

**VALUES^{to}
VOTES**

Grassroots
Advocacy to
Strengthen
Democracy



Values to Votes Guide for Grassroots Champions



**Special Big Table Meet-Up
Edition**

www.valuestovotes.com

www.grassrootsiowanetwork.com

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Takeaway Messages

Democracy is not a spectator sport.

Persuadable voters decide elections.

Grassroots champions know best who is persuadable.

Persuadable voters are reached through shared values and trusted messengers.

Grassroots champions don't need to do it all or do it alone.



**Grassroots champions
have **SUPERPOWERS**
parties and candidates
don't.**

- **The values you hold about the role of government in a democracy and how it affects your neighbors and community.**
- **The knowledge you have about your community and its uniqueness.**
- **The nonpartisan credibility you carry in your community.**
- **Your ongoing presence and ability to listen, ask, and connect with others around those values.**

Unique Independent (Nonparty/Noncandidate) Grassroots Roles

Partisan Campaigns

Mobilize the Base



Candidates & Parties

Focus on winning elections and advancing party priorities.



Fundraising & Paid Media

Raise and deploy large resources, often for paid advertising.



Timely Messaging and Response

Deliver consistent messages and respond quickly to events and opponents.



Turnout Operations

Mobilize identified supporters to get out the vote.



Election-Focused

Intensive activity during campaign seasons and election cycles.



Broadcast Approach

Communicate to large audiences through media and organized outreach.

Grassroots Organizing

Persuade & Engage



Community & Relationships

Rooted in the communities we know and are part of.



Conversations & Listening

Engage in two-way dialogue, listening as much as we speak.



Authentic Personal Messages

Share values and experiences in honest, relatable ways.



Reach Persuadable Voters

Reach people who are uncertain, fatigued by, or disconnected from partisan politics.



Sustained Engagement

Build relationships and civic capacity year-round, not just during elections.



Personal Approach

Connect person-to-person through trusted relationships, empathy, and local knowledge.

