



Special Pilot Webinar – Using Grassroots Superpowers for Children and Families

Thursday, September 11th, 3:30 Central



Charles Bruner
Grassroots Iowa
Network



Ailen Arreaza
ParentsTogether



Jasmine Jones
Partnership for
America's Children

Three Framework Themes and Application to Children and Families

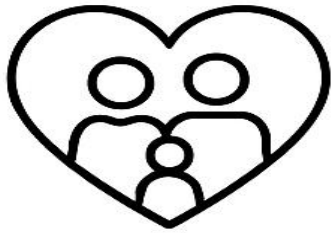
Charlie – Themes: The Case for Grassroots Advocacy and Values to Votes in Strengthening Democracy

1. Why (Core/Deep) Values to Votes
2. Why Grassroots Action is Needed
3. What Grassroots Leaders & Organizations Can Do Best

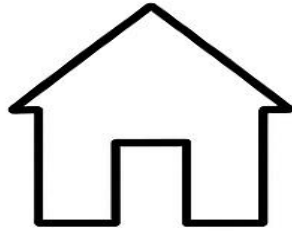
Ailen and Jasmine – Application: Parents and Children as an Important Value Focus

- How this Grassroots Action Can Specifically Be Applied to Parents and Child and Family Policy

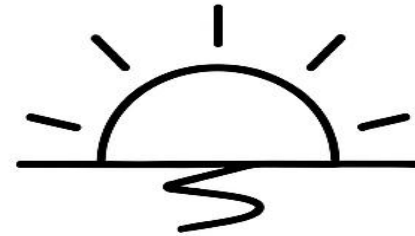
Shared Core Values



Family & Care



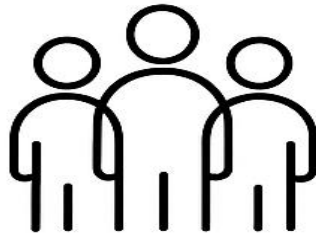
Safety & Security



Freedom &
Self-Determination



Opportunity &
Fairness



Community &
Belonging

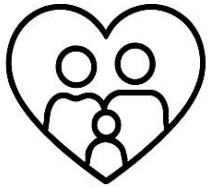


Stewardship &
Responsibility

“We the People” Democratic Values

Translating Values to Votes and Public Policy

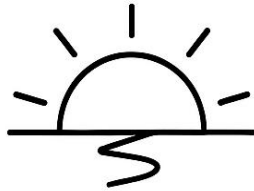
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**Grassroots
Activism and
Dialogue**



Votes

Who's Elected...

...What They Do

The Case for Grassroots Electoral Advocacy and Starting with Voter Values and the Electoral Environment

People vote their values and not just their pocketbooks (and that should be a good thing).

People are busy and most aren't policy wonks, but they want to cast informed votes that elect people who will uphold those values.

People rely upon what candidates say and what their trusted sources of information are in assessing them, but are fatigued and frustrated by current campaigning and its negativity.

People want to be in supportive environments as they make their decisions and hear from and dialogue with people they know and trust as sharing their values.

Contrasting Campaign Approaches

Grassroots vs. Partisan

PEOPLE POWER (priceless)

