



# DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS

January 2022

## Concerned Citizens Defending Democracy

*Promoting Democratic Institutions, Deliberative Dialogues, and Racial Justice and Reconciliation  
By Building Bridges and Strengthening Partnerships*  
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*“In the face of the sustained and alarming challenges to democracy and universal human rights around the world, more than ever, democracy needs champions.”*

*- President Joe Biden, December 9, 2021*

## Events of Interest

### The January 6 Insurrection: One Year Later

Thursday, January 6, 2022; 10:00-11:30am ET

An expert panel will reflect on the one-year anniversary of the Capitol riot and discuss its lasting effects. Hosted by Brookings.



### January 6 Vigil for Democracy

Thursday, January 6, 2022

A national movement and call to action to protect our democracy. Candlelight vigils are being organized across the country on Thursday, January 6, to lift up our voices and say: ‘We are One America. This can never happen again. The Senate must act to pass legislation immediately to protect our democracy.’



### Religion and Democracy: A Conversation with Bishop Curry and Jon Meacham

Thursday, January 13, 2022; 6:00pm CT

Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church, will join Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prize-winning presidential author, in a discussion about the role of religion in today’s democracy. Hosted by Vanderbilt Project on Unity & American Democracy.



### How Civil Wars Start: A Conversation with Barbara F. Walter & Michael German

Thursday, January 13, 2022; 6:00-7:00pm ET

It’s been a year since a mob attacked the U.S. Capitol, attempting to keep Donald Trump in office by overturning the results of the 2020 election. As we approach the 2022 midterms, should we expect more of the same? Or worse? Hosted by Brennan Center for Justice.



### State of Democracy

Thursday, January 20, 2022; 12:00pm ET

One year after the January 6 attack on the US Capitol, 92Y’s second annual State of Democracy Summit will explore the most important questions facing the country right now, with a special focus on technology’s impact on democracy and new approaches to civic engagement, journalism, politics and policy. A virtual summit presented in collaboration with Aspen Institute/Aspen Digital and Craig Newmark Philanthropies.



## CCDD Monthly Takeaways

### Summit for Democracy Summary of Proceedings

President Biden convened world leaders in the first-ever Summit for Democracy, from December 9-10, 2021, calling the defense of democracy “the defining challenge of our time.”

President Biden also announced the establishment of the [Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal](#), a set of policy and foreign assistance initiatives that build upon the U.S. Government’s ongoing work to bolster democracy and defend human rights globally. These efforts will center on five areas of work crucial to the functioning of transparent, accountable governance:

- 1) Supporting a free and independent media;
- 2) Fighting corruption;
- 3) Bolstering democratic reformers;
- 4) Advancing technology for democracy; and
- 5) Defending free and fair elections and political processes.

In his opening remarks, President Biden urged collective action from attendees in the face of “sustained and alarming challenges to democracy [and] universal human rights.” Calling democracy “an ongoing struggle to live up to our higher ideals,” President Biden recognized that to advance democracy, “we have to renew it with each generation,” because democracy is “the best way to unleash human potential and defend human dignity and solve big problems.” In closing, President Biden called on the more than 275 Summit participants not to “allow the backward slide of rights and democracy to continue unchecked” and instead urged them to work together “to once more lead the march of human progress and human freedom forward.”

Click link to read more:  Videos from Day 2 sessions: 

### The Biden-Harris Administration is Taking Action to Restore and Strengthen American Democracy

According to the White House, the Biden-Harris Administration believes that renewing democracy around the globe begins by working diligently and transparently to strengthen its foundations at home. The Administration’s goal is to take action across the Summit’s three broad themes:

- 1) Strengthening Democracy and Defending Against Authoritarianism
  - Ensuring Compliance with Voting Rights Laws
  - Making it Easier for Americans to Register to Vote
  - Combating Misinformation and Disinformation
- 2) Fighting Corruption
  - Developing a Strategy on Countering Corruption
  - Restoring Ethics, Transparency, and the Rule of Law
- 3) Promoting Respect for Human Rights
  - Combating Human Trafficking
  - Closing the Racial Wealth Gap
  - Promoting Equality for Transgender & Gender Diverse Americans



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## Opinion

### [We the People Must Respond to the January 6th Insurrection](#)

By Vivian Lowery Derryck

January 6, 2021, was the 21st century's Day of Infamy for the U.S. Our country's first [Day of Infamy](#), December 7, 1941, resulted in outrage as Americans united after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and mounted a mass mobilization for World War II.

A year after our 21st century Day of Infamy, as a country we're more divided than ever -- a flailing democracy with a polarized electorate -- and our fundamental institutions -- free and fair elections, impartial judiciary, independent legislature, free press, civilian control of the military -- are all under attack from within.

