



# Community Values

## Communications Toolkit

### Messaging the Campaign for Community Values

*A Collaboration Presented by*



The cover image is taken from a mural painted by Carlos “Botong” Francisco, recipient of the title “National Artist of the Philippines.” Francisco’s mural is titled “Bayanihan,” a term that refers to a spirit of communal unity and effort. The origin of the term bayanihan can be traced from a tradition in the Philippines where an entire village would help a neighbor move to a new home by literally carrying the entire house on their shoulders. This example of community values in action exemplifies the spirit of the Campaign for Community Values.

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## Introduction

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### *What are Community Values and why are we promoting them now?*

For the past 30 years, the theme of individualism has dominated our national dialogue and common culture. Under the guise of personal responsibility, this narrative often celebrates individual success over the common good and blames individuals who fall behind instead of examining societal factors and root causes. It also favors solutions that leave individuals to go it alone, instead of addressing our challenges collectively.

We have also watched the resulting policies leave millions of people behind. Evidence suggests that Americans are becoming tired of this individualistic approach to policy, and to life in general. Signs indicate that the country is ready for a new inclusive vision and a new generation of positive solutions.

Central to that vision, as well as to the solutions, is the notion of Community Values. This is the idea that we share responsibility for each other, that our fates are linked. Embracing Community Values means believing that we prosper as individuals and as a people when our politics and policies reflect that we're all in it together. Whether described as interconnection, mutual responsibility, or loving your neighbor as you love yourself, Community Values are moral beliefs, a practical reality, and an important strategy.

Those committed to social justice have always embraced Community Values. However, in an increasingly individualistic environment, we often lost the idea of championing values in the scramble to react against specific, issue-based threats. We believe that it's time to reclaim values in the political conversation. It's time to turn Americans' attention to our long history of working collectively, standing up for each other, and upholding the common good.

This toolkit provides ideas, advice, and resources for moving toward this new political conversation, beginning with the 2008 presidential election. Included here are a range of practical tools, strategies and background information. We've also included examples of how to infuse all of our communications opportunities with Community Values. We hope that the approaches, words, and phrases offered here help spread the drumbeat of Community Values throughout the 2008 election and beyond. We know Americans value Community. We now need to restore the balance between the individualism and Community Values, moving hearts and minds to support the policies we know will help us all truly rise together.

### Using this Toolkit

This publication contains a balance of historical context, framing advice, and practical tools. It is designed so that pieces can stand-alone, so if you're most interested in practical applications, you can flip directly to that section and get started. If you're more interested in a big picture approach to Community Values, you might find some of the contextual information toward the front useful. Whatever your purpose, we hope you find some tools here that make it easy and compelling for you to incorporate this theme into your work.

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# *Community Values Communication Toolkit*

## *Section A: Framing and Messaging Community Values*

### **In This Section:**

*Our Shared History of Community Values*

*Community Values Phrase Basket*

*Building a Message*

*Community Values Caveats*

*Community Values in Current Political Discourse*

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## Our Shared History of Community Values

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### *And the Dominant Conservative Narrative*

#### Community Values are American Values

Our country has long understood and honored the idea of Community Values. We've always embraced the idea of different people uniting to accomplish a common goal and to move our society forward together. That story is embodied in our national motto of *E Pluribus Unum*—"From Many, One." We've embraced it in our efforts to meet common challenges like World War II, the Great Depression, childhood diseases, the denial of civil rights, even the race to the moon. In embracing Community Values, our culture rejects selfishly pursuing individual interests at the expense of others. Popular rejection of the greedy businessperson or corporation, the corrupt politician and even the litterbug show that our country deeply values community and collective responsibility.

But Americans have also long valued the ideal of the rugged individual and the "up-by-the-bootstraps" narrative. In this story the lone striver conquers daunting challenges (the frontier, business competition, the athletic world), apparently with no help from anyone. Though this narrative is never fully accurate, it carries a lot of weight in our society. Over the last three decades, the political pendulum has swung to the extreme end of this individualism spectrum, abandoning our shared interests and robbing our country of the ability to achieve great things.

