



# WORTH FIGHTING FOR

## Engage Your Elected Officials

### Host Toolkit

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#### BACKGROUND:

At its core, the Worth Fighting For campaign is about defending the values that unite us: safety, accountability, fairness, and trust. This toolkit serves as a step by step guide for those who are looking to effectively engage their elected representatives around this shared goal.

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Questions or ideas arising as you are working with this toolkit? Email us at [democracyaction@citizen.org](mailto:democracyaction@citizen.org)

#### Who To Engage

The offices you prioritize contacting and topics you raise with them could vary based on your location and representation.

- U.S. Senators
- House Representatives
- State Legislators
- Local Leaders (City Council members, Board of Supervisors, Mayors, School board, Boards & Commissions, Oversight Committees, Delegates)

## How To Engage

### Goals:

- Engage your elected officials on a local, state and federal level with in-district meetings or public events asking them to pledge to stand up to corruption and protect human rights and the climate. Cultivate your representative as a partner for the next 4 years in our shared goals of safety, accountability, fairness, and trust
- If you don't currently have relationships with these offices, establishing relationships is a critical initial goal.

**Start Local and small – do not overwhelm yourself to the point of approaching burnout. Attend Local City Council Meetings, find out who your leaders are; Who is your Board of Supervisor (by district). Find out when the City Council and the Board of Supervisors meet and where. Get the Agenda in advance and review it. You may make Public Comments at meetings and in some cases, you can comment online if you are unable to attend in person. Check out this informative presentation created by one of our local City Council members:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqpO8xpOIc8>

### How to focus your conversations

*This will depend on the representative's role and party affiliation.*

- If you have a **Republican Senator** who has expressed skepticism of Trump's cabinet nominees, you could prioritize that;
  - You could hold an in-district meeting with their staff in your district - organize key voices who will have the Senators' ear on the issue to join you.
  - Hold a press event outside of their office with key voices on the issue - look for people who will hold influence over the Senator. Not all press is good press.
- If you have a **Democratic city government**, you might prioritize asking them to use their power to protect targeted communities in your area, the climate and democracy from Project 2025.

- **1. Adopt Sanctuary Policies:** Many cities have already become sanctuary cities, refusing to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. If your city hasn't done so, advocate for this policy to protect immigrant residents. Sanctuary cities make it harder for Trump's administration to carry out large-scale deportations, especially when states and cities work together.
- **2. Expand Protections for Vulnerable Communities:** Local governments can pass ordinances that protect housing rights, fund community health programs, and ensure that LGBTQ+ residents feel safe and supported. These policies create safer spaces for residents and demonstrate what pro-democracy governance looks like.
- **3. Invest in Local Environmental Initiatives:** Cities can enact local climate policies like banning single-use plastics, promoting renewable energy, or creating green infrastructure projects. These actions contribute to national environmental progress and create visible, tangible benefits for residents.
- **4. Partner with State and Regional Allies:** Encourage your city leaders to work with state and regional governments on issues like transportation, affordable housing, and voting rights. This collaboration strengthens progressive policies across jurisdictions and shows that cities are part of a larger resistance against Trump's agenda.
- **5. Create policies that make their city a thriving, healthy, and desirable place to live:** The more that Democratically-controlled areas deliver for their residents, the better we can make the case against the MAGA agenda to the American people.
- If you have **Democratic state leadership**, you might prioritize using their significant power to counter Trump's agenda directly and protect residents within your state, the climate and democracy from Project 2025.
  - **1. Sign Executive Orders to Protect Residents:** Democratic governors can issue orders that directly counter federal actions, like establishing protections for immigrants, expanding access to reproductive healthcare, or enforcing strict environmental standards that defy federal rollbacks.
  - **2. Use their Economic Leverage:** States with significant economic power, like California and New York, can use their influence to counter Trump's agenda by setting procurement and contracting standards that prioritize civil rights, environmental responsibility, and fair labor practices. Blue states can refuse to do business with companies that don't uphold progressive values, using their economic might to challenge Trump's policies.
  - **3. File Lawsuits Against Harmful Federal Actions:** Democratic AGs can use lawsuits to slow down or block federal policies that harm residents or violate constitutional rights. This legal resistance can delay implementation and spotlight

the harms of Trump's agenda in the media, building a case for the 2026 elections.

- **4. Decline to implement federal policies in their states:** A ton of federal programs or legislation is actually dependent on the states implementing them. Your governor could decline a pot of money earmarked for a police crackdown on peaceful protests or refuse to participate in a program that would require granting massive loopholes to giant corporate polluters. If there's an opt-out, they should be taking it.
- **5. Implement Sanctuary Policies for Out-of-State Visitors:** Blue states can enact laws that protect individuals traveling from red states to access services restricted under Trump's policies. For example, protections for reproductive healthcare or gender-affirming care reinforce blue states as safe havens for civil rights, creating a direct challenge to Trump's efforts to impose regressive values nationwide.
- **6. Create Legal Funds to Protect Residents:** Democratic states can set up state-funded legal defense funds to help residents directly affected by Trump's policies, such as immigrants at risk of deportation or families losing healthcare. These funds signal that the state is ready to stand up for its people, regardless of federal threats.

