



## **Report of the 2019 Convention**

*June 20-23, 2019*

*St. Louis, Missouri*

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## 1. Introduction

At our 2019 National Convention, 254 Better Angels came together to meet in person and ultimately to help ratify a formal public document known as ‘2019 Strategy Platform.’ The Convention was held June 20-23, 2019 at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. There were 241 voting delegates in attendance, split between liberals and conservatives - 115 red delegates and 126 blue delegates. Thirteen others attended as staff persons, volunteers, and representing partners. Delegates were admitted by application only from a pool of 346 applicants.

The program included discussions on the current state of our citizen-led movement to depolarize America, where we’re headed as described by Better Angels Theory of Change, and revisions and editing of the 2019 Strategy Platform document before voting. Breakout sessions allowed participants to experience new Better Angels programs: debates on topics like Healthcare as Human Right / Gender Identity / Military and American Foreign Policy / Immigration and Social Cohesion / Balancing Business, Consumption, and Environment / Social and Economic Inequality in America / American Identity / Gun Rights and Gun Control / Political Correctness / Confederate Statues in Public Square; Issues Workshops on Taxes, Welfare, and Role of Government / Reproductive Rights / Education, School Choice, and Free Speech on Campus / Future of Healthcare in America; Skill Workshops on Respectful Dialogue with Other Side / Depolarization Within; SiX Workshop on Immigration; lessons for Better Angels from the Tea Party and Black Lives Matter; and sessions on Better Angels Media. The evenings included optional sing-alongs, Q&A sessions with our leadership, and national organizing meetings. The Convention closed with the signing of the newly ratified 2019 Strategy Platform. Over 100 delegates signed the Strategy Platform document. A celebratory concert followed that evening featuring performers such as Steve Seskin, Ronni Lynn Smith, Sage Snider, David Thain and Better Angels very own Don Byrd, Cynthia O’Brien, Ciaran O’Connor, Andy Roth and John Wood.

Better Angels received national media attention featuring our 2019 National Convention, appearing on The Federalist, USA Today, and other digital and print media nationwide. Refer to section 9 and Appendix C for the press coverage leading up to and after the convention.

In 2017 about thirty key early members of Better Angels had gathered in Harrisonburg, Virginia for brainstorming and a leadership retreat. Never could they have imagined that just one year later, the size of their gathering would have multiplied eight-fold.

Data from our Convention evaluations suggests that ninety-three percent of the delegates acquired skills and opportunities to talk politics in a deeper way with their fellow citizens who think differently from themselves, while eighty-nine percent indicated the Convention increased their level of respect for fellow citizens who hold different political views than their own. Moreover, eighty-eight percent of the delegates believed the Convention left them energized to go deeper in our work and

to bring what they learned back to their community, while eighty percent agreed that they left the Convention less polarized than before.

## **2. Rules and Procedures**

1. Delegate applications were reviewed, and delegates selected, by appointees of the Better Angels board of directors.
2. Delegates represent the members of Better Angels and accordingly are expected to conduct themselves guided by their view of the best interests of Better Angels.
3. Convention decisions are not binding on the board of directors, but are intended to guide the organization going forward.
4. The convention will operate on a modified parliamentary procedure model.
5. Four Convention Officers - two Presiding Officers (Co-Chairs), a Parliamentarian, and a Secretary - will serve the delegates.
6. Delegates will select two members to serve as Presiding Officers (Co-Chairs) of the convention, whose duties include guiding the Convention, enforcing good decorum, deciding points of order, voting in cases in which their votes would make or break a tie, and deciding in plenary sessions in what order speakers shall be recognized.
7. A Convention Parliamentarian will advise the Co-Chairs as requested on matters of procedure.
8. A Convention Secretary will serve as the convention's recording officer and will keep a roll of convention delegates.
9. In plenary sessions delegates are asked to rise from their seat when they are called upon to speak, to address all statements to the Chair or Chairs, and to refer to the Chair being addressed as "Mister Chairman" or "Madam Chairwoman."
10. Delegates seeking clarification as to procedure should address the Chair saying "point of order" or "question of clarification."
11. The convention's agenda as approved by the rules committee is designed to insure fairness and to foster participation, collaboration, civil discussion, and orderly decision-making.
12. For the 2020 Better Angels convention, a rules committee selected by the board of directors will report the rules of the convention and recommend individuals to serve as convention officers; and a platform committee selected by the board will develop and report platform items for consideration by delegates. Members may apply to Board Chairman Tom Sylvester or President David Blankenhorn to join either or both of these committees.

### 3. Convention Officers

Co-Chairs:

Marisa Bogdanoff  
Steve Sphar

Parliamentarian:

April Lawson

Secretary:

Kouhyar Mostashfi



Marisa Bogdanoff and Steve Sphar

## 4. Agenda

Thursday, June 20, 2019

### Pre-Convention Information & Meetings

- 10:30am Washington University campus tour, meet at the South 40 clocktower plaza
- 12-6pm Registration Open: *Pick up your keys, parking permits, and other materials in Lien Hall.*
- 1-3:45pm Board of Directors Meeting, South 40 Meeting Room 1

### Optional Afternoon Programming

- 1-4pm **Red-Blue Workshop #1: Meet in the lobby of Liggett-Koenig House**  
Workshop in seminar room on lower level (Moderators: Paul Norris & Steve Warshaw)
- Red-Blue Workshop #2: Meet in the lobby of Thomas Eliot A House**  
Workshop in seminar room on lower level (Moderators: Paul Witte & Rachel Bailey)
- Red-Blue Workshop #3: Meet at South 40 clocktower plaza**  
Walk over together to Seigle Hall Rm 210 (Moderators: Reena Bernards & Mel Pine)
- 1-4pm **Skills Workshop: Meet in the Bear's Den Dining Area**  
Bear's Den is located inside the South 40 building (Moderator: Kerr Thompson)
- 1-4pm **Advanced Moderator Skills Training: Meet in College Hall**  
College Hall is located in the South 40 Building (Led by Bill Doherty)
- 1-2:15pm **Organizing Better Angels Workshops and Debates in Your Community**  
Meet in Thomas Eliot B House first floor lounge (Led by Donna Murphy & Lynn Heady)
- 2:30-4pm **Better Angels Debate #1: Meet in Ursa's Fireside, next to South 40 clocktower plaza**  
*Resolved: "Health care is a human right"* (Chair: Dan Kornfield)
- Better Angels Debate #2: Meet in first floor lounge of Thomas Eliot A House**  
*Resolved: "We should treat gender as binary, not a spectrum"* (Chair: Rob Robertson)
- 2:30-4pm **How to start a BA Alliance: Meet at South 40 clocktower plaza**  
Walk over together to Seigle Hall Rm L003 (Led by Steve Saltwick & Riley Hart)
- 2:30-4pm **Spreading BA message on college campuses: Meet at the South 40 clocktower plaza**  
Walk over together to Seigle Hall Room 305 (Led by our student leaders)

## Official Convention Begins

4-5:30pm **Welcome gatherings led by Better Angels Ambassadors**  
Meet in first floor lounges of Thomas Eliot B House and Liggett-Koenig House

5:45-6:45pm **Dinner at Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**  
Meet at South 40 clocktower plaza at 5:45pm if you need help finding your way

## Opening Session: Gathering Together

7:00pm **Be seated for opening ceremonies in College Hall**

- Call to order by the 2018 Founding Convention Officers
- Singing of the United States National Anthem  
Ronni Lynn Smith
  
- Nomination and selection of 2019 Convention Officers
- Review of Convention rules, agenda, & goals
  
- Delegate introductions led by Bill Doherty
- A red-blue pair tells their story: Robert & Tom Sylvester
  
- Comments by David Blankenhorn
- Singing of “America the Beautiful”  
Ronni Lynn Smith, John Wood, and Peter Yarrow
  
- Final announcements

9:00pm **Adjourn**

## Optional Evening Activity

9:15pm **Screening of Better Angels Documentary: Meet in College Hall**  
Introduction by film producer Peter Yarrow, with Greg Smith & Kouhyar Mostashfi

**Friday, June 21 2019**

**Session 2: Where We Stand Today**

7:30-8:20am **Breakfast in Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**

- 8:30am **Be seated for opening remarks in College Hall**
- Call to order by presiding officers, & announcements
  - A red-blue pair remotely deliver their message to Better Angels delegates: Senator Ben Sasse & Former US Representative Dick Gephardt
  - Discussion of Better Angels growth & progress since June 2018, with Q&A

9:30am **Break, refreshments available outside College Hall**

10:00am **Be seated in College Hall for directions to breakout sessions**

10:15am **BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Please see registration folders for your session assignments**

Option 1: Experiential Opportunities, 120 minutes, from 10:15am-12:15pm

- **Debate 1: Military, Defense, & American Foreign Policy**  
Thomas Eliot A House First Floor Lounge (Chair: Dan Kornfield)
- **Debate 2: Immigration & Social Cohesion**  
Ursa's Fireside, off South 40 clocktower plaza (Chair: Mel Pine)
- **Issues Workshop 1: Taxes, Welfare, & Role of Government**  
Session A: Thomas Eliot A House Lower Level Seminar Room (Mod: Paul Norris) Session B: Liggett-Koenig Lower Level Seminar Room (Mod: Tiffany Fite)
- **Issues Workshop 2: Abortion Kills / Reproductive Rights**  
Session A: College Hall (Mod: Karen Reiner)  
Session B: South 40 Private Dining Room (Mod: Cynthia Berkshire)
- **How can religious communities help heal America?**  
Held in McMillan Hall Café (Speakers: Daniel Darling, Glenn Stanton, Mark Beckwith, Pamela Wat; Mod: Leah Libresco Sargeant)

OR

minutes: Option 2: "Briefings," Informational & Discussion Opportunities, each 50  
Session A from 10:15-11:10am; Session B from 11:20am-12:15pm

- 10:15-11:10am **Bringing BA Message to our Political Leaders**  
Seigle Hall Room L003 (led by Bill Doherty)
- 10:15-11:10am **Better Angels Media: Our Approach & How to Get Involved**  
Seigle Hall Room 204 (led by Ciaran O'Connor)
- 10:15-11:10am **BA Messaging during the 2020 election cycle**  
Seigle Hall Room 205 (led by John Wood)



- 11:20-12:15pm **Bringing BA to Special Community Challenges**  
Seigle Hall Room L003 (led by Bill Doherty)
- 11:20-12:15pm **Take your Alliance to the Next Level**  
Seigle Hall Room 305 (led by Steve Saltwick & Riley Hart)
- 11:20-12:15pm **Better Angels Media: Our Approach & How to Get Involved**  
Seigle Hall Room 204 (led by Ciaran O'Connor)
- 11:20-12:15pm **BA Messaging during the 2020 election cycle**  
Seigle Hall Room 205 (led by John Wood)

12:15-1:30pm Lunch in Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall

### Session 3: Where We're Headed

1:45pm **Be seated in College Hall**  
Call to order by presiding officers

A red-blue pair tells their story: Randy Lioz & Cynthia Berkshire

Presentation & discussion on the BA Theory of Change, Q&A

Directions to breakout sessions

2:30pm **BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Please see registration folders for your session**  
assignments

Option 1: Experiential Opportunities, 120 mins in length, 2:30-4:30pm

- **Debate Chair Training: Learning to Lead Campus & Community Debates**  
Ursa's Fireside, South 40 clocktower plaza (led by April Lawson)
- **Debate 1: Balancing Business, Consumption & Environment**  
South 40 Private Dining Room (Chair: Rob Robertson)
- **Debate 2: Social/Economic Inequality in America**  
Bear's Den Dining Area, South 40 Building (Chair: Leah Libresco)
- **Depolarizing Within Workshop**  
College Hall (Mod: Bruce McKenzie)
- **Issues Workshop 1: Education, School Choice, and Free Speech on Campus**  
Ursa's Stageside, South 40 clocktower plaza  
(Cynthia O'Brien & Randy Lioz)
- **Issues Workshop 2: Future of healthcare in America**  
Liggett-Koenig Lower Level Seminar Room (Mod: Bruce MacKenzie)
- **SiX Workshop: Immigration**  
South 40 Meeting Room 1 (Mod: George Bouhasin)

OR

2:30-4:30pm Option 2: Exploratory Sessions -- Areas of BA Strategic Interest, 120 mins,

- **Public Policy: How BA Alliances can get things done at the policy level**  
Seigle Hall Room 205 (led by Steve Saltwick & Riley Hart)
- **Strategic Partnerships: Can we depolarize America through partnerships?**  
Seigle Hall Room 305 (led by Donna Murphy, Mel Pine, & Tom Smerling)

- **Influencing Media: How do we move the media away from polarized politics?** Seigle Hall Room 204 (led by Ciaran O'Connor & John Wood)
- **Reflect America: How to achieve Red/Blue balance at the grassroots level?** Seigle Hall Room L003 (led by David Lapp)

4:30pm **Break, refreshments available outside College Hall**

5:00pm **Be Seated in College Hall**

- Call to order by presiding officers
- Report outs from the group

5:45pm **Announcements & Adjourn**

6:00-7:00pm **Dinner in Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**

7:15-8:45pm **Lessons for Better Angels from the Tea Party and Black Lives Matter, in College Hall**

- With special guests: Hawk Newsome, president of Black Lives Matter of New York, & Ray Warrick, Cincinnati Tea Party leader & Better Angel Southwest Ohio Alliance. Moderated by David Blankenhorn.

