

DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF WILLOW VALLEY

NEWSLETTER

May 2025

Paid for by Democratic Club of Willow Valley

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Addressing the Issues

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Democracy Docket

April 16, 2025

<https://member.democracymarket.com/10-things-you-can-do-right-now-to-protect-free-and-fair-elections>

Donald Trump is an autocrat. But that doesn't mean he is all-powerful. He wants you to believe that opposing him is futile. It's not. He wants you to accept that there's nothing you can do to limit his ability to harm our country and our democracy. But that simply isn't true.

Trump knows his greatest weakness is elections. He lies about them because he fears the outcome. We saw how hard he and Elon Musk fought to win a Wisconsin judicial election — and they lost by 10 points. We know he's already fretting about the midterms. That's why he issued an illegal and unconstitutional executive order to try to seize control of them.

There are things every one of us can do in our daily lives to help ensure free and fair elections — and, in doing so, limit the harm he can cause. Some actions are small — so small that you might dismiss them as unimportant. Don't. Every important journey begins with a single step, and the first is no less important than the last.

It's also true that some actions are much bigger — so big you might doubt your ability to achieve them. Don't give up before you start. Have faith that you can accomplish great things if you set your mind to it.

I don't pretend to have all the answers or a comprehensive list of every way we can defend our elections or our democracy. Like you, I'm just one person doing my best to navigate a dangerous time in our country's history. Yes, I'm a lawyer, but right now, my most important role is that of an active citizen.

So, here is my list of what each of us can do to stand up for democracy and defend our elections:

1. Educate Yourself

Elections can be complicated. The rules vary from state to state — and sometimes even from county to county. These rules also change frequently due to new laws, policies or court rulings. My first recommendation: spend time each month learning what's happening with voting laws in your state and nationally.

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Democracy Docket (cont'd)

2. Share What You Learn

Once you've figured out what's going on, share that information with your networks and community. It might feel awkward to bring up voter suppression or changes in election laws when we're not in the middle of a major election — but local elections happen in off years, and special elections are more common than you think. Now is the perfect time to start conversations about voting.

3. Run for Something

I told you some of these would be big steps — and this is one of them. But that doesn't mean it's too big to take. Look around your community, and you'll see many local elected positions that need good, qualified people. These could be town or county roles — some of them even directly related to elections, like election judges or county clerks. A great place to start is the organization [Run for Something](#), which offers invaluable resources.

4. Volunteer for a Campaign

Not ready to be a candidate? Volunteer for a campaign or your local party committee. Every campaign needs volunteers, and there's no better way to support free and fair elections than by working for a pro-democracy candidate.

5. Join or Support Pro-Democracy Organizations

Is partisan politics not for you? There are numerous nonprofits and grassroots organizations working every day to protect voting rights and ensure free and fair elections. Supporting these groups with your time or resources helps these groups do their work.

6. Become a Trained Poll Worker

Many counties face a shortage of poll workers, especially during election season. Being a poll worker requires dedication, attention to detail and a willingness to be trained. It's a meaningful way to serve your community and help protect the integrity of the voting process.

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Democracy Docket (cont'd)

7. Engage Your Elected Officials

Call and write your elected officials at the federal, state and local levels. Tell them that protecting voting rights and ensuring free and fair elections are your top priorities. Even better, show up at public meetings. Ask them directly what they're doing to combat voter suppression. Be informed about pending legislation and urge them to support pro-democracy initiatives. This applies no matter where you live or who represents you — Democrat or Republican. Constituent pressure always matters. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

8. Vote in Every Election

Yes — every election. That means local elections, primary elections and special elections. Become a super-voter. The more you vote, the more informed and engaged you become. You'll also be better positioned to notice and report problems — like changes to polling locations or voting equipment — that could impact turnout or accessibility.

9. Stay Engaged

Trump is counting on you to give up. He assumes you'll take action for a few months, or maybe even a year, and then move on. Don't let that happen. To protect democracy, we all must stay engaged day in and day out. We can't just show up right before an election and tune out afterward. If we remain committed, democracy will win.

10. Support Independent, Pro-Democracy Media

I couldn't end without mentioning this. A healthy democracy depends on a well-informed public. Support independent, pro-democracy media by subscribing to and [supporting](#) outlets like Democracy Docket and sharing its content online and in real life.

How do you measure up? Are you ten for ten for ten?

Sunday Thoughts

Cry, The Beloved Country

Robert Reich

April 27, 2025

[Sunday Thought](#)

Friends,

I know how upset you are about what Trump is doing to our nation and the hardship he's bringing to millions of innocent people, every day.

