

Choose Democracy • Count Every Vote • Hold The Line

• Stop the Coup •

Updated 10/16/20

KEY TRAININGS + SESSION VIDEOS & SLIDES – free/online

HOLD THE LINE - Trainings to Defend Democracy

About: The authors of *Hold the Line: A Guide to Defending Democracy* are leading workshops to help people organize local election protection groups and ensure that the results are respected. We are researchers, organizers, and activists who've seen how people-powered movements have protected freedom and democracy around the world. We review potential scenarios that might unfold between Election Day and Inauguration Day. Then we offer evidence-based strategies to respond, and steps to plan nonviolent resistance if attempts are made to subvert the election.

- Two 90-min sessions (7:30-9:00pm EST).
 - **Oct. 15+22** - More info and sign up: bit.ly/holdthelinetraining2
 - **Oct. 20+27** - More info and sign up: bit.ly/holdthelinetraining3
- Read the *Hold the Line* guide to get up to speed: <http://bit.ly/holdthelinepdf>
- Slide deck #1:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BvtB2Fd7HIR5jwQVrsXjap_7ctDf53i_jShR9kZ8Rfc/edit#slide=id.g9af0c054c8_0_135
- Slide deck #2:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10u7rEoOQury0HkhrHJ5nKJtnVMX0VBsiZ5QsybbUzp0/edit#slide=id.g9af0c054c8_0_135
- Chat links from 10/13: https://docs.google.com/document/d/130_gOsRy2_XLXFrw27hOPTfua7gpyLxGloG2RHq9XJk/edit



Each Of Us Can Play a Role

CHOOSE DEMOCRACY – repeat trainings

- **Oct 16, 21, 22, 27** at 5:30-7:30pmMT
- <https://choosedemocracy.us/training/>
- Slide deck - https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wdGm91pIWtYmN01rJfx8JZVNMX5eSpQcApmxq9K1ws/edit#slide=id.g35f391192_00

350.org – Climate Democracy Defenders, from Oct 14

About: If Donald Trump threatens the integrity of our elections, we need to be ready to hold him accountable. That's why we're launching the Climate Democracy Defenders Program to mobilize voters, protect every vote, and take immediate action to demand a peaceful transition of power.

- Video: https://350org.zoom.us/rec/play/la2fMYINW7tYLDj7XQ4zCzdsVtkBWDpw_34u39rjqCysyqAifeCaQy327i8zQ1uESYckvFaSbiRH.BFyeg9MEAZPqYkV?
- Transcript: https://docs.google.com/document/d/15_aTuWDBSUvrCn0aeOFAnLLZwlcYDVDXMms1bNsX3ug/edit
- Slide deck: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1O4w7Qc_uy5rE0WBqnJ5EvKXF_GhrUXRyj-GnZzs1_d4/edit#slide=id.p1

“CountOnUs”: How to Defeat Trump and Defend the Election (repeated)

About: We're just a few weeks away from the most important election of our lives. Trump is worried he's going to lose and is openly threatening to use any means necessary to hold onto power. So we've come together with other young leaders from allied movements and we've mapped out a strategy for what we can do from now to the election and in the days and weeks to follow to make sure that Trump can't steal this election, that EVERY vote will be fairly counted, and we swear in a new government elected by us and for us. We have the plan, and now we're launching a mass training to get as many people as possible to join us in taking action.

- VIDEO of 10/15:
https://zoom.us/rec/play/ekC3l9VN1J9nbjnK7CDTgC6myRt56UgM89DQYgUx3SjbCSvacRmDWs0lrQZ_MiHoTG1g2twL52aal_4.pimhn9p1Ni1xdNp?starTime=1602805646000&x_zm_rtaid=xtaUghbuSKyAF7Owfz57ww.1602858710207.8bb4f988f0a9649268ba5f26b06e32ba&x_zm_rtaid=281
- Organizing Guide: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKZTTk-yVIDqKvfyxmzXKbKsMO7ic7yJyi4-yMktL4/edit>

OTHER TRAININGS – nonviolence, bystander, conflict and more.

Links to many offerings at Choose Democracy - <https://choosedemocracy.us/prepare/#partnertraining>

October 25, 2020: Rooted in Spirit for Right Action— Nonviolence and Social Change Workshop. – from Pace e Bene. Through exercises and examples, this virtual workshop will give you an overview of different aspects of how nonviolent practices specifically speak to the times we are living in. This workshop will cover ways participants can prepare and respond to the many challenges surrounding the upcoming US elections, including de-escalation skills and active bystander basics.

