



# 2024 MESSAGING GUIDE


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# INTRODUCTION

In 2024, Americans face a choice between very different futures for the country, including about our institutions and fundamental rights that have long been taken for granted. In our work with Democratic leaders who have demonstrated a strong track record of political and policy success across a diverse set of communities, NewDEAL is committed to partnering with those who are fighting for decency and progress this election year.

While voters have a range of concerns, a handful of issues are clearly top priorities among the electorate. To identify and dig into these key subjects, we have engaged with political strategists, Democratic party leaders, and, critically, state and local elected officials about what public opinion data and their work with voters can tell us on topics ranging from how to frame abortion rights to how to best reach young people. We hosted them on our podcast, [An Honorable Profession](#), and in other forums where they shared actionable strategies to help elect solutions-oriented Democrats up and down the ballot. You can hear directly from these experts by clicking the  button in the “Expert Insight” section on every page.

## TOP TAKEAWAYS

Before moving to suggestions by issue area, we offer three big-picture pieces of guidance for appealing to a broad base of voters:

**Lead with the Economy:** Polling and insights from various sources underscore the centrality of economic issues in this election across parties and voting blocs, driving voter sentiment more than issues like reproductive rights, education, immigration, and public safety. **It is imperative to understand voters' concerns and draw conversations back to economic issues, including how Democrats can and have delivered positive results for working families.**

- As [research](#) from Third Way makes clear, **reducing inflation and lowering the cost of living is the top priority for voters overall.** In addition, as we outline in this guide, housing costs are a particular concern that voters want to hear addressed more.
- Americans are not worried about finding a job – **they’re worried about finding a good-paying job.** Recognizing this distinction is key.
- **Democrats brought the nation back from the brink of economic catastrophe following Trump’s poor management during the COVID pandemic.** Legislation such as the American Rescue Plan, Inflation Reduction Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and CHIPS helped create nearly **15 million new jobs, including high-paying jobs in manufacturing and the growing “clean” economy.** [The laws](#) have delivered results and, if maintained, will do more to make progress on lowering costs, such as reducing utility bills through tax credits and energy efficiency, and easing the cost of healthcare, particularly prescription drugs.

**Focus on Freedom:** According to a [NewDEAL poll](#), freedom and democracy also top voters' concerns in 2024. From reproductive rights vs. abortion bans to investing in schools vs. pushing book bans, it is clear that Democrats are on the side of protecting and expanding freedoms while Republicans are trying to limit freedoms.

- With the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and escalating attempts to implement extreme abortion bans nationwide, reproductive rights and access are central topics to this year's election. When discussing these issues, **frame Republican agendas as part of their committed efforts to restrict American freedoms**, in this case by placing politicians at the center of personal, medical decisions between a woman and her doctor when it comes to not only abortion, but also other basic reproductive healthcare.
- As economic concerns continue to drive voters in this year's election, be sure to tie together messages of freedom and financial opportunities. As the [NewDEAL and New Democrat Coalition's Freedom Agenda](#) says, "Democrats represent the party that can uniquely offer practical solutions to creating opportunity for all and should be clear that Americans are freer when... barriers are removed." **Republicans have stood in the way of supporting working families, creating quality jobs, and developing career-focused education pathways, by promising to gut social security, the Affordable Care Act, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, while Democrats continue to champion these initiatives.**

**Draw Contrasts:** It is not enough to simply tell voters how Democrats and the Biden-Harris Administration have delivered for the American people over the past four years. **We must also focus on comparing the successes of this administration to the failures of the previous one, emphasizing what that means voters can expect in the future.** Voters will face not just two options for president at top of their ballot, but two visions of the country up and down their ballots: one built on misinformation, bigotry, and empty promises – as outlined in the [Project 2025 playbook](#) spearheaded by Trump advisers – and another built on freedom, democracy, and opportunity.