Engagement, Education, and Persuasion

Focus year-round directed to persuadable voters

RESULT: Informed electorate voting their values

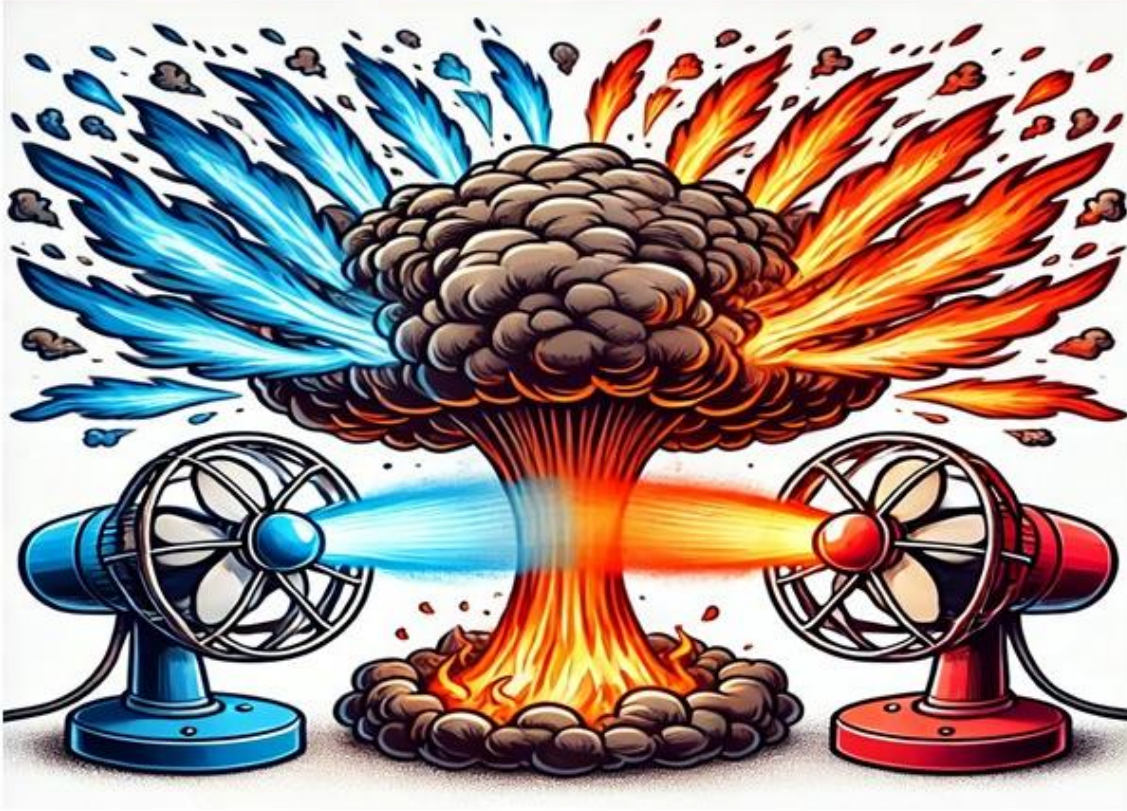
MONEY & MEDIA POWER

Marketing through Paid Media & "Gotcha" Campaigning

Focus last weeks of campaign and still undecided

RESULT: Fatigued electorate frustrated with politics

October Campaign Expenditures



**Bipartisanly Fueling Voters'
Anxieties About Politicians and
Government**

One-quarter of the estimated \$10 billion in Congressional partisan campaign expenditures in 2026 will be used for negative ads in the campaigns' final days.

Other 23 months of biennium are our ground for dialogue.