#### Framing, Values, and the Conservative Movement

That extreme swing is due in large part to decades-long, concerted and well-funded efforts by conservative think tanks, foundations, and politicians to turn public will against Community Values. Those efforts couple public outreach with radical changes in policy, dismantling and defunding shared systems that make our society work. These systems range from labor protections, to environmental laws, to civil rights provisions, to social safety net programs, and even bankruptcy protection.

This conservative strategy also fostered hostility toward those struggling for equal opportunity—people of color, women, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and poor people. Individualism, in this context, has meant ignoring and refusing to recognize that barriers to opportunity still exist. It then demonized those of us who would tear down those barriers.

This conservative drumbeat of messages was carried out through books like Thomas Sowell's "The Declining Significance of Race," commentary by "public intellectuals" like Dinesh D'Souza, writing and research by think tanks like the Federalist Society and American Enterprise Institute, advocacy by groups like the Center for Equal Opportunity and the Center for Individual Rights, and rhetoric and policies by conservative leaders in government, like Reagan, now-Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, Attorney General Edwin Meese, California Governor Pete Wilson, and California Regent Ward Connerly.

In each case, conservatives reached out strategically to American audiences through an aggressive media strategy that included talk radio, print, television, and later blogs, as well as a grassroots organizing strategy that mobilized activists and spokespeople for their cause. Each of these efforts, and many others, fit within the extreme individualism frame that is at the heart of the conservative worldview and policy agenda.

## Moving Forward

This is a crucial time to change that trend; to reignite our society's commitment to Community Values, and to move away from extreme "you're on your own" policies. Presidential elections are one of the few times the media, political and even dinner table conversations turn to our national values, and then explore the leadership and policies needed to achieve them.

We are, together, in a strong position to tell a new story to a growing audience. As a community of organizers, advocates, faith leaders, scholars, and community activists, we collectively possess deep knowledge, experience and networks. And, at a time when voters believe strongly that politicians are placing their political party before the interests of the country, we represent independent and authentic voices in the debate. Concerted and consistent communications from our network, rooted in shared values and positive solutions, can be new and noteworthy in ways that command interest and enthusiasm.

## Community Values Phrase Basket

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### *We're All in it Together – So Let's Say the Same Things!*

Below we've provided the drumbeat terms that we plan to track and measure the use of, to see how Community Values language is faring in the political debate. We've also included some terms to use to define the opposition.

It may feel awkward at first to weave the terms into your communications. But if you think about how others have used familiar terms such as "family values" or "tax relief," you may start to get the idea of what it looks like when a term infiltrates the popular vocabulary.

### *Drumbeat Phrases – to be tracked in media and discourse:*

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<b><u>Community Values Phrases</u></b>	<b><u>Labels for the Values We're Opposing</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Values	<input type="checkbox"/> "You're on your own" (mentality, approach, ideology)
<input type="checkbox"/> Policies/Politics of Connection	<input type="checkbox"/> "Go it alone" (mentality, approach, ideology)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Policies/Politics of Isolation

### *Also suggested depending on audience:*

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<b><u>Community Values Phrases</u></b>	<b><u>Labels for the Values We're Opposing</u></b>
<input type="checkbox"/> (We're all) In it together	<input type="checkbox"/> Community neglect
<input type="checkbox"/> Stronger together	<input type="checkbox"/> Everyone for themselves
<input type="checkbox"/> Sharing the ladder of opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/> Pull yourself up by your bootstraps
<input type="checkbox"/> On the same team	<input type="checkbox"/> Pulling up the ladder behind you
<input type="checkbox"/> Looking out for each other	<input type="checkbox"/> If you're playing to win, you have to play on your own
<input type="checkbox"/> Standing together	<input type="checkbox"/> Standing alone
<input type="checkbox"/> Rising together	<input type="checkbox"/> Leaving people behind
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared or Linked Fate	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Centered Values
<input type="checkbox"/> The Common Good	