- **Welcome disaffected Republicans and listen to their diverse viewpoints.** [Polling](#) shows the public does not approve of the dangerous, anti-democratic MAGA movement. Democrats should explicitly invite and welcome disaffected Independents and moderate conservatives who represent the anti-MAGA majority.
- **Emphasize Democrats' commitment to continuing the pursuit of a more perfect union;** we believe in improving our institutions, not in tearing them down. [Project 2025](#), the far-right agenda authored by people with close ties to Donald Trump working to shape a future administration, plots to [purge the federal government](#) of employees who are not unquestioningly loyal to MAGA and allow the president to evade our system of checks and balances to [usurp Congressional power](#). **Trump and Republicans have made clear that, if they are elected this November, they will waste no time tearing down our sacred, democratic institutions.**
- **Promote America's greatness in contrast to Republicans' dystopian view of the country.** "A nation in decline," "unparalleled tragedy," and "failure" are just some of the words former President Trump has used to describe our great country. Democrats must push back on such abhorrent rhetoric about America and its people to restore a positive vision of the future.
- **Counter the MAGA movement's disinformation strategy.** Every elected official in this country must be an **"information warrior"** and combat the attacks on our country, democracy, leaders, institutions, and each other.



#### EXPERT INSIGHT

"Part of our job is to counter that negative sentiment with positive sentiment. To talk about the greatness and the goodness of America, to talk about the good works [of] the Democratic Party... We need to become unyielding in our defense of this remarkable country."

– Political strategist Simon Rosenberg



# INFLATION AND COST OF LIVING

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING

Across the country, Americans are not feeling positive about the state of the economy with [polls](#) from earlier this year showing that a strong majority (74%) find it is in “fair” or “poor” condition. Further, only 22% of Black Americans, 13% of Hispanics, and 18% of young adults say they are financially better off today than a year ago. Recent [polling](#) from YouGov has found that 64% of Americans find inflation and high prices to be very serious problems heading into the election.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

The Democrats rescued the nation from the brink of economic catastrophe following Trump’s poor handling of the COVID pandemic. Legislation such as the American Rescue Plan Act, Inflation Reduction Act, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and CHIPS Act has helped create nearly 15 million new jobs, including high-paying positions in manufacturing and the clean economy, accompanied by rising wages. Despite this progress, recognize that rising costs have meant that Americans aren’t feeling the benefits that they should be and there is more work to do.

- **Look for Opportunities to Highlight the Good:** Democratic leaders have enacted historic policies and programs to help families. The average voter, however, is not well informed about these efforts. Polling found that [seven out of ten](#) Americans say they've heard little or nothing about the Inflation Reduction Act, and awareness is similarly low for ARPA, BIL, and CHIPS. Be an information warrior, promoting how Democrats have delivered real solutions and federal-state-local partnerships to improve people's lives, including by addressing costs. [Every state has experienced many tangible benefits, such as:](#)
  - With the **CHIPS and Science Act**, the Biden-Harris Administration has made a [major investment](#) in the critical microchip industry. “After several decades of individual companies offshoring the technology... companies [have announced](#) more than \$200 billion in private sector investments since the law passed,” and there are tangible examples to highlight, like projects with Intel and TSMC in Arizona, which are creating [35,000 new microchip manufacturing and construction jobs](#).
  - The **Inflation Reduction Act’s** clean energy investments have included partnerships in Michigan with companies like Ford, Polar Racking, and General Motors. The state [is ensuring](#) that the 160,000 new jobs being created are good-paying, high quality jobs with union representation to ensure that workers have a seat at the table.
  - The **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** is making possible critical investments to keep communities safe and connected. In [Pennsylvania](#), that includes repairs to the thousands of bridges and highways across the state, including along I-95 and in rural towns. The Keystone State is also expanding transportation options for low-income communities, by creating healthy, reliable, and sustainable transit options.

- Using funding from the **American Rescue Plan Act**, Georgia has created a record number of jobs since 2021, reaching its lowest recorded average unemployment rate. The state has been able to [support](#) a record 600,000 small businesses either recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 or embarking on new ventures. On top of this, ARPA [has made](#) 87,000 payments to struggling renters to assist them with ongoing rent and utility payments. In Atlanta, the city has used ARPA resources to [revitalize](#) its public safety workforce, establishing subsidized housing for firefighters, police officers, and corrections officials near their stations and offices.
- **Acknowledge Economic Apprehension:** Do not dismiss negative attitudes or tell people they should feel better about the economy just because of positive data. Experts recognize the widespread sentiment that families are struggling with inflation and ongoing economic uncertainty.
  - Addressing these concerns requires both acknowledging these feelings and consistently highlighting how Democrats are focused on lower costs. In contrast, Republicans continue to focus on tax cuts for the über-wealthy and across-the-board tariffs that will raise prices on all Americans.
- **Address Concerns about Housing:** [Recent polling from Gallup](#) has found that, after inflation, voters' top economic concern is the cost of renting or owning a home. Lincoln Project co-founder Mike Madrid said in his appearance on *An Honorable Profession* that this is particularly true for Latino voters. While there are numerous [federal](#) and [local efforts](#) to address housing affordability and access, the acute issue of paying rent or a mortgage at the end of the month can be more tangible for voters. Point to existing programs but acknowledge that much more must be done to incentivize new construction and rein in costs.



