

Feedback Summary

Assisted by Chat GPT/Revised by Steering Committee

What inspired you to join the Saugatuck Douglas Area Indivisibles

1. Deep Concern About the Trump Administration

- Overwhelming motivation stems from fear of Trump's re-election and his destruction of democratic norms, institutions, and the rule of law.
- Frequent references to Project 2025, authoritarianism, and fascism highlight the perceived urgency and existential threat.

2. Urgency for Collective, Organized Action

- Respondents seek an active, responsive group that avoids bureaucratic delays.
- There is a strong preference for intentional structure, coordination, and focused efforts over loosely organized or stalled initiatives.

3. Desire to "Do Something"

- A repeated theme is people feeling a moral obligation or "duty" to act—driven by fear, necessity, or the desire to answer the question, "What did you do?"
- Many expressed wanting to be part of something that is tangible, effective, and not just symbolic.

4. Political and Personal Motivation

- Beyond political issues, some shared personal motivations—like family, community, or disillusionment with past experiences.
- There is also feedback on meeting environments (e.g., discomfort with religious spaces), showing the importance of inclusive and sensitive planning.

5. Value in Local and National Connections

- People appreciate the chance to connect locally while aligning with a larger national mission.
- Some are already involved in other progressive groups and are seeking ways to collaborate or unify efforts.

What are you hoping to get out of your membership with us

1. Desire for Community & Connection

- Strong emphasis on building a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and solidarity with like-minded individuals.
- People want to connect, feel inspired, and not feel alone in the fight for democracy.

2. Demand for Direction & Action

- Members want clear direction and concrete ways to take action — not just meetings, but meaningful engagement like volunteering, protesting, or contacting officials.
- There's a call for focused, coordinated action against threats to democracy.

3. Access to Information

- Participants seek easy access to updates and upcoming opportunities, especially those with busy schedules or limited availability.
- They value transparency, clarity, and timely communication.

4. Urgency & Political Motivation

- The rise of authoritarianism (especially related to Trump and Project 2025) is a major motivating factor.
- Respondents want to feel they're making a real difference in preserving democracy.

5. Positive Feedback & Encouragement

- Several respondents expressed appreciation for the group's current efforts, particularly the *website* and *communication systems*.

Do you have any feedback about our previous meetings

What's Going Well

- **Strong Early Organization & Energy:** Many praised the fast startup, frequent meetings, and momentum (“bi-weekly meetings right away,” “love the energy”).
 - **Meeting Structure Improving:** Several noted that each meeting is getting more focused, better organized, and more efficient over time.
 - **Subgroups and Committee Work:** Appreciation for the creation of working groups and the sense of direction they provide.
 - **Positive Tone & Community Building:** Comments highlighted how the meetings feel unifying and empowering (“SDAI is giving a voice and a means to make positive change”).
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Areas Needing Improvement

- **Urgency vs. Planning:** Some feel progress is too slow given the national stakes (“The house is burning down”), urging faster action and less over-planning.
 - **Communication & Role Clarity:** Concerns about poor communication from leadership, unclear expectations, and overlapping requests — especially for volunteers and committee leads.
 - **Action Over Talk:** Desire to move beyond discussion into concrete, strategic community action that reaches beyond the already-engaged base.
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Criticism & Constructive Feedback

- **Singing at Meetings:** Widely unpopular — described as uncomfortable, “culty,” off-putting to younger members, and detracting from the professionalism and purpose of the group.
- **Church Venue Sensitivity:** Some expressed discomfort with meeting in churches, especially with religious symbolism prominently displayed.
- **Agenda & Speaker Flow:** Suggestions to end on a high note, limit individual performances, and keep chants/songs short and purposeful.

Do you have any feedback about what you'd like to see for our future meetings

What's Working and Valued

- **Strong desire for continued momentum:** Many appreciate the current direction and organization, and want to keep the energy up between meetings.
 - **Guest speakers are impactful:** The presentation by Dr. Arendshorst on nonviolent action was especially appreciated. Respondents want more educational, inspirational speakers.
 - **Bi-weekly meeting rhythm is helpful:** There's support for a mix of in-person and Zoom meetings to maintain engagement and build community efficiently.
 - **Protest and organizing information is important:** Attendees want more guidance on protest safety, legal rights, and coordination with state/national efforts.
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Suggestions for Improvement