## General Talking Points

- This is really about **Community Values**. Are we going to acknowledge that **we're all in this together**, and that we need to **look out for each other**? Or are we going to tell everyone to **go it alone**?
- What's missing here are **Community Values**. Telling people that [issue] is their individual problem is not only unworkable, it's contrary to our nation's long-held belief that we're **stronger together**, and that we **look out for each other** and work for **the common good**.
- What we need are more **policies of connection** that recognize our reliance on each other, and how much more we thrive when we **stand together**. Simply telling people that they're **on their own** is not an American option.
- Look, we're all **on the same team** here. This country thrives when we draw on our **Community Values** to solve our problems. There are those who say that we each need to figure it out **on our own**, but that **go it alone mentality** is obviously unworkable and not an option in today's interconnected world.
- I'm tired of the myth that we should all just **pull ourselves up by our bootstraps**, buck up, and get on with it. When it comes to health care, to our public school system, to the future of social security, I don't want **politics of isolation** to drive public policy. **We're in this together, and we'll rise together.**
- We all know instinctively that we're **stronger together**. And history shows that when we work together to solve our problems, placing the **well-being of the community** as a top priority, we all move forward. When we **leave people behind**, we all suffer. I'm for a country that embraces such **Community Values** again, let's leave the "**go it alone**" **mentality** behind.
- We have to recognize that we live in an interconnected world. Our actions have consequences beyond ourselves. Our **fates are linked**. Insisting on an old-fashioned **go it alone mentality** is not only unworkable, it's just wrong.

## Building a Message

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Where possible, our messages should: emphasize the values at risk; state the problem; explain the solution; and call for action.

- Value at Stake
  - Why should your audience care?
- Problem
  - Documentation when possible
- Solution
  - Avoid issue fatigue – offer a positive solution
- Action
  - What can your audience concretely do? The more specific, the better.

### Example:

- Our shared Community Values mean that we come together to solve our problems. We look out for each other and understand that leaving anyone behind is not an option.
- But we're falling short of that ideal—millions of Americans can't live on the wages they are paid for full-time work. By refusing to address this situation in a meaningful and realistic way, we're failing these workers and members of our community.
- We need to ensure that anyone who is working full time can support their family.
- Tell your Member of Congress to support a real and living wage. It's about workers, families and supporting Community Values.

## Messaging Questions

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Some useful questions to consider when building a message include:

### *Who are the heroes and villains of this story?*

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We need to be conscious of the images and stories that the characters of our narratives invoke and the moral implications of their roles within the frame. Consider the common conservative frame of “tax relief.” There's a lot packed into those two words. If people need “relief” from something, it is an affliction. If taxes are an affliction, they are never good and those who relieve us of them are heroes. Those who propose further affliction are villains. Working within this frame is therefore never helpful for those promoting increased governmental support for programs.

### *Who does the narrative suggest is responsible for implementing solutions?*

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The conservative frame of individualism does far more than suggest that we all need to take responsibility for our actions. By focusing on the individual, it also suggests that we should solve the bulk of our problems ourselves. Instead of an inclusive health care system, for instance, we should have individual health savings accounts. Focusing on individual success stories can have the same effect. If one immigrant came to this country, learned English, started a business and became a model citizen, why would we need any community or

societal level programs to help newcomers? The solution is again portrayed at an individual rather than a systemic level.

*What are the long term implications of this narrative? Does it point toward the solutions we want?*

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Sometimes, in hopes of providing a dramatic, media friendly story advocates use examples that can lead audiences in unhelpful directions. For example, in appealing for money for a specific child abuse prevention program, advocates might use dramatic statistics of children injured or killed each year by abuse and neglect. These statistics will get media coverage and draw attention to the problem of child abuse. However, they are unlikely to lead audiences to the solution that prevention advocates desire. If the long term goal is to increase funding for prevention programs that support parents, advocates have instead made their audience less sympathetic to parents, and more supportive of punitive measures that do not include prevention.

