

# STRATEGIES TO MEET THE MOMENT

## RESOURCES THAT INSPIRE HOPE AND ACTION AMIDST OUR DEMOCRACY CRISIS

A guide by the **SMALL PLANET INSTITUTE**

With our democracy under threat, it's hard not to feel stuck and terrified. Much has been written about what contributed to the 2024 presidential election's widespread Republican swing and how we've landed in a democracy crisis. It's important to understand where liberals and progressives went wrong and the cluster of societal forces at play, and even more essential to translate those findings into strategies and actions that meet the moment and help us build a better future.

This resource guide highlights a range of voices and perspectives offering strategies, solutions, and action ideas. We've sorted them by medium, including podcasts, articles, newsletters and blogs, and organizations. The ideas offered here remind us that there are many paths forward and that we can each play a role in restoring democracy.

### PODCASTS

- **Start Making Sense** *The Nation's* flagship weekly podcast, hosted by contributing editor Jon Wiener and featuring the magazine's writers and editors as well as activists fighting for democracy who shape the week in news. Recent episodes include "[An Amazing Week for Resistance Rallies](#)" (Mar 26) and "[Mobilizing Against Trump in Week 3](#)" (Feb 5), a discussion with Leah Greenberg, co-founder of [Indivisible](#), and Rebecca Solnit on coordinating strategy and tactics for protesting the administration's many-pronged assault on liberty and justice.
- **What Could Go Right?** from the *Progress Network*. What if, instead of being on the brink of disaster, we're on the cusp of a better world? Each week, experts discuss the central issues of our era—including sustainability, polarization, work, and the economy—and make the case for a brighter future. They offer regular "[Progress Report](#)" episodes, along with topical episodes on subjects ranging from the [environment](#) to [corporate monopolies](#).
- **Future Hindsight** takes big ideas in civic life and democracy and turns them into action steps for everyday citizens. Recent episodes include "[Youth Power vs. The Climate Crisis](#)" (Apr 10) and an episode on the political value of joining clubs and associations, "[Be a Joiner](#)" (Mar 6).
- **The Ezra Klein Show** from *The New York Times*. Klein's podcast covers a wide range of political and social issues. Since the election, he's hosted a series of conversations about the future of the Democratic Party, including his post-election audio essay "[Where Does This Leave Democrats](#)" (Nov 7). He features a range of viewpoints across episodes such as "[A Democrat Who's Thinking Differently](#)" (Feb 19) and "[The Last 2 Months – And Next 2 Years – of Democratic Politics](#)" (Mar 28).
- **Pod Save America** - Hosted by former Obama staffers Jon Favreau, Tommy Vietor, Jon Lovett, and Dan Pfeiffer, this progressive political podcast provides analysis of current events, often focusing on ways to oppose and respond to the administration's initiatives. Relevant episodes include "[How a Political Party Can Rise from the Dead](#)" (Mar 9) and "[A Democrat's Tough Love for His Party](#)" (Mar 23).

