

WE SHARE COMMON GROUND

We Take Personal Responsibility

We Care About Our Neighbors

We Believe in a Work Ethic

We Seek a Good Future for Our Children

We Want Equal Opportunity and Fair Rules

We Help Out Those in Need

We Are Stewards of Our Homes and Communities

Government Should Be Of, For, and About Us

CIVIL DISCOURSE BRINGS US TOGETHER

VALUES^{to} VOTES

Grassroots
Advocacy to
Strengthen
Democracy



Webinar Two – Using Grassroots Superpowers In Rural Communities Thursday, October 2nd , 3:30 Central



Charles Bruner, host
Grassroots Iowa
Network Member



Jess Piper, Presenter
Director, Blue Missouri



Denise O'Brien, Moderator
Former Director, Women
Food and Agriculture Network

Values to Votes is a project of the Grassroots Iowa Network
www.valuestovotes.com





Grassroots Advocacy and Persuading the Persuadable – Focus Upon Rural and Small Town Communities

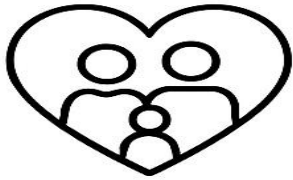
Charlie – Reaching Persuadable Constituencies Through Grassroots Activism – VtV and GIN

1. Why Values to Votes and Grassroots Advocacy (summary)
2. Why Focus on Persuadable Constituencies
3. Why Rural and Small Town Voters are Key Persuadables

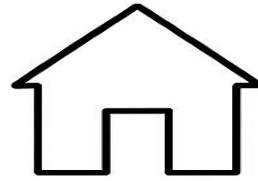
Denise & Jess – Messages, Messengers, and Dialogues that Connect with Persuadable Rural Voters

“We the People” Democratic Values: What We Want Government to Support and Preserve

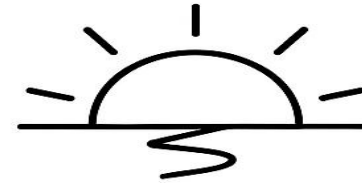
Shared Core Values



Family & Care



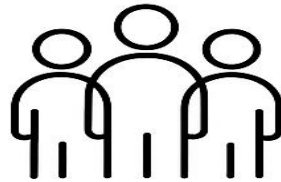
Safety & Security



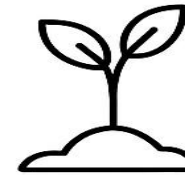
Freedom &
Self-Determination



Opportunity &
Fairness



Community &
Belonging



Stewardship &
Responsibility

***** Today: Values as Specifically Related to Sustainable Rural
and Small Town Community Way of Life *****

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

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

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

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) and with connections to messengers.

