

The background of the slide features a large American flag on the left and the Michigan State Capitol dome on the right, both rendered in a semi-transparent, blue-tinted style. The text is overlaid on a dark blue horizontal band.

# Practicing Civil Discourse in Community Conversations

2019 Capital Conference  
The Lansing Center  
333 E. Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

*March 20, 2019*

**Dr. Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer**  
**Executive Director Emerita**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



National  
Institute for  
Civil Discourse

18. 177. 1888. 1888. 1888.



# Weber Shandwick Poll

*Released March 1, 2018*

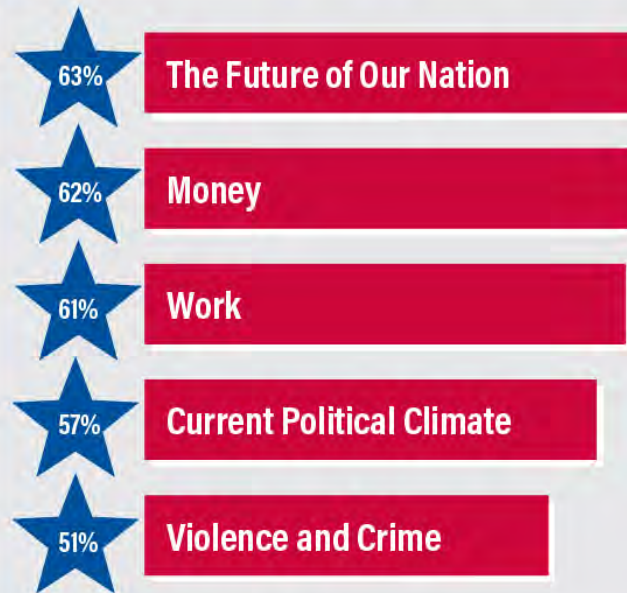
The public is all but unanimous in citing the importance of civility to democracy, with 96 percent of Democrats and 95 percent of Republicans agreeing.

- 75% of us now believe that incivility in America is a crisis
- 83% of the public say incivility leads to intolerance of free speech
- 79% of all respondents said incivility is leading to less political engagement



# STRESS IN AMERICA™

## MOST COMMON SOURCES OF STRESS



Note: Sources of stress reflect two separate questions; the sources of stress listed above were not shown within one list.

© 2017 American Psychological Association



## **How We Got Here:**

- **Money in Politics**
- **Gerrymandering**
- **Election Rules**
- **24/7 News Cycle**
- **Social Media**
- **Growing Economic Disparities**
- **Rising Social Isolation**

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top portion shows a red flag with white stars, partially obscured by a blue horizontal bar. Below this, a white dome building, likely a state capitol, is visible, also partially obscured by the blue bar. The main content area is white.

# People are Social Beings...

**They respond to:**

- **Context**
- **Structure**
- **Signals**

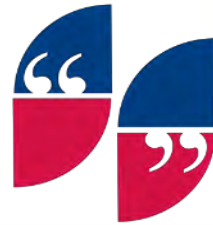
# What about Civility and Protest?

- **Civility is NOT weakness**
- **Protest has always been important in our democracy**

**Protest + Civility +  
Respect = Positive  
Change**



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



National  
Institute for  
Civil Discourse

The National Institute for Civil Discourse brings people together for civil conversations to find common ground on divisive issues.



# Three Target Groups



A nationwide program facilitated by  
state legislators *for* state legislators

## Next Generation Workshops



# National Network of State Legislators



The Network serves The Network serves as a forum for legislators around the country to exchange ideas and information with other legislators, coordinate actions and receive support.

# Signs of Hope: Elected Officials

## 46 Bipartisan Freshman Members of Congress Pledge to Civility, January 2018

@RepMikeJohnson  
@RepAnthonyBrown  
@RepBarragan  
@RepJimBanks  
@RepDonBacon  
@RepArrington  
@RepRaskin  
@RepTedBudd  
@RepCarbajal  
@RepLizCheney  
@KYComer  
@RepValDemings  
@RepCharlieCrist  
@RepJohnFaso  
@DrNealDunnFL2  
@RepBrianFitz  
@RepDrewFerguson  
@Rep\_Matt\_Gaetz  
@Rep\_Tom\_Garrett  
@RepJoshG  
@repdavidkustoff  
@RepJayapal  
@RepRoKhanna  
@RepBrianMast  
@CongressmanRaja  
@RepBRochester  
@RepAllLawsonJr  
@RepJimmyPanetta  
@RepMarshall  
@RepJackyRosen  
@RepSmucker  
@RepTomSuozzi  
@RepOHalleran  
@ClaudiaForNY22  
@RepDarrenSoto  
@RepRooney  
@Scotttaylorva  
@RepRutherfordFL

