
Children and the 2026 Congressional Mid-Terms
What Only Grassroots Activists Can Do
Share stories. Connect values. Inform votes.
Wednesday, October 14 • 3:00 p.m. Eastern

Additional Slides – To Amplify on Presentation

Slides 3-8 Additional detail on the narrative elements and how they relate to policy

Slide 9-11 A Comparison of Right and Left Family Frameworks

Slide 12 Depicting the Priceless Role of Grassroots Advocacy

Slide 13 Showing Chorus Members for a 2028 Family Electoral and Policy Agenda

Slide 14 More About Me -- Charlie Bruner

A Family Electoral Narrative Resonates With What Voters Want

Polling show bipartisan support for a family investment agenda. **Framing research** shows how to present it.

Government can't and shouldn't replace families in raising their children or legislate what they need to look like and do. Government, however, must recognize the essential dual roles families fulfill for our country and make it possible for them to raise their children and provide for their loved ones.

www.valuestovotes.com

From Values Through Stories/Narratives to Policies to Votes – Too Mjuch for One Slide

- *Strong families are the foundation for a strong America. Government should make it easier, not harder, for families to provide for one another, raise their children, and care for the people they love.* This means all families and supporting and valuing all parents.
- *Parents work hard to provide for their children, but they also need time to care for them. No parent should have to choose between a paycheck and being there when a child or family member needs them.* Paid family and medical leave.
- *Raising children costs money, and families should not be taxed as though those costs do not exist. We need a family-friendly tax system.* Expanded CTC.
- *Every family deserves the peace of mind of knowing that a child or a family member with a disability can get the extra care needed without expecting families to bear all the additional time and care.* Home and community-based health services.
- Most parents of young children have to work to make their family budgets. Child care needs to be available and of good quality and affordable so they can do so and their child can thrive. Ensure child care is affordable.
- *Health coverage should be built up the needs all members of the family.* Restoring Medicaid and expanded ACA premium assistance and ensuring child and dependent coverage is there.
- *Working families should not pay more so the wealthiest individuals and most profitable corporations can pay less. Those at the top rely upon productive workers and a healthy future workforce and need to pay their fair share.* Taking back excessive tax cuts targeted to the wealthiest and ensuring they pay their fair share.

From Deeply Held Values to What Congress Should Do – Unpacking the Narrative

- **Strong families are the foundation for a strong America.**

Congress should make it easier, not harder, for families to provide for one another, raise their children, and care for the people they love. **This means all families and supporting and valuing all parents (not culture wars).**

- **Parents need both income and time to care.**

No parent should have to choose between a paycheck and being there when a child or family member needs them. **Paid family and medical leave.**

From Deeply Held Values to What Congress Should Do

- **Raising children costs money.**

Families should not be taxed as though the costs of raising children do not exist. We need a family-friendly tax system. **Expanded and full CTC for all families.**

- **Health care must work for the whole family.**

This includes primary and preventive services and home-and-community care for those with special needs, so families are not overburdened. **Restored Medicaid and ACA premium assistance and home-and-community care for special needs.**

From Deeply Held Values to What Congress Should Do

- **Families need affordable care and early learning.**

Child care needs to be available, affordable, and of good quality so parents can work and know their children can thrive. **Ensured affordable child care.**

- **Jobs should pay at a level that enables families to raise a family.**

All work deserves to be paid at a basic level and jobs in care and education need to be compensated for their value. **A higher minimum wage and better pay for those providing the care and education families need.**

From Deeply Held Values to What Congress Should Do

- **The wealthiest rely upon strong families and should pay their fair share.**

Those at the top rely upon productive workers and a healthy future workforce to be successful and need to pay their fair share. All the prior family investments contribute to productive workers, better paying jobs, and more economic activity **. Taking back excessive tax cuts targeted to the wealthiest and ensuring they pay their fair share to finance investments in families, children, and a sustainable economy.**

The Importance of Providing a Family Narrative Based Upon Supporting All Families

The Right has developed and used a family narrative that has been particularly effective with working class families with traditional roles that emphasizes faith, family, and love of country in a family values frame.