*Does the story inadvertently invoke unhelpful cultural narratives?*

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For instance, in talking about health care, we sometimes use a consumer frame. But this competitive frame is actually unhelpful if the solution we want to promote is universal care. Consumerism implies that we are economic players competing for limited resources. Instead, we want to promote the idea that the system is stronger when we're all in it.

*Does the story use our opponents' frame?*

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Communications researchers like George Lakoff and Shanto Iyengar point out that using our opponents' frame, even to argue against it, just reinforces it. Consider the recent debate about proposed immigration reform. Many advocates engaged in conversations about whether reform would or would not grant "amnesty" to "illegal" immigrants. But by focusing on the word "amnesty," debaters deepened their opponents' "law breaker" frame. In this story, "illegal" immigrants are the villains, as are those who fail to punish immigrants by granting "amnesty" for their law breaking. The heroes of the story are people who want to enforce the law. However well intentioned, arguments that immigration reform is "not amnesty" reinforce the law breaker frame. We should be careful to avoid buying into such frames, particularly when we talk to persuadable audiences who might support our positions if we framed them differently.

## Community Values Caveats

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### *Additional Considerations When Building a Community Values Message*

In our efforts to articulate a compelling vision of community and inclusion, we have to be careful to not completely reject values that resonate for our constituency or unwittingly reinforce dominant frames that pit communities against each other. Below are a few examples of well-meaning strategies that can ultimately back-fire and undermine our shared values.

#### *Attacking personal responsibility*

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It's important to note that promoting Community Values should not appear to abandon all forms of individualism. Americans believe strongly in the value of individualism and "personal responsibility." And that belief cuts across ideological lines.

Research and experience show that people expect individuals to take responsibility and also to control their own destiny. These worries can prevent them from fully embracing Community Values if they view such values as letting people off the hook, providing handouts, or removing individual choices and empowerment. Bringing the idea of opportunity into the conversation can help us to point out that systemic barriers to opportunity prevent many individuals from moving forward.

#### *Talking about interconnections that harm, rather than help, us*

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In stressing community values, we want to emphasize the ties that bind us as neighbors, workers, Americans and humans. Our fates are connected, so it's in all of our best interests to move forward together. However, we should not imply that we only need to care about other people's circumstances if it's in our best interest.

For instance, advocates might make the case that we should cover all immigrants in new health care reform plans because if we don't, we are at risk of becoming infected with any diseases they carry. While invoking a linked theme, this narrative isn't helpful in the long-run as it implies 1) that immigrants are a danger to us and 2) that if their health does not affect us, we don't need to worry about including them.

Instead, we should emphasize that recognizing our connections is important not only to protect our own interests, but also to understand how we're part of something bigger.

#### *Invoking the charity frame when promoting the common good*

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The term common is useful because gives a name to the entity we hope to benefit. It names exactly what we want to win: an outcome that is good for the community. However, this term can also lead people to think of charity first. This idea says that we help others – often termed the "less fortunate" – through "handouts." There are certainly heroes to this story, but if we're not careful, those benefiting from charity can be painted as the villains. In addition, this is a judgmental frame that does not empower groups that have typically faced the biggest barriers to opportunity. In invoking the common good, then, it's important to point out the solutions we seek: shared power and responsibility, not a one-way, "privileged to unprivileged" exchange.

## *Using exclusive or nostalgic versions of community*

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Sometimes we lean toward limited or nostalgic Norman Rockwell illustrations of community that call up ideas of “the old days”, the Eisenhower years, childhood neighborhoods, or our own, limited surroundings. This is problematic for several reasons.

Neighborhoods, for one, are rarely inclusive, so that metaphor alone can be troubling. We need Community Values to mean benefit for everyone, not communities pitted against each other only looking out for their “own.”

Similarly, “the old days” didn’t hold a lot of promise for many groups. People do like the idea of old-fashioned small towns where everyone knows each others’ names, families are intact, and white picket fences prevail. But the old days in the form of 1950’s America was also home to racism, segregation, limited opportunity for women, and hostile to gays and lesbians.

