



News Release

It's Time for All Americans to Choose: The Franklin Project Launches Citizen-Driven Pro-Democracy Initiative

Join the effort to protect American Democracy at www.franklinproject.us

May 18, 2021 -- American democracy is on life support, and our elected officials will not be the ones to save it. The Franklin Project intends to equip, empower, and enable citizens to organize in their own communities to insist on better, more productive behavior from their elected representatives, and to generate deeper, more consistent engagement in the democratic process from themselves, their family, and their friends.

The Franklin Project's mission is to address the increasing imbalance of power between the governed and the government that has grown from a nationwide, decades-long breakdown in basic civic education. The Project will empower people to make an impact where it matters most, in their own communities, reminding Americans of the fragility of our system of government, and equipping them to better understand and utilize the power that system provides every citizen. Now is the time for this work because we have reached a decisive point in the history of American democracy.

The ideal of elected officials as public servants, seeking above all to serve and protect the interests of the communities who elected them, has largely disappeared. In its place has come an army of politicians focused above all else on acquiring and keeping power. Constructive dialogue focused on solving citizens' problems has been replaced by partisanship and political theater meant only to generate headlines and social media engagement through extremism. This trend is reaching its natural and frightening endpoint as politicians embrace the trappings of authoritarianism and tribalism.

The Franklin Project intends to help the people of the United States turn this tide by:

1. Generating and distributing original content
2. Launching a hyper local Democracy Corps to equip and empower Americans to agitate for better government through more active citizenship
3. Working with teachers to develop civics content and lesson plans
4. Awarding small action grants for Democracy Corps members and teachers who develop their own ideas that contribute to a more active citizenship
5. Partnering with mission-aligned organizations to amplify each other's pro-democracy/anti-authoritarian efforts

The Project is staunchly non-partisan, and welcomes any American who is frustrated with both the endless dysfunction of government and the rise of authoritarianism to join the cause. Anyone interested in starting this work can go to franklinproject.us to pledge your support for the future of American democracy. The Pledge will become the seed for the formation of the Democracy Corps, and in the coming weeks and months, The Franklin Project will work to support local organizations that are focused on driving citizen engagement with content and small action grants to support community-focused initiatives.

“A democracy requires the engagement and energy of its citizens to remain healthy. A political system focused primarily on grabbing power doesn't want a healthy democracy. Citizens of the United States are being given a stark choice today. We can rise up to reclaim our democracy or we can look away while budding authoritarians grab control,” said Greg Jenkins, co-executive director of The Franklin Project.

“Our aim is simple, but we believe the impact will be profound. If Americans have a better understanding of their rights *and* responsibilities, are provided the tools to have productive, less confrontational discussions with each other, and are equipped to insist on better from their elected representatives, together we can save this fragile democracy. It's up to us as Americans,” said Erin Dobson, co-executive director of The Franklin Project.

Democracy is worth fighting for. Every American has a role to play. It's time for all Americans to pick a side.

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The Franklin Project is a not-for-profit 501(C)4 social welfare organization