Campaigns Mobilize Voters

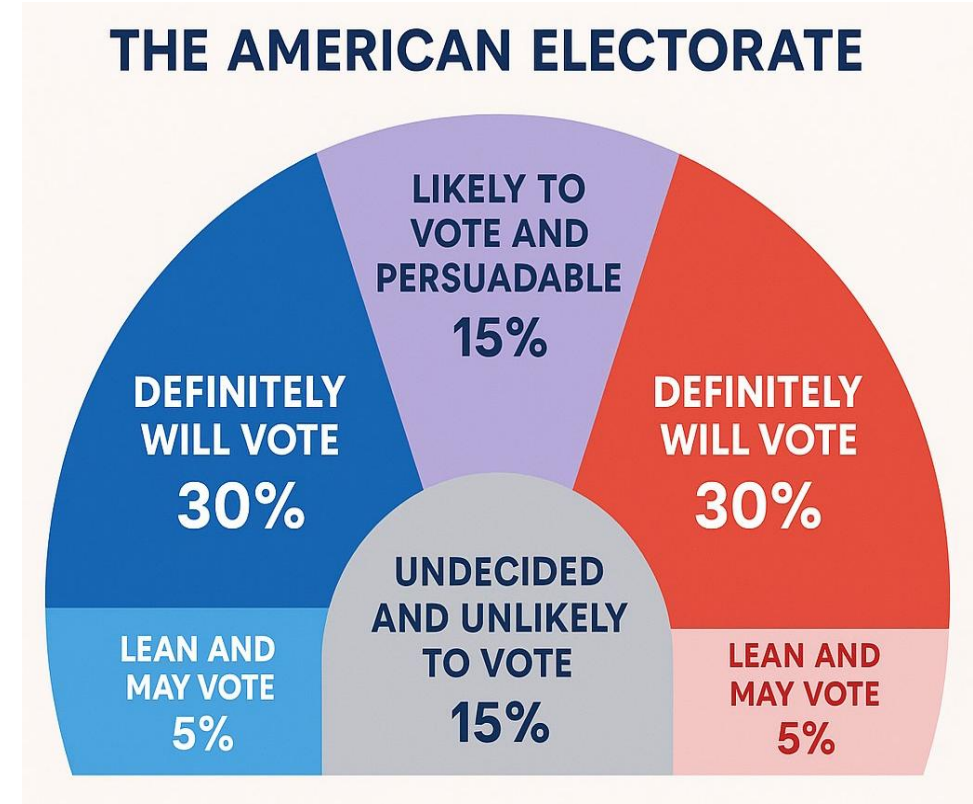


Grassroots Groups Build Trust & Dialogue

Persuadable Voters Decide Elections

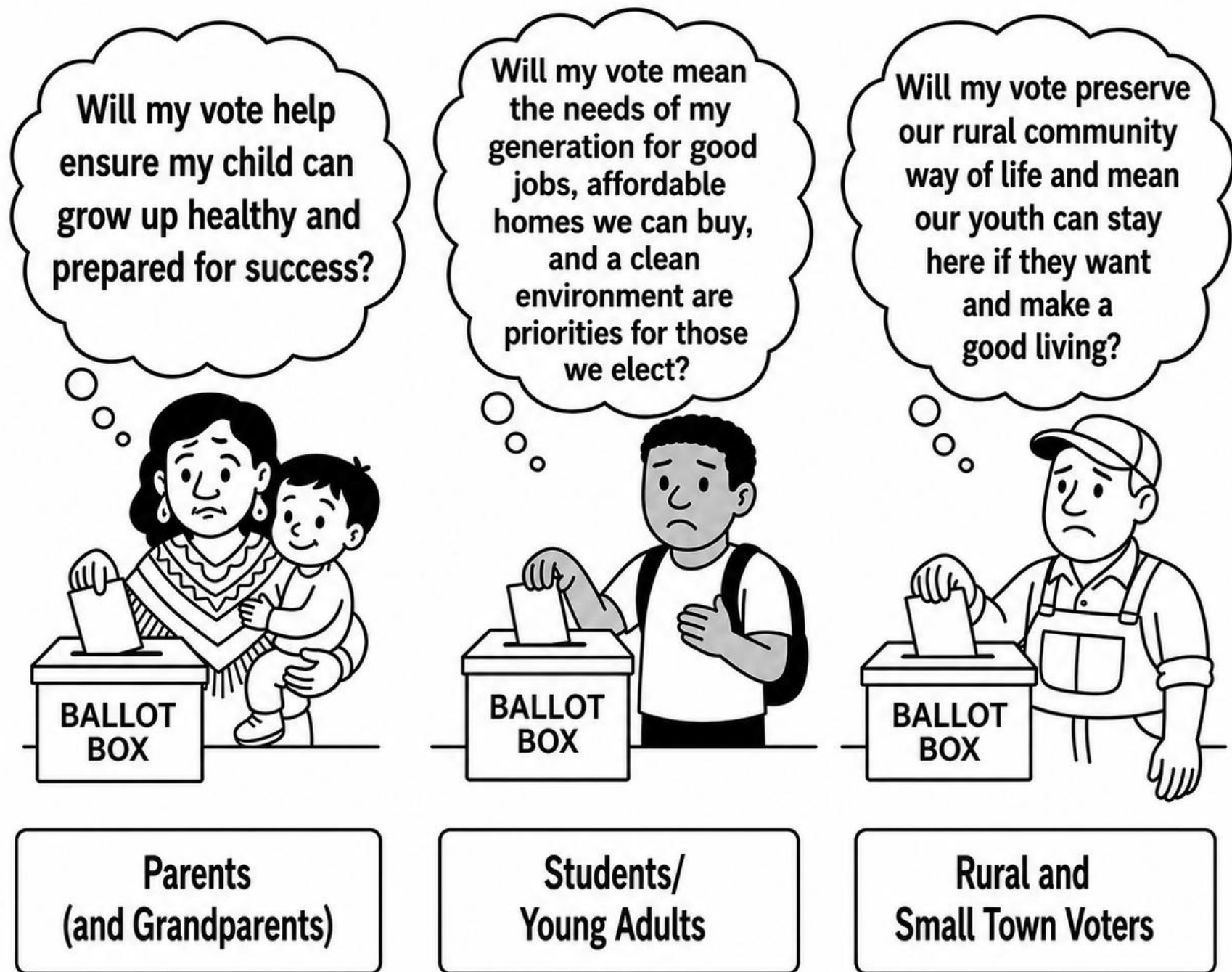
The Persuadable 15%

- Not captive to a media bubble or wedded to partisan messaging
- Concerned about their (and their children's) future – including pocketbook but also broader life values
- Connected to friends and community
- Wanting their vote to count
- Often frustrated with elections
- Often distrustful of politicians and partisan pitches



Grassroots advocates are uniquely positioned to engage, inform, dialogue with, and influence these votes.

