Americans of Conscience Action Checklist
Week of February 18, 2018
By Jen Hofmann



67 weeks down, 37 weeks to mid-term elections.

This checklist features clear, hype-free actions for Americans who value democracy, equality, voting, and decency. Additionally, we practice gratitude, self-care, and celebration to stay engaged. Urgent actions are highlighted in yellow.

I believe I can make a difference in our democracy.

Action: We still have miles to go. Make a self-care plan. Please.

Find your favorite pen and spend ten minutes with this worksheet.

Good news

Decent people everywhere are speaking up and working together. Just look.

Federal

- US District Court Judge Garaufis ruled to extend DACA beyond March 5.
- US 4th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the block against the third Muslim ban as unconstitutional.
- A group of mayors protest administration threats to withhold funding from sanctuary cities.
- The Attorneys General of twenty states cosigned a letter to strongly oppose adding a citizenship question to the 2020 US Census.
- Recent surveys shows that a majority of Americans support eventual citizenship for children brought to the US.
- Although media is spinning this week's 4 immigration votes as "failed," it looks like Democrats are not willing to sacrifice any person based on their immigration status, nor waste money on a racist wall, nor increase ICE terror in our communities.

State

- As adults fail to protect them and without the right to vote, young people take control of the narrative, organize, and use their limited power to advocate for change.
- A.G. Schneiderman files lawsuit against the Weinstein company to compensate victims, protect employees, and hold the company accountable in sexual harassment cases.
- Pennsylvania counties planning to replace their electronic voting systems must buy machines that leave a paper trail, declares Gov. Tom Wolf.

- Equality Virginia's Day of Action continues to empower LGBT and allied Virginians to create positive change.
- The Florida Senate Criminal Justice Committee passed legislation that extends critical protections to disability and transgender communities.
- The Pennsylvania Supreme Court will redraw the state's congressional map for the 2018 midterm elections.
- Pennsylvania will increase the security of elections in the state, following a directive was issued this week by PA secretary of state Robert Torres.
- Governor Andrew Cuomo's latest proposed state budget includes funding for early voting beginning in 2019.

Corporate/business

- Unilever threatens to stop advertising on Facebook if it doesn't improve transparency and cut "toxic" online content.
- Fed Chair Janet Yellen used her last day on the job to enforce a corporate governance overhaul at Wells Fargo and place restrictions on its growth.
- A Tribal and environmental coalition defeats the largest proposed oil-by-rail terminal in the US (amazing photos!).
- French insurance giant AXA will cease insuring the tar-sands sector and new-coal projects and divest over $3.5 billion in tar sands and coal companies.

Groups and organizations

- N.Y. Teamsters organize a 'sanctuary union' to support undocumented workers.
- The American Meteorological Society corrects the president on the climate crisis.
- 500 Jewish teens protest in DC holding "Jews for Dreamers" signs.
- #MeToo movement founder Tarana Burke is releasing a memoir about healing from sexual violence.
- Human Rights Campaign released a new report on the growing political power of the LGBTQ movement for the 2018 elections.

Local

- Post-Maria, Coamo residents rebuild the town's power grid by hand.
- Austin City Council passes a paid sick leave policy for all the town's workers.
- POC students will see themselves reflected in their school's new name honoring the first black NASA engineer, Mary Jackson.
- Disability rights advocates plan to sue the Texas Workforce Commission over their failure to provide registration assistance to voters with disabilities.
- A report titled *New Americans in Lancaster* adds to the body of data that shows immigrants make overwhelmingly positive contributions to our country.
- The US Court of Appeals ruled that segregating Alabama children by race in public schools is unconstitutional.

- Thanks to brave testimony, gay “conversion therapy” in Erie County, NY is now banned.

Feel good

- Raven and Janizia will be able to attend prom together (cute photo!). #lovewins
- A Syrian grandfather gets a Muslim ban waiver for eye cancer surgery, and is welcomed in Atlanta.
- A local farm family uses their local spotlight to uplift their neighbors.
- Despite attempts to silence her, Lyssa Lucas read off the donation amounts from gas and oil companies to candidates supporting a debated bill. #NeverthelessShePersisted
- Bresha Meadows returns home after being incarcerated for self-defense killing.
- See more good news at Small Victories, Marla’s Good News, and What Went Right.

