



DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS

April 2022

Concerned Citizens Defending Democracy

Promoting Democratic Institutions, Deliberative Dialogues, and Racial Justice and Reconciliation

By Building Bridges and Strengthening Partnerships

<https://www.cddus.org/>

Events of Interest

[The Twilight of Democracy](#)

Monday, April 4, 2022; 4:00-5:30pm ET (Hybrid)

Pulitzer Prize winning historian, journalist and commentator Anne Applebaum delivers the keynote lecture of the Spring 2022 Democracy in Crisis series. Hosted by Ford School of Public Policy at University of Michigan.



[Library Outreach Day: Libraries as Essential Civic Spaces](#)

Wednesday, April 6, 2022; 2:00-3:00pm ET

Webinar focuses on the essential role that libraries play in civic life. From ballot dropboxes and voter registration sites to venues for community dialogue, libraries sustain local democracy by bringing together residents of all ages, races, economic levels and partisan affiliations. Hosted by National League of Cities.



[Protecting Democracy-Common Ground for Greater Good](#)

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 4:00-5:00pm ET

A conversation with U.S. Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Liz Cheney (R-WY) discussing the role of public service and collaboration beyond party lines to protect our democracy. Hosted by Ford School of Public Policy.



[Universal Voting: Requiring US Voter Participation](#)

Tuesday, April 12, 2022; 6:00-7:00pm ET

26 countries require election participation. In [100% Democracy: The Case for Universal Voting](#), co-authors E.J. Dionne and Miles Rapoport argue that the US should follow in their footsteps. Hosted by Brennan Center for Justice.



[Courting the AAPI Vote: How Political Parties Plan to Reach AAPI Voters in the 2022 Elections](#)

Wednesday, April 13, 2022; 12:00-1:00pm ET

The 2020 election saw a dramatic increase in Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) voter participation. In the runup to the 2022 midterm elections, how will political parties continue to court AAPI voters? Hosted by Harvard Ash Center.



[Beyond Winner-Take-All: Possibilities for Proportional Voting in the United States](#)

Tuesday, April 19, 2022; 4:00-5:00pm ET

Rob Richie, Danielle Allen, and Archon Fung will discuss the proposals to enable adoption of proportional voting systems - what would be the impact and what will it take to enact it. Hosted by Harvard Ash Center.



[Who's to Blame for Democratic Backsliding: Populists or Dominant Executives?](#)

Thursday, April 28, 2022; 11:30am-12:45pm PT / 2:30-3:45pm ET

Professor Marisa Kellam uses new datasets on populist leaders to evaluate the danger of populists in government, and employ methods to distinguish the effects of populist executives and dominant executives on the decline in democracy under democratic governments. Hosted by Stanford Center of Democracy.



Opinion

[This Shared Life: The Theological Underpinnings of Voting and Democracy's Defense](#)

By Melvin Hardy

Our faith leaders must be more consistent in advancing the theology of voting as a spiritual practice. U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock [stated](#) "The vote is a kind of prayer for the kind of world we desire for ourselves and our children. And our prayers are stronger when we pray together." Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray of the Unitarian Universalist Association [stated](#) about American communities of faith: "... (our) commitment to justice, equity, and democracy is not just political or moral, it is fundamentally theological...grows from our affirmation of the inherent worth and dignity of every person and the knowledge that we are all interconnected...reflects the fact that our theology... is accountable to human experience and the conditions of people's lives here and now...such are the foundations of our commitment to a multiracial, pluralistic democracy." Days before Christmas 2021, 800 faith leaders from across the spectrum of American religious practice appealed to the President and Congress in a signed [letter](#) referencing their being "...steadfast in the belief that we all have an equal say in choosing our elected leaders."

Against these appeals, Rev. Elizabeth Theoharis [observes](#) "...an epic battle for the Bible is now underway in America...largely ceded to white evangelical Christian nationalists. Through a well-funded network of churches and nonprofits, universities, and think tanks, with direct lines to the nation's highest political officials...they set the terms of what passes for religious debate and dictate what morality means in our society. Such religious nationalism developed as a reactionary movement that includes technocratic billionaires, televangelists, and armed militias to take root with the simple message: God loves white Christian America, favors small government and big business, and rewards individualism and entrepreneurship...while the poor, progeny of the global south (*sic*), and immigrants are blamed for society's problems." In the current environment, the White, Black and Latinx evangelical Christian nationalists are litmus to our nation's political economy divide.

As religion, and selected religious activism, permeates the entirety of our apparatus of state, too often complicit in, sponsors of, legislative oppressions of civil society, what then of the role of our religious leaders, across the spectrum of religious and spiritual expression, to lift the theological underpinnings of voting as spiritual practice and as a fundament of human rights?

Interfaith clergywoman Mary Ann Brussat of the [Practicing Democracy Project](#) guides us that "voting encourages you to consider the larger whole of which you are a part. With voting as the predicate of democracy and its defense...our interfaith leaders are theologically bound to pro-democracy work." Rev. Jim Chapman of Colorado [writes](#) "...over 2000 verses in the Bible speak to poverty and freeing the poor and the oppressed and that voting...must consider how elections will affect the poor, the oppressed, the undocumented".