### COMMITMENT TO CIVILITY

*Incoming Members of the 115<sup>th</sup> United States Congress*

As new Members of the United States House of Representatives and as individual citizens we recognize the gravity of the responsibility we have been given and the significance of this moment in the history of our extraordinary country.

America remains the most free, most powerful and most prosperous nation in all the world, and yet we face significant challenges. Among these challenges has been an increasing division in and coarsening of our culture fueled too often by the vitriol in our politics and public discourse. One result has been a loss of trust in our institutions and elected officials.

We believe there is a better alternative.

Although we represent both political parties and a wide range of individual views across the political spectrum, our common and sincere aims are to serve the needs and interests of the American people, to work with one another and the leaders of our respective parties to encourage greater confidence in our institutions, and to set an example of statesmanship for the younger generations of Americans that will follow.

To this end, we are dedicated to showing proper respect to one another and all others, encouraging productive dialogue, and modeling civility in our public and private actions. While we may vehemently disagree on matters of law and policy, we will strive at all times to maintain collegiality and the honor of our office.

We believe that a leader can be cooperative and conciliatory without compromising his or her core principles, and we will remember that our political rivals in Congress are not our enemies—but rather our colleagues and fellow Americans. We also believe that maintaining a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation will help make government work more efficiently and effectively, help build consensus and restore the public trust, and, ultimately, serve as a positive influence on society at large.

For all of these reasons, we hereby pledge our names to this Commitment to Civility on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2017, in Washington, D.C.



NICD supports and champions these legislators in this commitment to civility.

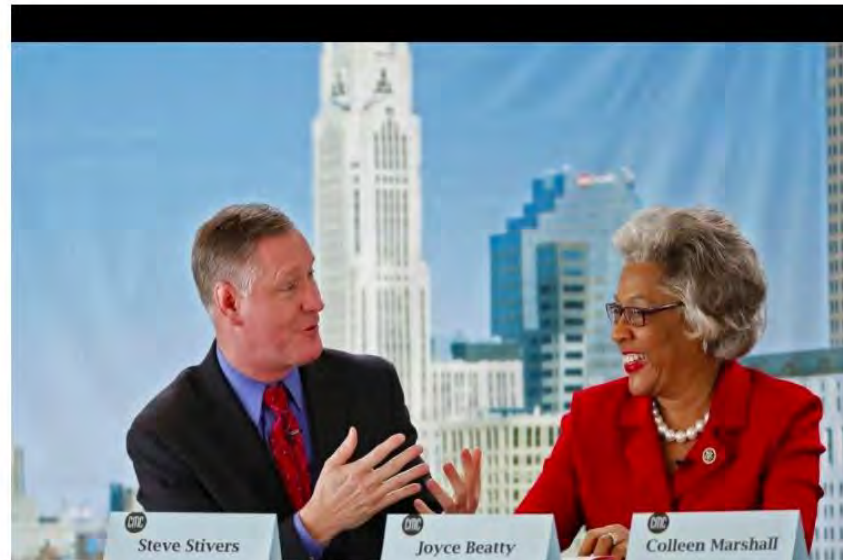
# U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CIVILITY CAUCUS

## Political opposites Beatty and Stivers form 'civility caucus' in Congress



### MOST POPULAR

- 1 Grove City hit by possible tornado as severe storms move through area  
Apr 4 at 8:39 AM
- 2 Police dive team calls off search for man who jumped off Broad Street



[https://youtu.be/42pzd2L6\\_hA](https://youtu.be/42pzd2L6_hA)

# 2018 Revive Civility Initiative

- Deep dive in 4 states: ME, OH, IA, AZ
- National state & local partners:



# PROCLAMATION



CITY OF TUCSON • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

*WHEREAS, civility reduces, rudeness, ridicule, and lack of respect for the open exchange of ideas; and*

*WHEREAS, civility improves our well-being, restores trust, and encourages Americans to participate in building a brighter future for generations to come; and*