- **Meeting Structure**
 - Keep meetings tight, focused, and on time.
 - Reduce committee updates and lengthy prepared remarks.
 - Stick to a clear agenda with top-down flow.
 - Avoid repetition (e.g., handing out mission/goals instead of repeating them aloud).
 - Open time for brief public comments, with limits to avoid off-topic speeches.
 - **Content & Focus**
 - Include brief current events/news highlights to keep members informed.
 - Offer brief tutorials or demos (e.g., on tools like the *5 Calls* app).
 - Provide education on key issues and how to take action effectively.
 - Focus more time on outreach strategies to engage people outside the base ("break the silo").
 - **Engagement & Communication**
 - Build community with more frequent, clear communication.
 - Provide direction and clarity for volunteers and subgroups.
 - Improve reporting back on organizational impact and results.
 - **Youth Inclusion**
 - Several noted the lack of younger members and encouraged a focus on content, speakers, and tone that could better attract younger generations.
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Concerns

- Meetings can feel too ceremonial or long: Criticism of "pomp and circumstance" and a desire for more interactive time.

- Need for action over commiseration: Attendees want less talk about how bad things are and more focus on strategic plans and action.
 - Zoom + dual-location meetings can be disjointed: A few noted logistical challenges and want more consistency.
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Notable Ideas

- Monthly in-person meetings with bi-weekly Zooms.
 - Highlight 3 key news stories per meeting.
 - 3-minute protest safety tips from the security team.
 - Limit team updates to a single sentence + optional Q&A.
 - More bulletin board-style ways for members to share ideas outside mic time.
 - Consider a national general strike (one passionate suggestion).
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Takeaways

- **Friday protests and volunteer meetings** are the clear pillars of engagement.
- **Post card writing, art parties, and virtual events** add variety and attract a mix of participants.
- **“Other events not listed”** was cited often—suggesting better event tracking or naming could help improve clarity and reporting.
- There's strong involvement across multiple types of engagement, reflecting an active and diverse base.

What types of events are you most interested in participating in

Summary: Preferred and Effective Event Types

Most Commonly Desired Activities

- **Protests & Demonstrations** – Overwhelming support for *visible, public action*, especially:
 - Local and regional protests
 - Large-scale protests with media coverage
 - Thematic and regular protests (but not too frequent)
 - Strategic locations: bridges, farmers markets, tourist areas

- **Town Halls** – Seen as important, especially with visibility (e.g., cardboard Huizenga, organized presence)
- **Virtual Events** – Popular for learning and accessibility
- **Postcard & Letter Writing** – Especially in group settings; some have done thousands

Additional Suggestions

- **Coffee meet-ups** to discuss current events and brainstorm
- **Issue-specific education ("Learn-Ins")** – e.g., Project 2025 discussions
- **Indivisible booth presence** at community events for recruitment and visibility
- **Wearing Indivisible gear** in tourist areas to start conversations
- **Boycotts and general strike** calls as large-scale action ideas
- **Musical events or involvement** – mentioned as a unique contribution

Desired Impact

- Be *seen and heard* in public
- Reach beyond the usual base ("not just our tribe")
- Inform and mobilize people who are unaware or undecided
- Counteract political extremism through peaceful, bold action

What do you think our short term priorities should be next 3 months

Here's a summary of the suggested short-term priorities for the next 3 months:

Key priorities:

- **Improve internal communication and coordination:** Better organize volunteer groups, coordinate with the board, and streamline focused email updates to keep members informed and engaged.
- **Education and outreach:** Educate the community about rights, political issues (e.g., Trump's budget impact), and ways to advocate effectively. Increase public awareness through community events and media.
- **Membership growth and inclusion:** Recruit and engage more young people and diverse populations, including training for leadership roles and encouraging political participation at local levels.
- **Strengthen organizational structure:** Develop clear bylaws, decision-making processes, and solid leadership commitments to create stability and shared ownership.
- **Activism and pressure campaigns:** Maintain pressure on elected officials (especially Huizenga), organize protests, calls, emails, and public actions to hold representatives accountable.

- **Collaboration:** Coordinate with other activist groups to consolidate efforts and avoid burnout.
- **Visibility:** Be present in the community through events, protests, and public demonstrations to show active resistance and encourage participation.

Overall, the focus is on organizing effectively, growing and diversifying membership, educating the community, and maintaining visible, consistent activism.