Auburn Seminary provided reporting on "[The Pro-Democracy Faith Movement](#)" exploring the values underpinning the faith community's support of democracy and efforts advancing democracy protection. In my opinion, too little consistent support for voting rights protections is promulgated by our faith community. I advise that such should be delivered from our pulpits each Sunday. Having identified the credible faith leaders in both domestic and international fora, I call on our faith leaders to preach the theology of voting in the interest of their flocks, and all of their American neighbors.



Corporate Money in American Politics

OpenSecrets

OpenSecrets is a nonpartisan, independent and nonprofit organization with the mission is to track the flow of money in American politics and provide the data and analysis to strengthen democracy. Click link for details.



Accountable.US

Accountable.US is a nonpartisan watchdog organization that shines a light on corporations and special interests that too often wield unchecked power and influence in Washington and beyond. Website includes reports and Corporate Donations Tracker. Click link for details.



Transparency and the Future of Corporate Political Spending

Based on current rules, the SEC is not able to require transparency in political spending for all public companies. The reason is that Congress, reinforced by party partisanship, has conditioned the SEC's funding on not finalizing a rule that requires disclosure of corporate political spending....



Democracy For All Amendment

We need to pass a 28th Amendment to the Constitution which makes it clear that corporations do not have the same rights as people. This amendment was re-introduced as [H.J. Res. 2 to the 116th Congress](#) in January 2019.

Description: / Jimmy Carter Support:

Common Cause

Common Cause's goal is to create a democracy where everyone's voice is heard and everyone plays by fair and commonsense rules. They are fighting so our politicians can't be bought by the highest bidder.



Combatting Foreign Interference in US Elections

In the last few elections, vulnerabilities in our campaign finance laws were exposed. The laws governing our campaign finance system have failed to catch up to the digital age.



Corporate Political Spending Is Bad Business

Corporations are facing increased scrutiny over their political spending - particularly when their stated values seem to contradict their lobbying efforts.



Corporations, Trade Groups Gave Over \$8 million to GOP Election Objectors Following Jan. 6 Riot (2021 \$)

After the Jan. 6 riot, corporations and trade groups combined gave \$8-9 million to Republican lawmakers who objected to the 2020 presidential election.

CNBC: / The Hill: / Citizens for Ethics:

Corporate Donations to Jan. 6 Election Objectors Have Plummeted - Individual Donors are Congress's Biggest Fundraising Force

Fortune: / Yale:

Safeguarding our Democracy:

Six on the Sixth

January 6, 2021 was a sad day for our country. To move forward as one nation we need a fact-based investigation like the one the bipartisan January 6 House Select Committee is holding. If we know what went wrong we can take steps to fix the problems. But the first step is getting a full picture of the day's events.

The House Select Committee needs to know that it has the support of the American people. We ask that on the *sixth day of every month at 6:00pm* you commit to celebrating and safeguarding our democracy by sending a tweet or message to Members of Congress; joining neighbors on your street corner with signs in support of the January 6 Committee; going outside, banging on a pot and pan and chanting: "To safeguard our future, examine the past. We support the January 6 Committee."



Opinion: Real Reason the Feds Haven't Indicted Trump

Discussion of author's beliefs why Garland and the DOJ haven't indicted Trump.



NY Times: Jan 6 Investigation Reporting

Investigators continue to analyze the events that led a mob to storm the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, one of the worst attacks on American democracy.



Vote Forward

Vote Forward is a nonprofit organization with the core mission of helping to increase the participation of historically underrepresented communities. Vote Forward makes letter writing easy - just download some letters.



Center for Common Ground

Center for Common Ground was founded to educate and empower underrepresented voters in voter suppression states to engage in elections and advocate for their right to vote. Join one of their action teams - phone banking, postcarding, and texting - to reach out to underrepresented voters of color.



News from Members & Partners

Muskingum County Social Justice Coalition (MCSJ)

The Muskingum County Social Justice Coalition is a network of dedicated individuals who work collaboratively to positively address racial inequities in social, economic, legal and educational sectors in their community in Ohio. Some activities include:

- Provided a series of 10 educational programs on cultural issues. Now developing a workbook to go along with each topic that was presented.
- In conjunction with Zane State College, providing the very first community-based offering of the Appalachian Law Enforcement Initiative.
- Providing Virtual Anti-Bias Training Workshops.
- Providing a Property Assessment Tax Clinic.
- Discussing the impact and course of action to address the issue of how voting locations have changed and will become inconvenience to many.



The Poor Peoples Campaign

Register your organization as a mobilizing partner for the Poor People's Campaign's March on Washington, D.C. on June 18th! This nationwide movement is working to address six issues facing our nation today: systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the lack of healthcare access, militarism and religious nationalism. Join this historic movement, rooted in the work of Dr. King, to press for true democracy and concrete action for equity and justice.



Please click the following link to contribute content to the newsletter: [Newsletter updates](#)