



July 17, 2025 | Host Guide

Good Trouble Lives On is a national day of nonviolent action to respond to the attacks posed on our civil and human rights by the Trump administration and to remind them that in America, the power lies with the people.

From felony disenfranchisement to voter suppression bills like the SAVE Act, anti-democracy forces are working overtime to silence our voices. 60 years ago, President Johnson federalized the National Guard to protect peaceful civil rights marchers in Selma. Now, President Trump is calling the Guard to stop protestors from using their voice and to block progress on issues we care about.

We can't wait. We need Good Trouble now!

On July 17th, the anniversary of Rep. John Lewis' passing, we're mobilizing across the country to demand that Congress protect our rights and ensure free and fair elections for all.

We're sending a clear message:

In the United States, the power lies in the hands of the people. We demand an end to:

- The extreme crackdown on our civil rights by the Trump administration, from our right to vote to our right to protest and free speech..
- The attacks on black and brown Americans, immigrants, trans people, and other communities.
- The slashing of programs that working people rely on, including Medicaid, SNAP, and Social Security.

What can elected officials do right now? It's time for **Good Trouble**, not just from us, but from every lawmaker who claims to care about our country. Congressman John Lewis warned us of this moment. He spent the final years of his life fighting to protect the right to vote. This is our moment to carry the torch, continue his legacy, and pass it forward to future generations.

This fight starts at the local level. Get to know how election administration works in your state. Build local connections, take local action, and find a democracy organization that matches your passion,

whether that's protecting voting rights, fighting disinformation, registering voters, or reforming our election systems.

On July 17th, join us for rallies, community events, press conferences, and candlelight vigils as we call on our leaders to defend the freedom to vote and protect American democracy. It's time for Good Trouble Now, Congress.

Join us on July 17th. **Together, we March in Peace and Act in Power.**

 [If you have not done so already, please fill out this form to officially sign up to host an event.](#) 

Event Planning Resources

- [Event Sign Up Link](#)
- [Sign up for an information session](#)
- [Event Checklist](#): Step-by-step instructions for planning, recruitment, and day-of logistics
- **Sample Press Advisory Template** *coming soon!*
(Please make a copy of this document to customize and edit.)
- [Sample Invite to Member of Congress](#) (please make a copy of this document to customize and edit)
- [Grant Application](#): Deadline to apply is July 1st!
- **Media Release Template** *coming soon!*
(Please make a copy of this document to customize and edit.)
- [Host/Event Resources](#): Signs, chants, a Facebook Live tutorial, de-escalation tips, and more!
- [Email Template for Recruitment](#) (please make a copy of this document to customize and edit)
- [Social Media Graphics and Template](#) (please make a copy of this document to customize and edit)

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Purpose of Events

We are asking activists across the country to host events on July 17th to mark the fifth anniversary of Rep. John Lewis' passing and urge our senators to pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom To Vote Act, the Native American Voting Rights Act, and the Washington D.C. Admission Act.

These actions are events in which:

- A group of people gets together in a highly visible, public area
 - We recommend still keeping venues outdoors to follow health and safety protocols.
 - We also recommend ideally finding an area that legislators frequent, like their local offices or a statehouse.
 - We also recommend finding a location outdoors on flat ground that is accessible. Some people search for and filter events that are ADA-compliant.
- Events should demonstrate support for democracy reform to elected officials and the general public on why sweeping voting rights protections are important to your community.
- Events can be intimate, large, or virtual.

Each event host should invite the media and post about the event on social media. Media attention is important because legislators are constantly monitoring media (both social and traditional media) to gauge public opinion and understand what their constituents think about them and care about.

This consistent messaging of “we demand democracy” partnered with each individual’s reasons for why we care about accessible voting rights, fair representation, and accountability in politics will send a powerful message to our legislators and our fellow Americans.

Before the Event

 **Choose an event location and time. Post your event on [Mobilize.us](https://mobilize.us)** 

The first step is finding a location for your event! The location should meet the demands of your event. For example, if you are hosting a rally, there should be an area with plenty of space for people to gather. There should also be a spot where speakers can be seen and heard. Consider logistical concerns at this stage: Does the location have space nearby for attendees to park their cars? If you are using them, do you need any permits for the candles? Do you need special permits to use a microphone and speaker?

Next, choose a time. Events will take place on Thursday, **July 17**. It's key that once a time and location have been settled on and announced, they are not changed.

Time & Location Guidance:

- ✓ Try to choose a high-traffic location, such as an overpass, a “town square” or something similar, or just an area where many people tend to walk by.
- ✓ If you'd like, you can also choose to have the event outside of your legislator's office.
- ✓ Ensure your location is safe and accessible to all members of your community. The Pacific Alliance on Disability Self Advocacy has a great [guide to Accessible Event Planning you can read here](#).
- ✓ Choose a time that works for your attendees. Make the decision that's best for your group to maximize both media attention and turnout.