'[Stop the Steal](#)' is alive and well. A [May 2021 Ipsos/Reuters Poll](#) reported that fifty-six percent of Republicans believe the election was rigged or the result of illegal voting, and 53 percent think Donald Trump is the legitimate president of the United States. In November 2021, one in three Republicans thought that violence is justified to change regimes.

As we mark the one year anniversary, the lack of urgency in our efforts to aggressively address this unprecedented attack is unsettling.

If we do not have an accurate historical account of the insurrection, prosecute the key perpetrators and erect safeguards that reinforce a fair, accurate count as early as the mid-terms we risk a situation of massive voter skepticism and partisan election officials determining election outcomes.

The [House Select Committee](#) is leading efforts to address the insurrection, but the Committee faces major obstructions and is therefore slow to act. The Committee's timetable for public hearings and referral to the Justice Department to recommend charges for alleged perpetrators will delay major actions to midsummer, too late to galvanize public support for definitive actions to put the insurrection finally to rest. The Committee needs a constituency to urge faster action. We citizens need to seize the initiative and form a nationwide citizens' effort to rebuild our democracy.

#### **Two-Phase Plan**

Civil society -- including conservatives, moderates, progressives, civic associations, democracy groups, professional associations, churches, civil rights groups, entertainers and activists working on ranked choice voting, gerrymandering and filibuster reform -- needs to unite in a bi-partisan two-pronged plan that embraces all Americans, especially the rural poor, and appeals to their patriotism.

The first phase must be implemented with urgency before the mid-terms and the second phase must be operational well before the 2024 election.

In *Phase I* we need to build a vocal citizens constituency to support the work of the House Select Committee by publicizing its work and reporting every significant revelation through local news outlets and on social media.

Let the country know what the committee is doing. Work with mainstream media to profile police and others harmed on January 6th, building human connection and sympathy for those personally impacted. Have daily briefings as we had for the first phase of COVID-19. Plan civic protests for the sixth day of every month.

In a bi-partisan campaign as intensive as the 2020 get-out-the-vote drives and letter-writing campaigns, we must unite to push the Committee to hold public hearings immediately. The spring is too late.

Along with the House Committee acceleration campaign, the citizens' coalition must urge Attorney General Merrick Garland to expedite judicial review so that the public views the consequences for close Trump friend Steve Bannon and former chief of staff Mike Mulvaney. A.G. Garland should share his thinking: Is he drawing up charges for known perpetrators

who clearly violated the Constitution? Is he planning to charge former President Trump with sedition? Can he find a way to respect Justice's tradition of relative silence on ongoing investigations but still explain his decisions to the American people in real time?

In *Phase II*, we will aim to bring Trump loyalists toward the political center. Our long-term goal is to have 20 million Americans now supporting the insurrection-whitewash to reexamine their views regarding January 6th. To effect permanent change in Trump supporters, we must work with local community groups and grassroots democracy networks to find common ground and reach a shared vision of our country. The coalition will have to demonstrate that we respect their views and their culture, and jointly work to craft a vision of a common future that gives each American dignity.

January 6, 2021 is an unrequited Day of Infamy for our country. That stigma can change with robust, sustained citizens' demand for their government to act with urgency and decisiveness. ***We the people can make it happen!***

## News from Members & Partners

### [Reminder: Our Common Purpose](#)

Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century -- presents a sweeping and comprehensive proposal for reforms to how our country is governed. The 31 recommendations are organized across six strategies:

1. Achieve Equality of Voice and Representation
2. Empower Voters
3. Ensure the Responsiveness of Government Institutions
4. Dramatically Expand Civic Bridging Capacity
5. Build Civic Information Architecture that Supports Common Purpose
6. Inspire a Culture of Commitment to American Constitutional Democracy and One Another

The Academy and the Commission are committed to making significant progress on all recommendations by 2026, the nation's 250th anniversary.



## Relevant Articles

### [Opinion: 'We are closer to civil war than any of us would like to believe,' new study says](#)

If you know people still in denial about the crisis of American democracy, kindly remove their heads from the sand long enough to receive this message: A startling new finding by one of the nation's top authorities on foreign civil wars says we are on the cusp of our own.



### [New AI and free press standards fortify the fight against autocracy](#)

Individual human rights, privacy and the free press are under siege in an increasing number of countries around the world. Liberty itself is being challenged by authoritarian governments whose power is enhanced by the unethical use of social media, facial recognition technology and the ability to intercept private communications.



### [Voting Rights, Reforms, and the Democracy Crisis](#)

Robert Berg discusses the status of U.S. voting rights, what is being done to address these challenges and provides some suggestions on what we can do.



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