#### EXPERT INSIGHT

“I just opened a can of something the other day, and it was half-full but the same price. And I was annoyed about that. And so, I think it’s as much talking about the [inflationary] issues but **acknowledging the anxiety and the pain that people are feeling, and how that makes them feel about their lives overall.** [It’s] understanding the ways that we experience all of these issues in our day-to-day lives.”

– CNN Commentator Karen Finney

# ABORTION

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING

Polling, including a [NewDEAL poll](#), shows that Americans broadly support the freedom of women to make healthcare decisions – and that includes abortion care – without government interference.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

Democrats support the freedom of women to make their own healthcare decisions, and that includes abortion care. Republicans support draconian abortion bans that restrict freedom and make women and communities less safe.

- **Highlight Real-Life Dangers of Abortion Bans:** More than [20 states](#) banned or severely restricted abortion after the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Courageous women in those states, including [Jaci Statton](#) in Oklahoma and [Kate Cox](#) in Texas, have come forward to share their experiences with bans. **Tell their stories.**
- **Emphasize Future Threats to Reproductive Health:** Republicans are not satisfied with merely banning abortion. Senate Republicans blocked attempts to codify access to contraception and access to IVF, and [some state legislatures have targeted birth control](#).
- **Highlight Economic and Overall Health Impact:** Abortion bans are not only wrong for women who are or who wish to become pregnant; they are bad for everyone. A majority of young workers (62%) would “probably not” or “definitely not” live in a state that bans abortion ([CNBC](#)). Local economies and businesses in states with restrictions will suffer. Restrictions on women’s reproductive healthcare also cost state and local economies more than \$170 billion annually through reduced labor force participation and earnings among women (Institute for Women’s Policy Research). In addition, such bans [have pushed](#) highly-qualified doctors and medical professionals out of states with the most draconian laws, creating healthcare deserts and turning already dire situations into catastrophes.
- **Talk about *Roe*, Not *Dobbs*:** Most people have an idea about what *Roe v. Wade* is, but few people know what the “*Dobbs* decision” means.
- **Embrace Freedom Language:** Abortion is motivating this election cycle, especially for Democratic and women voters. Embrace the [message of freedom](#), as [polling](#) shows voters are more likely to trust Democrats to protect freedom than Republicans.

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

In Michigan, **State Senator Mallory McMorrow** [championed](#) a nine-bill package (the Reproductive Health Act) to remove remaining state barriers to abortion access. To protect women’s privacy, **San Antonio, TX, Mayor Ron Nirenberg** led efforts to pass a [city resolution](#) preventing the city from using any funds or data to jeopardize women seeking safe abortions.

### EXPERT INSIGHT

“It exceeds my worst nightmares on how this ban would play out. **We lost half of our OBGYNs in the state.** We’ve lost half of our high-risk maternity specialists... women are having to be airlifted to neighboring states. One woman’s sepsis had advanced so far she needed a hysterectomy. So this law has permanently robbed her of the ability to have children.” – *ID House Minority Leader Ilana Rubel*



# CLIMATE

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING

[Polling from Third Way](#) shows the “Climate-First voter” makes up about 5% of voters and is already likely to vote Democratic. Many “Economy-First” voters, however, are still undecided, and they are leaning away from Democrats.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

It is crucial to emphasize the high-quality, high-paying jobs that accompany America’s transition to a clean energy economy. Effective communication on clean energy should prioritize voters’ major concerns, such as the cost of living, including food and housing, and the need for high-paying jobs.