*WHEREAS, civility assists in the process of working together to create lasting solutions to our most pressing challenges, while fostering respect among opposing groups; and*

*WHEREAS, community members should feel comfortable and respected while exploring worldviews outside their own; and*

*WHEREAS, The University of Arizona's National Institute for Civil Discourse headquartered in Tucson and Washington, D.C., was created for the purpose of reviving and restoring civility to achieve a higher quality of public discourse;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor of the City of Tucson, Arizona do hereby proclaim May 2017 to be*

## REVIVE CIVILITY MONTH

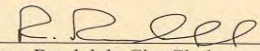
*in this community, and encourage all our citizens to exercise civility and respect toward each other.*

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Tucson, Arizona to be affixed this 1<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2017.*



ATTEST:

  
Jonathan Rothschild, Mayor

  
Roger Randolph, City Clerk

# Working with Citizens Initiative to Revive Civility





# Unlikely Friendships

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dMMCVfKP9s>



1

## Text CIVILITY to 89800

Gather in groups of 3-5 with one cell phone. Text CIVILITY to 89800



2

## Follow the text prompts

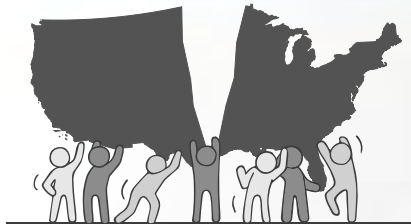
Groups move through the texted script at their own pace.

3

## Be part of the change

As a group, you might discover new ideas and perspectives – and be well on your way to engaging in a respectful dialogue.





# DIVIDED

WE FALL

TEST WEEKEND

September 7-9, 2018  
Double Edge Theater  
Ashfield, MA

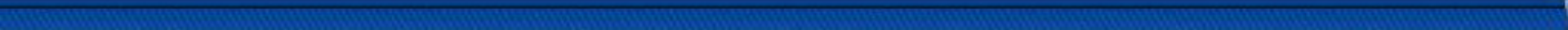
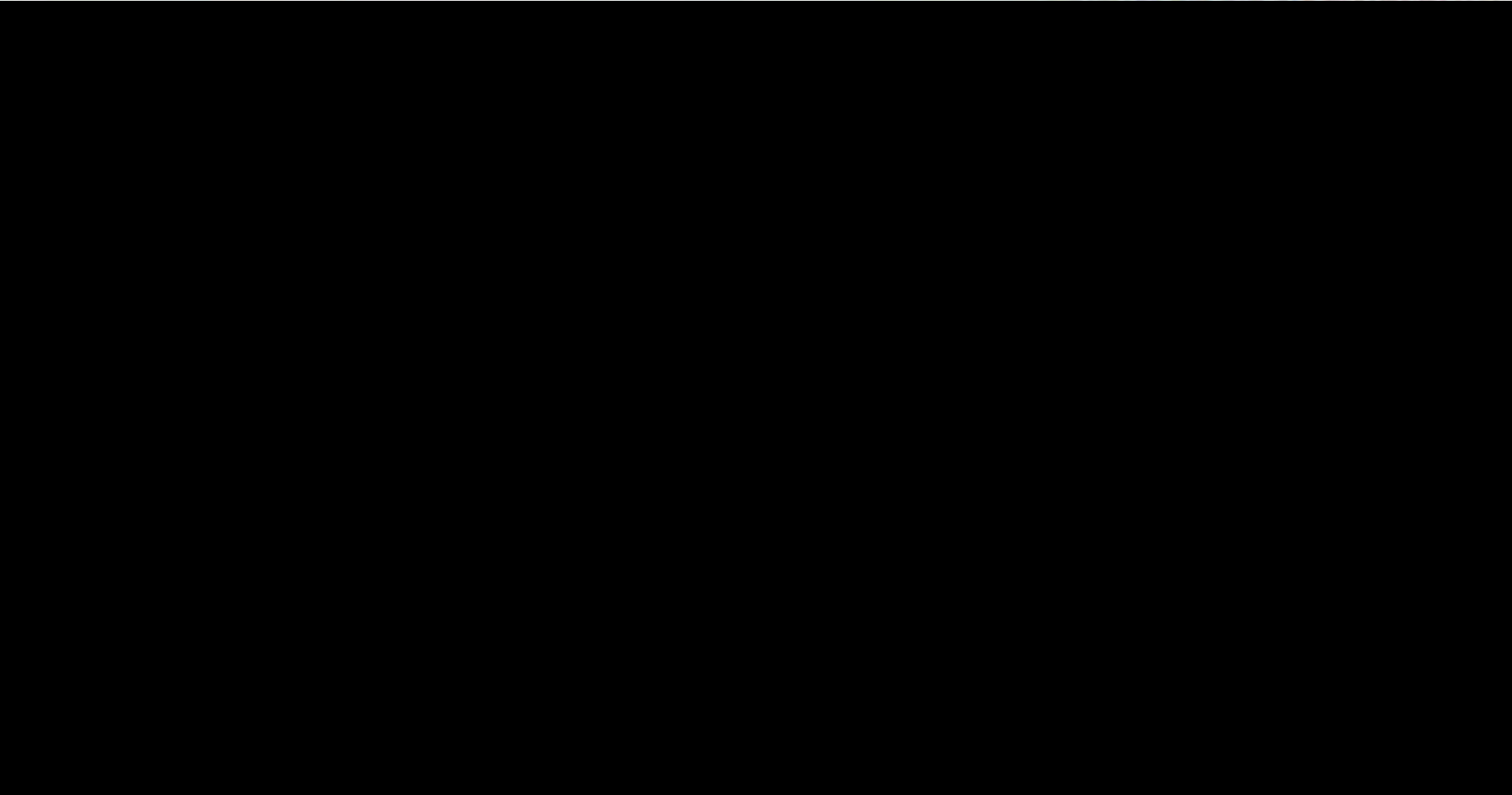