<https://paceebene.org/events/2020/10/25/from-spirit-to-action-nonviolence-and-social-change-workshop-dbtn6?>

Turning Towards Each Other: Navigating Conflict for Social Change: 3 sessions, equity priced.

It's time to build our collective conflict resilience and turn toward the gifts of conflict as a means of building trust, clarifying our strategies, and learning about ourselves and each other. Because we need all of us more than ever! Let's learn to embrace the gifts of conflict and turn towards each other.

Oct. 30, Nov. 20, Dec. 11 at 11:00am-12:30pm MT.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/turning-towards-each-other-navigating-conflict-for-social-change-part-i-tickets-124345674259>

Together, We Organize:

The Choose Democracy folks created google docs for us to add our names and find compatriots.

- Find other folks who have done trainings and signed onto this accessible spreadsheet:
- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1iC3el8b34FwW2jll8UW46EeQuvXmk8jxFSI7dN7nNt8/edit#gid=2055712831>
- Add your name to the list:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfQ0WCMFoRDkhSrLtcyVIYJbRhigTE5TCLhOo5S5AeCCBe1NA/viewform>

These New Mexicans started a FB page:

- <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3432095657014974>

Choose Democracy
 ★ New Mexico ★
Count Every Vote.

VOTER and ELECTION PROTECTION

VOLUNTEER (consider your Covid risk):

- Sign up for Election Protection volunteer, 866-Our Vote: (Common Cause + dozens of orgs):
<https://protectthevote.net/>
- DPNM Election Protection (at polls and ballot counting warehouse), email to volunteer:
nmelectionprotection@gmail.com
- Offering local training in poll protection (check for additional dates):
<https://www.facebook.com/OLENewMexico/>

Read Advisory from Oct 14

<https://www.sos.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOS-OAG-Advisory-10.14.20-1.pdf>

Secretary of State and Attorney General's
 2020 New Mexico General Election
 Voter Information Advisory

October 14, 2020

For NM and folks in other states too:

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voters-should-not-be-intimidated>

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/limits-observers-and-challengers-polls>

Strategic Rationale

“It is now widely expected that the winner of the presidential election will not be known on the night of Election day, Nov. 3. This creates opportunities for the Trump administration and its allies to attempt to subvert the election results from that point onward – Trump could declare victory, stop mail-in ballots from being counted, refusing to respect the results if he loses, and unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.” And this will likely happen quickly and require a rapid response. – Hold the Line.

We need proactive and publicly visible efforts throughout the election season & inauguration.

We need to show that:

1. People around country are organized to defend democracy.
2. People who are united and engaged in disciplined nonviolent action are powerful and gaining momentum.
3. Election protection is a non-partisan issue focused on upholding the Constitution, and protecting widely-shared values of accountable government and democratic freedoms.
4. People are the country are watching closely and will hold accountable all those who try to subvert this election.

Landscape at the national level

There are 3 primary organizations that are big collaboratives addressing the threats to our Democracy. They are providing trainings, guides, action steps, resources, and more. These orgs are:

1. **Hold the Line** - <https://holdthelineguide.com/>
Hardy Merriman, Kifah Shah, Ankur Asthana, and Mariam Navid
2. **Protect the Results** - <https://protecttheresults.com/>
partners include Indivisible, PDA, 350, Womens March, GreenPeace and dozens more
3. **Choose Democracy** - <https://choosedemocracy.us/>
co-lead is George Lakey, online written guide, trainings, more
4. **Count on Us Coalition**– <https://wecountonus.org/#!>
youth-led orgs: Sunrise, March for Our Lives, Dream Defenders, and United We Dream Action Pac

Best docs to read right now:

Orientation: <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2020/09/10-things-you-need-to-know-to-stop-a-coup/>