- **Clean Energy is Deeply Politicized and Polarizing:** While a majority of voters support investments in clean energy, it is essential to use rhetoric that resonates with voters' core values and immediate concerns as a more effective framing than, for example, making altruistic arguments about conservation or touting greenhouse gas emission reductions. Some straightforward and simple messaging frames that work include:
  - Creating stable, good-paying jobs
  - Cleaning up the environment to reduce health problems like asthma
  - Investing in domestic clean energy to become less dependent on foreign fuels
- **Avoid Electric Vehicles:** Electric vehicles are not popular among many voters, especially when discussed as affecting what they will drive. That doesn’t require running against them. Instead, focus on other aspects of the clean energy transition that have broader appeal.
- **Drive Home the Economic Benefits:** With the influx of federal investments and the growth of the green economy, Democrats must stress tangible investments in communities. And, as noted above, job creation messages in a time of low unemployment should focus on job quality, not quantity.

### EXPERT INSIGHT

“Often when you go to your constituents and talk to them about clean energy investments because of climate change, people will say, ‘That’s nice but I’m more worried about other things.’ **But when you talk to them about cleaning up air quality, it resonates in a much deeper way because everyone knows somebody who has asthma or who struggles because they live near a freeway and the air quality is poor.** It connects in a way that is really tangible.”

– Emily Becker, *Third Way*





# DEMOCRACY

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING


A recent [NewDEAL poll](#) showed that Americans are unhappy with the state of our democracy. Only 23% of respondents described the state of American democracy as “excellent” or “good,” while 53% said our democracy is weaker than following the 2020 election.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

Communicate clearly, consistently, and forcefully to dispel misconceptions and drive home the importance of this election for the future of our democracy. **That means improving and repairing our democracy rather than “protecting” a democracy that the majority of Americans feel is broken in some way.**

- **Draw a Clear Contrast:** The Republican Party refuses to denounce widespread efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, which led to a violent attack on our Capitol. Further, Republican leaders overwhelmingly support Donald Trump, who won’t commit to accepting the results of the 2024 election.
  - Democrats, on the other hand, are protecting and expanding every eligible citizen’s **opportunity to vote and to have their vote counted**. Many specific efforts are outlined in documents like the NewDEAL Forum’s [Democracy Playbook](#).
- **Quickly & Forcefully Correct Misinformation:** Democrats must continue to be trusted as sources about voting, including how, when, and where to vote. Fact-check disinformation in real time and lead with the truth. Misinformation is not new in elections, but social media and [generative artificial intelligence](#) can spread lies and conspiracies further and faster than ever before.
  - **Talk about AI:** According to NewDEAL polling, most voters are unaware of the use of generative AI related to election disinformation. Political leaders should work with trusted voices in their communities to educate voters about misinformation, including nefarious uses of AI, and point them to reliable sources.
- **Address Questions about Election Security and Transparency:** When people learn how votes are processed and tabulated, they come away with more confidence in elections. On issues of election security and integrity, lead with empathy. **Remember that reasonable people can have questions about election security and processes, and candidates should respond by easing concerns.** Legitimate, good-faith questions should not be dismissed as attacks, but rather treated as opportunities to discuss election security and highlight the ways that voting is safe, secure, and fair. Embracing transparency also requires election officials to show how elections are administered, such as how voting machines work.

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

**Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes** set up a rapid response unit within his office to immediately flag misleading material, including AI-generated material. His office will alert both voters and the media to the misleading information to increase awareness and visibility and blunt the impact of the misinformation. Fast, aggressive responses are necessary in today’s media environment and reinforce Democrats as the trusted party to protect democracy. [Click to hear more](#) 



# EDUCATION

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING

Democrats have lost their traditional advantage on education. [Polling](#) from Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) shows voters trust Democrats (by 15 points) on policies that prioritize caring for students (i.e. providing essential services like free lunch and after-school care) but by only 1 point on which party better prioritizes outcome-based measures (i.e. ensuring students are learning). The perception that Democrats “care” about education but do not “deliver” on education is shared across various demographics, including among Independents and core Democratic voters.

- DFER has found that improving public school efficacy rates second, only to reducing inflation, among the most important issues for improving the futures of young people. At the same time, voters no longer view Democrats as the party that will prepare students for economic success.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

Democrats should emphasize an education agenda that ties proposed investments to improving outcomes while respecting parents’ desires to be involved in their children’s education. Contrast this with Republicans using schools to pursue culture war goals.