**NVS** | New Voice  
Strategies



**National Institute for Civil Discourse**

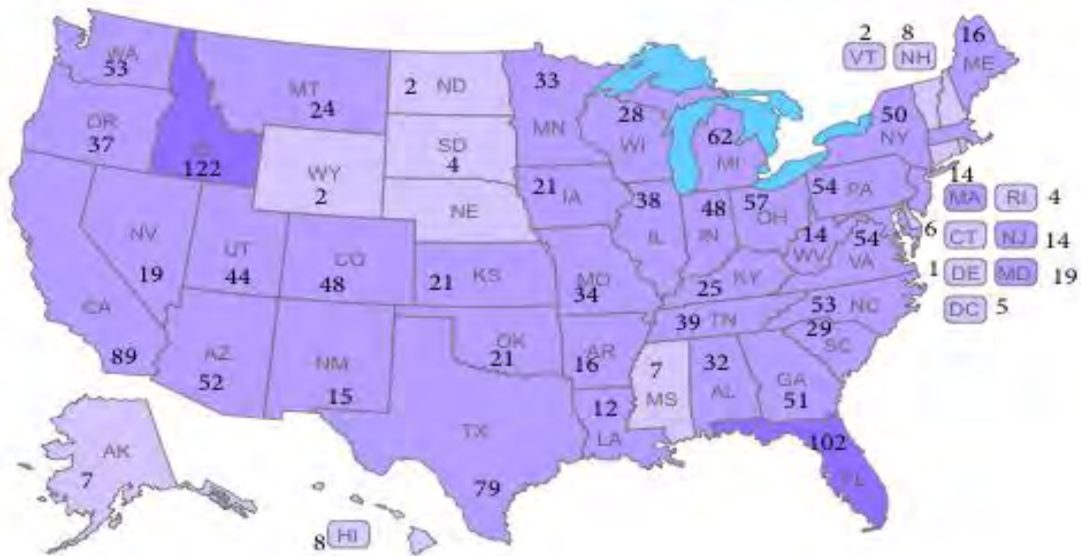
*A nonpartisan center for advocacy, research and policy*