Once you've settled the event details and posted your event on Mobilize, please consider posting your event on social media. You can also create an event page on Facebook or Eventbrite with the relevant details and share widely!

**The time of the event will be visible on the event map, regardless of whether the date is hidden or visible. All postings will need to be approved before they are visible.*

Gather Materials for Your Event:

While no two communities or events are the same, here are some common materials you might need for your event:

- Candles (if holding a vigil)
- Lighters (if holding a vigil)
- Home-made posters
- Sign-in sheet or petition ([sample](#) petition)
- Sound system (only needed for larger events of 50 people or more)

Gather Volunteers: Depending on your event, you may need many volunteers or just a few. Think through what roles you might need for this event and how many people should be assigned to each

role (for example, do you need a media liaison, a photographer, or someone to help set up chairs or tables?).

Recruit For Your Event:

- ✓ Build a list of your friends, neighbors, local leaders, organizations, etc., to reach out to.
- ✓ Reach out to them.
 - o Call, text, email, and social media message your network to invite them to the event!
 - o [Here is a sample email](#) you can use
- ✓ Keep track of responses to your calls. This will be helpful later on to remember if a person said they were coming or not. It will also help you avoid double-calling someone.
 - o A great way to do this is by ensuring each guest RSVPs using the online event link for your event
- ✓ Post a link to your event on your social media and do social media outreach!
- ✓ Post a signup link to your event in relevant social media groups and pages, and ask your friends to invite their networks to the event.
- ✓ It can be helpful to create a separate event page on Eventbrite or Facebook, but make sure you also communicate with people who RSVP with the main event page link we'll send you.
- ✓ Send an email
- ✓ Plan to remind your attendees 2 days before the event, the day before, and the morning of the event for best success

Promoting On Social Media:

- ✓ You should post a picture of your action to any social media you have - Twitter(X), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc., and ask others at your event to do the same.
 - o Here is a Social Media Toolkit! **(coming soon)**
 - o Here are [graphics](#) you can use in your posts **(coming soon)**
- ✓ If you do not have social media, that is ok, make sure the other participants post
- ✓ BE SURE to use the hashtags **#GoodTroubleLivesOn #JohnLewis #JLVRAA #FreedomToVote #NativeVote #DCStatehood**
- ✓ BE SURE to tag your representative in your post (e.g. @Sen_JoeManchin)
- ✓ It is good practice to have sample posts, with prepared language ready to post during and right after your action.

Create a Media Plan

Boost your chances of getting media to your event

- Invite your Member of Congress or other local leaders to your event!
- Host your event outside of their office or another recognizable legislative building.
- Have good visuals! (I.e., posters!)
- You can also invite local activists and leaders from different perspectives to speak to why we need democracy reform.

Build your media list.

- ✓ Here is a sample Press Advisory Template (*coming soon!*)- be sure to update it with your event information.
- ✓ Having a good list of press contacts will be critical. If you need help getting contacts, email info@goodtroubleliveson.org to request a media list as soon as possible.
- ✓ For this type of visual action, you want to make sure to invite video and photo reporters.
- ✓ You can create an email list by searching the internet for lists of media contacts, or just go to the websites of the local media outlets in your area and find contacts for their newsroom or assignment desk.
- ✓ See who covers this type of story, not just in your local paper, but on local radio, TV, and blogs. 68% of Americans get some news from TV - so make certain to call the 2-3 most popular local TV news stations, including your local FOX affiliate and 1-2 news radio stations.
- ✓ There are lots of sites that maintain contact lists. Here are a few good places to start:
 - a. <http://www.usnpl.com>
 - b. <http://www.newslink.org>
- ✓ Ask people in your network if they have any strong personal media connections.
- ✓ Outside of traditional media, be sure to make lists of independent bloggers, podcasters, and photographers, as well as local individuals with social media influence.

Send out the advisory before the event.

- ✓ Media Advisory Template (*coming soon!*): Localize it for your city!
- ✓ Highlight the visuals that might make them want to send a photographer or video camera. "Dozens of community members will come together with homemade posters for a candlelight vigil on the steps of the State Capitol building".
- ✓ List someone who will be at the action as one of your points of contact.
- ✓ Find good messengers to quote in the release.
- ✓ Email reporters with the advisory in the body of the email, not as an attachment
- ✓ Call to follow up - this is the most important step. Ask for help with this if you expect to be busy the day before / day of the action.
- ✓ If you need help from us, ask! Email jalisa@dfadcoalition.org or jdockens@tjcoalition.org, and we can send your advisory for you.

Contact reporters.