- **Tie Education Vision to Issues that Motivate Voters:** Education is directly tied to the economy in voters’ minds. Voters are very worried about the economic security of their kids and young people today, and view improvements to public education as key to setting their children up for economic success.
- **Make Education Funding about Results, Not Dollar Signs:** While increased school funding may be necessary, voters first need to hear about how Democrats will use additional education resources, like investing in individualized attention for students and skills training.
  - **Recognize that voters also broadly support improving public school options** to include more charter schools, magnet schools, and career academies, in addition to traditional public schools (66% support to 14% oppose in DFER’s polling). Supporting those options effectively counters Republican privatization efforts that largely benefit families already using private schools. NewDEAL CEO Debbie Cox Bultan and Georgia Senator Elena Parent wrote about this and how to build broad coalitions in support of public schools for the [74 Million](#).



## EXPERT INSIGHT

“What we miss is talking about the **families and the students**. People want to know, ‘how will what you’re doing affect my family? How will it affect my kids’ **opportunities in the future** to have good jobs so that they can afford to live at least as well as we’re living now?’ When we talk about our traditional public schools... we have to talk about it in a way that says the **end goal is for families to have local choices** so that their kids will have the best opportunities going forward in life. And when we are supporting teachers and schools, it’s not because we are just supporting unions and buildings, but because we know that it will have the best impact for kids, and it will give them the best chance to succeed in the future.” – *FL Representative Christine Hunschofsky*

# PUBLIC SAFETY

## WHAT AMERICANS ARE THINKING

While [data](#) shows that violent crime has [decreased](#) since the Biden-Harris Administration took office, there is more to do, and polls show Americans are increasingly worried about public safety and crime. From 2021 to 2024, the percentage of respondents who said addressing crime should be a top priority for Congress and the president increased from 47% to 58% ([Pew Research](#)). In 2024, the numbers are highest for Republicans (68%) compared to 47% for Democrats.

## TOP LINE MESSAGE

Don't avoid the issue. Rather, tout the positive impacts of increased investments in law enforcement led by a Democratic administration and Congress and reject the framing of opponents about undermining public safety. At the same time, don't dismiss voters' concerns about crime no matter what data might say.

- **Lead with Accountability:** Voters are receptive to Democrats' messages about crime prevention and criminal justice reform but first need to know their immediate safety is prioritized and understand Democrats are the ones investing in it. As Third Way's Executive Vice President for Policy Jim Kessler [pointed out](#) at a recent event with NewDEAL, data shows that Democrats have been more effective on public safety legislation and [have increased](#) spending on critical local police initiatives.
  - [As Jim and Kylie Murdock write:](#) "It's accountability and prevention: holding violent criminals accountable for their actions and investing in prevention so crime doesn't occur in the first place."
- **Explicitly State Support for Law Enforcement:** Elected leaders must be unwavering in their support of law enforcement. Point to evidence that proves Democratic support and delivery on the issues, such as the Biden-Harris Administration's [near doubling of investments](#) in key initiatives like the [COPS workforce program](#) and [Byrne grants](#) for community crime interventions. Democrats can become trusted messengers by showing they are focused on real solutions and by making issues personal to connect with residents and let them know that they are heard and that you understand the problem from a human perspective.
- **Gun Safety:** Democrats have the American people on their side and should prioritize emphasizing gun safety policies when they talk about their approach to public safety. A majority (56%) of Americans [support](#) stricter gun laws, while only 12% support less strict laws. Democrats have and will pass commonsense laws to keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals. In contrast, Republicans at the local, state, and national levels block these policies time and again.
- **Anecdotes to Accompany Data:** Putting a face to policy recommendations and adding real life examples to make data and statistics more relatable helps lawmakers and the public understand the issue on an emotional rather than solely intellectual level.

- When **Utah State Senator Stephanie Pitcher** worked across the aisle to pass a bail reform bill, she was armed with data and anecdotal evidence. Pitcher highlighted statistics showing that the bail bonds industry failed to ensure that people showed up for their court dates, and she used her storytelling skills to juxtapose a wealthy murderer, who could get out on bail simply because they were wealthy, with a poor defendant, arrested for a less serious offense, who could be stuck in jail despite being a lower risk.