**Grassroots
champions
know best
who is
persuadable
...
and how to
reach and
influence
them around
values.**

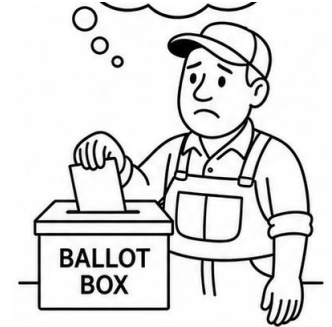


Evidence of Persuadability in Recent Voting

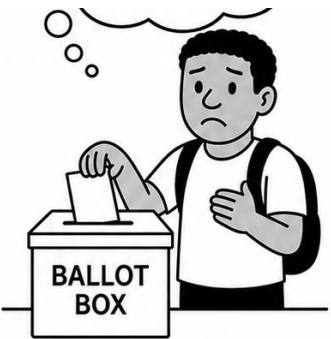
10 percent of **parents** with children switched their Presidential vote from 2020 to 2024 compared with 3 percent of nonparents.



1 in 5 voters in Iowa's 89 **rural counties** switched their Presidential vote between 2008/2012 and 2016/2020/2024 compared with 1 in 20 voters in Iowa's 10 urban counties.



Students and young people are least party-oriented, most developing their political identities, and most future oriented and liberal, but shifted from 2020 to 2024 or didn't vote.



Polling and other analyses show these shifts were the result of concerns very much related to those in the cartoon bubbles – and how parties/candidates were perceived.

What happened with the parent vote in 2024 (and what could happen in 2026)?

Parenting is central to values for those raising children: e.g. "Big part of identity": **Being a parent** 88%, one's partner 70%, friendships 44%, work 42%, gender 37%, religion 36%, political views 34%.

Biggest threats parents say they faced in 2024 were: getting by economically in dual breadwinning and caregiving roles (especially with inflation and caregiving costs).

Government actions that parents wanted and would have most helped them were and are: affordable child care and health care, paid family leave, reduced taxes (especially expanded and refundable child tax credit), and better pay.

How parents think government should finance those actions were: ensuring wealthiest individuals and most profitable corporations paid fair share.

But... Partisan campaigns provided very little dialogue connecting values to government actions and how to vote.

Same concerns exist today and even greater because of HR1: Reviewing and redoing tax and spending cuts is on the table.

Grassroots champions can engage, educate, dialogue, and persuade parents and those who care about children: where parents get together, at meetings and forums, through neighborhood coffees.

Persuadable Voters Are Reached Through Shared Values and Trusted Messengers

Mobilize and
Message

- Rallies
- Public Statements
- Social Media

VISIBILITY

Engage and
Story Tell

- Deep Canvassing
- Personal Outreach
- Listening

TRUST

Dialogue &
Persuade

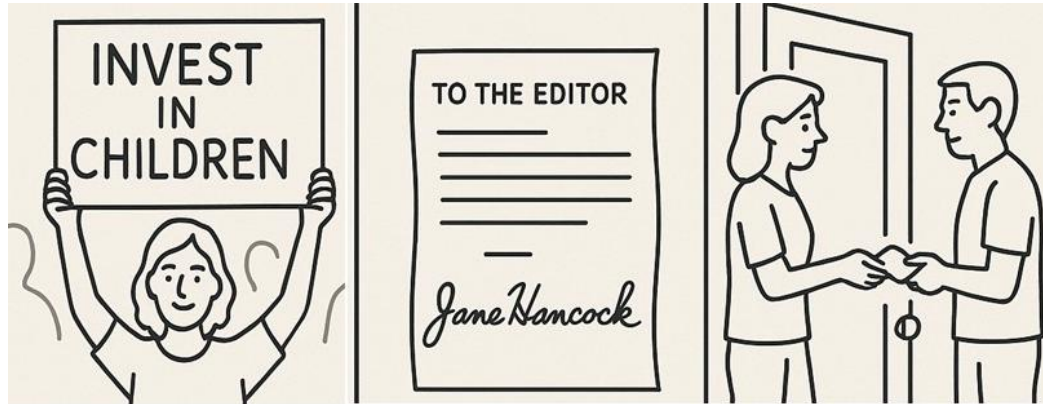
- Values to Policy to Votes Discussions
- Community Forums, Coffees
- Ongoing Dialogue

VOTES

Visibility activates. *Trust* opens. *Dialogue* transforms.

