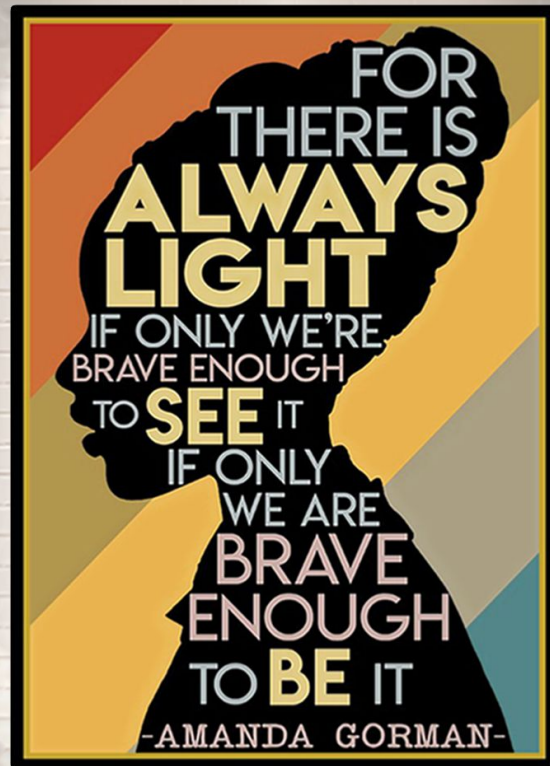
- Pick your “paper”
 - ◆ What is your paper’s policy on op-ed or LTE?
 - ◆ How do you submit?
 - ◆ Length limit? – no more than 300 words
- Describe your issue and your views (Say 3 things 3 times)
 - ◆ Who are you? What is your personal story?
 - ◆ Why is this important to you?
 - ◆ Why is it important to the community?

Basics – Write an Op-Ed or LTE, cont

- Request Action – What do you want to happen? Who do you want to take action?
 - ◆ If it's a vote or other governmental action, mention the policymaker by name
 - ◆ Do you want invite others to join your organization?
 - Invite to an upcoming event
 - ◆ Do you want to encourage others to take action?
- Amplify – If your LTE is published, amplify your message by posting in social media.
- “Multi-task” -- You can use your LTE and send as a letter to policy makers and vice-versa.

Civics for Change!

- Spend time on issue identification. What is important to you and why?
- Spend time determining who is in charge and let them know you are out there and keep contacting them.
- In preparing your message, stay positive, state what you are for and why.
 - ◆ If you are leading a group, spend time assisting members on framing and explaining their point of view. Support them in creating their own communications, offer words and phrases (what to use, what to avoid).
- Try other outlets, reporters, media, social media, op-eds and mention the policymakers by name.





BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

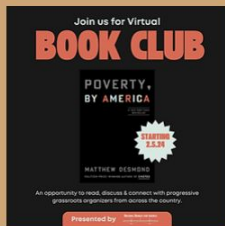


Supporting grassroots
organizers, candidates,
and causes.

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[Back](#)



Dive into the action as we meet online to read and discuss great books about political organizing. Join us weekly for inspiring talks with the authors and other leaders.

Our next book is "Poverty, By America" by Matthew Desmond.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

[GET THE BOOK HERE](#)

Book Club has started!

We got your progressive political book recommendations covered!

Check out our previous Book Club books and videos.

- Run for Something, Amanda Litman ○
- Don't Think of an Elephant, George Lakoff ○
- UnTrumping America, Dan Pfeiffer ○
- Politics is for Power, Eitan Hersh ○
- Trust, Pete Buttigieg ○
- Our Time is Now, Stacey Abrams ○
- Kill Switch, Adam Jentleson ○
- Harvest the Vote, Jane Kleeb ○
- Merge Left, Ian Janey López ○
- The Sum of Us, Heather McGhee ○
- The Purpose of Power- Alicia Garza ○
- How We Win the Civil War, Steve Phillips ○
- A People's Future of the United States ○

Text to register voters NOW!

Build the Vote in 2024

TEXT FOR DEMOCRACY
VOTER REGISTRATION IN KEY STATES

Reach critical voters in Virginia, North Carolina, Texas and Georgia through Field Team 6's BYOP (Bring Your Own Phone) Text-Banking Program.

Field Team 6
BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Join Building Bridges for America Action Fund and our partners Field Team 6 to text unregistered voters in key states.

Reach critical voters in Virginia, North Carolina, Texas and Georgia through Field Team 6's BYOP (Bring Your Own Phone) Text-Banking Program.

You use your own phone and go at your own speed. Sign up once and text all you like in 2024.

[GET STARTED HERE](#)

www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

We're just getting started in 2024!

This is an important year for Democracy. Want to know what you can do? Here are some opportunities to get started.



Text for Democracy!

Millions of US citizens are not registered to vote. Building Bridges for America is partnering with Field Team 6 to Text for Democracy in some of the most under-registered areas of Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas.

Join us! Sign up once and text whenever you like in 2024. [Use this link to learn more and get started.](#)



Free Online Trainings on Thursdays

We believe democracy is participation. And we believe participating in politics must be accessible. Trainings are free — join online from wherever you are!



Use the links below to sign up. Or you can browse the [Training page on our website](#). All trainings are 8:00 to 9:00 PM EST

[How to Be Politically Active](#)
Beginning January 11

[Civics 101 - The Basics They No Longer Teach in School](#)
Beginning January 18

[Pop the Disinformation Bubble](#)
Beginning January 25

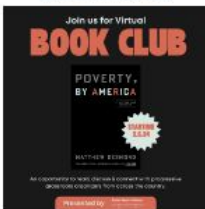
[Grassroots Organizing for Change](#)
Beginning February 1

Book Club - Mondays, Beginning February 5

Join us for a virtual book club journey that "gives us new ways of thinking about a morally urgent problem...helps us imagine solutions...calls on us all to become poverty abolitionists, engaged in a politics of collective belonging to usher in a new age of shared prosperity and, at last, true freedom."

We are reading *Poverty, By America* by Matthew Desmond
Mondays, beginning February 5
8:00 to 9:30 PM EST

[Sign up on Mobilize Here](#)
Support a Local Book Store:
[Purchase the Book Here](#)



Sign up for our bi-weekly newsletter: buildingbridgesforamerica.com/joinus

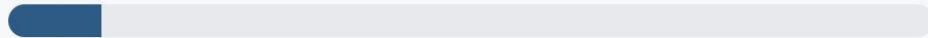
**BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA
ACTION FUND**



**Donate to the Building Bridges for America
Action Fund**

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Discussion Time