OR

plaza **A Debate on American Identity, in Ursa's Stageside, off South 40 clocktower**

Opening speakers: Alexandra Hudson, Ciaran O'Connor, Sage Snider, & John Wood. Chaired by April Lawson.

### **Optional Evening Activities**

9:00pm **State Coordinators Meeting**  
Meet in Bear's Den Dining Area, South 40 Building

welcome!) **California Better Angels Meet-Up & Social** (non-Californians are most welcome!)  
Thomas Eliot B House First Floor Lounge

**Better Angels Sing Along with Andy Roth & Friends**  
Liggett-Koenig First Floor Lounge

## Saturday, June 22 2019

### Session 4: The Path Forward

7:30-8:20am **Breakfast in Danforth University (DUC) Dining Hall**

8:30am

**Be Seated in College Hall for Opening Remarks**

- Call to order by presiding officers, & announcements
- A red-blue pair tells their story: Don Byrd & William Ellis
- Report outs from Friday night events
  
- Introduction of 2019 Strategy Platform by David Blankenhorn
- Reading of 2019-2020 Strategy Platform
  
- Platform feedback & approval process explained
- Questions of clarification

10:15am

**Break, refreshments available outside College Hall**

10:45am

**Be seated in College Hall for directions to Breakout Sessions**

11:00am

**BREAKOUT SESSIONS: Select whichever session appeals most to you**

Option 1: Experiential Opportunities, 90 minutes in length, from 11am-12:30pm

- **Red-Blue 1:1 Conversations** (Facilitator: Bruce France)  
Bears Den Dining Area, South 40 Building
- **Debate 1: Gun Rights / Gun Control**  
Ursa's Fireside, off South 40 clocktower plaza (Chair: Rob Robertson)  
*"Resolved: Public school teachers should be equipped with (and trained in the use of) handguns to protect students in their classrooms."*
- **Debate 2: Political Correctness**  
College Hall (Chair: Leah Libresco)  
*Resolved: "Political correctness does more harm than good"*

Option 2: Strategy Platform Deliberation & Revisions, 90 mins, 11am-12:30pm

*These sessions will deliberate on possible revisions/changes in each strategy*

*area.*

**Preamble & Conclusion**, Seigle Hall Room 103 (John Wood)

**Theory of Change**, Seigle Hall Room 106 (Jim Ewel)

**Media Initiative** Seigle Hall Room L003 (Ciaran O'Connor, April Lawson)

**Public Policy Initiative**, Seigle Hall Room 104 (Steve Saltwick, & Riley Hart)

**Partnerships Initiative**, Seigle Hall 208 (Donna Murphy, Mel Pine, Tom Smerling)

- 12:30-1:45pm **Lunch for Delegates at Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**  
 NOTE: Drafting Committee members meet for working lunch in South 40 Private Dining Room. See Section 6 for more details.
- 2:15pm **Be seated in College Hall for Final Platform Discussion & Voting**
- Call to order by presiding officers
  - A red-blue pair tells their story: Maureen Rauscher & Carol Bohl
- Final platform document presented by David Blankenhorn**  
 Opportunity for final discussion prior to voting
- 4:15pm **Voting of 2019-2020 Strategy Platform document**  
*Followed by signature of 2019-2020 Strategy Platform*
- 4:30pm **Break, refreshments available outside College Hall**
- 5:00pm **Be seated in College Hall for concluding exercises**  
 Discussion: *What's next? What am I taking home with me?*
- 5:45pm **Wrap Up & Announcements, convention is adjourned**
- 6:00-7:15pm **Dinner at Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**
- 7:00pm **Alliance Co-Chair Social**  
 Meet in Bear's Den Dining Area, South 40 building
- 8:00pm **Better Angels Concert in Graham Chapel** (located not far from the DUC Dining Hall)
- Main artists: Steve Seskin, Ronni Lynn Smith, Sage Snider, and David Thain
  - Featuring: Don Byrd, Cynthia O'Brien, Ciaran O'Connor, Andy Roth & John Wood

**Sunday, June 23, 2019**

**Optional Post-Convention Opportunities**

8:00-10am **Breakfast in Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall**

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*Public Events (open both to delegates and general public)*

- 9:00am-12pm **Depolarizing Within Workshop**  
Bear's Den in South 40 building (Mod: Bill Doherty)
- 9:00-10:15am **How to Organize Workshops & Debates in Your Community**  
Thomas Eliot A House Lobby & Common Room Lounge  
(Led by Donna Murphy & Lynn Heady)
- 9:30am-12pm **Skills Workshop**  
Ursa's Stageside, located just off of South 40 clocktower plaza  
(Mod: Wendy Robinson)
- 10am-12pm **Join a Better Angels debate** (*Resolved: Remove Confederate statues from the public square*)  
Ursa's Fireside, off the South 40 clocktower plaza  
(Chair: April Lawson & Steve Warshaw)
- 11am-12pm **Town Hall w/ BA Leadership - 'Ask Me Anything'**  
South 40 Private Dining Room  
(with David Blankenhorn & others)
- 12:00-1:00pm **Lunch in the Danforth University Center (DUC) Dining Hall for delegates**  
*NOTE: Members of public are welcome to purchase lunch via cash/credit at checkout*
- 1:00-2:30pm **Join a BA debate with members of local community**  
Ursa's Fireside, located just off South 40 clocktower plaza  
(Chair: Rob Robertson)
- 

*Private Events*

- 10:30am-12pm **How to Start & Run A Great BA Alliance**  
Liggett-Koenig LL Seminar Room (delegates only)  
(Led by David Lapp)
- 1:00-3:00pm **Leadership Team Debrief**  
Thomas Eliot B House First Floor Lounge

## 5. Opening Song: “America the Beautiful”

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet,  
Whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved,  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness,  
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

*Katharine Lee Bates, 1915*

## 6. Report on Better Angels Progress since our 2018 Convention

By Donna Murphy, Better Angels Lead Organizer

A year ago, we convened our Founding Convention at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA. We had 141 delegates from 28 states plus Washington, DC, and the vast majority of our delegates were from the east and west coasts. We had nobody from Missouri, and from the seven states contiguous to Missouri came 17 delegates. [TN, AR, IA, NE, KS, IL, OK] Last night we convened our second convention here at Washington University in St. Louis MO with 258 delegates\* from all 50 states plus DC. From Missouri, we have 15 delegates\*\*, and from its contiguous states, we doubled the number of attendees.

How did we get from Harrisonburg to St. Louis? That's what this speech is about. The answer is: It was all me. I did it all by myself!

If that were true, I'd be in an insane asylum by now. I'd be asking my fellow patients: What false or misleading stereotypes do people who are sane have of people who are insane? No, getting to St. Louis took the dedicated efforts of a flight of angels, although we use other categories besides seraphim and cherubim. Let's talk about our volunteers.

A year ago, we implemented online moderator training. Approved applicants could learn online how to moderate workshops, and now Better Angels moderators are running them across the country. And in the past few months, workshop architect Bill Doherty has come up with more for them to do: separate Red and Blue Skills workshops, and Depolarizing Within workshops. We have almost 350 trained moderators, and we are incredibly grateful to them for their efforts to help depolarize America. Moderators, stand up and take a bow.

Organizers, courageous, fearless organizers have put together over 450 workshops and debates since we began. Organizers are the heart and soul of Better Angels, all 625 of them. They roll up their shirtsleeves and do whatever it takes to make these workshops happen. You are our miracle workers! And you have something in common with Helen Keller's Anne Sullivan, who brought the light of understanding to the blind and the deaf. If you have ever helped to organize a Better Angels workshop, or are an enrolled red or blue organizer, please stand up, and let's give them a hand.

State coordinators are the glue that holds together the members, organizers and moderators in their state. We attract consistently excellent, motivated people to this crucial volunteer position. We're on a quest for 102 state coordinators, one red and one blue in each state plus DC, and we're well on our way. In your program you'll see where we still need state coordinators. To learn more about this position, talk to anyone with an SC sticker on their name tag, and please join us at the meeting for state coordinators tonight. Yes, if you're at all interested in becoming one of the most

important, best connected Angels in your state, please, please join us at the state coordinator meeting at 9 pm tonight. If you ARE a state coordinator, we LOVE you! Please stand up and accept our appreciation.

After you've attended a Better Angels workshop or debate, you can join a local alliance. We currently have 34 local alliances located across the U.S., from San Francisco, California, to Austin, Texas, to Easthampton, Massachusetts. The alliance's red and blue co-chairs are amazingly creative in coming up with programs and attracting both red and blue members. And they like each other, right, Don Byrd and William Ellis from Monroe County, Indiana? These co-chairs embody the spirit of reds and blues forging friendships and working toward the greater good. If you are an Alliance co-chair, please stand up and receive our gratitude.

We hold separate, monthly zoom conference calls for our moderators, organizers, alliance co-chairs, and state coordinators. By the way, I'm looking for two experienced organizers, one red and one blue, to take over running the monthly organizer call. See me! We also hold monthly member calls. If you're a member, you can participate in calls where our guests have included Jonathan Haidt, Andrew Walker, Francis Fukuyama and John Pudner.

Beginning in March of this year, we rolled out our Better Angels Debate Chair training program and began holding community debates. April Lawson is the architect of our Debate program. Yes, we stole April away part-time from David Brooks and the Aspen Institute's Weave the Social Fabric Project, and pretty soon we're getting her full-time. We now have 45 trained Debate Chairs, have held several community debates, and we've only just begun. At the college level, we've held student debates at American University, Graceland University, Eastern Tennessee State, Virginia Tech, and with the help of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, we'll continue to expand debates on college campuses. At the high school level, we pioneered debates for students at a high school history camp last summer, and will now be holding Better Angels debates in Loudoun County, VA high schools. If you are a trained Debate Chair, please stand up and receive our thanks.

We're also working harder to "Reflect America." To be honest, when we started, we were mostly middle to upper middle class, college educated, and white. We're now striving to attract working class people, and people of color. We still have a long way to go, and we hope many of you sitting in this room today will help us.

We've held special, nationwide events. In January, David Blankenhorn gave an inspirational Better Angels State of the Union Address, broadcast from my house in Fairfax, Virginia, with folks watching both at home and at public viewing parties. Last month, was the Grand Premiere of the documentary Better Angels: Reuniting America, broadcast from the barn of Tea Party supporter Richard Lynch in Waynesville, Ohio, with folks watching both at home and at public viewing parties. That film is now available for free group screenings—and it's a fantastic way to introduce people to Better Angels.



Meanwhile, the Better Angels media wing has become more active and more credible, expanding its audience, featuring prominent podcast guests such as Vox Media's Ezra Klein and former president of the American Enterprise Institute Arthur Brooks. On our website we host regular commentary and journalistic content, from ordinary Americans to respected political leaders alike. This team is led by red John Wood and blue Ciaran O'Connor, who are the most photogenic members of our male staff. Sorry, Bill Doherty, but I have to be honest! But along with beauty, they have marvelous brains. In addition to co-hosting the Better Angels Podcast, our public argument work has led Ciaran and John to campuses and conferences across the country from UC Berkeley and Linn-Benton Community College to the Global Philanthropy Forum and the Aspen Institute's "Weave the People" gathering. They write widely circulated essays and Op Ed's in publications ranging from Quillette to Fox News.

Better Angels representatives have attended many events designed to bring together organizations that promote conversations, bridge divides, and foster civic engagement, to get us to learn about and collaborate with each other. This includes the Urgency of Civility Conference held by the Masonic Family Civility Project; the Summit for Democracy sponsored by Freedom House and Stand Up Republic; the Unrig Summit organized by Represent.us; a monthly breakfast held by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget; a BridgeUSA conference; and a peacebuilding conference co-organized by the Alliance for Peacebuilding and the George Mason University School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. We participated in the National Week of Conversation sponsored by the National Conversation Project. We are proud that Rotary International published a four-page spread about Better Angels in a magazine distributed to its 1.2 million members, and that we'll present at the Rotary World Peace Conference next January.

Better Angels is, down to its core, a grassroots organization, bringing together ordinary people for conversations that bridge the divide. But we held Skills workshops for some members of the Minnesota State Legislature, and Red/Blue workshops for mayors in the state of Maryland. We'd like to work more with politicians.

How did we get from Harrisonburg to St. Louis? With loads of hard work by Better Angels across the country who are motivated by the desire to get people to change their minds, not about the issues, but about each other. To realize that those on the other side, well, they're not so bad; we can actually be friends even though we disagree. And in forging those relationships, to realize there is common ground that we can build upon to create the more perfect union that our Constitution promises.

At this point, David Lapp, April Lawson, John Wood, Ciaran O'Connor, Kelly Schuman Andino and myself will be happy to answer questions.