Grassroots Champions Don't Need to Do it All or Do It Alone

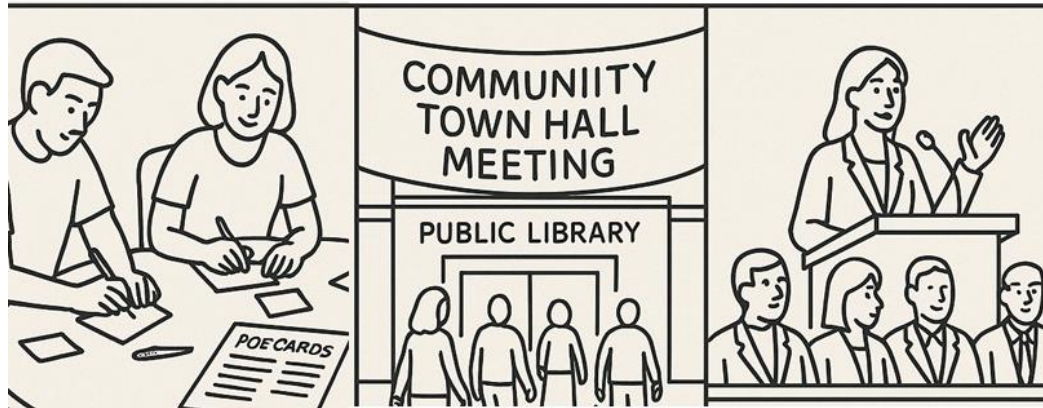
More People Doing More Things in More Settings



RALLIES

LTE'S

CONVERSATIONS



POSTCARDS

FORUMS

TESTIMONY

National and State Allies

Messaging help, postcards, and LTEs

Voter data and strategy

Policy information and framing

Training and organizational resources

Grassroots Colleagues

Resource and strategy sharing, lessons learned

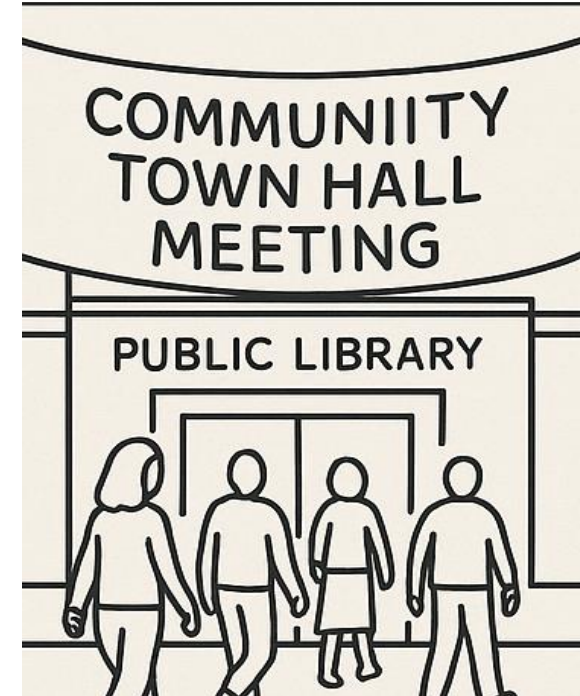
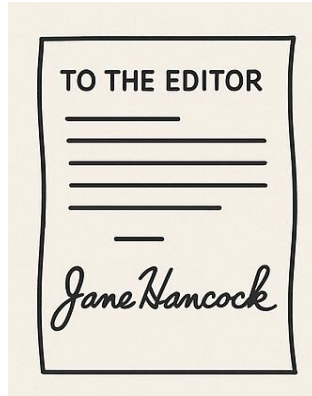
Solidarity and Encouragement

Candidates and Parties

Responses to requests for statements and positions

Participation in events and outreach to community

From Visibility to Trust to Dialogue and Voting



Awareness and Presence of
Constituency in
Community



Messages and Testimonials from
Recognized Community Members



Safe Opportunity for Learning and Deeper
Dialogue Around Values
and Policy

**For more information, visit:
www.valuestovotes.com**