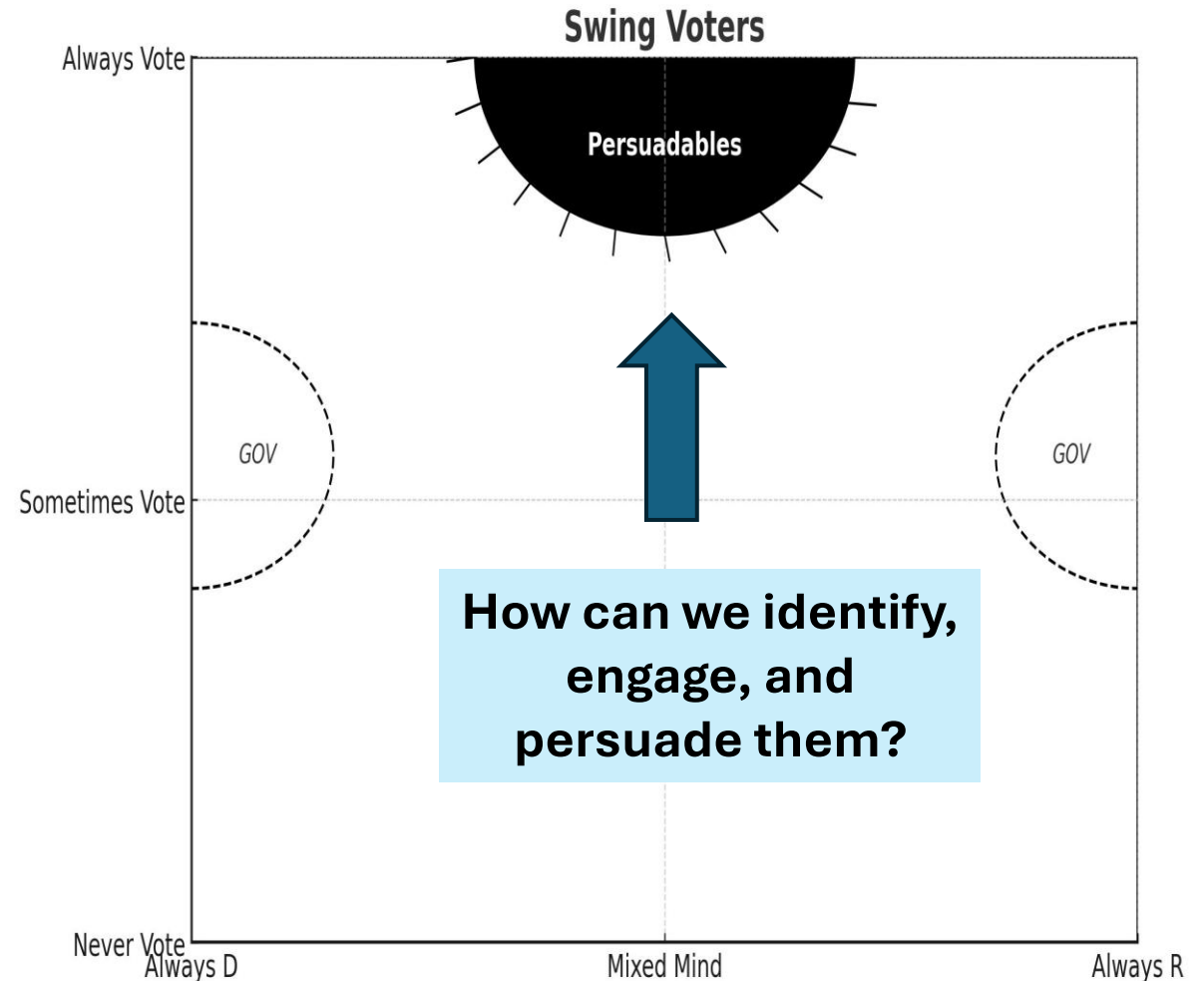
Why Persuadable Voters (Micro-Targeting)

70-80 percent of people who will vote in 2026 already have pretty firmly locked-in choices.

The remaining 20-30 percent will determine the election outcome.

Some relate to getting out sometimes, voters who generally support one's position (Registration/GOV activities) – 5-10 percent.

A larger proportion relate to persuading those likely to vote who are not yet locked into their votes – 15-20 percent of population.



Some Persuadable Constituencies and Priority Core Values/Concerns



PARENTS

Raising Children



RURAL RESIDENTS

Preserving Way of Life



NEW VOTERS

Future Opportunities

One Aspect of Persuadability – Changing Vote Choices from Election to Election

PARENTS vs. NONPARENTS

10 percent shift in voting from 2020 and 2024 Presidential election for parents, 3 percent for non-parents

YOUNGER vs. OLDER VOTERS

21 percent shift in voting from 2020 and 2024 Presidential election for younger (18-29 (voters) compared with 5 percent other voters (somewhat different cohort)

RURAL VOTERS IN IOWA*

19 percent shift in voting from 2012 to 2024 Presidential election in 89 rural counties, compared to 5 percent in 10 urban counties

One in five rural-small town voters swung and turned Iowa from bluish purple to red (rural-small town voters are about half the state's population)

** There are many different “rural” Americas. Different strategies apply to addressing different types of rural communities.*

VALUES to **POLICIES** to VOTES

VALUES APPLIED TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

Opportunity for Healthy and Valued Living in Rural Communities

Making it Possible for Children to Succeed and Stay if they Want

Supporting People over Capital, Profits, and Outside Money Holders

POLICIES THAT SUPPORT THEM?

Strong rural health care system

Sanitation, roads, public services meeting rural needs

Livable wage job opportunities

Good rural education K-12+ including technical
Child care and preschool

Economic development priority on family farms and local businesses
Controls over corporate power
Fair tax system for working families



Denise O'Brien – Moderator

Farmer and community organizer from Atlantic, Iowa.

Founder and former director of the Women Food and Agriculture Network.

Former president of the National Family Farm Coalition.

Recipient of the 2005 Practical Farmers of Iowa Sustainable Agriculture Award.

Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Iowa Farmer's Union.

Inducted into Iowa's Women's Hall of Fame in 2000.



Jess Piper – Keynote Presenter

Mother to five and grandmother to three living on a family farm

Former Maryville, Missouri high school teacher

Founding executive director of Blue Missouri

Political activist and 2022 candidate for Missouri House

“Dirt Road Democrat” and speaker, blogger, and substack author on electoral advocacy in rural and small town America



Questions, Comments, and Ideas for Next Steps

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bruner@childequity.org

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