The Left has the opportunity to develop a family narrative that is inclusive of all families that recognizes their rights to raise their children but government's responsibility to support them in doing so – which has the potential to win back those voters the Right has reached with its family values narrative.

Which Side Talks Most To Voters About Families?

RIGHT

Family Values
Parents Matter
Pro-Family
Faith, Family, Love of Country

Family Policy Alliance/Focus on the Family
Family Research Council
American Family Association
Eagle Forum, Moms for Liberty
Moms for America, American Principles Project
Faith and Freedom Coalition
Heritage Foundation/Turning Point

LEFT

Working Families/Working People
Middle Class/Living Wages

Campaign for a Family-Friendly Economy
Families Over Billionaires
Working Families Party

MomsRising
Parents Together Action
Families USA

What Agenda Does Each Side Propose?

MORALITY

Parent School Choice

No to Transgender Athletes

Marriage Between Husband and Wife

Eligibility Restrictons Based Upon Demonstrating Personal and Family Responsibility

Protecting Tradirtional Families Against Threats – Immigrants, DEI, Public School Indoctrination, Government

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Mostly Affordability, Minimum/Living Wage, Worker Rights, Equal Pay

Expanded, Fully Refundable CTC

Paid Family and Medical Leave

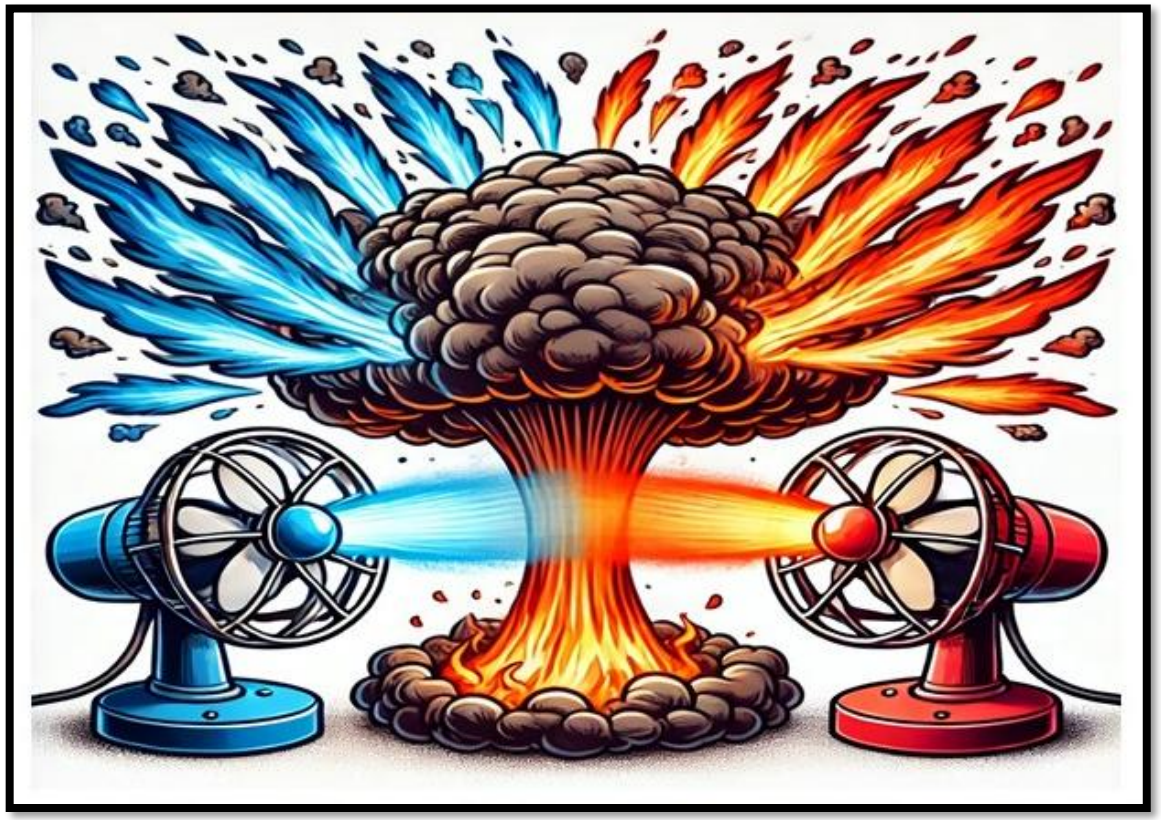
Affordable Child Care and Preschool

Affordable Child and Family Health Care

All Families – Trad, Blended, Two+income, Husband/Wife, LGTBQ+, Single, etc.

Can We Be Difference-Makers and Grassroots Influencers Amidst the Noise?