COMMONSENSE  
AMERICAN  
GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE

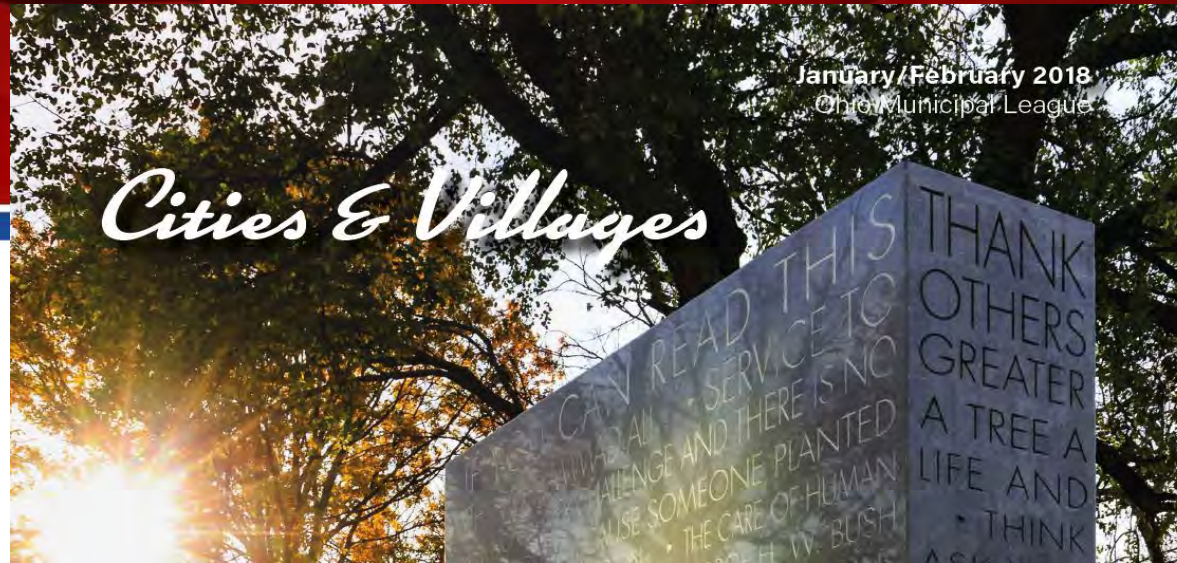
# CommonSense American



Members by State

January/February 2018  
Ohio Municipal League

## *Cities & Villages*



**From the Executive Director**

# **Municipalities Are Positioned to Take Leadership Setting the Tone for Respect & Civil Discourse in 2018**

*In 2018, Ohio's municipalities have the unique opportunity to lead the way in which our communities dialogue and disagree with respect and civility.*



# Maine Town & City

The magazine of the Maine Municipal Association

MAY 2018

## Revive Civility, a national project to do as its name suggests

*Maine is among four states to take part in the 'intensive, year-long' effort. Two high-profile community leaders are spearheading the project.*

By Pam Plumb and Ryan D. Pelletier

Democracy at its core is our ability as citizens to talk with each other, to work out our differences and to solve problems for our communities. Our long history of town meetings is a testament to that concept. Democracy isn't a winner take all sport. That is called a dictatorship. Democracy is designed to bring together people with various points of view, life experiences, belief systems and get them to hammer out an agreement that will blend those needs and develop a compromise that will be acceptable to a large percentage of the people. All of you who are working in the cities and towns of Maine are at the cutting edge of that democracy.

The practice of democracy at every level of government has always been a messy process with passionate feelings on every side. But have you noticed a steady shift in recent years to more anger, blame, accusations in our public



Pam Plumb



Ryan D. Pelletier

disagreement and name calling that it is easier to just stay away? How can we bring back civility, more ability to discuss our differences with more openness and understanding?

That dilemma has led to the creation of a project in Maine to help us find our way back to lively debates about our different points of view that are built on truly listening to one another, on understanding each other's point of view and searching for common ground and reasonable compromises. Maine Revives Civility is a project of the National Institute of Civil Discourse (NICD). Its website is: [www.nicd.arizona.edu](http://www.nicd.arizona.edu). It is a grassroots initiative committed to helping foster an open exchange of ideas

and expression of values that can lead to solutions. You can learn more at the Revive Civility website: [www.revivecivility.org](http://www.revivecivility.org), where all of the tools and resources can be found. NICD has partnered with the Maine Development Foundation and Maine League of Women Voters in this effort.

In order to achieve our goals, Maine Revives Civility is organized around three core strategies – Pledge, Engage and Organize. We ask people to make a personal commitment to improve civility and respect in their own lives, engage elected officials and community leaders to do the same, and organize one of four conversation types in their communities. This three-pronged approach is designed to help people and communities overcome the degradation of our public dialog.

