

Help Stop Political Violence

A guide for community safety

In this challenging time, Americans from all political backgrounds must urgently work to cool the heated political discourse and reinvest in civic life to build bridges.

Most Americans agree that political violence has no place in our system, so

you're not alone in rejecting it; in fact,

you'll find that most people around you

share this belief.

Use this pocket guide to help transform the political climate of the United States, not just during election season but for the future of our nation.



Why we need your help

The rising tide of heated, harmful, and aggressive rhetoric, particularly from political leaders, along with the rampant spread of disinformation and false narratives, has severely polarized political discourse. This, coupled with escalating challenges to the legitimacy of election outcomes, has led to threats and harassment against public officials, including the very individuals who come from and serve our communities by managing our elections. Their safety and integrity are now at unprecedented risk.

You can help!

1 Create Space for Dialogue

Especially in times of uncertainty, it is important to find solace in our communities. **Create space to discuss politics and the political climate within your circles.** If there is an official leader of your group, such as a pastor or administrator, ask them to help facilitate a discussion. By talking out anxieties and emotions amongst trusted peers, communities can ease their shared worries and find solutions.

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2 Call people in

If someone in your community or social circle is using violent or threatening rhetoric when discussing politics or the election, **talk with them about why they felt compelled to use such language.** This is best done away from the larger group, so that the individual does not feel attacked and can be honest about their feelings. If you feel uncomfortable approaching the situation alone, have another trusted individual with you to help manage the conversation.

3 Get involved

There are many opportunities for Americans to get involved in the election process beyond casting a ballot. Sign up to register voters, become a poll worker, or act as an observer on Election Day. This is an opportunity to **meet people from across the political spectrum with a shared desire to carry out a peaceful and successful election.** Bring in other members of your community and make it a group activity!

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How to Help While Voting

Americans can help local election officials conduct safe and secure elections by equipping themselves with the tools to contribute to a positive environment at voting locations. Many election officials are prepared with de-escalation training, and coordinate among local government agencies, potentially with support from local law enforcement. Voters, too, can learn to maintain calm. Here's how:

- Be aware of body language and personal space. Voters should maintain and respect the personal space of all voters and workers.
- Be attentive to the environment around you. Remain aware of the flow of human traffic in and around the polling place so that everyone can vote in a timely and orderly manner.
- If you find yourself getting frustrated with the lines or flow of operations, take a moment to yourself before asking for assistance. When seeking the help of a poll worker, remember that they, too, might be tired or overwhelmed.
- Approach the conversation with the intention of learning how to resolve your frustration by carefully listening to the poll worker or election administrator offering assistance.
- If you witness a dispute between voters or involving a poll worker, give those involved physical space to resolve the issue. It is most helpful not to add to the tense situation by getting directly involved.
- If you are concerned about safety, inform another poll worker, election administrator or a member of law enforcement (if present).

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As citizens, we have a voice that many people around the world do not. Democracy is an awesome responsibility to uphold. It is important to remember that we have persevered through difficult times before, and we will again. By being engaged citizens and thoughtful community members, we can all help create a better political environment that allows all Americans to practice their civic duty safely and securely.

This fall, let's reject division and fear and choose people over politics.