*Donna Murphy is Better Angels Lead Organizer.*

*\* The final count was 254 convention attendees: 241 voting delegates plus 13 others who attended as staff, volunteers, and representing partners.*

*\*\* The final count was 13 delegates for the State of Missouri.*

## 7. Drafting Committee

To discuss and incorporate input\* that was solicited at Strategy Platform Deliberation & Revisions sessions into draft of 2019-2020 Strategy Platform document and generate final version, a drafting committee was formed. This committee met in a working lunch session and made the necessary revisions to the draft to address any area of concern raised by delegates. The drafting committee comprised of 10 delegates - 1 red and 1 blue - from all revision sessions, each strategy area's representative, the President, and convention secretary. The following is drafting committee's participants:

### Delegates & Strategy Area Representatives

#### Preamble & Conclusion

- Kathy O'Hanlon (Blue - DC)
- Michael Bent (Red - WA)
- John Wood (Red - CA)

#### Theory of Change

- Itara Sumeros (Blue - LA)
- Butch Porter (Red - VA)
- Jim Ewel (Blue - WA)

#### Media Initiative

- James Coan (Blue - DC)
- Albert Eisenberg (Red - PA)
- April Lawson (Red - DC)

#### Public Policy

- Kim Watson (Blue - OH)
- Jennifer Stepp (Red - NC)
- Steve Saltwick (Red - TX)

#### Partnership

- Brenna Bry (Blue - PA)
- Bill Roos (Red - VA)
- Tom Smerling (Blue - MD)

### Other Participants

David Blankenhorn (President)  
Kouhyar Mostashfi (Secretary)  
Bill Doherty (BA Lead Moderator)

*\* Note: Refer to Appendix A for input solicited at Strategy Platform Deliberation & Revisions sessions.*

## 8. 2019-2020 Strategy Platform

Better Angels was born in response to the crisis of polarization—a growing crisis that hampers government, destroys trust, degrades public discussion, fosters isolation, and harms personal relationships. Polarization tears at our social fabric, as trust in our institutions reaches historic lows, distrust of one another on the basis of politics reaches all-time highs, and disturbing trends in race relations and in social and class friction point to increasing conflict.

From its beginning, Better Angels has stood for understanding other people’s point of view, even if we don’t agree with it. We have stood for the importance of working together despite our differences. We have stood for a love of country that demonstrates itself in the concern we bear for our fellow Americans. It is this patriotic empathy that will break the grip of divisiveness and strengthen our common bonds.

Proud of our origins, today we dedicate ourselves to the great task before us—to safeguard the spirit of our republic and to preserve its deepest unity. In our politics, let us work together when agreement is found and oppose one another in civility and good faith when it is not. In the work of Better Angels, let us build trust between individuals and restore trust in our institutions. Let us labor together to discover and cherish our common heritage and identity as Americans. Let us strive as one for the “beloved community” of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr’s vision and the “more perfect Union” of the Founders’ summoning.

### Theory of Change

A theory of change provides a guide to the key strategies and initiatives for achieving the progress we seek.

### Reflect America

Critically, our theory of change requires us to reflect America. Thus, our rule of red/blue balance is foundational for all that we do. In our red/blue workshops and alliances, in our campus work, and at every level of leadership we are half red and half blue. Beyond reflecting the spectrum of political opinion, we must also strive to be inclusive in our membership and leadership of all walks and aspects of American life, so that our organization reflects the country we seek to serve.

### Changing Our Hearts

Our focus is grassroots, citizen-to-citizen changing of hearts. It’s “We the People” depolarizing one another and it’s been Better Angels’ main focus and success to date. In this part of our work, we seek both to renew our trust in one another and build our civic muscle.

How much grassroots success is necessary for us to influence the nation as a whole? Probably the best answer is one percent. Research shows that one percent of the people in a community, if organized and motivated, can significantly influence that community. We estimate that, for Better Angels, the one percent tipping point is about 1.5 to 2 million involved and committed Americans. That's our long-term goal. To reach it, we will set intermediate goals along the way, and in the next 12 months we will strive to develop new and online offerings to make the Better Angels experience available not just to thousands, but to millions of Americans each year.

## **Changing Institutions**

Changing ourselves is fundamental, but to depolarize America, we must also change our institutions. Changing ourselves happens inside and between us as individuals. Changing institutions requires focusing on society's guiding rules and structures. Better Angels' three institutional priorities are government, education, and media. Each requires its own approach.

Changing governmental institutions requires approaches such as Better Angels caucuses within state legislatures and policy proposals developed by local Better Angels Alliances. Better Angels Debates can influence culture and possibly influence practices in colleges and high schools, as can Better Angels skills workshops in college freshman orientation programs. Changing the media presents probably the greatest challenge, but through example and incentives, including establishing a prominent audience for non-partisan media, we hope to change this institution.

We can also state generally the type of institutional change we seek. Our concern is not with specific outcomes but with establishing that an institution's rules, norms, and operating procedures create incentives for less polarization. To use the analogy of sports, we do not seek to determine who wins the game; we seek to change how the game is played. Imagine a hockey game where fights take up 95 percent of each time period. That is the unfortunate reality of many of our institutions today. We strive to reduce the fighting so that healthy, robust deliberation leads to better outcomes for our nation.

## **Thought Leadership**

Just as the Federalist papers made the case for ratification of the Constitution, we must have key opinion leaders who make the case for depolarization.

We seek a virtuous cycle in which individuals help to change institutions and changed institutions in turn encourage more individual growth. Such a cycle can be initiated by leaders capable of defining and encouraging it. For Better Angels, that pump-priming

occurs through our growing network of thought leaders, scholars, and researchers and in 2019, by establishing the Council for the Common Good.

## **Partnerships**

Finally, we are not alone in seeking this change. Many other organizations are also trying to reduce polarization, increase civility, and change the rules and norms of our institutions. Where it makes sense, we will collaborate and partner with organizations that share our vision and mission.

## **Priorities and New Initiatives**

At our Founding Convention in Harrisonburg, Virginia, in June of 2018, delegates adopted “An American Declaration” stating our call to the nation and “Principles and Program” offering guidelines and recommendations in the areas of citizen mobilization, media, scholarship, and public policy. To advance and build upon those founding ideas, today we adopt three priorities for new and further-developed Better Angels initiatives in the next 12 months.

### **Media Initiative**

A 2019-2020 research and exploratory initiative will test strategies to reduce partisanship and polarization in the media – traditional, digital, and social – and to foster a humanizing alternative. The effort will build upon existing campaigns under the umbrella of Better Angels Media.

The initiative will work to create depolarized media, challenge media polarizers, and promote the work of Better Angels.

Possible strategies include the creation, dissemination, and on-going monitoring of a voluntary Media Code of Ethics; organizing Better Angels members and other consumers of media to take local action to support depolarizing media content; creating new media programming to model depolarization; and enlisting leading red and blue media personalities to model and publicly support depolarizing media content.

This initiative will be coordinated by two Better Angels leaders, one red and blue, selected by the Better Angels board of directors. A report on the initiative, including measurements of success and recommendations for next steps, will be submitted to the 2020 Better Angels Convention.

### **Public Policy Initiative**

A 2019-2020 pilot project involving the creation of Alliance Policy Groups will test our ability to bring together interested red and blue Better Angels members at the local level and in equal numbers to examine and in some cases develop and propose public policies. The desired outcome is to demonstrate that Better Angels members at the local level can work together across party and philosophical lines to offer constructive proposals.

Each local Alliance Policy Group participating in the initiative chooses and develops its own proposal. The resulting proposals as a group will therefore be diverse and, as regards content, not necessarily in agreement with one another. Nor will the content of the proposals be specified or directed by the national organization, which does not and will not take policy positions.

This pluralistic, local approach to policy discussion and development is intended to encourage local innovation, respect the reality and importance of viewpoint diversity in a free society, and model for our elected officials in both parties and in all levels of government a process of respectful, fair-minded collaboration that they might profitably learn from and seek to imitate.

The project will operate according to five basic guidelines.

1. Participation is optional for all Alliances and all Better Angels members.
2. Alliance Policy Groups are created by and accountable to local Better Angels Alliances.
3. The composition of each local Policy Group will follow the Better Angels Rule of half red and half blue participants.
4. To be adopted by a Better Angels Alliance, a proposal emerging from a Policy Group must be endorsed by at least 75 percent of the Alliance's dues-paying red members and 75 percent of its dues-paying blue members.
5. Better Angels as a national organization does not and will not develop, endorse, oppose, or comment on matters of public policy.

The pilot project will be coordinated by two Better Angels leaders, one red and one blue, selected by the Better Angels board of directors. A report on the pilot project, including measurements of success and recommendations for next steps, will be submitted to the 2020 Better Angels Convention.

### **Partnerships Initiative**

Over the next 12 months, Better Angels will actively explore partnerships with other organizations. We seek mutually beneficial partnerships in order to reach more Americans, be better stewards of our resources, learn from and assist organizations who share our mission, and accelerate our nation's overall progress toward depolarization.



In considering whether and under what conditions to propose or agree to partnering, Better Angels will consider, among other relevant factors, the following:

1. Will the partnership be mutually beneficial?
2. Will the benefits of this partnership outweigh its costs?
3. Does Better Angels have the resources to manage the partnership effectively?
4. Will the prospective partnership help Better Angels achieve its goals of red-blue balance and reflecting America? How balanced and representative is the prospective partner itself?
5. Will the partnership build goodwill and better friendship?
6. Does the prospective partner share our values and vision?
7. Is the partnership supportive of the 2019 Better Angels Platform?

Pending answers to these questions, this initiative will explore and, in some cases, test various forms of partnership, at the local and national level, which are presented below in ascending order of complexity and breadth.

1. Organizations proposing or agreeing to bring Better Angels programs to their members.
2. Organizations proposing or agreeing to partner with local Alliances for projects or events.
3. Organizations proposing or agreeing to trade favors with us (for example, each group promoting the other on its website or via email to its members).
4. Organizations seeking our agreement to join their organization or network.
5. Organizations proposing or formally agreeing to combine or merge some or all of their programming with ours.

The fifth and closest form of partnership – “organizations proposing or agreeing formally to combine or merge some or all of their programming with ours”– must and can only occur according to actions taken by the Better Angels board of directors.

The procedures for review of local partnerships will be developed promptly after the Convention.

This initiative will be coordinated by the president of Better Angels and by two Better Angels leaders, one red and one blue, selected by the Better Angels board of directors. A report on the initiative, including measurements of success and recommendations for next steps, will be submitted to the 2020 Better Angels Convention.

*Adopted June 22, 2019, with 156 delegates voting “yes,” two voting “no” and two abstaining.*

*Refer to Appendix B for the list of 2019-2020 Strategy Platform signatories.*

## 9. Announced Performers at Convention Concert

### Steve Seskin

Steve Seskin is one of the most successful writers in Nashville today, with songs recorded by Tim McGraw, Neal McCoy, John Michael Montgomery, Kenny Chesney, Collin Raye, Peter Frampton, Waylon Jennings, Alabama, Mark Wills, and Peter Paul and Mary. His song “Don’t Laugh At Me” was a finalist for CMA “Song of the Year” in 1999 and has spurred an entire tolerance movement launched by the “Don’t Laugh At Me Project.” Other Seskin hits include: “I Think About You,” “Life’s A Dance,” “No Doubt About It,” “If You’ve Got Love,” and “Grown Men Don’t Cry.”

### Ronni Lynn Smith

Ronni Lynn Smith is a young singer with one of the most beautiful and sincere voices you'll ever hear. Her inspiration and musical idol is the country music legend Patsy Cline. She has sung with and alongside of award-winning artists such as David Frizzell, Peter Yarrow, Billy Yates, and Richard Lynch. Her love of God drives her aspiration to make America a little better place with the greatest gift of all: music. Ronni is currently studying music management at Hocking College in Ohio, and is one of the newest members of the Better Angels Southwest Ohio Alliance.

### Sage Snider

Sage Snider is a fiddler, singer, dancer, and songwriter based in Nashville, TN. Informed by her music history and museum education studies at Yale and Brown, Sage’s performances mix fairytales with feminism, folksongs with looping and flatfooting with distortion. Her work has been featured at the Smithsonian, the Yale University Art Gallery, Smugglers’ Notch Ski Resort, and the Brown University Folk Festival. In addition to her solo act, Sage also performs regularly in Nashville Honky-Tonk band, various bluegrass groups, and Tom Mason’s Blue Buccaneers. This December, she used her songs and storytelling to headline to benefit tour for Better Angels.

### David Thain

David Thain grew up in southeast Georgia, where he started playing piano and singing harmony on gospel songs with his family. He’s been performing for over 30 years and currently plays in two Nashville-area bands in styles ranging from rock ‘n’ roll, country, western swing, to blues. He was drawn to Better Angels out of a desire to help heal growing divisions in our country by bringing people together and learning to hear both sides of the story.

### Don Byrd

Don Byrd set out in life to become a composer. He graduated from Indiana University School of Music, where he’d learned to write the kind of music no one wants to listen to. He started to learn something about computers in the late 1960’s and changed career goals. He got a job as a programmer, working on music software on the side. He received a Ph.D. in computer science and spent many years in industry as a soundware engineer, software engineer, and entrepreneur before returning to academia.

Byrd now spends most of his time on Better Angels but still works on music software and composes. His most recent work is a concerto for violin and orchestra.

### **Cynthia O'Brien**

Cynthia O'Brien is a pianist, singer, and minister from Gresham, Oregon. She attended the 2018 Better Angels Founding Convention and became the first moderator in her State. Since then, she has moderated seven Better Angels workshops, appeared on television and radio, and now coordinates and oversees twelve moderators in her region.

### **Ciaran O'Connor**

Ciaran O'Connor is a graduate of Duke University and a digital communication strategist with a background working on national political campaigns (including Obama 2012 and Clinton 2016) and consulting for clients in the government, technology, and corporate sectors. He serves as the Chief Marketing Officer for Better Angels and is based in Los Angeles, CA.