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

There are a plethora of commonsense gun policy ideas that would make communities and states safer without infringing on Second Amendment rights. Policies include [strengthening background checks](#), [enacting red flag laws](#), [banning bump stocks](#), addressing untraceable “[ghost guns](#),” and [closing loopholes](#) that allow violent criminals easy access to guns. **Representative Christine Hunschofsky**, who represents Parkland, FL, balked at the idea that her ideas for gun safety would undermine public safety. “As someone who represents Parkland, if you don’t think I care about public safety, you’re nuts,” she said.



### EXPERT INSIGHT

“Ultimately, it's not really about what we say. It's about how they feel when we say it. And that means you have to start by identifying with where people are, and then bring them to where you want to take them. That means talking about supporting law enforcement, making sure the communities are safe, and holding police accountable – holding law enforcement accountable. **The system has to be about safety, and that means keeping communities safe, and it also includes accountability.**”

– Democratic strategist Jesse Ferguson

# VOTERS

Recent polling indicates shifting support among key voting blocs away from Democrats, and data reveals that young voters, voters of color, and rural voters all share primary concerns around limited economic opportunities and cost-related issues. [Only a small percentage of voters believe they are financially better off today](#) than a year ago – 22% of Black Americans, 13% of Hispanics, and 18% of young adults. To secure their support, there is a critical need and valuable opportunity for the Democratic Party to reach these groups across demographics by emphasizing an agenda that strengthens the middle class.

- Polls show that young voters [continued to support President Biden before he left the race, but at a lower margin than 2020](#) (8 points compared to 23 at the same time last cycle). **Young voters are not a monolithic group and should be met where they are**, which requires using non-traditional channels and empowering their peers as party messengers.
- Black voters continue to [overwhelmingly support](#) the Democratic Party, however, a trend among [younger Black voters](#) sees them identify more frequently as Republicans, particularly among men. **It is critical to show that voting for Democrats will empower this segment of the electorate.**
- **Latino voters are primarily focused on economic opportunity and mobility.** As a fast-growing and predominantly younger voting bloc, they [prioritize the economy, particularly around housing affordability](#). Democrats lost ground with Latino voters in 2020. To turn that around, Democrats must address their economic concerns effectively.
- Over 46 million people live in rural regions in the US, and they too are not a monolithic group; there is an opportunity to reach persuadable rural working-class voters, who face a variety of complex issues. **With billions in new federal investments, rural Democrats are poised to focus on hyper-local issues and deepen their relationships and support in these communities.**

## EXPERT INSIGHT ON REACHING YOUNG VOTERS WHERE THEY ARE



### EXPERT INSIGHT

“The core root of the problems in messaging to young Americans is that they are just seen as a **monolith**. Treat young voters just like you would treat any other voter. No party is entitled to their vote, and it has to be earned. The party needs to find ways to message the economy and finances for young people and empower young surrogates to deliver that message. Stop speaking for young people and let them speak for themselves. Gen Z is not going to traditional media to get their news; they want to hear from their peers.” – *Democratic strategist Olivia Julianna*

### EXPERT INSIGHT

“We’ve gotta meet them where they are, talk to them the way they’re used to being talked to, go to channels where they are.... but the other part, and the much more difficult part, is the solutions part. It’s not enough to go on TikTok. It’s not enough to give them lip service. **It’s not enough to say, ‘Hey, we see you and we appreciate you.’ They want results.**” – *Co-author of Today’s Big Stuff newsletter Sam Youngman*





## EARNING THE SUPPORT OF AND EMPOWERING VOTERS OF COLOR

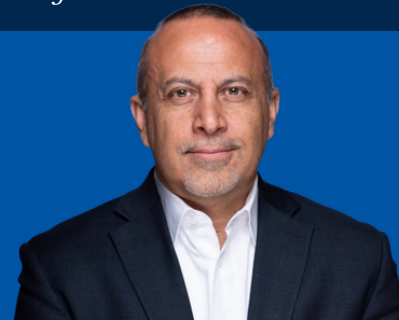


### EXPERT INSIGHT

“What’s happening here is not that Black men are moving towards the Republican party. It’s that our party hasn’t had enough of a conversation to make them feel like they’re valued. We need to think about investing in year-round engagement and focusing on empathetic messaging that recognizes where the other person’s coming from. As Pete [Buttigieg] would say, to change the channel, and **focus on empowerment**. And that was a resonate message that worked for us in 2022, especially in terms of driving Black turnout in particular. **‘Look at how much power you have to change what’s happening around you by casting a ballot.’**” – *Political strategist Nina Smith*