Deeper dive: *Hold The Line: A Guide to Defending Democracy*

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J_9qWY5Oyk0NndSqzFVcGDbPDIMnccnsuRd34Vt0paE/edit

pdf - http://holdthelineguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Hold-The-Line_-A-Guide-to-Defending-Democracy.pdf

short link - bit.ly/HoldTheLineGuide

Get ready: *Commitment to Uphold Democracy: What We Demand from Elected Officials and Police and Military – A Campaign Planning Guide*

online - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y07Umh2xsoExWSje7RobVdbDmMkC5lluBUUIT2sLSJk/edit>

short link - bit.ly/DemocracyPlan

Strategies: #CountOnUs’ *Organizing Guide – Defeat Trump. Transform America.*

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uKZTTk-yVIDqKvlfyXmzXKbKsMO7ic7yJyi4-yMktL4/edit>

Pledges

EVERYONE CAN SIGN THESE PLEDGES TODAY: (which will also link you to updates)

<https://protecttheresults.com/>

<https://choosedemocracy.us/>

<https://wecountonus.org/#!>

The Choose Democracy pledge:

OUR PLEDGE:

- 1 **We will vote.**
- 2 **We will refuse to accept election results until all the votes are counted.**
- 3 **We will nonviolently take to the streets if a coup is attempted.**
- 4 **If we need to, we will shut down this country to protect the integrity of the democratic process.**

GOVERNORS SIGNED VOW TO COUNT ALL VOTES INCLUDING GOV. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/12-democratic-governors-vow-all-votes-will-be-counted-n1241645>

Here is the full text of their statement: Sept 30, 2020

"We do not take for granted the sacred right of every American to cast a vote, and to have that vote counted, in the presidential election held every four years. It is a right that is foundational to our democracy and essential to the continuation of our constitutional system of government — something to be cherished, revered and defended by elected leaders at all levels.

"Any efforts to throw out ballots or refuse a peaceful transfer of power are nothing less than an assault on American democracy. There is absolutely no excuse for promoting the intimidation or harassment of voters. These are all blatant attempts to deny our constituents the right to have their voices heard, as guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution, and to know the will of the people will be carried out.

"As governors, it is our solemn duty to protect the people of our states. Today, we affirm that all votes cast in the upcoming election will be counted and that democracy will be delivered in this election. That means all valid ballots cast in accordance with state and local laws must be counted, and that all states must properly appoint electors in accordance with the vote. We will not allow anyone to willfully corrupt the democratic process by delegitimizing the outcome or appointing fraudulent electors against the will of the voters.

"Our nation has held presidential elections and upheld the results throughout our history, even in times of great peril. We did it during the Civil War and both World Wars, and we can do it during a pandemic.

"And if the outcome of this election means the end of a presidency, he must leave office — period.

"We recognize that democratically held elections are not an exercise in controlling power. By its very nature, democracy is an exercise in determining and honoring out the collective will of the American people, regardless of the outcome. Disenfranchising voters in order to retain power strikes at the very heart of this promise. We call on elected leaders at all levels, from both parties, to speak out loudly against such efforts in the weeks ahead."

Overall campaigns plus suggested strategies and tactics

4 keys to beating a coup: (Choose Democracy)

- Widespread mobilization – we need everyone we can recruit, remember the solid middle!
- Alliance building – see allies in “unlikely” places
- Nonviolent discipline – the authoritarian response delights when we are violent; “crackdown”
- Refusal to acknowledge illegitimate authority.

This is authoritarianism and we need to call it a Coup. We’ll know it’s a coup, if the government:

- Stops counting votes
- Declares someone a winner who didn’t get the most votes, or
- Allows someone to stay in power who didn’t win the election.

Campaigns: (we can draw from)

- Hold The Line – is called a Commitment to Uphold Democracy
- Choose Democracy – is called How To Beat An Election Power Grab
- Count on Us Coalition – is called #CountOurVotes: How to Defeat Trump and Defend the Election

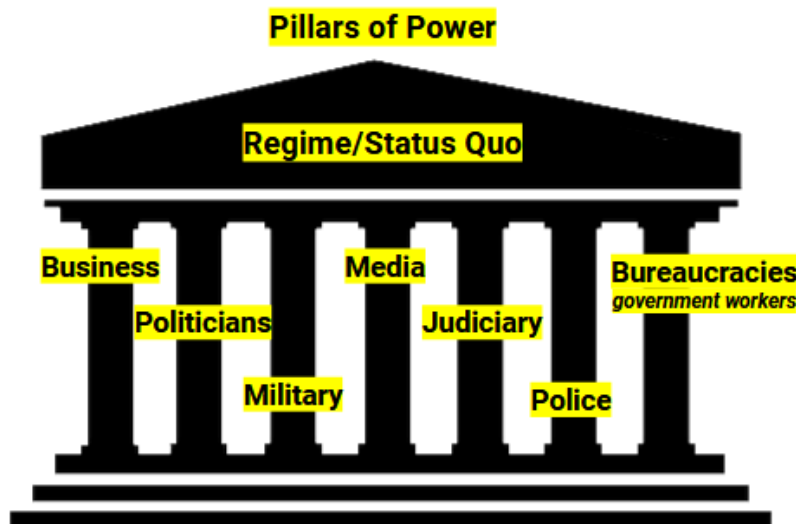
Tactical Flexibility: based on location, red/blue state, orgs, skills etc:

Right now - Focus on getting written (accountable) commitments from leaders that they will protect the integrity and results of the 2020 election

- Choose: elected, appointed, or community leader
- Demand they commit publicly that every vote will be counted – need public/visible accountability tool!
- Use nonviolent action to: pressure them to commit, publicize their commitment, invite more and more allies to join you
- Need accountability tools: publicly visible statement, audio, video?

What sections of society do we focus on?

- Hold The Line: Elected officials, Police & Military
- Choose Democracy’s Pillars of Power: 7



ORGANIZE. VOTE. STRIKE.

Count On Us – very accessible overall strategy – of organize, vote, strike.

- **Mass Non-Cooperation: Become ungovernable & withdraw our consent for upholding status quo**
- **Organize:** In addition to collective organizing, establish “Count On Us Squads” with 5-7 of your people. Small groups committed to action are essential building blocks of movement!
 - Sign up: <https://secure.everyaction.com/pocd1RF0vUm7bAavuk-TEQ2>
 - Organizing Guide: <https://secure.everyaction.com/pocd1RF0vUm7bAavuk-TEQ2>
- **Vote:** GOTV plus election protection
 - Voting Triple: volunteer to be outside polls and ask folks right there to text 3 people to vote
 - Red Line: If Trump tries to disrupt the vote or counting, we move into Daily Actions.
 - Go to locations where counting votes, stay until all votes counted and certified
- **Strike:** Overall - non-violent, mass non-cooperation with
 - Red Line: If Trump shifts into a coup, “we call a national Youth Strike.”
- **Tactic – Target – Location:** organizing tools to aim you efforts – use at any level of action.
- **Pledge to Vote and Strike,** get your friends trained with us.



Hold the Line has 3 Red Lines – if these are crossed, then we move forward with more direct non-violent actions:

1. All votes must be counted, without interference or intimidation. This is a position we can organize around proactively before, during and after Election Day, Nov. 3.
2. Incidents of voter fraud, voter suppression, or other election irregularities must be investigated impartially and remedied as appropriate. This can be effectively done especially at a local level.
3. The true election results must be respected, regardless of who wins. Preserving democracy is most important.

Prepare for Civil Resistance – Non-violent direct action

Discussed in Choose Democracy trainings; Gene Sharp teachings; all the lessons learned from pro-democracy movements around the world that have pushed back against authoritarian governments:

- Goal is to shift the obedience pattern –
 - We remove our consent and cooperation with the false government and withhold our obedience to anything/everything to shift the power and destroy their legitimacy
 - The goal is to interrupt business as usual, make it costly to maintain the status quo
- We make cracks in the illegitimate government through:
 - Acts of commission – picket, protest, occupy, etc
 - Acts of omission- boycotts, slow downs, divestment, etc
 - Both
- Locally, consider what is our collective status of ...
 - Unity?
 - Planning?
 - Nonviolent means?
- What if violence is acted against us:
 - Minimize the likelihood of violence – public announcement of our non-violent commitment, etc
 - Meet violence with de-escalation – see resource links
 - If it happens, expose it; contrast it to our behavior.

Count On Us – main principle if “We must be non violent in word and deed - in strategy and speech.”

From their trainings, they are stressing non-violence as a primary principle, below is their rationale:

- Strategize so that people join us in demanding democracy
 - Clear moral mandate for why we demand Trump accept peaceful transition of power
 - We need average American to join us b/c we need max number of people to follow this movement bc that's how oppressive governments are toppled
- Cannot beat opposition with violence, they have more firepower
 - We do NOT want to accelerate Trump's violence against us
 - We must be NV /c opposition will use our violence as reason to squash us with every power they have
 - Media will show us as violent and people will not join in.