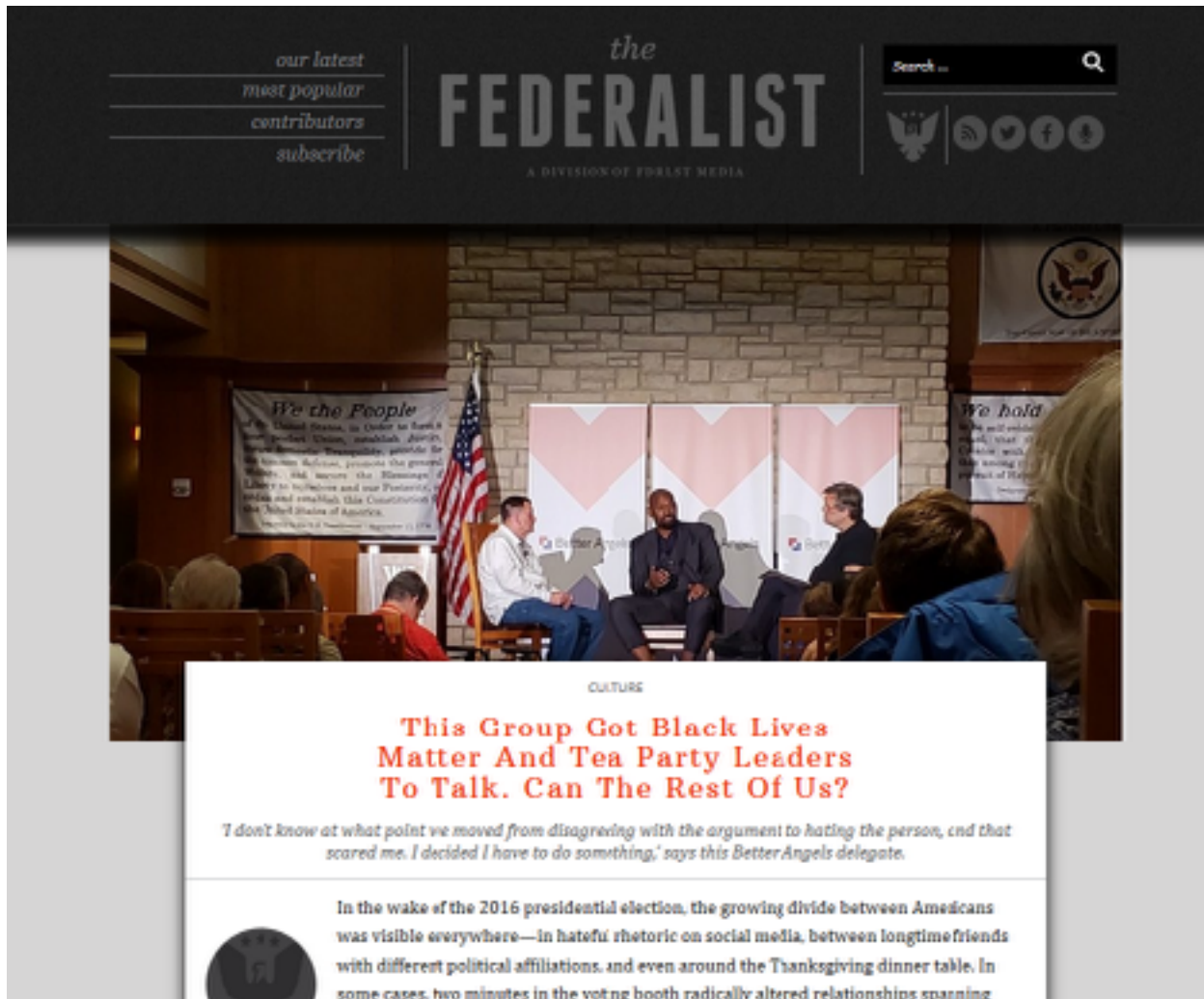
### **Andy Roth**

Andy Roth started as a folksinger in the late 60s and went on to a career as a musical comedy performer, with roles in the movie Grease and Broadway's They're Playing Our Song. Now a psychologist, Andy was disturbed by the anger surrounding the 2016 election and joined Better Angels. With this concert, he returns to his musical roots to help de-escalate our country's heightened political tensions.

### **John Wood, Jr.**

John Wood is a national leader for Better Angels, a former nominee for Congress, former Vice-Chairman of the Republican Party of Los Angeles County, and author of the upcoming book Transcending Politics: Perspectives for a Divided Nation. He serves as the Director of Media Development for Better Angels.

## 10. Selected Media Coverage



Published Story in *The Federalist*, June 24, 2019

- The Federalist
  - <https://thefederalist.com/2019/06/24/group-got-black-lives-matter-tea-party-leader-talk-can-rest-us/>
- USA Today
  - <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/06/11/trump-era-anxiety-inspires-better-angels-civil-discourse/3747143002/>
- Real Clear Politics
  - [https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2019/06/18/better\\_angels\\_bridging\\_the\\_uncivil\\_discussion\\_divide\\_140580.html](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2019/06/18/better_angels_bridging_the_uncivil_discussion_divide_140580.html)
- St. Louis Public Radio

- <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/can-one-group-depolarize-america-better-angels-comes-st-louis-try#stream/0>

Refer to Appendix C for a list of Press Coverage since Convention.

## **We need to restore civility in politics**

By Julie Gordon

*Hendersonville Times* (Hendersonville, NC)

July 14, 2019

I've heard it said that it doesn't matter who is in the office of the president; if we don't have civil discourse, we are on the verge of civil divorce in this country.

While statistics vary, USA Today in November 2018 reported that nearly 80% of Americans are concerned about the lack of civility in politics and fear it will lead to violence. Americans are also deeply disturbed by the impact political polarization has on their personal lives, including the loss of friends and friction in families. Restoring civility and bipartisanship seem distant goals.

It is often easier to see the opportunity we want than to see the opportunity we have, particularly when it is couched in the warlike fever of vitriolic language and the extremism of political polarization. Yet hidden in this mass of anger and vitriol is exactly where our opportunity, and our power, are to be found.

But where to start? Let's start where our personal power lies: with the individual. Our opportunity lies in the courage to ask ourselves if we are a part of the polarization problem and the integrity to answer that question honestly. We might begin by asking if the hostility we feel from others is ever mirrored by our own fears and actions.

There may also be a solution to this dilemma: Better Angels, a bipartisan, grassroots organization whose primary goal is to bring people of varying and differing political views and beliefs together to discuss their differences in a civil and respectful environment.

As the May 2019 issue of *The Rotarian* magazine reports, the "vanishing art of listening is being cultivated once again in the Better Angels movement, which brings people from both sides of the political spectrum together."

Better Angels was co-founded in 2016 by Bill Doherty, David Blankenhorn and David Lapp. The name "Better Angels" is based on Abraham Lincoln's 1861 first inaugural address, just before the Civil War, when he appealed to the American people and said, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory will yet swell the course of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Better Angels currently includes 7,000 members and recently held its second annual convention June 20-23 in St. Louis, Mo. Attendees were made up of a 50/50 ratio of "reds and blues," an amazing feat in itself, and fulfilling a goal of offering a venue designed to accommodate the current divided American body politic and hopefully help depolarize the toxic political environment we find ourselves in.

Better Angels' purpose is not to change another's political perspective. It fully understands that healthy disagreement is one of the foundations of our democracy. Better Angels' mission is to reduce animosity and divisiveness through an environment where civility, trust and respect can be restored.

To this end, Better Angels is addressing this issue on multiple levels. One approach is a variety of workshops being held around the country where reds and blues can sit down together in an atmosphere of civility to discuss their differences. Participants' comments have been extremely positive and include accolades on the change of heart that can take place in a such an environment.

I recently attended a workshop in which participants from opposite sides of the political spectrum came to the program with some reservations and discomfort. By the end of the session, the skepticism and discomfort had been replaced, in most part, by a sense of hope and commitment.

To learn more about Better Angels and its mission to reduce political polarization in the United States through civil dialogue, giving all Americans a better chance to understand each other and ultimately recognize our common humanity, please visit [www.Better-Angels.org](http://www.Better-Angels.org). If you'd like to be contacted when a workshop is planned in this area, contact Duane Beck at [duane.beck@better-angels.org](mailto:duane.beck@better-angels.org).

*Julie Gordon of Hendersonville is a member of Better Angels.*



## **A time-honored concept is that relationships fuel healthy living**

By Crystal Miller

*Kenosha News (Kenosha, WI)*

July 24, 2019

I am a conservative. I am not ashamed of it. In fact, I'm proud of my beliefs. However, it has become difficult to talk about it for fear of being disregarded, rejected or dismissed.

I have a deep commitment to my community, and I work in an industry that has long been governed by people who generally have more liberal views than I do.

My perspective is valuable, especially as I balance the business side with the social work angle. A lot of the work that I enjoy as an industry leader is policy advocacy work for regulations and funding, but recently I have felt "less than appreciated" when I point out some wins that conservatives have led in these areas.

At one point, it was even suggested that I may not be a fit to moderate a legislative roundtable because it might appear that I was too thankful for the funding that Gov. Scott Walker and conservatives achieved. That day I determined to learn more about communicating well, continuing to embrace my conservative values in addition to the practice of loving others.

It shouldn't have to be this way and it doesn't have to be this way. That's where Better Angels comes in.

Better Angels is an organization uniting Red and Blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America. It is based on the value of love for others and that each of us can contribute in meaningful conversation, even if we don't agree. That concept appealed to me.

I attended a Better Angels skills workshop, facilitated by Cameron Swallow. She did a great job of helping the room learn techniques for sharing our views and listening to the views of others. It appeared that people were intrigued by this way of thinking. It was clear that there is a desire to have meaningful conversations and be open to listening.

In my work the last few months of promoting Better Angels, it appears that "Reds" are apathetic to this movement. I believe that it is spurred by the belief that "Blues" don't want to listen, so why would this be worth it?

I believe that 50% of our nation supports President Trump and his policies, but 45% of people would rather not discuss it. It may be because the media consistently tells us (Reds) that our ideas don't have merit. I wouldn't go so far to say that Reds are ashamed of their views, but certainly many would prefer to vote but not discuss it.

I think that some of it stems from not knowing how to communicate it well. With the media so often portraying Republicans as “stupid” or not educated, is it possible that people are tired of dispelling that untruth? Perhaps many Republicans just start thinking it’s not worth talking about.

Why fight, seemingly without wins, against the sentiment that appears to be held by so many? Conservatives must remember that this sentiment is driven by the media. It only feels pervasive, more likely our neighbors don’t actually feel this way.

It is my hope that the Reds in Racine and Kenosha Counties will participate in Better Angels. I am excited about what this movement can mean for our community. A time-honored concept is that relationships fuel healthy living.

Better relationships with our neighbors through strong communication, especially when we learn to be real, vulnerable and true to what we believe is winning for sure. The Better Angels movement is built on trust and that is something that I’m excited to build.

I am reminded of the thought-provoking quote attributed to President Abraham Lincoln: “I don’t like that man; I must get to know him better.” This was true then and it is true now. Better Angels is a wonderful way to bring this concept to life in southeast Wisconsin.

*Crystal Miller is an entrepreneur who serves on the leadership teams of several nonprofits and enjoys the impact that her efforts have in making Wisconsin a better place to live and work. She is the president and an owner of Frontida Assisted Living.*

## Osceola pair joins Better Angels effort

*The (Osceola, WI) Sun*

August 31, 2019

By Suzanne Lindgren



*Wisconsin delegates to the National Better Angels Conference, Lisa Erickson and Kim Gearin.*

When Kim Gearin heard about a grassroots movement to depolarize America, she thought of her friend, Lisa Erickson. “We both come from different political viewpoints but we’ve managed to be open to each others’ thoughts and ideas over the last 20 years,” Erickson explained.

The two Alden residents met shortly after Gearin and her husband had moved to the Osceola area.

“My husband met Lisa’s husband at the bank and they hit it off,” Gearin recalled. “He thought we should all get together, so when we were in town one day we stopped by the bank. I saw Lisa in the office with an infant in her backpack and I thought, ‘Oh yeah, I like her.’ I knew we would have things in common.”

Where Gearin leans blue, Erickson leans red. Like many, their positions are nuanced and not fully described in a single syllable. Beyond that, they have always put their friendship before political philosophies.

“We’ve always had different political backgrounds but we’ve never tried to change each other or convince each other to think anything different,” Erickson said.

“We were both really concerned about how polarized things are,” Gearin said, “and both attracted to the idea of bringing into the community the idea that if our

communities are going to work we have to be able to talk to each other and jointly solve problems.”

That’s the whole concept behind the Better Angels organization, which started a couple days after the divisive 2016 election. David Blankenhorn and David Lapp brought a small group of Trump supporters and Clinton supporters together for a weekend. Bill Doherty, a family therapist and community organizer, developed the structure for what became the first Better Angels Red/Blue Workshop. Participants were surprised to find that, when they focused less on changing someone’s mind and more on understanding what informed the other’s political philosophies, they liked each other.

The organization’s name, Better Angels, is a reference to Abraham Lincoln’s Civil-War era inaugural address: “We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. “

The key, as Lincoln implores, is seeking to understand rather than agree.

“A lot of it is being curious and interested to learn how people came to believe what they do,” Gearin said, “and being willing to enter into conversations where you’re not trying to convince people to believe what you do.”

“It’s learning how to ask really good questions and just listen,” added Erickson. “You focus more on what you have in common and less on what you don’t agree on.”

The pair hopes to start hosting Better Angels debates in the community. They are not debates in a conventional sense, but public conversations between people of divergent viewpoints.

For instance, as Wisconsin delegates to this year’s National Better Angels Conference, Gearin and Erickson watched a debate between a member of Black Lives Matter and the head of the Ohio Tea Party.