Acts of Gratitude

Time for some stamps, postcards, and sparkle markers for gratitude mail. (It’s good for you!)

Send a letter of support to a teen at Stoneman Douglas High. By request, we’re welcoming them back to classes by sharing words of support, love, empathy, and encouragment. Tell them you’re working for solutions and a future for all America’s kids. **Update**: Send laminated well-wishes, donations, and #MSDStrong notes on social media.

Address: Diane Wolk-Rogers, Stoneman Douglas High School, 5901 Pine Island Road, Parkland, Florida 33076

Thank Sen Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) for leading the effort in the Senate to overhaul the system for congressional employees’ harassment claims. I am grateful for your support for survivors’ right to seek and attain justice. Thank you.

Address: 780 Third Avenue, Suite 2601, New York, New York 10017

Thank HHS Sec. Alex Azar for backing CDC research on gun violence. I support collecting data that helps minimize gun violence and keeps our loved ones safe.

Address: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20201

Thank Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), and **Reps. Robert Scott** (D-VA) and **Mark Takano** (D-CA) for demanding the withdrawal of a proposal to pool restaurant workers’ tips. I support fair wages for all and appreciate your advocacy for hardworking Americans.

Address (PM): 988 Jackson Federal Building, 915 2nd Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98174
Address (RS): 2600 Washington Ave., Suite 1010, Newport News, VA 23607
Address (MT): 3403 10th Street, Suite 610, Riverside, CA 92501

Thank Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-WA) for holding accountable the Department of Homeland Security in its new role in United States elections. The right to vote is at the core of a representational democracy. Thank you for working to protect that right.
Address: 950 Pacific Ave. Suite 1230, Tacoma, WA 98402

Thank Reps. Joyce Beatty (D-OH) and **Steve Stivers** (R-OH) for creating the Congressional Civility and Respect Caucus. I appreciate your work to build bridges between parties and help us solve the challenges of our time.
Address (JB): 471 East Broad Street, Suite 1100, Columbus, OH 43215
Address (SS): 3790 Municipal Way, Hilliard, OH 43026

Thank Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator, for his recent call for a federal strategy to reduce lead exposure in drinking water. I am grateful to you for advocating for the safety of our most vulnerable citizens.
Address: EPA, Office of the Administrator 1101A, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20460

Take action

I value equality.

Stand with your rainbow of neighbors from every religion, race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, age, and ability. Out of many, we are one.

Action: Stand with kids everywhere.

This action is in solidarity with the student marches and Youth EMPOWER.
Call: Your three MoCs (look up). Your 2 *state* legislators (look up).
Script: Hi. I'm from [ZIP], calling to let [name] know that I want students to learn and school staff to work in environments that are free from fear. I want [name] to be proactive in addressing the public health crisis of gun violence (US Senators: and co-sponsor S.2095). Thank you.

Action: Stand with your LGBTQ neighbors for their equal rights.

Call: Your 2 senators (look up).
Scripts

- **Red senators**: Hi. I'm from [ZIP] and am concerned that Sen. [name] approves of discrimination against 5% of her constituents. I/my neighbor can legally be evicted or fired with no recourse against discrimination. I

would like him/her to cosponsor the Equality Act (S. 1006) to show s/he believes in equality for all his/her constituents.

- **Blue senators**: I'm calling to thank [name] for co-sponsoring the Equality Act (S. 1006) to ensure all Americans are treated as equals. I would like them to use their influence to move this bill through committee.

Bonus: Write the Judiciary chairs and urge them to move this bill forward.
Chuck Grassley, SSJC Chair, 135 Hart SOB, Washington, D.C. 20510
Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, 331 Hart SOB, Washington, D.C. 20510

Action: Stand with kids to receive quality public education.

Call/Write: Your 2 *state* legislators (look up).
Script: I'm concerned about the decrease in funding for [state's] public K-12 education as a result of the new tax plan's caps on state and local tax deductions. Since the tax plan also allows 529 college savings plan holders to withdraw money tax-free to finance K-12 private education, there's a risk of further decline in public school funding. I am curious about whether [name] shares this concern, and what s/he is doing to address education funding.

Action: Stand with LGBTQ people and oppose biased judicial appointments.