Non-violent Direct Action Resources:

- Many resources - <https://www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction/>
- Choose Democracy's resource link - <https://choosedemocracy.us/prepare/#resources>
- SUN Oregon Activist Toolkit - <https://www.sun2020.org/activist-toolkit>
- *Get in Formation: A Community Safety Toolkit*; with addendum for navigating multiple pandemics
<https://www.visionchangewin.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/VCW-Safety-Toolkit-Final.pdf>
- From: <https://www.visionchangewin.com/>
- *198 Methods of Nonviolence* from Gene Sharp
<https://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/198-Methods.pdf>
- *BackFire Manual: Tactics Against Injustice* by Brian Martin
<https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Backfire-Manual-Full-English.pdf>
- *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* by Gene Sharp (multivolume set), 1973

The power of non-violence – from Gene Sharp’s work, one piece summarized here

<https://nonviolence3.com/sharp/struggle/>

Why People Obey

Clearly the question of why people obey is central to understanding the dynamics of political power.

Sharp lists seven reasons:

1. **Habit:** In my opinion habit is the main reason people do not question the actions their “superiors” expect of them. Habitual obedience is embedded in all cultures. After all, isn’t that what culture is—habitual behavior?
2. **Fear of sanctions:** It is the *fear* of sanctions, rather than the sanctions themselves, that is most effective in enforcing obedience.
3. **Moral obligation:** This “inner constraining power” is the product of cultural programming and deliberate indoctrination by the state, church and media.
4. **Self interest:** The potential for financial gain and enhanced prestige can entice people to obey.
5. **Psychological identification with the ruler:** People may feel an emotional tie with the leader or the system, experiencing its victories and defeats as their own. The most common manifestations of this are patriotism and nationalism.
6. **Zones of indifference:** People often obey commands without consciously questioning their legitimacy.
7. **Absence of self-confidence:** Some people prefer to hand control of their lives over to the ruling class. They may feel inadequate to make their own decisions.

When analyzing human obedience, the psychological factor is decisive. Domination and submission are psychological states of mind.

Those who argue against the use of nonviolent tactics like demonstrations or petitions, claiming that they are merely symbolic gestures, forget that power is symbolic as well.

Withdrawing support, even symbolically, calls into question the props and illusions that hold Power up. Yet people are often ignorant of the power they hold, and governments conspire to maintain the illusion of their monolithic power, making their subjects feel helpless.

Messaging about Threats to Our Democracy

Count On Us Coalition – principles:

There are more of us than there are of them.

We are the ones who make this country and economy run

We remain nonviolence in word and deed

We are always aware of how we are perceived

We remain hopeful

From Count On Us Coalition trainings offered great media language:

We must **TELL OUR STORY** – tell the story of who we are

- We are defending democracy (against authoritarian) – count every vote
- To become the nation we could be, we must count every vote and uphold our democracy
- Right now, tyranny of the minority – who are fighting for power by any means they can – lies, cheat, stall+
- We are the majority – we are the nonviolent majority – they are the violent minority
- Our story of Democracy is everyone has a vote, all votes are counted, and there is a peaceful transition in power

**Non violence lets us write our story of what we are fighting for –
not what opposition maps on us!**

Use media

- get really savvy about media
- use all outlets, get connects in mainstream and use all other avenues to tell our story of Democracy is everyone has a vote, all votes are counted, and there is a peaceful transition in power

Welcoming, Growing & Powerful – that is our message

- Future of this country and its ability to live up to its promise – that has not ever been met for all – but the ability to live up to that promise is ZERO under fascism.
- Fascism = not counting votes, suppressing access to polls, claiming victory when not winner - that is not democracy
- So to be able to live up to the promise – we must uphold our democratic values
- Be aware of how perceived all the time

Hopeful – militantly radically hopeful ☺

Remain hopeful that struggle works ... this effort is worth all of us and our planet and people

We gotta act like we believe we can win to create what our country could be

Courage bravery – some fear? Yes, and Hopeful

Resist cynicism

Ridiculously hopeful – we're going to win!