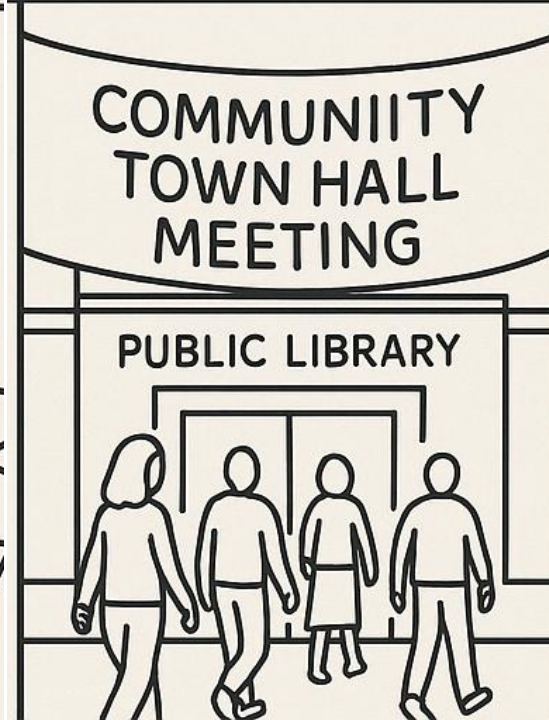
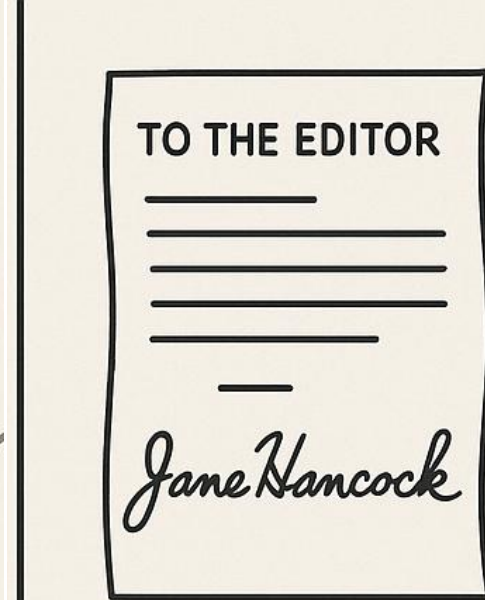
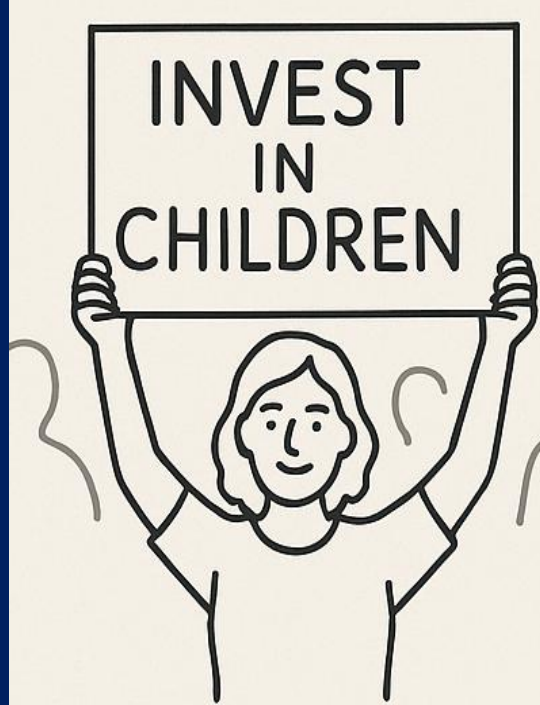
The Superpowers of Grassroots Advocacy – The Best Messages and the Best Messengers to Reach the Most Persuadable

Messages – Rooted in a core community value or values and describing the positive role government can and should play.

Messengers (Trusted Influencers) – Grassroots leaders recognized for their integrity, work, knowledge and commitment to the message (nonpartisan credibility)

Constituencies (Persuadables) – People in community most concerned about and affected by the policies related to the value(s) with connections to messengers.

