



Braver Politics – Renewing Trust Among Elected Officials and Citizens

What is Braver Angels?

Political polarization, bitterness, and rancor are dividing Americans in ways that threaten the future of our nation. We need to find a way past what Braver Angels co-founder William Doherty describes as taking someone's policy positions and/or party affiliation and making it a fundamental test of their humanity and integrity.

Founded after the 2016 election, Braver Angels (<https://braverangels.org/>) is a national non-profit led by a small staff and a multitude of citizen volunteers. Our mission is to bring Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic. Embracing core values of respect, humility, honesty, and responsible citizenship, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us and foster opportunities to listen to and better understand those with whom we disagree.

Our goal is not to change people's views of issues, but to change their views of each other. We seek ways to engage kindly with others, believing that everyone is worthy of dignity and respect. Braver Angels is actively growing alliances (chapters) across the United States and offers a portfolio of activities: workshops, debates, book and movie discussions, forums, podcasts, structured conversations, college debates, and town hall events.

The Braver Angels Pledge

- 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.

What is Braver Politics?

The newest initiative of Braver Angels, Braver Politics fosters opportunities for elected officials and their staff to develop the skills and commitment to work together in goodwill across political differences. We envision American political institutions remade in the spirit of citizenship and common purpose, where elections are viewed as valid by voters in both parties and trust is restored between voters and the officials they elect.

Braver Politics Program Objectives

- To offer opportunities for elected officials and staff to build productive relationships with peers across the partisan divide.
- To provide opportunities and teach skills so that elected officials and staff successfully lead Braver Angels-style events and initiatives with voters in their districts.
- To hold Braver Angels candidate debates and town halls with elected officials from both parties.
- To bring together conservative-leaning voters concerned with voter fraud and progressive-leaning people of color and allies concerned with voter suppression to build relationships, look for areas of potential common ground, and make recommendations for the future.
- To publicly recognize and award elected officials and staff members for choosing to participate in Braver Politics activities.
- To re-energize elected officials and staff in a belief that public service is an important, worthwhile, and satisfying enterprise.

Who Can Participate in Braver Politics?

While we welcome elected officials and their staff from administrative and judicial branches of government, our priority in the immediate future is for elected officials and staff from the legislative branches, especially at the state and local level. (Note: There are about 520,000 elected officials in the United States. Of these, about 96% are the local or county level, about 3.6% are state, and about 0.1% are federal.)

Why Should Elected Leaders Participate?

We encourage you to reflect on your experience as an elected official, including recalling your expectations and intentions when you first ran for office. Has the experience lived up to your initial hopes and dreams? Are you discouraged by the present atmosphere of polarization, bitterness, and rancor and looking for a better way? Are you interested in learning new skills to help you engage more effectively with constituents who disagree with you? Are you interested in stepping up into a new leadership role that embraces a high level of humanity and integrity?

To participate in Braver Politics activities or for more information, please fill out the form at braverangels.org/politics. We look forward to hearing from you!