- ✓ Follow up after you've sent the advisory in the body of an email (not as an attachment). Make it clear why it's incredibly important that they cover your event. This phone call is the most important part of earning media coverage.
- ✓ Call reporters on the day of the event. Give them a quick update (e.g., how many people you're expecting) and then pitch them on coming again. Make sure they still have your advisory and resend it if they don't.
- ✓ Talk to the reporter or editor where possible; don't settle for leaving voicemails or messages with the receptionist. Your pitch calls are your best tool; make sure you're using them.

Safety Preparedness

Before your event, create a security plan that is easily accessible to leadership to ensure the safety of attendees before challenges or risks present themselves.

- ✓ Appoint safety leads responsible for ushering the crowd to safe locations
- ✓ Establish exit routes and safe meet up points
- ✓ Create a directory of volunteers' emergency contacts
- ✓ Utilize a safety planning worksheet ([Hands Off](#) has a great example!)
- ✓ Share security plan with attendees through Mobilize or email

To ensure attendees establish their safety measures before the event, send out materials such as:

- A safety planning worksheet ([Hands Off](#))
- Digital "[Know Your Rights Cards](#)" that disclose information on protesters' rights as well as cards on immigrants' rights ([Spanish/English](#) cards provided by the Immigrant Defense Project)

During the Event

Prepare the space

Set up your location, including handing out posters, setting up sound systems, and putting out candles and lighters for attendees (if applicable). Make sure all technology is working properly. Double-check that your event is accessible to all. Again, see [this guide from The Pacific Alliance on Disability Self Advocacy for help](#).

Prepare your volunteers and begin

Arrive at your location 30 - 45 minutes early, actively greet any early arrivals, greet the media, and direct them to your spokespeople proactively (some events may require you to arrive earlier than suggested). Don't delay more than ten minutes after your advertised start time, especially if any members of the press show up. If you have speakers, follow your planned agenda and make sure to keep things moving.

Look for reporters at your event.

- ✓ Have a designated media liaison.
- ✓ Greet reporters and answer any questions they have.
- ✓ If they have cameras, help them get the shots they're looking for by ensuring your group is arranged in a photo-friendly way.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to call the media back again if they didn't show up to a previous event.
- ✓ Build relationships. Reporters are people, too. If they know and trust you, they're more likely to come.

Post on Social Media

You and your attendees should post on Twitter(X), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Tag the profiles of elected, orgs, news outlets, etc., as soon as you can after the event. Be sure to announce the hashtags to your attendees - **#GoodTroubleLivesOn #JohnLewis #JLVRAA #FreedomToVote #NativeVote #DCStatehood** (and tag your Senators) several times during the event. And feel free to tweet photos and videos you take, as well as text.

Take note of the number of attendees at your event so that you can report that number to the media right afterwards.

Event Security

If the crowd is **approached by agitators or infiltrators** (those encouraging illegal activity, disrupting group unity, acting suspiciously), encourage attendees to practice **de-escalation techniques** such as:

- ✓ Staying calm, using a neutral tone, and avoiding aggressive or threatening body language.
- ✓ Redirect focus from the agitators to the protest's purpose by leading chants.
- ✓ Set boundaries such as stating "We are here peacefully"
- ✓ Work with a buddy or allies to create a safe solution
- ✓ Remove oneself and others from the situation and relocate the group to a safer area
- ✓ Documenting instances of tension with agitators, police officers, or among crowd members

through video recording.

Finally, enjoy yourself!!! You've put the work in—now it's time to watch things come together!

After the Event

The first thing to do is follow up with the media. Whether you had media present or not, send a post-event press release to all media in your area immediately after the event.

Follow-up email to reporters

- ✓ Pre-write a brief follow-up message to send to reporters after the action, accompanied by a still photo from the event. Ideally, you'll designate one person to do this, in case you're too busy to do it yourself.
- ✓ Prompt sharing of photos with traditional media and on social media, using the **#GoodTroubleLivesOn, #JohnLewis, #JLVRAA, #FreedomToVote, #NativeVote, and #DCStatehood** hashtags, is essential for folks to see and hear about your event.
- ✓ If you have an event with prominent partners, you can do a formal press release with them that includes quotes from the different groups about why this is important. If you go this route, make sure to ask each group for a quote early to include and have the drafted release ready to send.

Thank your volunteers and attendees

Email your attendees to thank them for a great action. Immediate follow-up is important for recruitment and group longevity!

Finally, let us know how it went! After the action, we'll send you an email with a link to a short survey, and you can use that survey to tell us about your event. You should **send your photos to jdockens@tjcoalition.org** as well as posting them on Instagram, Twitter(X), LinkedIn, and Facebook using the hashtags **#GoodTroubleLivesOn #JohnLewis #JLVRAA #FreedomToVote #NativeVote #DCStatehood**