### EXPERT INSIGHT

“The best thing you can probably do is simply listen to the voters and respond to what they’re saying. And for 30 years, at least – maybe 50 years – **Latinos have been telling us overwhelmingly, ‘Our primary concerns are economic.’** And so, until you get back to economic opportunity and allow me to rise, I’m not really going to be listening to the oppressed racial arguments that are supposed to sort of make me feel better about being a Democrat.” – *Lincoln Project co-founder and author Mike Madrid*



## AUTHENTICALLY CONNECTING WITH RURAL VOTERS



### EXPERT INSIGHT

“The first step is to listen to these people in these communities, friends and families, the people who will vote for you and the ones who will not. **We’ve done a bad job [by] not listening to the folks that see the world a little bit differently.** If you listen, you’ll find why they view things in a certain way and [you’ll have] an opportunity to balance that. **By listening to someone, you’re showing them that you respect them and you care for them.**” – *Canton, NC, Mayor Zeb Smathers*

### EXPERT INSIGHT

“You can’t start from the idea that if only they knew better, if only they were as educated, they would vote for us. It’s rarely the case. **We need to acknowledge that they have concerns and engage in that conversation around cultural issues that have become a barrier for some of them.** If we engage in that conversation, we can win that conversation.” – *Democratic strategist Jesse Ferguson*





# VIEWS FROM THE STATES



## ARIZONA

“People often move to Arizona for opportunity. They want to be able to rise economically and to have more options. Democrats need to talk about our success in this area – how we’ve made it so that you can get great educational options for yourself or the next generation and how there are better jobs available in Phoenix today than there were a generation ago. **Phoenix has worked with the Biden-Harris Administration to create high-wage jobs with year-round benefits where you can work hard and your family will be substantially better off.**”

– Phoenix, AZ, Mayor Kate Gallego



## MICHIGAN

“**The priority in our caucus and our priority as Democrats in Michigan is economic.** We need to put more money in the pockets of Michigan's working families. Our fundamental question: How do we raise our median income? How do we increase our population?... I think about it as the ‘Michigan Dream.’ **If you get up every day and you work really hard, you should be able to own a home and save for retirement and raise your kids.** That's the goal and I am laser focused on making that a reality.” – Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet



## NEVADA

“Senator Cortez Masto, who won reelection, has been doing an amazing job, **talking to Democrats, talking to Republicans, talking to Independents,** talking to our rural communities, which are easy to sort of ignore. If you want to just look at the math, right, 2 million people in Clark County. And why are you going to go out to West Wendover? But there are voters out there, and there are people out there that matter, and **we won because we pulled Republican votes over to the Democratic side.**” – Treasurer Zach Conine



## WISCONSIN

“There’s so many different ways to reach voters, and **we’ve got to do a good job of reaching them where they are,** whether that’s utilizing social media, whether it’s Twitter, whether it’s Instagram, whether it’s TikTok, in some cases. You got to find ways to reach them exactly where they are. And they’ve got to be able to see what that means. That’s the thing that I’ve found in my executive position as mayor is, **folks want to be able to point to things and be able to see things in action.**” – Milwaukee, WI, Mayor Cavalier Johnson



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The NewDEAL would like to thank the many state and local elected leaders in the NewDEAL network who contributed their insights and shared details of their interactions with constituents. We are also especially grateful to Third Way, Democrats for Education Reform (DFER), Simon Rosenberg, Karen Finney, Emily Becker, Jesse Ferguson, Jim Kessler, Olivia Julianna, Sam Youngman, Nina Smith, and Mike Madrid for taking the time to join us on [\*An Honorable Profession\*](#), share presentations, and participate in discussions with NewDEAL Leaders. Their comments informed the contents of this document.

# ABOUT NEWDEAL

The NewDEAL is a national, center-left network of over 180 rising state and local elected leaders. Our mission is to bring together leaders focused on expanding opportunity and to help them develop and spread innovative ideas to spur economic growth that is broadly-earned and sustainable. We do this by connecting the NewDEAL Leaders with each other to exchange ideas, and connecting them with other pro-growth progressive political, policy, and private sector leaders.