As outrage mixes with sadness, we feel the magnitude of our loss. Several of you weep at what's happening. I have wept too.

But I urge you not to dwell solely on the loss. We have much to do.

Our first responsibility is to help protect the people in our communities who are most vulnerable to this regime. ICE is now arresting, abducting, and deporting some of our neighbors and friends. It is ignoring their rights to due process. It is spreading fear among international students. (The FBI even arrested a Milwaukee Circuit Court judge who tried to protect an undocumented immigrant in her courtroom.)

We can help ensure they know their rights by getting them [red cards](#) in their own languages. We can help prevent local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE (especially in access to schools, hospitals, courts, and other necessary facilities) by getting our mayors and city councilors to join us. We can give vulnerable people in our communities our moral — and, if possible, financial — support.

A second responsibility is to give courage to the leaders of our communities, universities, libraries, law firms, local media, museums, and other civic institutions. They need to be fortified to stand up to the Trump regime. Organize and mobilize your colleagues and community members to support courageous leadership.

Third, if and when we hear anyone repeat Trump's lies — especially his hateful lies about immigrants, transgender people, LGBTQ+ people, women, Black people, or Latinos — correct them with the truth, and explain to them how dangerous, hurtful, and divisive such lies can be.

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Sunday Thoughts (cont'd)

Fourth, we can help public servants who have lost their jobs find new ones. Many need access to job training, assistance with job searches, and jobs in local or state government that draw on their experience.

Fifth, help lay the groundwork for the midterm elections on November 3, 2026 (and any other elections between now and then) by making sure good people run for office, and you and your compatriots are organized to get out the vote.

Finally, continue to demonstrate loudly and boldly against the regime, so others gain the courage to join us and speak up for decency and democracy.

To paraphrase Thomas Paine in 1776, these are the times that try people's souls. As Paine also wrote:

When a people agree to form themselves into a republic ... it is understood that they mutually resolve and pledge themselves to each other, rich and poor alike, to support this rule of equal justice among them ... (and) they renounce as detestable, the power of exercising, at any future time any species of despotism over each other, or of doing a thing not right in itself, because a majority of them may have the strength of numbers sufficient to accomplish it.

Keep the faith, my friends.

We will get through this.



Trump 2028

Trump 2028: The Joke That's About to Kill American Democracy

He told us exactly what he planned to do — dismantle democracy, destroy the Constitution, and rule unchecked. The real tragedy? We still aren't listening.

Michael Cohen April 27

<https://therealmichaelcohen.substack.com/p/trump-2028-the-joke-thats-about-to>

Donald Trump didn't lie about who he was. He didn't hide it. He didn't sugarcoat it. Hell, he wasn't even clever about it. He telegraphed it; screamed it, shoved it in our faces like a pie made of hate, greed, and authoritarian wet dreams. And still, America is surprised.

Now, like the sucker who keeps going back to the three-card monte dealer on the corner, you're about to get conned again; and this time, it might just be the death blow to our democracy.

Let me be perfectly clear: Trump is building an unconstitutional presidency right before our very eyes. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Now. You think you still have time? You don't. He's coming for the First Amendment. He's coming for dissent. He's coming for anyone who won't bend the knee and kiss his oversized ring.

Deportations? Mass roundups? Raids on universities? Politicizing the military? Stripping away free speech? Yeah, that's not campaign rhetoric. That's the Trump 2.0 action plan. He warned you during his first term. He's warning you again now. And if you think Congress or the courts are going to swoop in and save you, wake the hell up. He doesn't respect the Constitution; he barely knows what's in it. To Trump, the law is just another contract he can break, another rule he can smash and walk away from without consequence.

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Trump 2028 (cont'd)

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And about that third term? You laughed. You dismissed it. "Congress would never allow it!" you said, smug in your ignorance. Well, guess what? It's already in the bloodstream. His campaign dropped that psychotic "Trump 2028" photo, like it was just another MAGA meme. They're selling T-shirts and hats with "Trump 2028" on them. He's testing the waters. And America; brilliant, naïve America, just chuckles along like it's a comedy skit instead of a five-alarm fire.

This isn't comedy. It's confession. It's a battle plan.

And let me remind you: every time Trump has floated one of these so-called "jokes," it wasn't a joke. "Maybe I'll stay in office forever." "Maybe we should terminate parts of the Constitution." "Maybe we should have military tribunals for journalists." Maybe, maybe, maybe, until the maybe becomes reality.