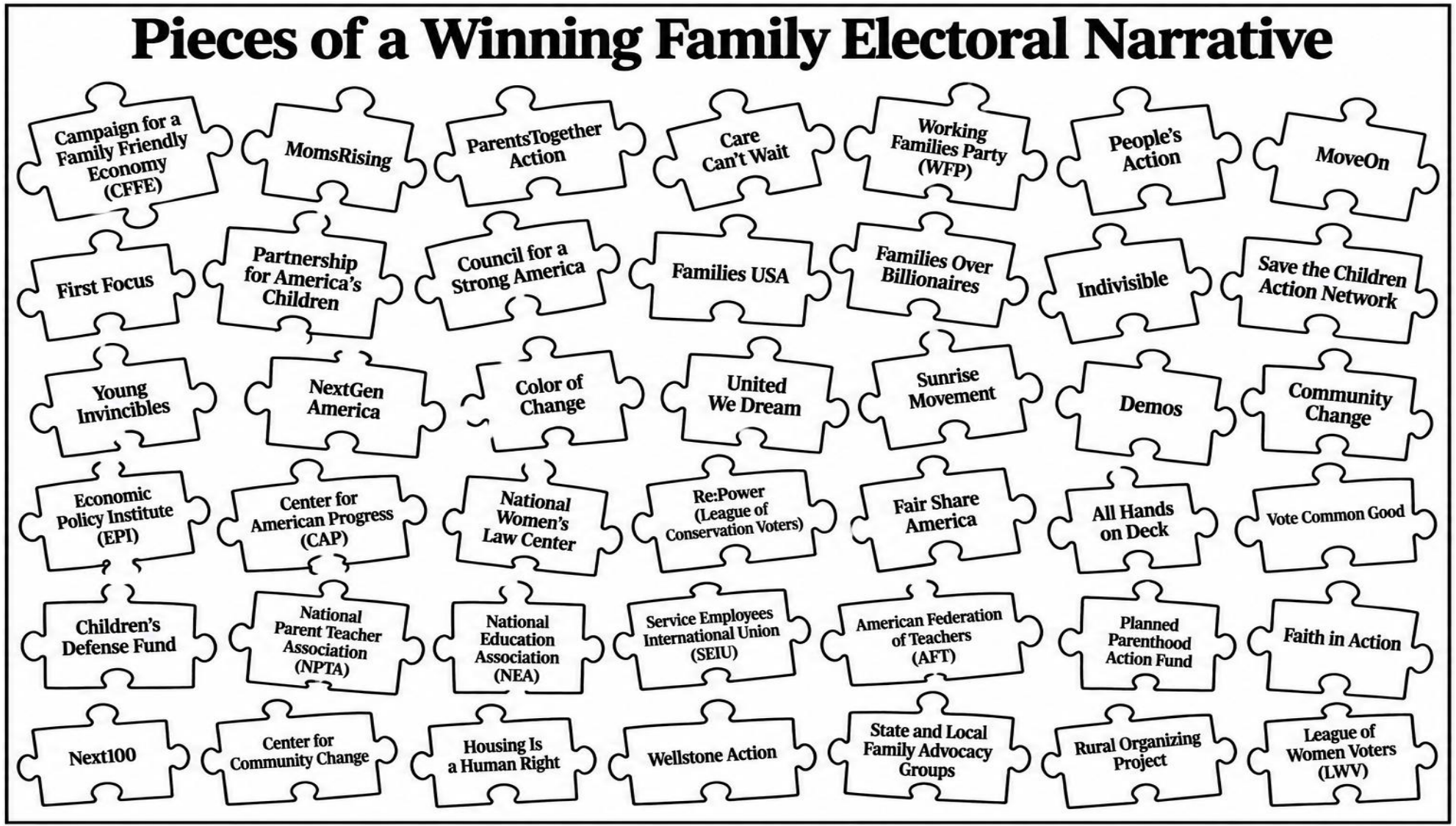
THE $10 BILLION PARTISAN ECOCHAMBER



OUR *PRICELESS* TRUSTED VOICES



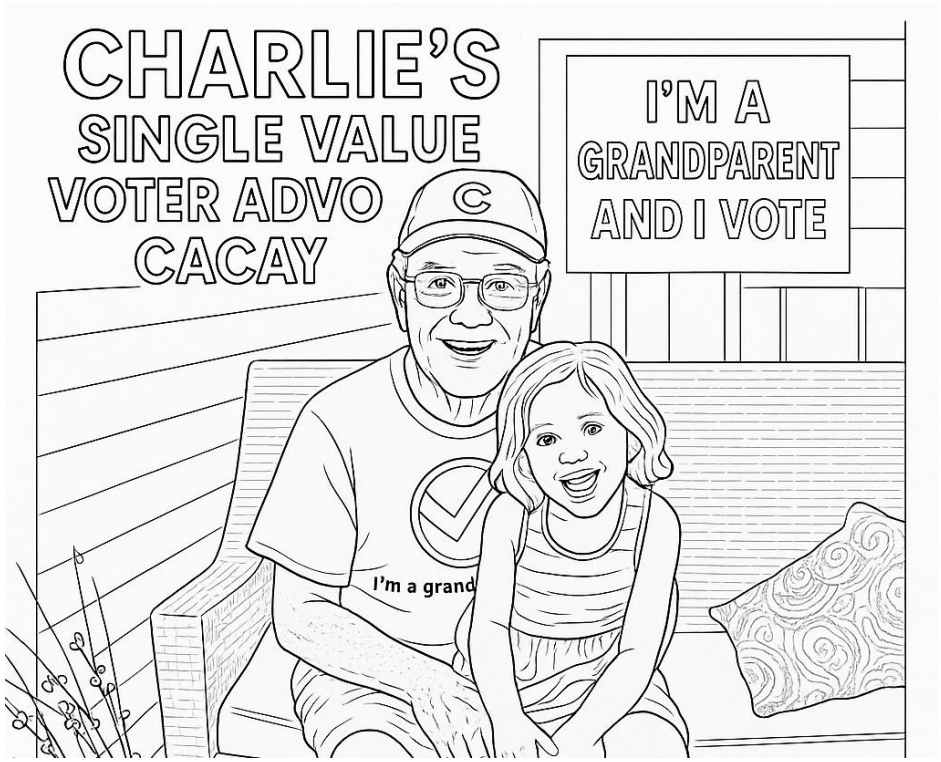
Preparing for 2028. There are Many Chorus Members. They Need a Common Song Book with Different Verses and Harmonies…



Most have policy agendas fully aligned with an overall valuing families agenda.

They represent and can reach people both as advocates and voters.

Value-Based Advocacy and Voting – Who I Am and What I Do – Charlie Bruner



HEART

My single value advocacy has a name – my granddaughter Eviana. I want her and all children's futures to be bright.

HEAD

(50 years – politician, academic, policy wonk)

Synthesize research and policy analysis on child and family policy.

Provide resources and tools and tips for the field.

Encourage 501c3 child and family groups to do electoral education and community building as well as legislative advocacy.

Encourage independent groups doing electoral advocacy to incorporate child and family policy and use value-based narratives.

Encourage philanthropy and contributors to invest in value-based child and family electoral advocacy.

Volunteer and speak out when I can contribute.