“They ended up having more in common than not,” Erickson said. “There were no arguments. There was laughter. These people had never met before and we were all on the edge of our seats waiting to hear what they had to say. You walk away not thinking about whether you’re red or blue.”

“It was so powerful,” Gearin said. “You think you can anticipate what someone is going to say based on whether they’re blue or red. You realize there’s a lot of nuance. There’s a lot of complexity.”

Gearin and Erickson emphasized the need for such understanding locally and nationally.

“Families are being torn apart,” Gearin said. “People are saying, ‘For the first time ever I’m concerned about our democracy.’ ...

“We’re so divided, and so evenly divided across the United States and Wisconsin,” Gearin continued. “Neither side is going to vanquish the other. Even if an election changes the party in any given year, there’s still this enormous underlying difference that remains and has implications for how the community functions. No matter who wins we need to be able to talk to each other and engage.”

Added Erickson: “It’s almost like people see it as a battle they need to win. ... All the rules of engagement have been thrown out the window. We’re all human. We all have families. We’re all in this together. How can we understand where others are coming from? Just be open and listen. You’d be surprised how it actually changes you.”

“When the purpose of talking to someone shifts from, ‘I want to make you see things my way,’ to, ‘I want to know more about where you’re coming from,’ it changes everything,” Gearin said.

“You can actually physically feel it,” Erickson said. “And you can’t help but want to be part of it.”

“It’s refreshing,” Gearin said, “and it gives me hope to see that there’s a way forward.”

*Stay tuned to the Sun for updates on Better Angels debates and workshops organized by Gearin and Erickson. Learn more about Better Angels at [www.better-angels.org](http://www.better-angels.org).*

## 11. Delegates and Other Participants

First Name	Last Name	Status	City	State
Cynthia	Frey	Blue Delegate	Phenix City	Alabama
Christopher	Wilson	Red Delegate	Birmingham	Alabama
Jacob	Chapman	Red Delegate	Anchorage	Alaska
James	Gibson	Blue Delegate	Sedona	Arizona
Nirvair	Khalsa	Blue Delegate	Tucson	Arizona
David	Ancieta	Observer	Jonesboro	Arkansas
Jerry	Henderson	Blue Delegate	Little Rock	Arkansas
Elise	Henson	Red Delegate	Sherwood	Arkansas
Cindy	Kyser	Red Delegate	Austin	Arkansas
Glen	White	Blue Delegate	Little Rock	Arkansas
M Diane	Wimberley	Blue Delegate	Jonesboro	Arkansas
Cynthia	Berkshire	Red Delegate	Santa Monica	California
Marisa	Bogdanoff	Red Delegate	Sacramento	California
Benita	Bollinger	Blue Delegate	Sacramento	California
Kris	Brown	Blue Delegate	Inverness	California
Darcy	Crosman	Blue Delegate	El Sobrante	California
Emily	Henderson	Red Delegate	Placentia	California
Carlos	Hernandez	Red Delegate	San Francisco	California
Peter	Hill	Red Delegate	La Quinta	California
Isaac	Huang	Blue Delegate	Berkeley	California
Randy	Lioz	Blue Delegate	Irvine	California

Leslie	Lopato	Blue Delegate	San Francisco	California
Marshall	Mason	Red Delegate	Fremont	California
Paul	Norris	Red Delegate	San Francisco	California
Ciaran	O'Connor	Blue Delegate	Los Angeles	California
Samantha	Shireman	Blue Delegate	Berkeley	California
Steve	Sphar	Blue Delegate	Sacramento	California
Greg	Steinbrecher	Red Delegate	North Hollywood	California
Steven	Taddei	Red Delegate	Alameda	California
John	Wood	Red Delegate	Los Angeles	California
Michael	Waters	Red Delegate	Sacramento	California
Rachel	Bailey	Blue Delegate	Westminster	Colorado
Mary	Gaylord	Blue Delegate	Superior	Colorado
Kenneth	Hay	Red Delegate	La Veta	Colorado
Bill	Imig	Red Delegate	Denver	Colorado
Joyce	Imig	Blue Delegate	Denver	Colorado
Lavonna	Longwell	Blue Delegate	Greeley	Colorado
Meg	Small	Blue Delegate	Fort Collins	Colorado
Michael	Soguero	Blue Delegate	Boulder	Colorado
Glenn	stanton	Red Delegate	Colorado Springs	Colorado
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Juan	Torres	Red Delegate	Estes Park	Colorado
Bob	Vanourek	Red Delegate	Golden	Colorado
Owen	Hughes	Red Delegate	Stonington	Connecticut
Pamela	Wat	Blue Delegate	Wilmington	Delaware

Keith	Allred	Partner	Washington	District of Columbia
Corene	Alvarado	Red Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
James	Coan	Blue Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Skip	Gain	Red Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Daniel	Kornfield	Red Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
April	Lawson	Red Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Kathy	O'Hanlon	Blue Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Blake	Phillips	Blue Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Branden	Polk	Partner	Washington	District of Columbia
Isabel	Soto	Red Delegate	Washington	District of Columbia
Cheryl	Couture	Red Delegate	Naples	Florida
Lesa	Klein	Blue Delegate	Santa Rosa Beach	Florida
Stephanie	Maier	Red Delegate	Ft. Myers	Florida
Joyce	Taylor	Red Delegate	Orlando	Florida
Paul	Witte	Blue Delegate	Rockledge	Florida
Barbara	Brown	Red Delegate	Lilburn	Georgia
Clark	Brown	Red Delegate	Athens	Georgia
Deborah	Davis	Blue Delegate	Columbus	Georgia
Chris	Ideker	Red Delegate	Alpharetta	Georgia
Maggie	Schumann	Blue Delegate	Atlanta	Georgia
Patrick	Thomas	Red Delegate	Brookhaven	Georgia
Lei	Mohr	Blue Delegate	Pahoa	Hawaii



Tiffany	Fite	Red Delegate	Boise	Idaho
Kenneth	Bone	Partner	Belleville	Illinois
Leila	Brammer	Blue Delegate	Chicago	Illinois
Pam	Hay	Blue Delegate	Glenview	Illinois
Carolyn	Mendenhall	Blue Delegate	Evanston	Illinois
Donald	Byrd	Blue Delegate	Bloomington	Indiana
Bill	Clendineng	Red Delegate	Plainfield	Indiana
Miles	Eddy	Blue Delegate	Bloomington	Indiana
William	Ellis	Red Delegate	Ellettsville	Indiana
Patrick	Etienne	Red Delegate	Bloomington	Indiana
Alexandra	Hudson	Red Delegate	Indianapolis	Indiana
Kian	Hudson	Red Delegate	Indianapolis	Indiana
Carol	Bohl	Red Delegate	Urbandale	Iowa
Anthony	Ginger	Blue Delegate	Pleasantville	Iowa
Zach	Goering	Red Delegate	Lamoni	Iowa
Remington	Hutton	Red Delegate	St. Charles	Iowa
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Christopher	Peters	Red Delegate	Coralville	Iowa
Julie	Peters	Red Delegate	Coralville	Iowa
Richard	Tucker	Red Delegate	Winterset	Iowa
David	Rine	Red Delegate	Olathe	Kansas
Carolyn	Dupont	Blue Delegate	Nicholasville	Kentucky
Troi	Bechet	Blue Delegate	New Orleans	Louisiana
John	Fletcher	Blue Delegate	Baton Rouge	Louisiana
Julianna	Padgett	Blue Delegate	New Orleans	Louisiana

Itara Uma	Sumeros	Blue Delegate	New Orleans	Louisiana
Moriah	Geer	Blue Delegate	Old Town	Maine
Reena	Bernards	Blue Delegate	Chevy Chase	Maryland
Adam	Garfinkle	Red Delegate	Wheaton	Maryland
Jane	Jacobs	Partner	Bethesda	Maryland
Tom	Smerling	Blue Delegate	Chevy Chase	Maryland
Melvin	Whitfield	Blue Delegate	Columbia	Maryland
Mark	Beckwith	Blue Delegate	Worcester	Massachusetts
Rob	Robertson	Blue Delegate	Amherst	Massachusetts
Wendy	Robinson	Blue Delegate	Northampton	Massachusetts
Tom	Sylvester	Blue Delegate	Cambridge	Massachusetts
Betsy	Waters	Blue Delegate	Berlin	Massachusetts
Maggie	Bayless	Blue Delegate	Ann Arbor	Michigan
Al	Lemmo	Red Delegate	Dearborn	Michigan
Michael	Radke	Blue Delegate	Okemos	Michigan
Matthew	Byrne	Blue Delegate	St. Paul	Minnesota
Patricia	DeVries	Blue Delegate	Rosemount	Minnesota
Leah	Doherty	Staff	Roseville	Minnesota
William	Doherty	Staff	Roseville	Minnesota
Karl	Fredrickson	Red Delegate	Northfield	Minnesota
Bruce	MacKenzie	Blue Delegate	Minneapolis	Minnesota
Bruce	Morlan	Red Delegate	Northfield	Minnesota

Rick	Olson	Red Delegate	Prior Lake	Minnesota
Mitchel	Rauk	Red Delegate	Minneapolis	Minnesota
Chuck	Shreffler	Red Delegate	Saint Paul	Minnesota
Bob	Sylvester	Red Delegate	Hutchinson	Minnesota
Marion	Weger	Blue Delegate	Gulfport	Mississippi
Thelma	Coleman	Blue Delegate	St. Louis	Missouri
Lydia	Franklin	Blue Delegate	St. Louis	Missouri
Patsy	Heddinghaus	Red Delegate	Ballwin	Missouri
David	Lewins	Blue Delegate	St. Louis	Missouri
Dillon	McCann	Red Delegate	Columbia	Missouri
Maureen	Rauscher	Blue Delegate	Saint Louis	Missouri
Michael	Rues	Red Delegate	Fulton	Missouri
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Christian	Sarabia	Red Delegate	Sedalia	Missouri
Lloyd	Sloan	Red Delegate	Ballwin	Missouri
Rachelle	Smith	Blue Delegate	St. Louis	Missouri
Roberta	Vogel-Leutung	Blue Delegate	Kansas City	Missouri
Elizabeth	Weiner	Blue Delegate	Springfield	Missouri
Linda	Moore	Blue Delegate	Kansas City	Missouri
Chelsey	Sanford	Blue Delegate	Whitefish	Montana
Suzanne	Jouvenat	Blue Delegate	Lincoln	Nebraska
Katherine	Quinn	Blue Delegate	Las Vegas	Nevada
Samantha	Lewandowski	Blue Delegate	Barrington	New Hampshire

Timothy	Moore	Blue Delegate	Barrington	New Hampshire
Kenneth	Freeman	Red Delegate	Kinnelon	New Jersey
Randy	Freeman	Red Delegate	Kinnelon	New Jersey
Charles	Heckscher	Blue Delegate	Princeton	New Jersey
Karen	Reiner	Blue Delegate	Moorestown	New Jersey
Andrew	Roth	Blue Delegate	South Orange	New Jersey
David	Metzler	Blue Delegate	Albuquerque	New Mexico
Kelly	Andino	Red Delegate	Astoria	New York
David	Blankenhorn	Staff	New York	New York
Bruce	France	Red Delegate	Albany	New York
Caroline	Giuffra	Observer	New York	New York
Elizabeth	Giuffra	Red Delegate	New York	New York
Joyce	Giuffra	Red Delegate	New York	New York
David	Greene	Blue Delegate	Dobbs Ferry	New York
Riley	Hart	Blue Delegate	Schenectady	New York
Mikayla	Irlle	Blue Delegate	Brooklyn	New York
JoAnn	Luehring	Blue Delegate	Ossining	New York
Hillary	Luehring-Jones	Blue Delegate	Brooklyn	New York
Stephen	Mayo	Red Delegate	New Rochelle	New York
Chivona	Newsome	Blue Delegate	Bronx	New York
Hawk	Newsome	Blue Delegate	Bronx	New York
Leah	Sargeant	Red Delegate	New York	New York
Eric	Steinlauf	Blue Delegate	New York	New York

Peter	Yarrow	Musician	New York	New York
Ruth	Backstrom	Blue Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Julie	Boler	Blue Delegate	Raleigh	North Carolina
Angela	Clark	Red Delegate	Raleigh	North Carolina
Mark	Epstein	Blue Delegate	Gastonia	North Carolina
Elton	Futrell	Red Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Penelope	Gardner	Blue Delegate	Raleigh	North Carolina
Julie	Gordon	Blue Delegate	Hendersonville	North Carolina
Cybele	Hetherington	Red Delegate	Asheville	North Carolina
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Immanuel	Jarvis	Red Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Valarie	Jarvis	Red Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Rich	Midkiff	Red Delegate	Charlotte	North Carolina
Katherine	Peterson	Red Delegate	Fairview	North Carolina
Allen	Quigley	Red Delegate	Wilmington	North Carolina
Jennifer	Stepp	Red Delegate	Gastonia	North Carolina
Cecilia	Warshaw	Blue Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Steve	Warshaw	Blue Delegate	Durham	North Carolina
Krishana	Polite	Red Delegate	Raleigh	North Carolina
Krisanna	Peterson	Blue Delegate	Bismarck	North Dakota
William	Fry	Red Delegate	Blanchester	Ohio
David	Lapp	Red Delegate	South Lebanon	Ohio
Andrea	McDonough	Blue Delegate	Pickerington	Ohio
Evan	McDonough	Red Delegate	Pickerington	Ohio
Kouhyar	Mostashfi	Blue Delegate	Springboro	Ohio