Everyone Has a Grassroots Advocacy SUPER POWER



Board of Supervisors

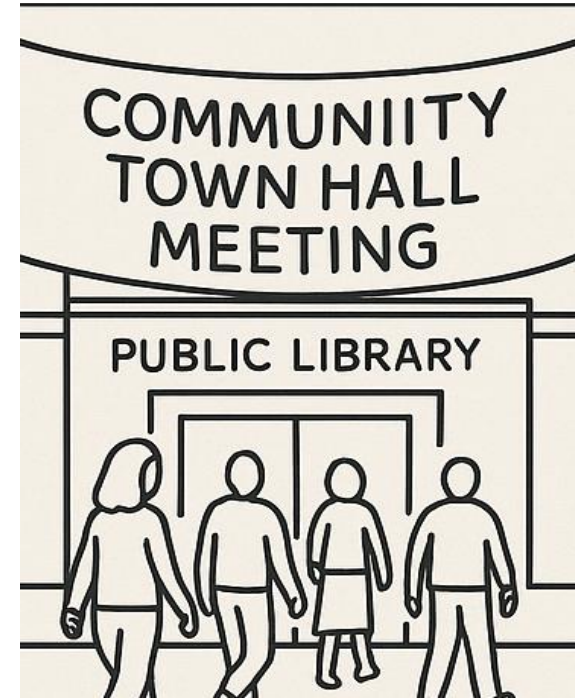
Redundancy Value of Redundancy



Awareness and
Presence of
Constituency in
Community



Message and
Testimonial from
Trusted Community
Member



**Safe Opportunity for
Learning and Deeper
Dialogue Around Values,
Policies, and Votes**



Some Persuadable Constituencies and Priority Core Values/Concerns



PARENTS

Raising Children



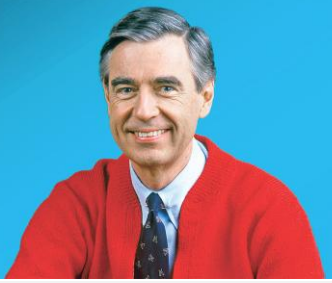
RURAL RESIDENTS

Preserving Way of Life



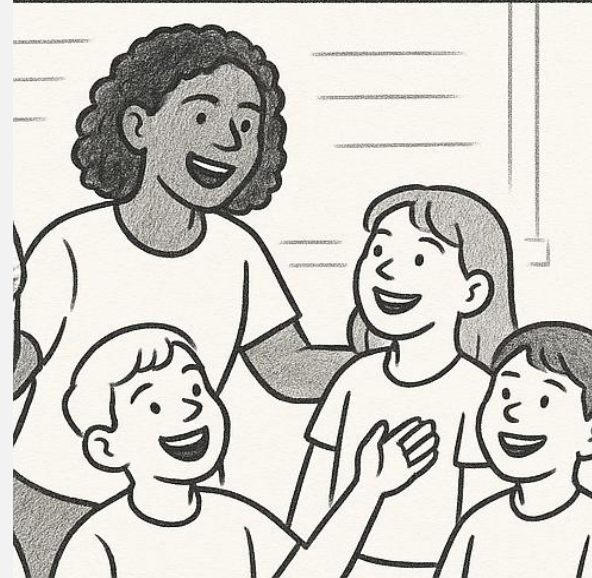
NEW VOTERS

Future Opportunities



Persuading the Persuadable: People Who Go High

***Think
Civic 501(c)3
Grassroots
Influencers
(and particularly
helpers!)***





Values to Votes Website Development – Your Help

www.valuestovotes.com

VALUES TO VOTES BASICS

- * Reclaiming the Positive Role of Government
- * Persuading the Persuadables
- Enlisting Effective Messengers
- * Maximizing Influence Through Dialogue

GROWING THE GRASSROOTS

- * Building a Team
- * Knowing Community Value Strengths
- * Using Everyone's Superpowers
- * Accessing Nonprofit Help

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

- * Messaging and Dialogue
- * Community Forums and Events
- * Contacting People Who Know You
- * Focusing Upon Specific Values

CANDIDATES AND NONPROFITS

- * Engaging Candidates
- * Sharing Candidate Stands/Records
- * Working with State Nonprofits
- * Working with National Nonprofits

Presenters Who Go High

Ailen Arreaza is Executive Director of ParentsTogether, a national nonprofit organization that channels the love parents have for their children into a powerful force for advocacy and political change to help all families thrive.

ParentsTogether reaches millions of parents annually providing resources to support their parenting and has a million member ParentsTogether Action network of grassroots leaders – bringing parents together to make a difference on the issues that matter most to kids and families — things like family leave, childcare, the child tax credit, and quality education.

www.parents-together.org

www.parents-togetheraction.org





ParentsTogether

- Our mission is to provide the news families need. We cover the latest research, policies, and trends affecting kids and families, so busy parents have the information they need to help their families thrive.
- We believe that parents can be an unstoppable force for good. We show up for parents with inspiring and actionable journalism, so parents can show up for their families and communities.
- Parent-led and parent-powered, ParentsTogether reaches over 3 million parents via Facebook, SMS, email, and web.

ParentsTogetherAction Families First Messaging Guide

We all want to be able to provide, support, and care for our loved ones, especially our children.