- **“There is a Way for Democrats to Stop Trump and Save America”** Op-ed by Ben Rhodes, from *The New York Times* (Mar 21). “We need authenticity [from our political leaders]. We need to know that the party is willing to fight for the things that matter most to people in this country and is unafraid to take on the special interests that are destroying it. Don’t just tell us what policy or program you are for; tell us why you are for it. Show leadership by letting a new generation ascend.” And check out Ben Rhodes’ 2022 book *After the Fall: The Rise of Authoritarianism in the World We’ve Made*.
- **Democracy Playbook 2025: 7 Pillars to Defend Democracy in 2025 and Beyond Report** by Norman Eisen and Jonathan Katz, from Brookings (Jan 17). This report provides actionable steps for democratic actors in the U.S. and globally to strengthen democratic institutions and resist illiberal forces. The seven pillars are (1) Protect elections (2) Defend the rule of law (3) Fight corruption (4) Reinforce civic and media space (5) Protect pluralistic governance (6) Counter disinformation (7) Make democracy deliver.
- **“Fighting Back: A Citizen’s Guide to Resistance”** by Timothy Noah, published by *The New Republic* (Mar 27): “[T]here is no silver bullet – no single arena, not even the courtroom, where Trump’s illegal power grab can be stopped. ‘There’s no messiah’ who will ‘sweep in and make everything better,’ said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. That’s up to you and me. The good news is there are a lot of us.” And take a look at Noah’s *The Great Divergence: America’s Growing Inequality Crisis and What We Can Do About It* (2013).
- **“Saving Our Democracy: A Call to Action Ahead of Trump’s Joint Session of Congress”**, from The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (Mar 3). This resource calls for collective action to address the challenges posed by the Trump administration’s policies. It provides specific actions ordinary citizens can take.
- **“So You Want to Be a Dissident?”** by Julia Angwin and Ami Fields-Meyer, published by *The New Yorker* (Apr 12). This article contextualizes the current moment in earlier chapters of American and global history. The authors also interviewed dissidents in authoritarian regimes around the world who promote non-violent resistance as a strategy.
- **“What’s Happening Is Not Normal. America Needs an Uprising That Is Not Normal.”**, an op-ed written by conservative columnist David Brooks and published in the *New York Times* (Apr 17), emphasizes that a collective body is needed for a civic uprising against Trump’s power grab, stating: “It’s time for Americans in universities, law, business, nonprofits and the scientific community, and civil servants and beyond to form one coordinated mass movement. Trump is about power. The only way he’s going to be stopped is if he’s confronted by some movement that possesses rival power.”
- **“Trump Wants You to Think Resistance Is Futile. It Is Not”**, written by Jamelle Bouie, published by *The New York Times* (Apr 23), examines Senator Van Hollen of Maryland’s response to the case of Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, a victim of the Trump administration’s deportation program under the 1798 Alien Enemies Act. This article highlights the success of Van Hollen’s call to action, as his journey to El Salvador to meet with Abrego Garcia inspired other Democrats to make the same trip. It sheds light on the atrocities of this removal program, putting pressure on the White House to abide by the law.

## NEWSLETTERS & BLOGS

- **Chop Wood, Carry Water** Jessica Craven's friendly, accessible newsletter is "dedicated to saving democracy, addressing the climate crisis, preserving our freedoms, electing better lawmakers, and, in general, creating a better country – one simple action at a time." Her motto: "Hope is an action."
- **"Where We Go From Here"** A series of posts by legal scholar and activist Larry Lessig about re-strategizing for resisting the Trump/MAGA agenda.
- **"Even More Reasons For Very Modest Optimism"** by Robert Reich (Mar 14). The third post by Reich outlining specific reasons to be hopeful about political and economic outcomes. Check out his [newsletter](#) and follow him on social media.
- **How We Fight Back** is a newsletter put together by several organizations, including Indivisible and MoveOn, that breaks down issues and offers strategies for how to resist, both on the group level and as an individual.
- **"15 Ways You Can Fight for Democracy"** is a post on the Contrarian that offers ways to get involved. The Contrarian is an independent news source, dedicated to defending democracy.
- **Hopium Chronicles** Simon Rosenberg's newsletter that crowdsources a lot of images and videos. Check out ["The Power of the People is Greater Than the People in Power"](#) (Apr 6) and ["Trump is an Irredeemable Madman, Let's Be Very, Very Loud Today, Our Movement Is Getting Stronger"](#) (Apr 7).
- **Meditations in an Emergency**, Rebecca Solnit's new blog covering politics and media. And check out her 2018 book *Call Them By Their True Names: American Crises (and Essays)*.
- **Open Letters** Anne Applebaum's newsletter. Applebaum is a scholar-journalist, covering politics and history. Her recent book *Autocracy, Inc (2024)* is dedicated "for the optimists."

## ORGANIZATIONS

- **Demand Progress** Its mission is "to amplify the voice of the people and wield it to make government accountable and contest concentrated corporate power." It covers activism campaigns, including online petitions, policy expertise, and special projects, such as helping to coordinate Congress' transparency caucus.
- **Democracy Forward** This organization "uses the law to build collective power and advance a bold, vibrant democracy for all people." It uses legal avenues to build collective power and advance a vibrant democracy for all citizens.
- **Protect Democracy** Its nonpartisan, cross-ideological strategy works to build a political coalition to push back on populist and authoritarian movements in the U.S.
- **Democracy 2025** This strategic hub seeks to protect people and their rights should the Trump-Vance administration seek to unlawfully strip away freedoms and prosperity.
- **Indivisible** Founded in response to Trump's election, this organization started with the [Indivisible Guide](#), which became a resource for thousands of grassroots groups nationwide. Now Indivisible serves as an umbrella resource to help connect individuals to local groups and create action plans in their communities.