What do you think our medium term priorities should be next 4-18 months

Here's a summary of the medium-term priorities (next 4–18 months):

- **Strategic and flexible organizing:** Anticipate political threats and prepare preemptive actions, such as legal challenges and coordinated large-scale events with multiple organizations to increase visibility and influence.
- **Election focus:** Prioritize voter registration, education, and turnout, especially targeting mid-term elections to support Democratic candidates and judgeships, and prevent election interference.
- **Building political power locally:** Recruit, train, and encourage members to run for local offices (school boards, township, city councils) to create grassroots change that can grow upward.
- **Partnerships and coalition building:** Strengthen ties with other Indivisible groups and national organizations, expand outreach to diverse and younger populations, and improve communication networks across regions.
- **Issue-focused activism:** Concentrate efforts on a few key issues affecting the community and country (e.g., healthcare cuts, immigration, reproductive rights, voting rights) to raise awareness and mobilize support.
- **Sustained public engagement:** Maintain ongoing, accessible activism like standing protests, community education, and visible participation in local events while considering members' capacities.
- **Becoming a community hub:** Establish the group as a go-to place for citizens seeking involvement and positive change across generations.

Overall, the medium-term focus is on building organized, strategic, and inclusive political power locally and nationally through elections, education, partnerships, and sustained activism.

What do you think our long term priorities should be next 4 years

Here's a summary of the long-term priorities (next 4 years):

- **Remove Trump and his allies from power:** Focus on impeaching Trump, preventing any return of current administration members to federal office, and reclaiming control of Congress.
- **Elect Democrats broadly:** Win midterms, capture the presidency in 2028, and secure Democrats in local, state, and federal offices.
- **Rebuild and reshape the system:** After removing harmful leadership, work on rebuilding a stronger, more inclusive democracy—not returning to the old status quo.
- **Engage and train young people:** Continue efforts to involve youth in local government and leadership roles to sustain long-term political change.
- **Sustain organized activism:** Make protests goal-oriented, visible, and impactful; support judiciary and representatives defending democracy; and focus on protecting voting rights.
- **Influence Democratic Party priorities:** Push for policies that resonate with a broad base, including funding public education and balancing social support without alienating working Americans.
- **Plan strategically for future elections:** Begin early planning for the 2028 election cycle and beyond.

Overall, the emphasis is on political turnover, strengthening democratic institutions, expanding electoral success for Democrats, and building a resilient, engaged movement to protect and advance democracy over the next four years.

How could the Board better support and guide members like you

Here's a summary of how the Board could better support and guide members:

- **Improve clear communication and coordination:** Members want a focused, unified message and clarity on roles—especially about who handles what (e.g., event liaison contacts, communications with authorities). Updates and changes should be shared clearly and promptly.
- **Provide specific tasks aligned with members' strengths and preferences:** Not everyone wants to canvass or make calls; offer options like research, writing, speaking, or creative work so people can contribute in ways that suit them without pressure or shame.
- **Increase transparency and accessibility:** Make board and section leader contact info available to encourage cross-group collaboration and easier sharing of ideas.
- **Set clear goals, plans, and outcomes:** Members appreciate having a predictable structure with defined objectives and strategies so they can understand how efforts align and what success looks like.
- **Avoid burnout:** Distribute workload evenly and identify leaders to share responsibilities sustainably over the long term.
- **Enhance information sharing:** Use emails better to keep everyone informed (not just the website), including local political updates, event notifications (including in nearby areas), and resources from allied groups like ACLU.
- **Strengthen safety and planning:** Involve safety committees and local authorities early in event planning to protect participants and reduce risk.
- **Build community and celebrate wins:** Along with resistance efforts, include opportunities for connection and celebration to keep morale high.

Overall, members want clearer structure, better communication, tailored volunteer roles, and sustainable support from the Board.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know

Here's a summary of additional member thoughts and requests:

- Deep gratitude and appreciation for the group's passion, effort, and dedication to protecting democracy and social justice.
- Personal connections to issues like LGBTQ+ rights and concern about ongoing social injustices and erasures.
- Calls for stronger safety planning in events, including early involvement of the safety committee to minimize risks.
- Desire for clearer leadership, communication, and well-defined volunteer roles to avoid confusion and wasted effort.
- Suggestions for more impactful protests—such as spreading out participants, using loudspeakers for chants, and submitting press releases to gain media attention.
- Interest in knowing which local businesses openly support Trump to inform consumer choices.
- Requests for better coordination and communication between group leaders and the Board to improve volunteer engagement and productivity.
- Commitment from members to stay involved in whatever ways they can, even if their availability varies.
- Calls for strategic, effective actions that move the cause forward while maintaining group strength and morale.

Overall, members express strong support and a desire for improved organization, safety, communication, and effective activism.