You can post your meeting or event to the [www.WeAreWorthFightingFor.org](http://www.WeAreWorthFightingFor.org) site as a community event if you'd like - either as a public or private event.

## Messaging

By taking action, we are sending a clear message:

**We will not rubber-stamp extremism. We demand leaders who prioritize people over politics.**

### Strategic Phrases for Use in All Messaging

- "Protecting our communities starts with rejecting leaders who prioritize extremism over safety."
- "Stopping dangerous nominees is the first step toward a government we can trust."
- "Every nomination that prioritizes politics over people must be blocked before it causes harm."

## The Stakes

The people nominated to lead our institutions shape the policies that govern our lives. These nominees are not just names on a list; they have the power to:

- Undermine the safety of our children and families.
- Erode public trust in our justice system.
- Prioritize the interests of extremists and corporations over the needs of everyday people.

Stopping harmful nominees is about preventing real harm to real people. It's about ensuring that our leaders reflect our values and protect our freedoms.

### What's at Risk

- **Our Safety:** Nominees like those that have been named threaten national security by prioritizing political loyalty over public safety.
- **Our Freedoms:** Nominees with histories of discriminatory policies and harmful practices threaten the liberties of marginalized communities.
- **Our Democracy:** Rubber-stamping extremist nominees without checks and balances opens the door to authoritarian governance and dismantles the systems that hold leaders accountable.

### The Opportunity

Every step in the nomination process is a chance to:

1. **Build Power:** Mobilize communities, engage new activists, and strengthen coalitions.
2. **Create Change:** Stop nominations before they gain momentum and demonstrate the strength of grassroots action.

### Messaging Tailored to Audiences

- **To Senators:** "Rubber-stamping dangerous nominees isn't just bad policy—it's bad politics. Your constituents are watching, and they expect you to take a stand."
- **To Communities:** "You have the power to protect your family and neighbors from harmful leadership. Together, we can hold our government accountable."
- **About Nominees:** "Nominee X has a record of [specific harm]. Their confirmation

### Key Narrative Hooks

1. **A Job Interview for America:**
  - "Confirming a nominee is like hiring someone for a critical job. Would you hire someone who has a record of [specific harm]?"
2. **Building Trust in Government:**
  - "Our democracy works best when we have leaders who prioritize accountability and fairness. Harmful nominees undermine that trust."

### 3. The First Line of Defense Against Authoritarianism:

- “Stopping extremist nominees is the first step to preventing authoritarian policies that dismantle our democracy.”

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## How to Ask for a Meeting and What to Say in a Meeting

### Scheduling a Meeting:

1. Contact your Senator’s office by phone or email. Find a contact [here](#).
2. Explain that you are a constituent and want to discuss the [nomination/issue].

Example:

*“Hi, I’m [Your Name], a voter from [City]. I’d like to meet with [Senator’s Name] to discuss the dangerous implications of confirming [Nominee X].”*

### What to Say During the Meeting:

- Start with a personal story or local example of how this nomination impacts your community.
- Highlight the nominee’s specific harms:  
*“Nominee X has a documented history of [harm]. Their confirmation would result in [specific consequence].”*
- Request a specific action:  
*“I’m asking you to oppose this nomination and vote no in committee or on the Senate floor.”*

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## How to Host a Town Hall in Your Community

A town hall is a public meeting or forum where members of a community gather to discuss issues, share information, and engage in open dialogue with local leaders, public officials, or organizers. They provide a valuable platform for community members to voice concerns, ask questions, and contribute ideas in an inclusive and interactive setting.

### Step 1: Plan the Event

- **Set a Date and Location:** Choose a space that’s accessible and public, like a library or community center.
- **Promote the Event:**

- Use flyers, social media, and local organizations to spread the word.
- Use platforms like Facebook events or Mobilize to have people attending register for the event.
- **Invite Speakers:** Reach out to community leaders, activists, or validators such as veterans, faith leaders, or local business owners.
- **Invite your US Senator to attend**

## Step 2: Build the Agenda

- **Opening:** Explain why this fight matters. Use human-centered examples to frame the issue.
- **Main Discussion:** Share facts about the nominee, key messaging, and calls to action.
- **Interactive Segment:** Allow participants to draft letters, record videos, or sign petitions on-site.

## Step 3: Engage the Community

- **End the event with concrete next steps:**
  - Plan office visits or group calls to Senators.
  - Schedule a letter-writing campaign or follow-up town hall.
  - Form small working groups to stay organized and coordinated.

### Sample Call to Action:

*“This nominee represents a direct threat to our community and values. Together, we can stop this nomination and protect our freedoms. Let’s act now!”*

## How to Run a Lobby Visit

A lobby visit is a meeting between constituents and lawmakers or their staff to discuss specific issues, advocate for policies, or share personal perspectives. These visits allow citizens to directly engage with decision-makers, providing a valuable opportunity to influence legislation and build relationships.