### Four states selected

NICD has selected Maine as one of four states for an intensive year-long effort to:

- Support people to shift the way they talk to and listen to each other.
- Understand why people have come to those conclusions.
- Know each other better.
- Show mutual respect for each other's perspective and opinions.
- Be able to "disagree without being disagreeable."

The purpose of Maine Revives Civility is not to get everyone to agree



# What Can You Do?

- Sign the Civility Pledge at [www.ReviveCivility.org](http://www.ReviveCivility.org)
- Encourage your Representative to join the civility caucus
- Host civility conversations with friends, family and within organizations/clubs
- Kick off and lead a civility initiative in your community/county
- Build a cadre of facilitators to support civility within your community/county.

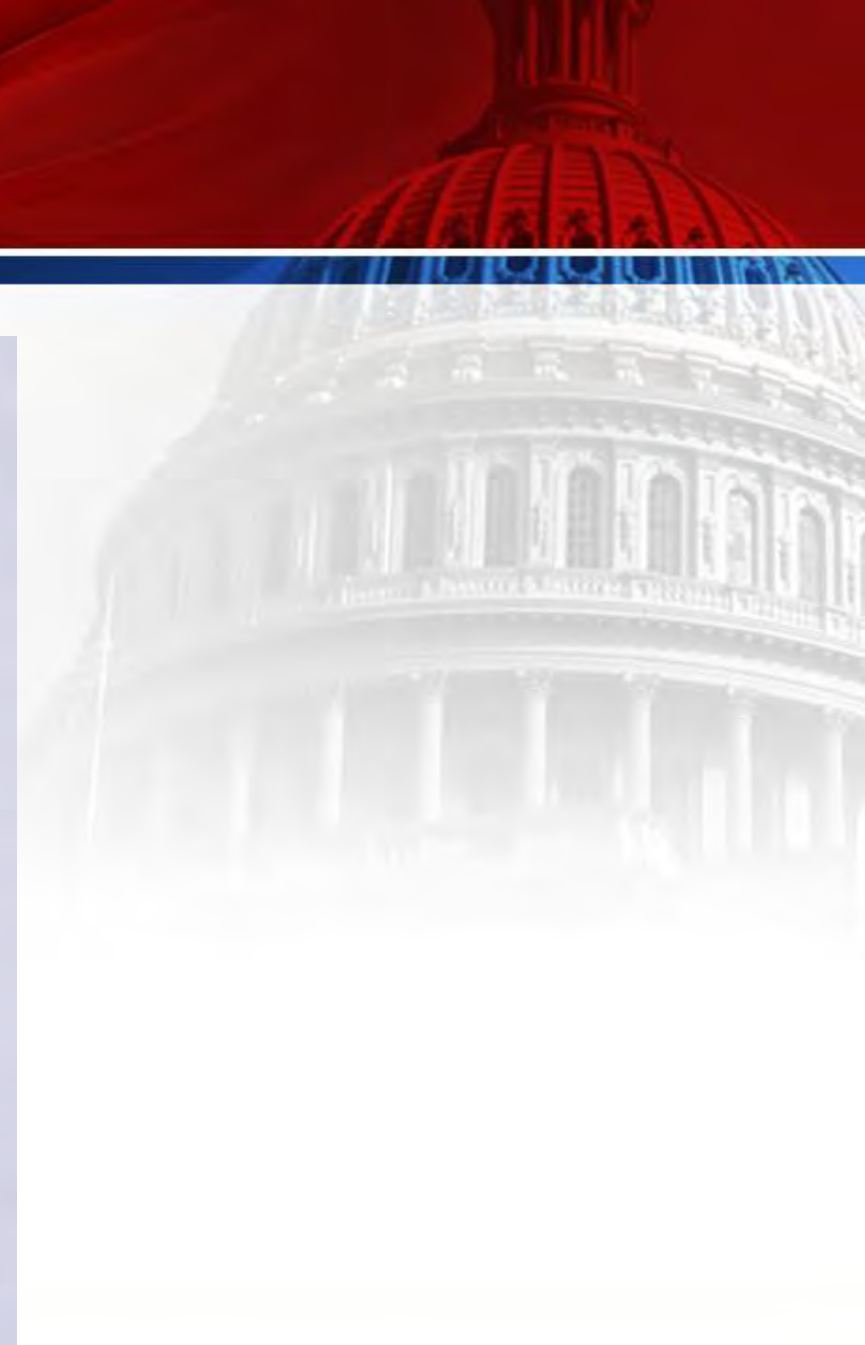


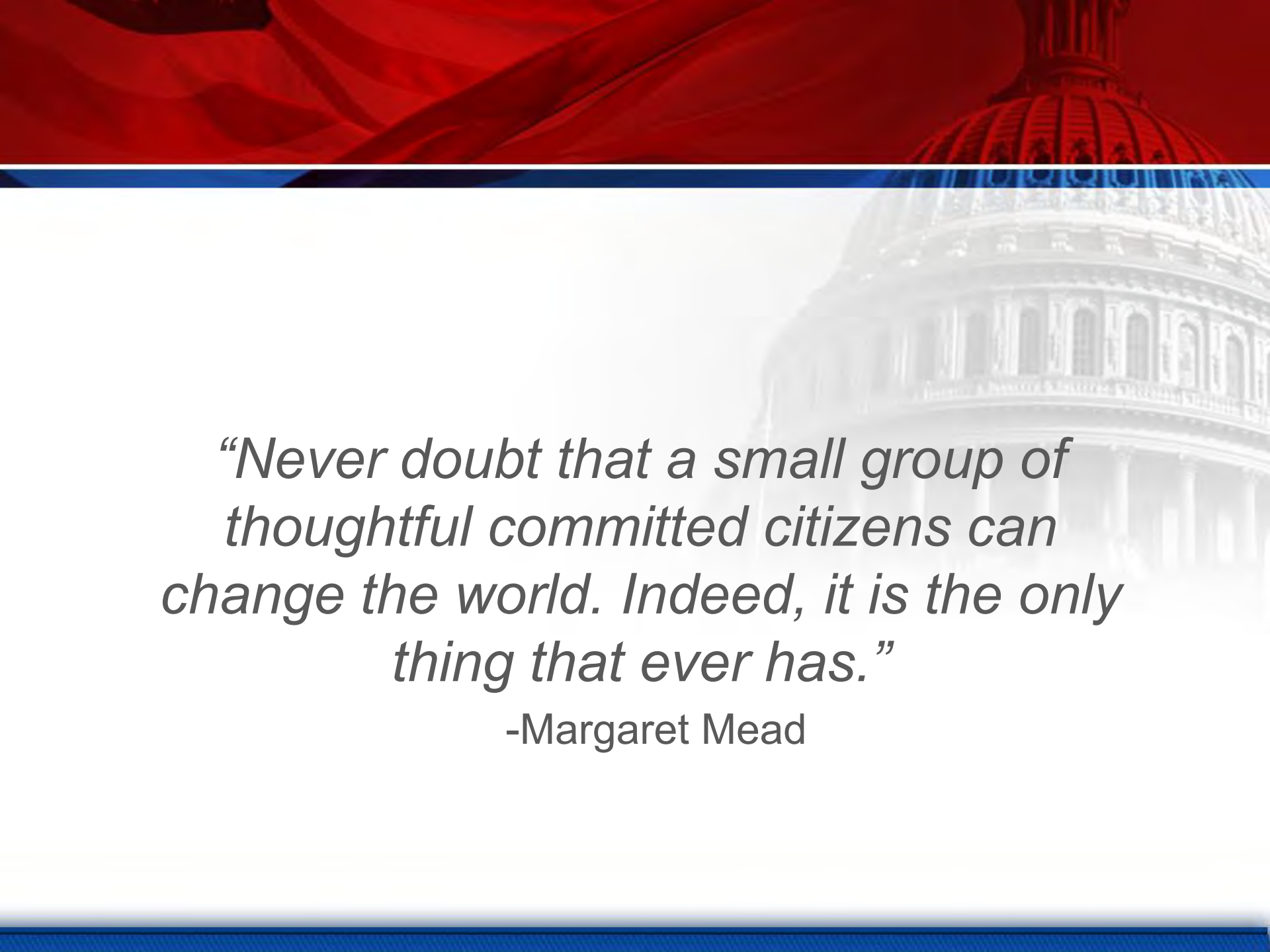


"We have to face the fact that either all of us are going to die together or we are going to learn to live together. And if we are to live together, we will have to talk."



**Eleanor Roosevelt**  
American politician, diplomat, activist and former First Lady of the United States of America





*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

-Margaret Mead

**Thank You!**



## **Questions?**

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