He doesn't play 4-D chess. He plays the same broken record on loop. He tells you exactly what he's going to do; and then does it, counting on your cynicism, your laziness, and your belief that "someone else" will stop him.

There is no "someone else. It's you. It's me." It's everyone who still believes in the insane ideas that America should be a democracy, not a banana republic run by a spray-tanned con an and his band of sycophantic grifters.

Here is what to expect. Expect institutional collapse. Expect loyalty tests at every level of government. Expect federal agents knocking on doors. Expect blacklists. Expect Trump Jr. in a cabinet position and sycophants like Stephen Miller writing executive orders that read like the fever dreams of every dictator who ever lived.

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Trump 2028 (cont'd)

This isn't hyperbole. It's math.

Trump is out there right now threatening prosecutors, judges, journalists, universities, immigrants, anyone who doesn't bow before him. And he's doing it...one executive order at a time. One unthinkable act by a loyalist at a time.

Still think it's just words? Still think the Constitution is some magical barrier against authoritarianism? Ask yourself: What good is a Constitution when the guy in charge wipes his ass with it and the institutions meant to stop him fold like a cheap suit?

Trump isn't hiding his playbook. He's reading it aloud, night after night, executive order after executive order, while the media normalizes it, while the public shrugs, while Congress naps.

He's telling you; again, exactly what he's going to do.

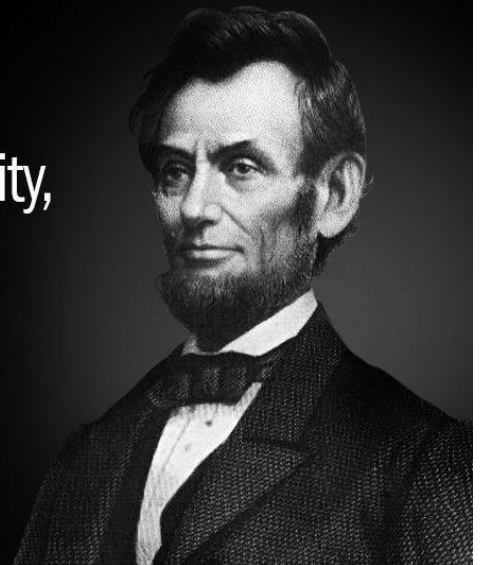
Ignore it at your peril. Because the next time, when he puts "Trump 2028" on a ballot or declares an "emergency" to cancel elections altogether, it won't be a joke. It'll be the end. And America; once the land of the free, the home of the brave, will have become the punchline to its own tragic, stupid joke.

You were warned by me before.

You are being warned by me; again.

Nearly all men can stand adversity,
but if you want
to test a **man's character**,
give him **power**.

– *Abraham Lincoln*



Project 2025 Boiling Point

Rubber meets the road': Project 2025 architect warns 'boiling point' coming in Trump 2.0

Raw Story

Sarah K.Burris

April 29, 2025

<https://www.rawstory.com/project-2025-2671865306/>

Tuesday marks President Donald Trump's first 100 days in office, and one organizer for "[Project 2025](#)" knows what he needs going forward.

NBC News described it as "undoing liberal gains dating back to Franklin D. Roosevelt." But the man who led the effort to produce "Project 2025," Paul Dans, lamented that [Trump](#) "needs an influx of new attorneys to fight for his policies in court." He told NBC News that getting those lawyers would shape the next 100 days.

The Justice Department has suffered an exodus of staff, either as part of its purge of the "deep state" or staff who abandoned the administration after being asked to compromise their ethics.

Some of the internal legal battles arose after the public resignation of Justice Department lawyers. One of those [included an acting U.S. attorney](#) brought in by the Trump administration. Danielle Sassoon quit in an angry letter that accused the DOJ of a quid pro quo with New York City Mayor Eric Adams. She said in the letter that she refused to compromise her principles. Others in her office followed, as did some in the main DOJ office over the matter.

ALSO READ: [What Trump's unconstitutional executive orders are really meant to do](#)

The reduction in lawyers is a top concern for Dans, he said.

Trump "needs additional reinforcements on his team," Dans said, "as this kind of slows down into a war of attrition with the deep state, particularly on the legal front."

Dans added: "As much as he can continue to get his team on the field, that's imperative."

"If Roosevelt had the New Deal, this is what I would think of as Trump's real deal," Dans told NBC News. "This is deconstructing the administrative state and walking back a lot of this progressive architecture that had been built up by FDR."