Call: Your 2 senators (look up).
Script: Hi. I'm from [ZIP], calling to express my concern about several lifetime judicial nominees who oppose equality. All six have long histories of discriminating against LGBTQ citizens: Sen. Mark Norris, Kyle Duncan, Howard Nielson, Ryan Bounds, Gordon Giampietro, and Michael Brennan. Additionally, both Brennan and Bounds failed to secure blue slip endorsements from their states' Senators. I ask [name] to stand up for our LGBTQ neighbors and oppose these nominees for lifetime appointments.

Action: Stand with soon-to-be moms in underrepresented, underserved communities.

Call: Your 2 senators (look up). (*Red or blue. This bill has only 4 co-signers.*)
Script: Hi. I'm from [ZIP] calling to ask Sen. [name] to support the bipartisan bill S. 783, the Improving Access to Maternity Care Act. I'm concerned about the shortage of obstetricians and nurse-midwives in rural areas and communities of color. In 25 years, the US rate of maternal death has doubled. This bill would save lives through better maternity care. Is [name] willing to co-sponsor it?

Action: Stand with people with disabilities and advocate for basic civil rights.

Call: Your 2 senators (look up).
Script: Hi. I'm from [ZIP], and I am calling to express my concern about possible changes to the Americans with Disabilities Act. H.R. 620 just passed in the House and permits delayed ADA compliance, restricts litigation rights, and makes people with disabilities report non-compliance. I want [name] to advocate for basic civil rights and vote no when this bill comes up for a vote in the Senate.

I value secure, convenient voting and fair elections.

Democracy thrives when all citizens can freely elect those who represent their values.

Action: Be 100% sure you're on your state's voter rolls.

Visit: https://www.headcount.org/verify-voter-registration/ (site verified as safe). With primaries starting next month and 2017 voter data shenanigans, take 15 seconds to check that your voter registration is active.

Action: Advocate for protecting the integrity of US elections.

Call: Your 1 House rep and 2 senators (look up).
Script: Hi. I'm calling from [ZIP]. In light of Robert Mueller's most recent indictment, I am calling to ask [name] to co-sponsor the bipartisan DETER (Defending Elections from Threats by Establishing Redlines) Act (H.R.4884/S. 2313). National security isn't a partisan issue. Supporting this bill will protect the integrity of our next election.

I value showing respect for all people, no matter where they were born.

People who immigrate to the US make our country stronger and build our economy. As our neighbors and as fellow human beings, they are entitled to basic respect and compassion.

Action: Help your neighbors understand their constitutional rights.

Our neighbors have constitutional rights, and these tools communicate them.
Visit: https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards.
Print: Or order IRLC's "Know Your Rights" Red Cards.
Pin: On community bulletin boards in grocery stores, congregations, coffee shops, and libraries.
Ask: Business owners if you can leave a stack on the counter.

Action: Stand with Jewish organizations opposing president's racist advisor.

Script: I stand with leaders of Jewish organizations in their open objection to Stephen Miller's advisory role to the president. I share their belief that his anti-immigrant and racist agenda makes him unfit to serve and that he should be removed immediately.
Address: Gen. John F. Kelly, White House Chief of Staff, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500

Deep breath innnnnnn… Deep breath ouuuuuuuut…

Recommended reading

Thought-provoking, in-depth reading that's worth your time.

- **Not your FBI**: The Federal Bureau of Investigations is a department that operates independently. The president's efforts to influence it are dangerous for democracy.
- **Propaganda machine**: A coordinated, well-financed Russian company used over 100 employees working two shifts to break our trust in voting and sow hatred between us. (original source)

Final action

If you find this checklist useful, please spread the word!

Tweet: A government for the people, by the people. Help create positive change with this week's @AoCChecklist. https://goo.gl/6NTWk9

Email and Facebook: A democracy works best when everyone uses their power to influence decision-making. Use your voice in support of democracy with the Americans of Conscience Checklist. https://goo.gl/6NTWk9

Housekeeping

- **Sign up**: Subscribe to the weekly Americans of Conscience Checklist here.
- **Stay inspired**: Complete the Self-Care Worksheet.
- **Stay focused**: Complete the Action Worksheet (or Kelly Wooten's artistic version).
- **Connect**: If you have a question, correction, or action suggestion. With thanks!
- **Nerd out**: See archives of past AoC Checklists here and scroll down.

Note: This checklist is always ad-free and no-cost. If you're able, support Jen's time on patreon or paypal.