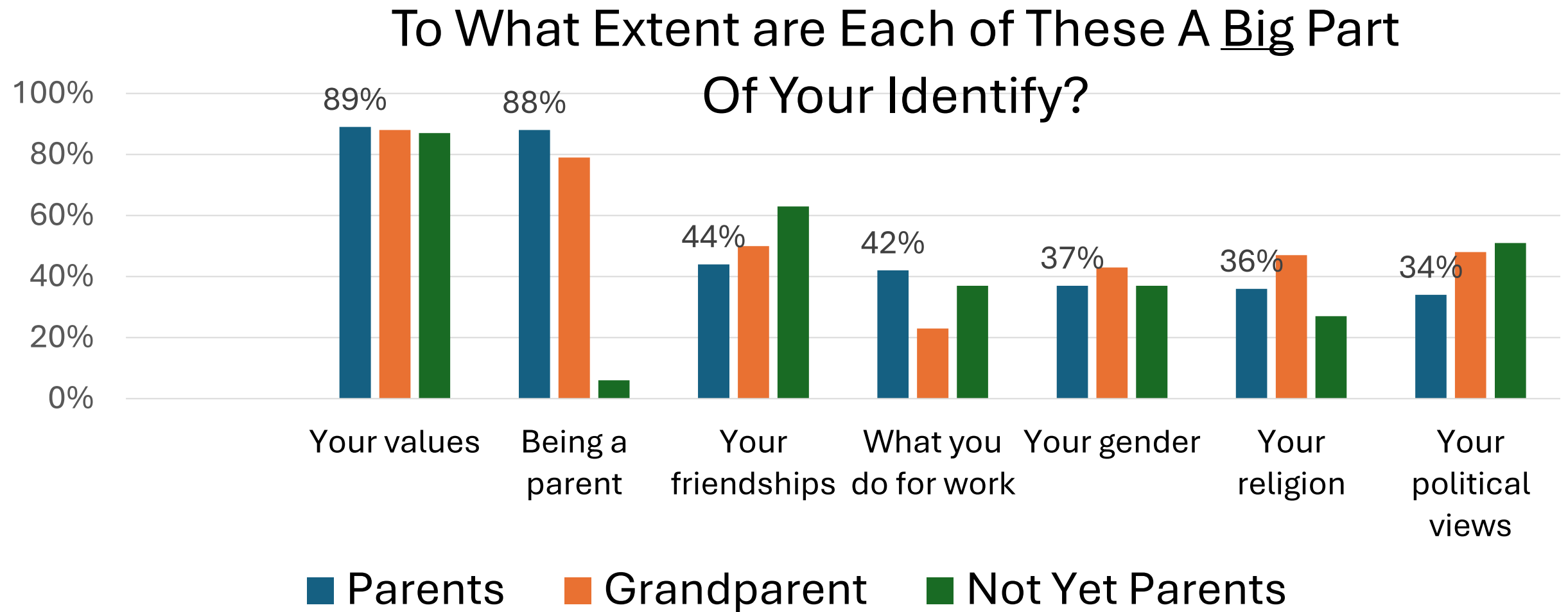
Yet today, across America, parents are struggling: they're worrying about how to pay for rent, groceries, and childcare, how to keep their kids safe, and how to be present for the most precious moments.

Some politicians want to distract us from the solutions that would help by intentionally creating conflicts that divide parents.

It's time to join together to demand that our leaders reinstate the child tax credit that puts money in parents' wallets, require Big Tech to make social media platforms safer, fully fund our schools so our children can each reach their potential, and pass paid family leave so parents can be there when it counts. It's time to join together to see to it that every child has the care and support they need to thrive.

Available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ytz6ynuQQNSM8D-aQ6AOBQVdtcAojPTc/view>

ParentsTogether Poll: What Matters to Parents (and Grandparents) Identity and Values?



Further Survey and Voting Results

- Of all voters, parents say they are most likely to change their votes and party preferences based upon their values and what candidates say.
- Parents were much bigger “swing voters” than nonparents in their choices for President from 2020 and 2024
 - ABC Exit Polls of Shift – Men with children 10% swing to R, Women with children 9% swing to R; Men without children 6% swing to R, Women without children 0% swing.
- Dads matter.

Supports for Grassroots Advocacy: Nonprofit and Candidate Roles

State policy and advocacy organizations and coalitions providing policy expertise & speakers and resources for grassroots audiences (e.g. Partnership).



National nonprofits offering tools, trainings, and resources geared to grassroots activism (e.g. ParentsTogether).



Candidates participating in grassroots events and seeking counsel from grassroots leaders.

Presenters Who Go High

Jasmine Jones, Director of Network Learning, Engagement, and Programs, joined the Partnership for America's Children in May of 2019. She cultivates member engagement by connecting members to expert knowledge within the network as well as the broader advocacy sector.