Tom	Navin	Partner	Fairfield	Ohio
Laura	Rocker	Blue Delegate	Shaker Heights	Ohio
Christina	Smith	Blue Delegate	Waynesville	Ohio
Gregory	Smith	Red Delegate	Waynesville	Ohio
Janice	Smith	Red Delegate	Waynesville	Ohio
Melissa	Smith	Red Delegate	Franklin	Ohio
Ronni Lynn	Smith	Red Delegate	Waynesville	Ohio
Richard	Stoff	Partner	Columbus	Ohio
Michael	Taggart	Red Delegate	Delaware	Ohio
Ray	Warrick	Red Delegate	Maineville	Ohio
Chris	Watson	Red Delegate	Oregonia	Ohio
Kim	Watson	Blue Delegate	Oregonia	Ohio
Rob	Weidenfeld	Blue Delegate	Loveland	Ohio
Sheryl	Sullivan	Blue Delegate	Nichols Hills	Oklahoma
Shannon	Warren	Blue Delegate	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma
Denise	Lundblade	Red Delegate	Portland	Oregon
Jim	Lundblade	Red Delegate	Portland	Oregon
Chip	Masarie	Blue Delegate	Portland	Oregon
Cynthia	O'Brien	Blue Delegate	Gresham	Oregon
Brenna	Bry	Blue Delegate	East Stroudsburg	Pennsylvania
Philip	Donnelly	Blue Delegate	Barto	Pennsylvania
Albert	Eisenberg	Red Delegate	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
Eva	Haddon	Red Delegate	Stroudsburg	Pennsylvania
Cindy	Heck	Blue Delegate	West Chester	Pennsylvania

David	Lenig	Blue Delegate	Glenville	Pennsylvania
Jennifer	Livingston	Red Delegate	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
Currie	Thompson	Blue Delegate	Gettysburg	Pennsylvania
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Karen	Ward	Red Delegate	Bloomsburg	Pennsylvania
Ro	Mede	Blue Delegate	Warwick	Rhode Island
Shari	Jung	Blue Delegate	Clemson	South Carolina
Margaret	Manning	Red Delegate	Greenville	South Carolina
Hannah	Booth	Blue Delegate	Pierre	South Dakota
Daniel	Darling	Red Delegate	Hermitage	Tennessee
Lynn	Heady	Blue Delegate	Nashville	Tennessee
Ronald	Heady	Blue Delegate	Nashville	Tennessee
Judith	Ideker	Blue Delegate	Knoxville	Tennessee
Austin	Ramsey	Red Delegate	Kingsport	Tennessee
Adam	Rosenbalm	Red Delegate	Blountville	Tennessee
Steve	Seskin	Musician	Nashville	Tennessee
Deb	Smith	Blue Delegate	Nashville	Tennessee
Sage	Snider	Blue Delegate	Nashville	Tennessee
David	Thain	Red Delegate	Goodlettsville	Tennessee
George	Bouhasin	Blue Delegate	McKinney	Texas
Amber	Compton	Red Delegate	Austin	Texas
Nancy	Dixon	Blue Delegate	Austin	Texas
Eleanor	Goodwin	Blue Delegate	Coppell	Texas

Myrna	King	Red Delegate	Austin	Texas
David	LaCook	Red Delegate	Houston	Texas
Steve	Saltwick	Red Delegate	Austin	Texas
Mike	Seay	Blue Delegate	Austin	Texas
Jacob	Hess	Red Delegate	Paradise	Utah
Erika	Munson	Blue Delegate	Sandy	Utah
Jeff	Walker	Red Delegate	Ogden	Utah
Brien	Benson	Red Delegate	Reston	Virginia
Katrina	Derderian	Red Delegate	Arlington	Virginia
Geoffrey	Kabaservice	Red Delegate	Alexandria	Virginia
Donna	Murphy	Blue Delegate	Fairfax	Virginia
Luke	Phillips	Red Delegate	Stafford	Virginia
Mel	Pine	Red Delegate	Hamilton	Virginia
Butch	Porter	Red Delegate	Leesburg	Virginia
Paul	Roche	Red Delegate	Herndon	Virginia
William	Roos	Red Delegate	Arlington	Virginia
Jeffrey	Williams	Blue Delegate	Henrico	Virginia
Michael	Bent	Red Delegate	Vancouver	Washington
Will	Clemmer	Blue Delegate	Bremerton	Washington
Jim	Ewel	Blue Delegate	Clyde Hill	Washington
Blake	Lundquist	Blue Delegate	Seattle	Washington
Sara	Thomsen	Blue Delegate	Charles Town	West Virginia
Lisa	Erickson	Red Delegate	Osceola	Wisconsin
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>
Kim	Gearin	Blue Delegate	Star Prairie	Wisconsin



Cameron	Swallow	Blue Delegate	Kenosha	Wisconsin
Rustin	Burr	Red Delegate	Sheridan	Wyoming
Kris	Korfanta	Blue Delegate	Ranchester	Wyoming

## 12. About Better Angels

### Mission

Better Angels is a citizens' organization uniting red and blue Americans in a working alliance to depolarize America. As individuals, we try to understand the other side's point of view, even if we don't agree with it. In our communities, we engage those we disagree with, looking for common ground and ways to work together. In politics, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us.

### Origins

Better Angels was born in response to the crisis of polarization—a growing crisis that hampers government, destroys trust, degrades public discussion, fosters isolation and despair, and harms personal relationships. Polarization reflects the tearing apart of our social fabric, as trust in our institutions reaches historic lows, distrust of one another on the basis of politics reaches all-time highs, and disturbing trends in race relations and in social and class friction point to increasing conflict. Better Angels began its current work in late 2016, when 20 red and blue citizens came together in South Lebanon, Ohio. Several months later, a few of us drove across the country on a bus, sleeping in homes of local volunteers and piloting our program in 40 communities in 10 states.

### Why the Name “Better Angels”?

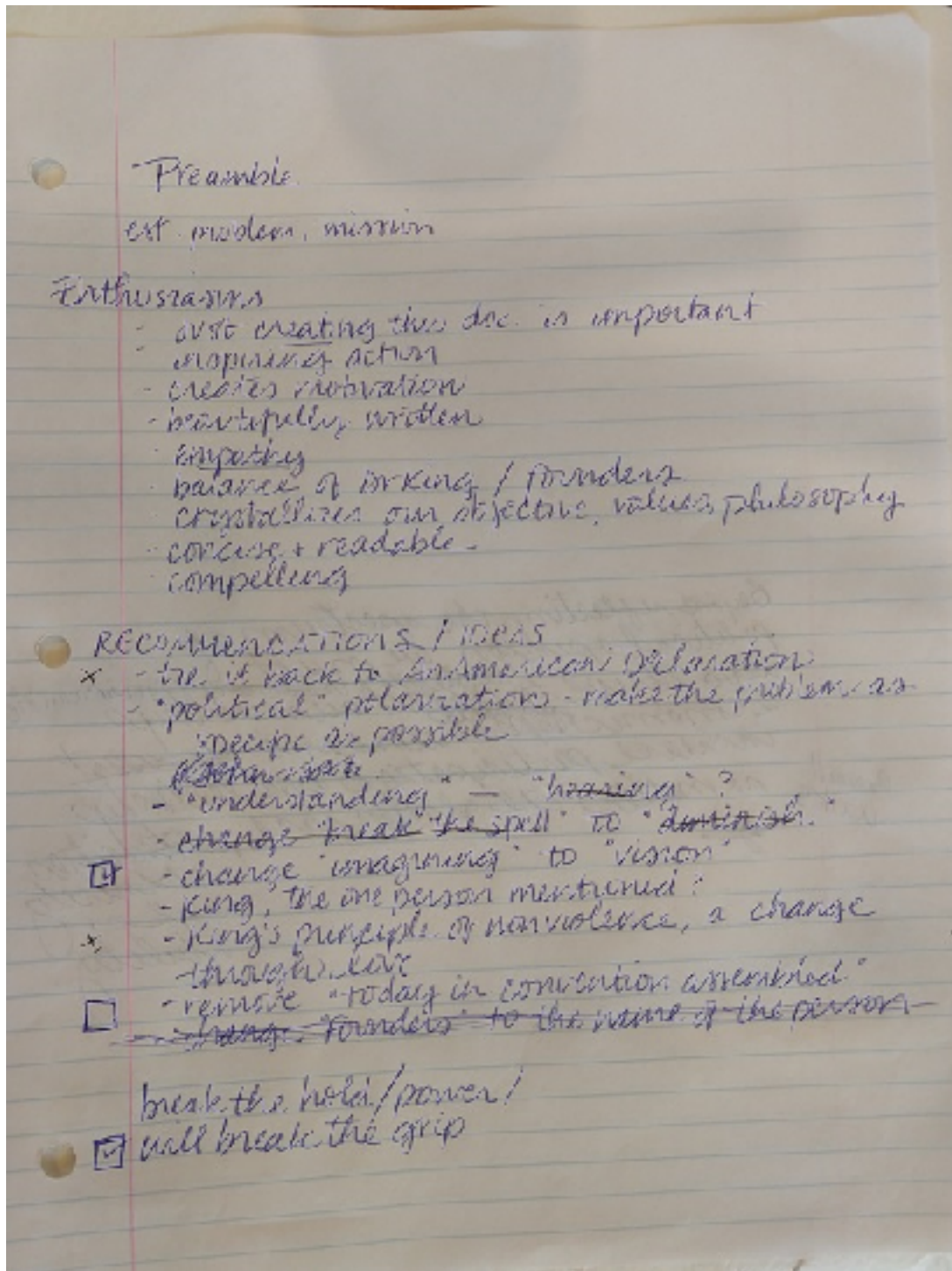
*We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory... will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.*

—Abraham Lincoln, 1861

The idea of recognizing something that's shared with the other — even in moments of fierce conflict — is beautifully reflected in Abraham Lincoln's use of the term “better angels” in his First Inaugural Address in 1861, on the eve of the Civil War. William Seward, who would serve as Lincoln's Secretary of State, had suggested that Lincoln close his speech by calling upon the “the guardian angel of the nation.” Lincoln changed it to “the better angels of our nature.” In Seward's version, what was needed would come from outside us. In Lincoln's version, it would come from within us, something “better” in the “nature” of both Northerners and Southerners. Today in our dangerously fractured nation, surely we all need to be touched by something “better” within us.

## A. Strategy Platform Deliberation & Revisions Sessions Input

### Preamble & Conclusion Session



## Theory of Change Session

### Enthusiasm

Change begins with ourselves

Like the progression

Describing what we're moving  
towards (positive moving forward)

Long term goal

Specifying what kind of institutional  
change we seek

Reminding us to be organized

Education as priority

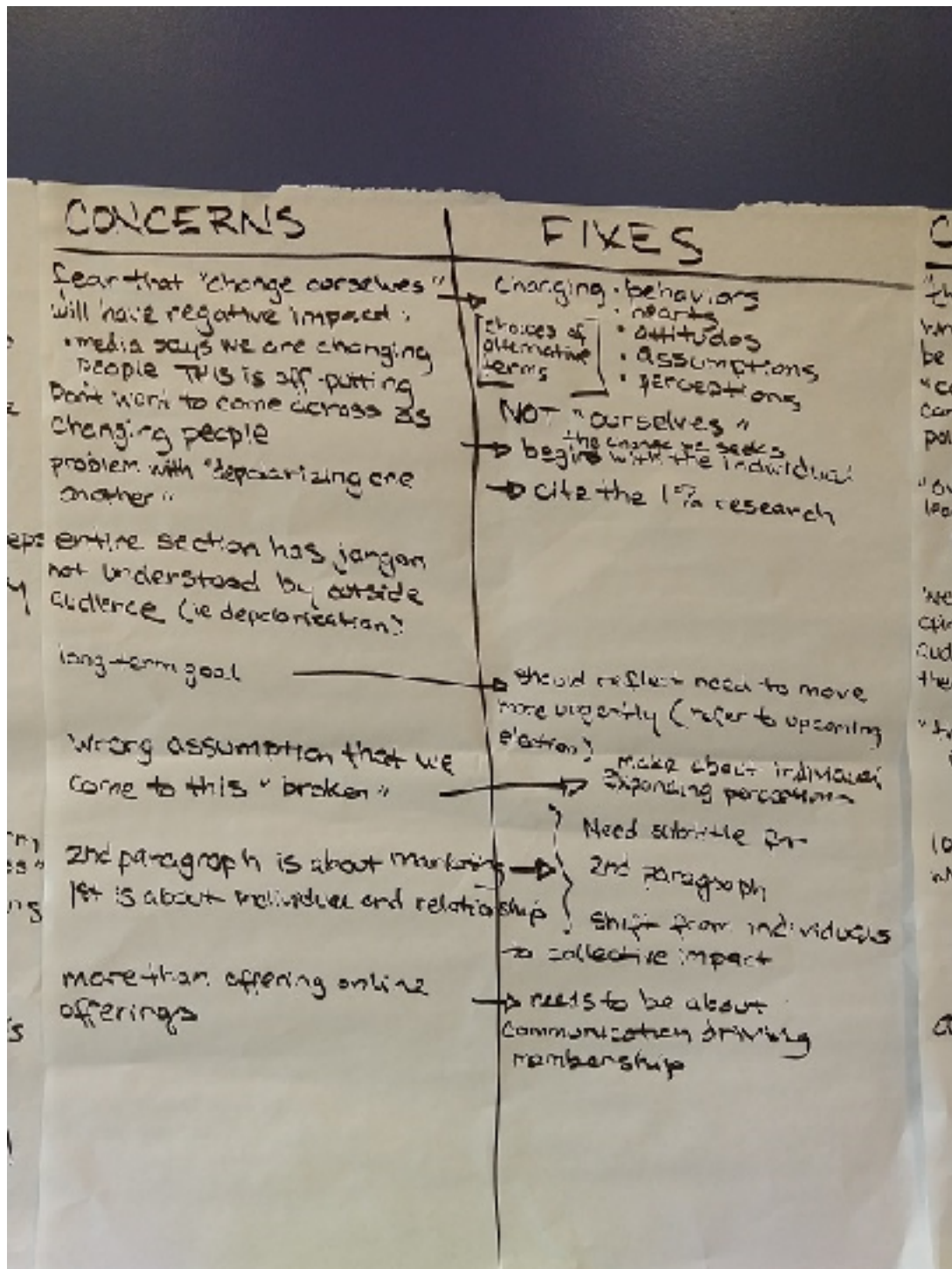
Defining involved & committed

Media as focus

Theory of Change Session (Cont.)