### Step 1: Setting up your virtual lobby visit

- **Set a Date and Location:** Check your Senator’s website to see if they have specific instructions on setting up a lobby visit.
- If there aren’t specific instructions on how to set up a visit, try calling the in-district office and ask to set up a virtual meeting via Zoom, or whatever platform is used by the office.
- If for whatever reason you cannot reach the district office, call the D.C. office and tell them you are a constituent looking to set up a meeting.

- Once you are able to get a staffer on the phone, tell them that you are a constituent and that you'd like to request a meeting with your member of Congress, or if they aren't available, with the staffer who handles government ethics and/or democracy reform. You'll likely be instructed to follow up by email with the scheduler or to fill out a webform. [Here is a tool to look up your Senators and their website](#)

## Step 2: The Meeting

- **Opening:** Explain why this fight matters. Use human-centered examples to frame the issue.
- **Main Discussion:** Share facts about the nominee, key messaging, and calls to action.

## Quick Tips

- Respect the member's office and time.
- Thank them for something (a good vote, a thing they said in the news, or even just taking the time to meet).
- Talk about why this issue is important to you.
- Make a clear and direct ask. "Will you (or your boss) make a public statement committing to stopping the nomination of members that will suppress our freedoms?" Then listen.

## Step 3: Meeting with Staff

Chances are that your representative won't be able to make your meeting in-person and you'll meet with one of their staff. Don't be discouraged by this or think that the meeting is less important.

- There is very little to change about what you say or ask during a meeting with staff. The biggest difference is that they cannot speak for the member so their answers will be a little less concrete than if you were meeting with the representative themselves.
- All of this said, don't forget to ask them to prioritize and ask them to pledge to stand up to corruption and protect human rights and the climate. They will deliver your request to their boss, rain or shine.
- Lastly, have fun. It's ok to be a little nervous before these meetings, especially if it's your first one ever.
- In general, this should be a positive experience, even if your representative isn't supportive. At worst they'll tell you they don't agree. At best, you'll identify a



democracy reform champion who will go to Washington and make some much-needed changes. This is the best way to find out!

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

I have been following these Political Commentators daily. They are so much more informative than the news or social media. If you download Substack, the app (it's free, but you can upgrade to paid, I haven't yet) you can follow most of these people in it, AND it offers an audio version of their articles. This comes in very handy, as most of the information is LARGE, and thorough and accurate and very interesting.

- 🔗 **Dan Rather- Steady**
- 🔗 **Heather Cox Richardson- Letters from An American**
- 🔗 **Jess Piper- The View from Rural Missouri**
- 🔗 **Joyce Vance- Civil Discourse**
- 🔗 **People Power United- Laurie Woodward Garcia – America's Voice for Progress & Actions**
- 🔗 **Robert Hubbell- Today's Edition Newsletter**
- 🔗 **Robert Reich**
- 🔗 **Thom Hartmann- The Hartmann Report**

## **At the End of the Rise & Empower workshop:**

- Finally, research out to like-minded organizations to continue your work. These organizations are well established and I find them to all have different personalities. Check each of them out and find the right fit for you. It may be one or it may be all of them.
  - **Surj.org – Gear Up – Janine**
    - **I would like to invite you all to the next National SURJ call on Jan 8th, 5 pm PST. And we are tentatively saving Feb 1st for an event to take action. The website to learn more about SURJ and to join the call is <https://sites.google.com/surjaction.org/gearup?emci=7c3e1bae-1fbe-ef11-88ce-0022482a93af&emdi=50344a51-4cbe-ef11-88ce-0022482a93af&ceid=1769170>.**
  - **Immigration – Post links in the Chat.**
    - **Know Your Rights <https://www.ilrc.org/community-resources>**
    - **Alto-trump <https://altotrump.com>**
    - **ICE Out of CA <http://www.iceoutofca.org/>**
    - **Save The People <https://ndlcn.org/asambleas/>**
    - **<https://mijente.net/>**

- **Indivisible** supports local activist groups around the country to fight back against Trump's agenda. Whois: Ezra Levin, Jeremy Haile, Leah Greenberg, and Angel Padilla, were former Congressional staffers.
- **MoveOn**: We're a multi-issue organization using grassroots member power to organize on issues and elections to achieve an America where we can all thrive. MoveOn's Mobilizer community is a place for individuals around the country to build community and take action on a range of issues. Whois: Entrepreneurs Joan Blades and Wes Boyd, supported by Robert Reich
- **Public Citizen**: Corporations have their lobbyists in Washington, D.C. The people need advocates too. That's where we come in. We organize to put people ahead of corporate power, and to make sure that no politicians succeed in putting themselves above the law. Whois: Lisa & Robert
- **Working Families Party**: We're building a multiracial party of working people to transform our country. State by state and community by community, WFP is building a political home for all of us who see bigotry, bailouts, and business as usual in our political system and ask, "Is that the best we can do?" If you're interested in getting involved with WFP, either on our national email list or with one of our state chapters. Whois: coalition of labor unions, community organizations, members of the now-inactive national New Party, and a variety of advocacy groups such as Citizen Action of New York and ACORN: the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now.