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Project 2025 Boiling Point (cont'd)

"What's coming next is really a squaring off with the courts," Dans continued. "This is going to reach, certainly, a boiling point, and so look to that getting resolved."

"It's with great excitement that I read what's going on every day and see a new step that they're taking," Dans said. "But to be sure, this has to get implemented. At this point, a lot of the executive orders and the like are policy pronouncements, and the real rubber is going to meet the road when it comes to implementing all these directives."

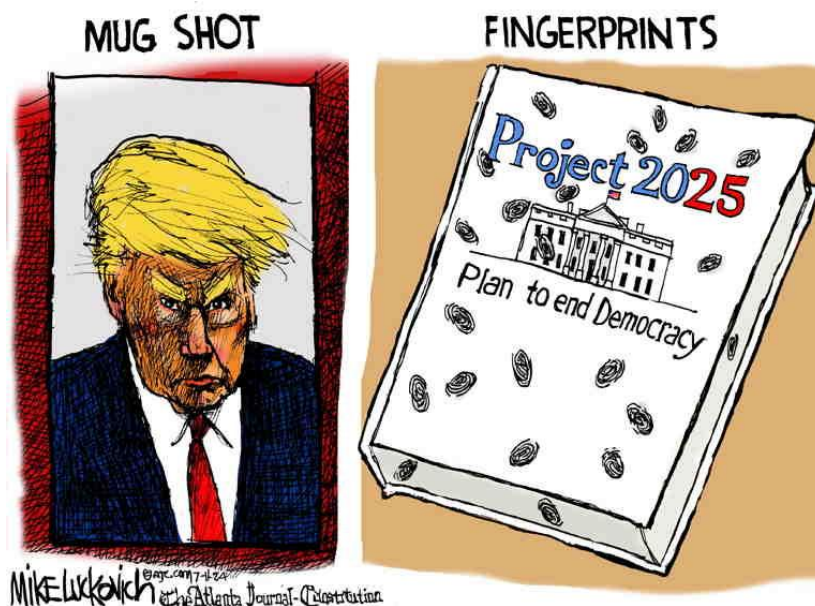
"Project 2025" was part of an effort by the [Heritage Foundation](#) before the [2024 election](#), [showcasing what the plan would be](#) if Trump won in November. Once it became clear that the document was unpopular, Trump distanced himself from the guide. Still, "Project 2025" became the blueprint for the new administration, the report characterized.

"After Trump won, however, he [hired multiple authors of the report to key positions](#), including Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought, immigration czar Tom Homan, top trade adviser Peter Navarro, and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr, among others," the report said.

[NBC News reported](#) during the Trump transition that "the transition team was utilizing the Project 2025 database of potential hires, too."

It "ultimately foreshadowed plenty of what Trump has enacted or attempted once in power. An [independent tracker](#) found that the administration has completed or taken action on roughly 40% of the material in 'Project 2025.'"

[Read the full report here.](#)



Coming Dems WVC Events

Save this date: Tuesday, May 20th is PRIMARY DAY

Understanding Our Democracy

Thursday, May 22nd at 10 AM

Cultural Center Education Room

Susan Spica (Education Voters PA)

and

Erin Small (Hempfield School Board candidate)

will discuss

federal and state education funding.

General Meeting

Tuesday, May 27th 1:00 PM

Cultural Center Education Room

Susan Spicka

Executive Director, Education Voters of PA

Understanding Our Democracy

Thursday, June 12th at 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Cultural Center Education Room

Members of the Lancaster Quaker Meeting will share with us their advocacy efforts with our elected officials.

Upcoming Regional Events

May 1st May Day Nationwide Protests; 6pm @ Penn Square

May 13th Public Education Advocacy Day; Noon PA Capital Building

May 17th L-S Dems Spring Social; 4-7pm, The second annual spring social will be bigger than last year's. Join in this family-friendly outdoor event with food, drinks, and live music. Info and tickets:

https://secure.actblue.com/donate/l-sdems_springsocial2025

May 20th Primary Election; 7am-8pm; greeters needed for various L-S polling locations. The Locust precinct (Willow Valley Club at Manor) is now full - Thank you! However, the Lyndon Precinct, which is listed right below the Locust Precinct, is located at the new Snyder Funeral home by the Willow Valley Shopping Center and has several open times and would appreciate your help! Contact Jerry Henige (jhenige@verizon.net) for Lakes precinct; for other precincts sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0E4CA9AC2AA1F94-51523099-greeter#/>

June 7th Lititz Pride Festival 2025; 11am-6pm Lititz Springs Park

Meeting Minutes

Democratic Club of Willow Valley General Meeting April 29, 2025

Attendance: 53

Education Chair Jerry Henige opened the meeting at 1p.m. and introduced members Ted Borek and Terry Webb to speak of their experiences in working with the Braver Angels organization.