CONCERNS	FIXES
<p>Seemed like a theory of growth / scaling [not ToA]</p> <p>Unclear what we are changing (BA or America?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Strategies for change in America</li> <li>→ Framework for driving the change we seek</li> <li>→ we're developing a process to make change happen</li> <li>→ include some specific steps</li> <li>→ theory / process / strategy distinctly made</li> </ul>
<p>"reflect America"</p> <p>no mention of location, no reference to "rural"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ <del>stimulate change</del></li> <li>→ no matter the gender</li> <li>→ add "cultures"</li> <li>→ include reference to location (ie, rural, urban)</li> <li>→ add more socioeconomic term ie, there is lower than "working class"</li> <li>→ include independents / libertarians</li> <li>→ encourage multi-generational participation</li> </ul>
<p>"can't" means we're not as</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ reflect our country socio-econ including pol. from all backgrounds</li> <li>→ eliminate "as simple as"</li> <li>→ we can serve more effectively by being more inclusive</li> </ul>
<p>last paragraph puts ppl. in groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ eliminate last paragraph "reflect America"</li> <li>→ use word "strives"</li> </ul>

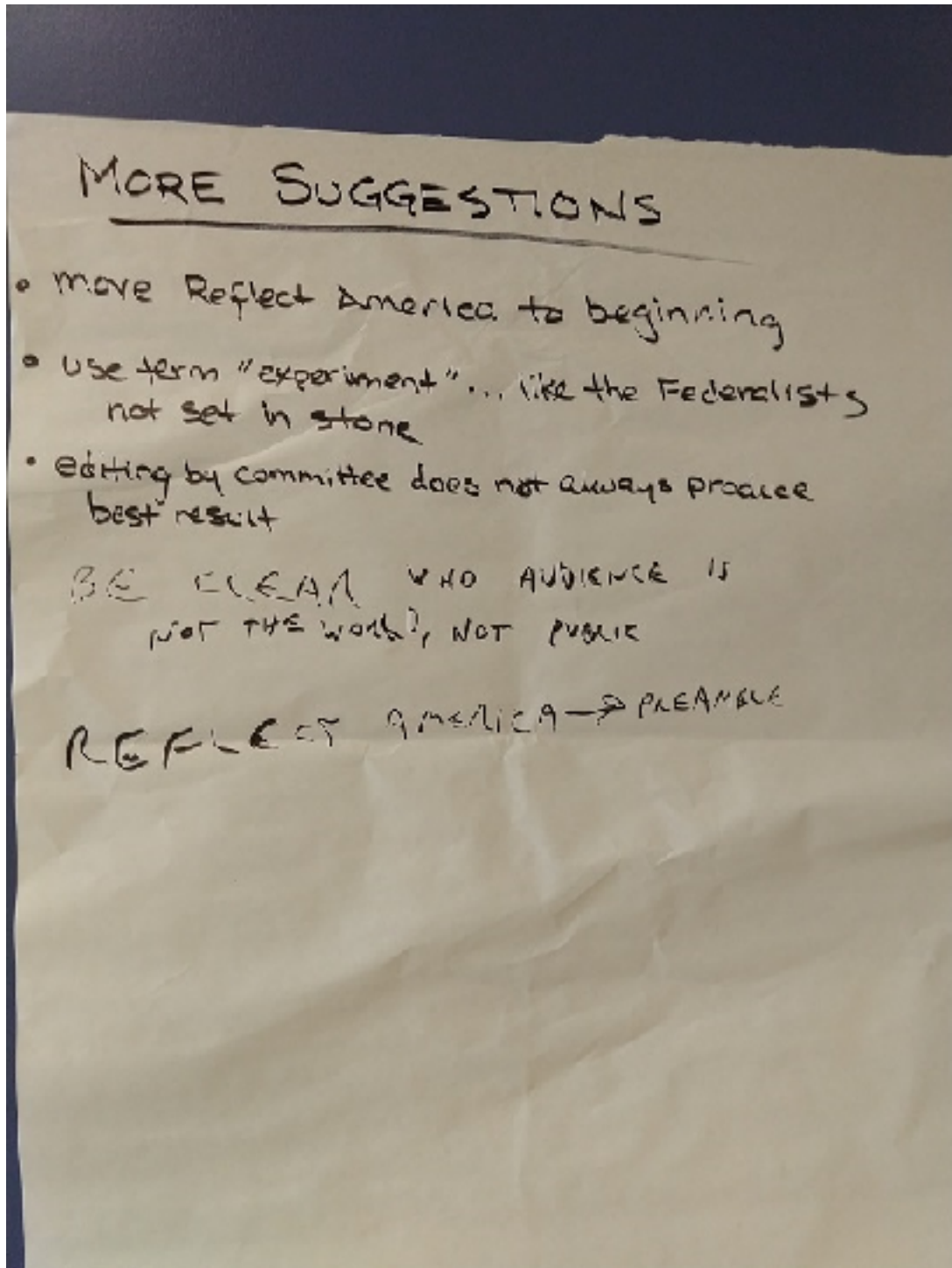
## Theory of Change Session (Cont.)



## Theory of Change Session (Cont.)

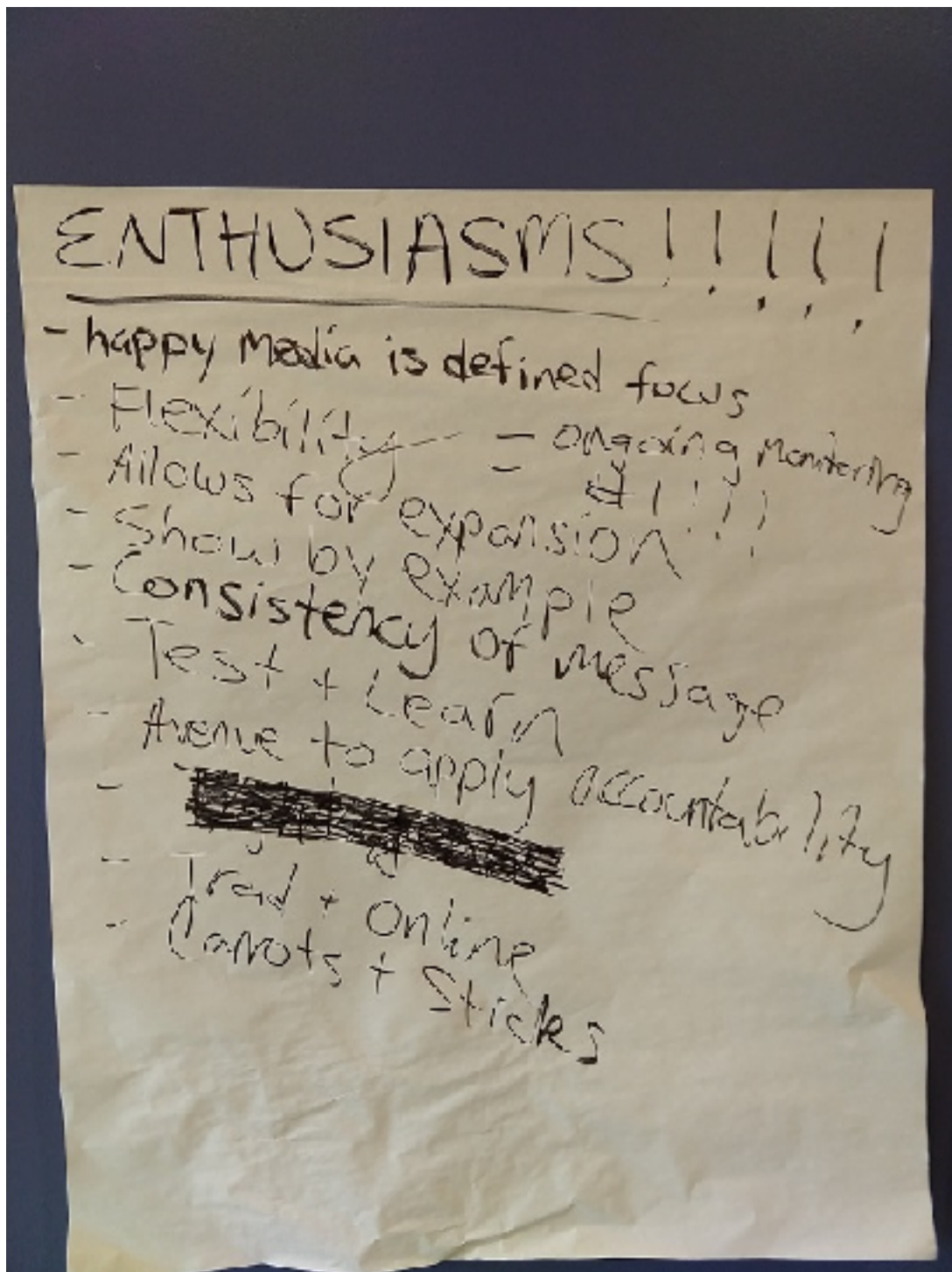
CONCERNS	FIXES
<p>"Thought leadership" -                      what does it mean? can                      be off-putting... sound like                      "controlling thoughts"                      can sound like extension of                      political correctness</p>	<p>→ thoughtful leadership                      (note: some object this phrase does                      not describe some thing)</p> <p>could use                      → "key opinion leaders"</p> <p>(strike first sentence)</p>
<p>"Our top requires thought                      leadership"                      problematic sentence</p>	<p>→ eliminate or revise</p> <p>→ expand perceptions requires sound                      fact based evidence/research</p>
<p>We need influential people whose                      opinions are considered by larger                      audience - listeners choose what                      they opt into</p>	<p>→ influential leaders to reach                      broad audience</p> <p>ASK research and public voices</p>
<p>"Thought leadership"                      is jargon</p>	<p>→ would like more positive                      forward moving terms                      (build trust, civic muscle)                      and less "anti" language</p>
<p>lots of language about                      what we're working against</p>	<p>→ would like more positive                      forward moving terms                      (build trust, civic muscle)                      and less "anti" language</p>
<p>audience is too broad</p>	<p>→ one simple doc for the                      members</p> <p>→ a second for larger                      audience</p>

## Theory of Change Session (Cont.)





## Media Initiative Session



## Media Initiative Session (Cont.)

# CONCERNS + FIXES

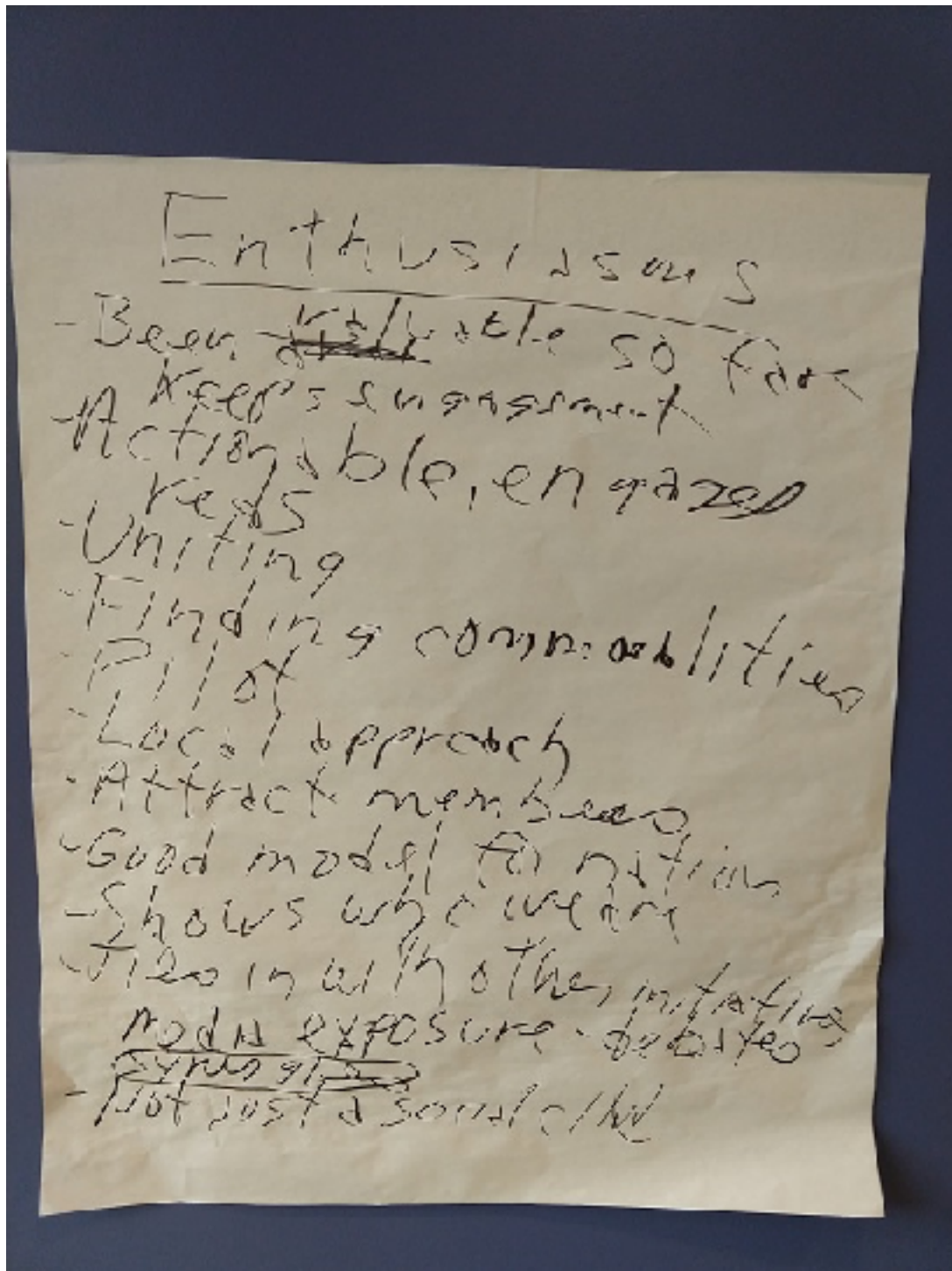
- Code of conduct not specific / tailored enough
- Develop custom CoC with media institutions in concert?
- Make message more distinct?
- Eliminate redundant words (if possible)
- Punch it up
- Say what you mean and mean what you say!
- First sentence confusing + but still important to define terms
- Need to address BAM / existing initiatives