Members of the Partnership for America's Children are leaders in their states in advocating for results-based child policies and often leading community and state coalitions in electoral education and advocacy work.



www.foramericaschildren.org

Working with State Partners:
Building Power Together
Equity, Collaboration, and Impact for Children



PARTNERSHIP
FOR AMERICA'S
CHILDREN

Who We Are



The Partnership for America's Children supports a national network of child advocacy organizations focused on state and local policy change.



40+ members across the country, working at local, state, and national levels.



United vision: Every child in every race, ethnicity, ability, and zip code has the opportunity to thrive.



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CHILDREN

Our Strategic Shift

- Reexamined how to make the most impact as a network.
- Renewed values: centering equity and community powerbuilding.
- Members bridge grassroots energy with state policy action.



The Connector Role

- **Listen to communities:** lifting up lived experiences.
- **Translate & connect:** bridging grassroots stories with state policy knowledge & data.
- **Navigate complexity:** requires humility, relationship-building, and authentic collaboration.

Examples from Our Network

Hawai'i Children's Action Network: Partnered with parents to advance affordable childcare which helped shape policy wins.

Michigan's Children: Engaged youth and parents to lead non-partisan candidate forums to center their priorities.

Voices for Virginia's Children: Supported young people in advocating for long-term policy change through the Virginia's Youth in Action Program.



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CHILDREN

Collaboration Strategies

Begin with shared values and equity as the foundation.

Co-create priorities with grassroots leaders.

Share expertise and data in empowering, accessible ways.

Build intentional, trust-centered relationships.

Takeaway: Policy impact and grassroots energy are most powerful when aligned — building power together.



PARTNERSHIP
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CHILDREN

VALUES^{to} VOTES

Grassroots
Advocacy to
Strengthen
Democracy



VtV – a
Project
of GIN



www.valuestovotes.com

ADDITIONAL SLIDES FOCUSED UPON CURRENT FEDERAL POLICY ACTIONS

Nonpartisan Child Policy Advocacy
Requires **Resisting** Assaults on
Democracy

Nonpartisan Imperative: Calling Out the Rogue Elephants in the Room (Children and Families Example)

COMMON VALUE – Ensuring the Next Generation Has the Opportunity to Succeed

- Supporting the rights and responsibilities of parents to raise their children while knowing they cannot do it alone.
- Providing the community environment and public services and responses needed for children to grow and develop.

GOVERNMENT'S POSITIVE ROLE: Child care, preschool, public education, child welfare, nutrition, health care, child tax credit, family leave, etc.

1965-2024 Bipartisan Federal Child Policy Advances

Child Health: Medicaid and CHIP, Vaccines for Children, Home-and-Community Waivers, Nutrition (SNAP, WIC, school meals), ECCS, Community Health Centers, etc.

Early Learning: Head Start/Early Head Start, CCDBG, Early Intervention, MIECHV, ECCS, etc.

Education: IDEA and Title One, National Education Goals, No Child Left Behind, Community Schools, 21st Century Learning Centers, etc.

Safety and Permanence: Title IV-e foster care and adoption assistance, Title IV-b child abuse prevention, etc.

Economic Security: Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing/Nutrition/Health Care supports

SIX DECADES OF
BIPARTISAN PROGRESS
SETTING A FOUNDATION
FOR OUR FUTURE



**AT RISK OF TEARING IT DOWN:
ROGUE ELEPHANTS IN THE
OVAL, CONGRESSIONAL MEETING,
AND EXECUTIVE OFFICE ROOMS**



2025 Multi-Tusk Unilateral Federal Assaults on Child Policy

Oval Room: Executive orders and actions (DEI, Department of Education, DOGE), testing unilateral Presidential budgeting authority

Congressional Meeting Rooms: One Big Beautiful Bill Act for mandatory programs and taxes now moving to appropriations for discretionary spending and executive oversight

Executive Office Rooms: Reductions in force and terminations, anti-government appointments, destructive administrative rules, decimated administrative capacity

501(c)3 Superpowers

Beyond the Usual (Partisan) Advocates

Credible and evidenced-based voices on children and families

Collaborators and coalition-builders with other child-serving/advocating organizations

Support for solution-based grassroots convenors around children and public policy

Advocates who know the state political culture and Congressional delegation as constituents

Storytellers for those directly impacted