"We cannot ignore the threat that Trump poses to our democracy and a peaceful transition. We will stand together to ensure that if Trump loses the 2020 presidential election he will not throw our country into a constitutional crisis. We will honor the valid results of the 2020 election, ensure that every vote is counted, and show up to demand that the losing candidate put their ego aside and concede for the good of our country." <https://protecttheresults.com/>

"Elections work because the public agrees to honor the results. Similarly, coups work only if the public honors them. When the public refuses to accept the coup as legitimate, coups fall apart. Refusal looks like millions of people using nonviolent tools to delegitimize the coup by demonstrating, resisting orders, and shutting down the country until democracy prevails. That's why we are committing now to choose democracy: by voting, making sure all the votes are counted, and preparing to take the streets in the case of a coup. Together, we choose democracy." <https://choosedemocracy.us/>

Bernie Sanders: "Lastly, and most importantly, the American people, no matter what their political persuasion, must make it clear that **American democracy will not be destroyed.**"

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/09/24/warning-us-democracy-under-threat-never-sanders-outlines-plan-stop-trumps>

Could this actually happen?

Atlantic journalist Barton Gellman re details of Trump's plan to usurp the election

<https://www.npr.org/2020/10/01/919023364/trump-will-not-accept-any-result-that-is-not-a-victory-atlantic-writer-says>

The Election That Could Break America

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/11/what-if-trump-refuses-concede/616424/?>

Especially for youth: Count On Us: video from *Xiuhtezcatl* Martinez

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEorX5YWm_jAKnP7TY5l6Q

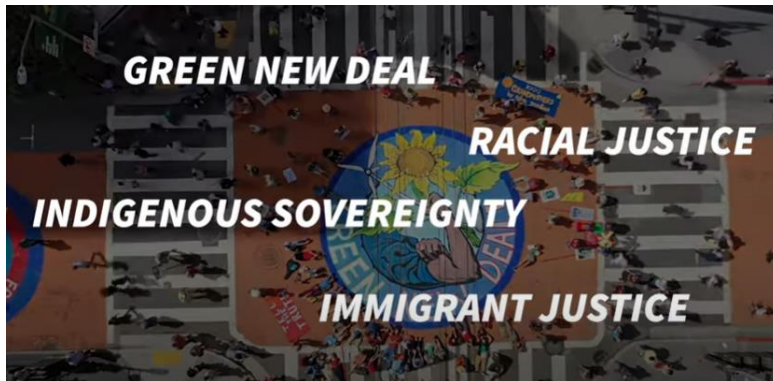
Young people have the power to crush Trump, and he knows it. That's why he's trying to steal the election, but we're going to be there to stop him. Sunrise Victory Squad - <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/campaign/victory-squad/>

Bernie's speech & 6 points: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/09/24/warning-us-democracy-under-threat-never-sanders-outlines-plan-stop-trumps>

Sanders outlined a number of steps that he said will be necessary in "the struggle to preserve American democracy":

1. First, it is absolutely imperative that we have, by far, the largest voter turnout in American history and that people vote as early as possible. As someone who is strongly supporting Joe Biden, let's be clear: A landslide victory for Biden will make it virtually impossible for Trump to deny the results and is our best means for defending democracy.
2. Second, with the pandemic and a massive increase in mail-in voting, state legislatures must take immediate action now to allow mail-in votes to be counted before Election Day—as they come in. In fact, 32 states allow for the counting or processing of absentee ballots—verifying signatures for example—before Election Day. All states should do the same. The faster all ballots are counted, the less window there is for chaos and conspiracy theories.
3. Third, the news media needs to prepare the American people to understand there is no longer a single election day and that it is very possible that we may not know the results on November 3rd.
4. Fourth, social media companies must finally get their act together and stop people from using their tools to spread disinformation and to threaten and harass election officials.
5. Fifth, in the Congress and in state legislatures, hearings must be held as soon as possible to explain to the public how the Election Day process and the days that follow will be handled. As we count every vote, and prevent voter intimidation, everything possible must be done to prevent chaos, disinformation, and even violence.
6. Lastly, and most importantly, the American people, no matter what their political persuasion, must make it clear that American democracy will not be destroyed.

Image bank



**HOLD
THE
LINE** / a guide to
defending democracy

Each Of Us Can Play a Role



**ORGANIZE. VOTE.
STRIKE.**

Two Models of Political Power

Monolithic Power



Only the person at the top of an institution has real power. The only way to make change is to change the people at the top of society.

Social Power



"Power in society ultimately comes from the people. Rulers only have that power which people provide to them." - CANVAS

-end-