Ted Borek and Terry Webb:

Mr. Borek, an ambassador for Braver Angels for five years, began with information about its origin in December 2016 following the November election of Donald Trump. Ten Democrats and ten Republicans gathered in Lebanon, Ohio, for discussion about the growing polarization in the U.S. Since that date, Braver Angels has spread to other states and now has 116 alliances. Lancaster County belongs to the Braver Angels Lower Susquehanna Alliance (BALSA) along with the counties of Cumberland, Dauphin, York, and Lebanon.

Ms. Webb spoke of her work in establishing a Braver Angels presence in Lancaster in 2020, concerned particularly with the growing polarization in society. A major goal of Braver Angels is to confront the challenges found in families, at work, and in schools by bringing members of opposing views into respectful and engaging discussion. Membership continues to grow, especially among younger citizens.

Some points highlighted:

- Key words in discussions with those of opposing views are *honesty, dignity, respect*.
- Core values are respect, humility, honesty. responsible citizenship.
- Programs include debates, podcasts, and workshops among others, online or in person.
- Debates are always comprised of equal distribution between opposing sides, the same number of Republican and Democratic members.
- Topics cover issues such as gun laws, immigration laws, book bans, and fair elections, among many others.
- To learn more about Braver Angels and its upcoming events, check their website <https://braverangels.org>.

Following a Q&A session with the speakers, President Porter thanked them both for their informative talk and reminded attendees that handouts with more information were available.

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Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

Business Meeting

President Porter opened the business meeting with a sample of possible thank you notes to be written for donors and new members by volunteers who will be recruited. She also reminded attendees to turn in their legislator contacts. Those contacts for April totaled 252.

Treasury/Membership: The balance stands at \$2,522.22 with \$3,432.00 to be set aside for scholarships. The deficit will be covered once 2025 membership enrollment begins. Membership stands at 284.

Scholarship: Two scholarships of \$1,000 will be awarded in May with the announcement made in June. For the first time, a scholarship will be awarded to a student attending a technical school.

Website: Vice President Ross Fairweather met with the provider on April 25 and will make changes as needed. A demo to members is planned for mid or late May at a General Meeting.

Advocacy: Barbara Bonanno and Jen Porter

- President Porter highlighted the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to former President Jimmy Carter for his work in spreading peace throughout the world. At this time there are over 100 armed conflicts around the world, and men and women are needed more than ever for peace efforts.
- She also described the work of VoteRiders, an organization that provides voter ID information to assist voters who do not have access to proof of citizenship documents. Members may volunteer to assist as well as to financially support by contacting www.VoteRiders.org.
- Advocacy chair Barbara Bonanno made several reports
- Volunteers are needed for the Letters to the Editor campaign. Signup sheets are in the back.
- Signup sheets are available for those interested in visitations to U.S. Congressman Lloyd Smucker's office.
- A list of eleven recent local events was presented, including rallies and town halls.

May 20 Primary Elections: Jerry Henige.

Greeters are needed at both Willow Valley campuses as well as at eight other precincts in the district. Volunteers may contact Jerry to sign up. Sample ballots are available for both Lakes and Locust. Jerry stressed the importance of voter turnout in this primary.

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Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

Upcoming *Understanding Our Democracy* forums Cultural Center Education Room

Thursday, May 22, 10 a.m. Susan Spica (Education Voters PA) and Erin Small (Hempfield School Board candidate) will speak on federal and state education funding.

Thursday, June 12, 1:30 p.m. Members of the Lancaster Quaker Meeting will share their advocacy efforts with elected officials. **Note the change of day and time.**

Upcoming General Meeting Speakers:

May 27	Chris Baxter. CEO and President of SpotlightPA
June 24	Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade-El
July 16&22	Milagro House Tour
August 26	School Board candidates Sarah Cook and Kirk Willard, West Lampeter Supervisor Board candidate Tracy Arnold (not confirmed)
September 30	Jerry Henige, the importance of Judiciary elections
October 28	open

Next General Meeting: Tuesday May 27, 1p.m. Cultural Center Education Room

Lucy Painter, Secretary



THE FIRST 100 DAYS