Media Initiative Session (Cont.)

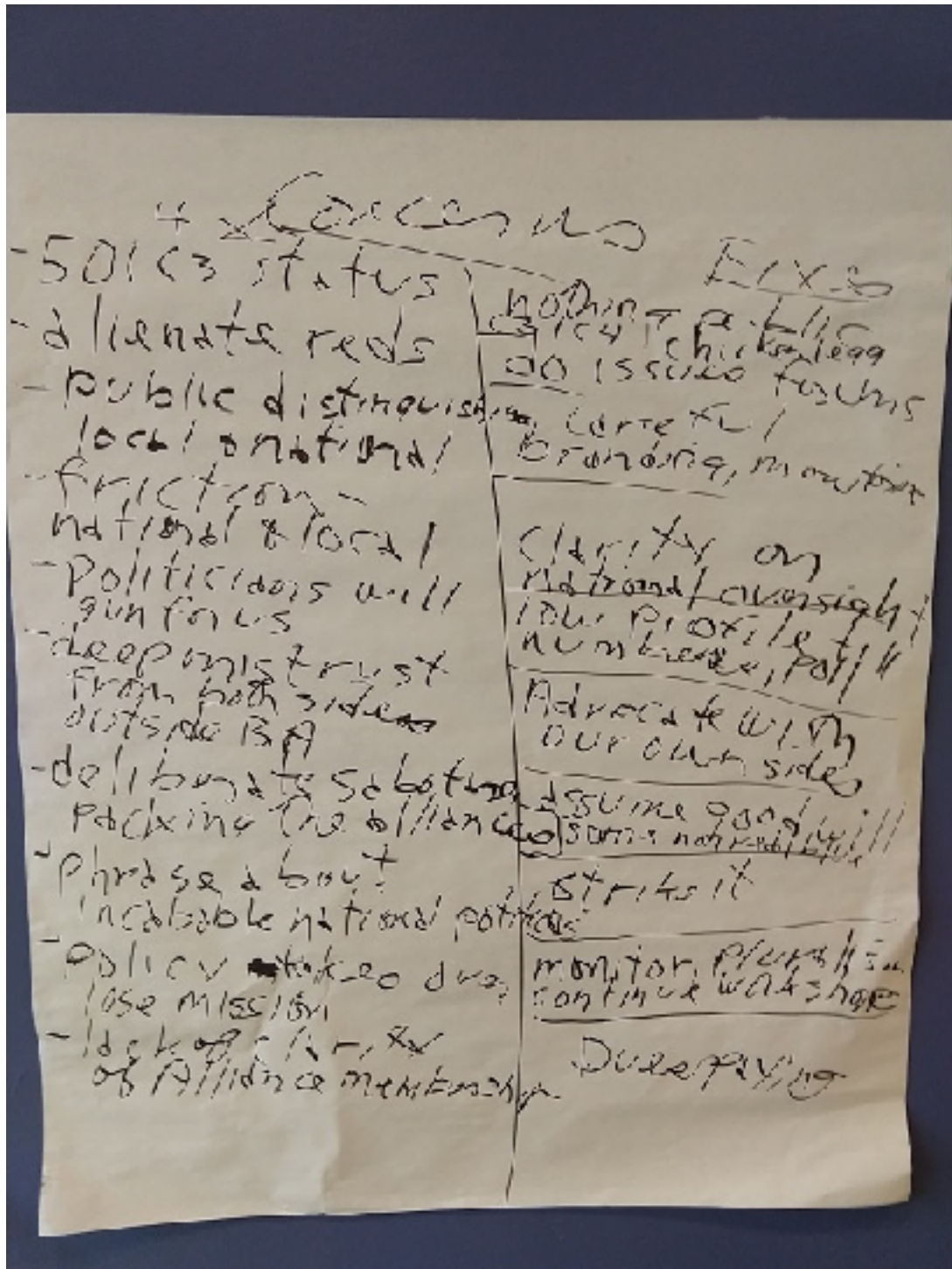
CONCERNS + FIXES Pt. 2

- Add goal. Influence?
- Say it's a "living doc"?
- Be more explicit, concrete, and specific?
- Emphasize mission over tactics?
- Add "+ team" + red + blue
- <sup>incentivize / Model / create</sup> Positive + <sup>challenge / reduce</sup> Negative
- ↳ "Humanizing"

## Public Policy Initiative Session



Public Policy Initiative Session (Cont.)



## Enthusiasms

- Partnership offers way to increase membership more reflective of "We the People"
- Expand Funding Opportunities
- Potential for easier entry by Redso and other possibilities through ~~the~~ partners
- Mutual Benefit
- Multiple Opportunities for Partnering
- Can Provide A Procedure for Partnering
- Broaden Membership

Partnerships Initiative Session (Cont.)

CONCERNS	Fixes
+ Partnership Reflect Does <del>it</del> <del>align</del> <del>with</del> (Plan/ Platform)	Add that Question.
<del>Values</del>	<del>Leadership</del> Addressed
Want Procedures for Local Partnering to be clarified Quickly.	AFTER selecting Red Blue leaders immediately

Appendix B Strategy Platform Signatories

Abigail M. Mudgett  
Doreen P. ...  
Julie Bolen  
Wendy Robinson  
J. Hutto  
Amanda Longwell  
Brenda H. Gray  
Steve Worscham  
Cynthia S. Washburn  
R.K. ...  
Wendy ...  
Shari P. Jung  
Bill Cloutier  
Walter D. Smith  
Johnanne Padgett  
S. Rindaker  
Randy Freeman  
Helena Kellerman  
Balara B. ...  
Ch. D. ...

John H.  
Marion Boyde  
Reginald ...  
G. ...  
Kathy O'Hanlon  
Ann Kelly-Hadden  
M. ...  
Cynthia Tracy  
C. ...  
Cheryl ...  
Keena ...  
William F. Roas, Jr.  
Valerie ...  
Michael ...  
Eli ...  
Janice ...  
D. ...  
Melanie ...  
M. ...



~~William~~

Laurence J. Jansen

Luis Brown

Henry S. Sullivan

Benita L. Bollinger

John

Kimberly

John L. Lanning

James G. Gage

Margaret J. Jansen

John

Don't M. M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

John

~~John~~

George M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

George M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

Ken M. M.

Richard M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

Betty M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

Edward M. M.

John M. M.

John M. M.

Carol Bohl  
~~John [unclear]~~  
~~Carl Dugg~~  
Mike Esley  
John F. [unclear]  
Ro Medle  
Hillary Locking-Jones  
Bill Byl  
~~Frank Hardice~~  
~~James [unclear]~~  
~~Patricia Allen~~  
Cameron Sudders  
Eric [unclear]  
Karen Uma Sunceron  
David D. [unclear]  
Van C. [unclear]  
Judit S. [unclear]  
Peter [unclear]  
Bruce A. [unclear]

Bruce R. [unclear]  
Kirstene [unclear]  
James D. [unclear]  
Michael W. [unclear]  
Tom Moar  
Mitch Rank  
Domenick W. [unclear]  
~~[unclear]~~  
Mark [unclear]  
[unclear]  
Cybele [unclear]  
Chai [unclear]  
[unclear]  
[unclear]  
Lynn Heady  
Leland [unclear]  
Evelyn [unclear]  
Romita [unclear]



## Appendix C Press Coverage

- **The Journal Times**
  - [https://journaltimes.com/news/opinion/columnists/we-are-humans-before-we-are-liberals-or-conservatives/article\\_fc9824d9-0eb6-568f-bccc-b556c11f749f.html](https://journaltimes.com/news/opinion/columnists/we-are-humans-before-we-are-liberals-or-conservatives/article_fc9824d9-0eb6-568f-bccc-b556c11f749f.html)
- **Kenosha News**
  - [https://www.kenoshanews.com/opinion/local\\_columnists/a-time-honored-concept-is-that-relationships-fuel-healthy-living/article\\_040af9ab-6f33-517b-822f-d3f33d0b3969.html](https://www.kenoshanews.com/opinion/local_columnists/a-time-honored-concept-is-that-relationships-fuel-healthy-living/article_040af9ab-6f33-517b-822f-d3f33d0b3969.html)
- **Harry Boyte in the Twin Cities**
  - [https://www.twincities.com/2019/07/19/harry-c-boyte-we-the-people-meeting-polarization-and-other-challenges/?fbclid=IwAR2V2hMmus\\_aqxckJecvqqm-iP4asW1BAZ12dw1QCuCzQjW9z1VCSO0F\\_b0](https://www.twincities.com/2019/07/19/harry-c-boyte-we-the-people-meeting-polarization-and-other-challenges/?fbclid=IwAR2V2hMmus_aqxckJecvqqm-iP4asW1BAZ12dw1QCuCzQjW9z1VCSO0F_b0)
- **Lynden Times**
  - [https://www.lyndentribune.com/news/group-tries-to-find-common-ground/article\\_acde501c-be2c-11e9-a7ff-33f6a461a065.html](https://www.lyndentribune.com/news/group-tries-to-find-common-ground/article_acde501c-be2c-11e9-a7ff-33f6a461a065.html)
- **The American Conservative**
  - <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/civil-conversation-your-time-has-come/>
- **Florida Today**
  - <https://www.floridatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/08/05/uncivil-times-try-let-better-angels-guide-you-opinion/1915727001/>
- **Arkansas Business**
  - <https://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/127599/reaching-across-the-political-divide-cindy-kyser-commentary>
- **Southern Minn**
  - [http://www.southernminn.com/owatonna\\_peoples\\_press/news/article\\_663e63c1-4efa-52ae-aace-ead78409c768.html](http://www.southernminn.com/owatonna_peoples_press/news/article_663e63c1-4efa-52ae-aace-ead78409c768.html)
- **Blue Ridge Times**
  - <https://www.blueridgenow.com/opinion/20190714/gordon-we-need-to-restore-civility-in-politics>
- **NPR MN**
  - <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/07/08/how-to-bring-out-the-better-angels-in-your-community>
- **David on Laura Flanders**

- <https://lauraflanders.org/2019/07/better-angels/>
- **Ciaran on Denver Radio**
  - <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/139-mandy-connell-26936030/episode/07032019-better-angels-46652949>
- **Florida Today**
  - <https://www.floridatoday.com/story/opinion/2019/07/03/civility-brevard-workshop-teach-talking-politics-people-you-disagree/1632491001/>
- **Greater Good Magazine (UC Berkely)**
  - [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_americans\\_can\\_find\\_what\\_they\\_have\\_in\\_common](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_americans_can_find_what_they_have_in_common)
- **VIDEO: KAMR (Local NBC Affiliate in Amarillo, TX)**
  - <https://www.myhighplains.com/news/local-news/better-angels-host-red-blue-workshop/>
- **Tennessean Op-Ed**
  - <http://nashvilletennessean.tn.newsmemory.com/?publink=0db16c402>
- **Glenn Falls Post-Star Op-Ed**
  - [https://poststar.com/opinion/columnists/guest-essay-better-angels-change-my-view-of-the-other/article\\_ce33c5c9-d6dc-53de-a960-6f71d1d6e2d6.html](https://poststar.com/opinion/columnists/guest-essay-better-angels-change-my-view-of-the-other/article_ce33c5c9-d6dc-53de-a960-6f71d1d6e2d6.html)
- **Carrol County Times**
  - <https://www.carrollcountytimes.com/news/local/cc-better-angels-workshop-20190628-story.html>

## Appendix D Picture Gallery











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