Community Values should mean drawing on our shared history of collectively solving our problems. We can do this by using examples of how we’ve solved problems collectively, such as the New Deal or Civil Rights. This is an instance where patriotism can aid our cause by igniting people’s pride in our ability to work together.

History shows we move forward when we invest in an effective partnership between government and our people. Think of child immunization programs that have wiped out devastating diseases in our country. Think of our Social Security system that has enabled millions of seniors to stay out of poverty. Medicare has kept them safer and healthier without regard to their wealth, race, or region of the country. Think, even, of the interstate highway system, which connected us as a single prosperous nation. To address our health care crisis effectively, we need to invest in those kinds of policies of connection.

## Community Values in Current Political Discourse

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### *How Political Leaders Are Embracing or Attacking Community Values*

Community Values is not a new concept. In fact, recently, various versions of community values have been making their way into political discourse, championed by some, attacked by others. In order to elevate Community Values as a dominant theme in American culture, we need to recognize when and how current leaders are using it. We then need to encourage its champions, and find effective ways to confront opponents.

Below are several examples of current defenses and attacks on the Community Values theme by presidential candidates, along with our analysis. Because this Toolkit does not encourage the support of any particular candidate or party, we have not identified the speakers, who were all candidates for their party's nomination as of September 2007.

### Invoking Community Values: the Ladder of Opportunity

#### Excerpt 1

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*“Nobody gets to pull the ladder up behind them, once they’ve gotten to the top. And everybody has a chance to make the climb.”*

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This metaphor acknowledges personal responsibility: it takes initiative to climb the ladder. However, the speaker also insists that the ladder is communal and shared, not the exclusive property of one group or individual.

#### Excerpt 2

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*“It’s a simple principle of fairness and opportunity, first and always, even in a complex world.”*

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The speaker elevates the values of fairness and opportunity – which are complementary to community.

### Defending Community Values: Part of Something Larger

#### Excerpt 1

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*“They will tell you that the Americans who sleep in the streets and beg for food got there because they’re all lazy or weak of spirit.*

*That the inner-city children who are trapped in dilapidated schools can’t learn and won’t learn, and so we should just give up on them entirely.*

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The speaker challenges the individualism frame’s blame of those facing challenges in our country. By explicitly and harshly stating the mindset’s implicit judgments, the speaker characterizes the approach as lacking in compassion.

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*That the innocent people being slaughtered and expelled from their homes half a world away are somebody else's problem to take care of...*

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**Excerpt 2**

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*[But their struggles are yours] because our individual salvation depends on collective salvation.*

*And because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you will realize your true potential – and become full grown.”*

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The speaker urges a rejection of the mindset he's just described, linking the individual to the collective. He also suggests that there is a wisdom and maturity in moving beyond individual concerns and valuing community.

**Attacking Community Values: Invoking Socialism**

**Excerpt 1**

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*“Look at how [they] talk about the economy. [They] said that it is “time to reject the idea of an ‘on your own’ society” and replace it with shared responsibility. [they prefer] a “we're all in it together society.”*

*I see, out with Adam Smith and in with Karl Marx!...”*

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This quote is interesting because it explicitly attacks the community values frame and its iteration in recent political discourse. Clearly meant for a conservative base, this derisive attack on terms such as “all in it together” might not work with other audiences.

However, it is telling that these terms can still be used as ‘red scare’ tactics with some audiences.

**Excerpt 2**

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*“Don't [they] see that individual initiative is at the heart of America's unprecedented march to world economic leadership”?*

*Adam Smith wasn't heartless. Adam Smith saw that individual initiative would produce the greatest wealth for the entire society...”*

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This either/or approach to personal initiative and collective benefit is important to note. Individual initiative is an important American value; we just need to balance it with the community spirit and collective action wherever possible.

## *Community Values Communication Toolkit*

### *Section B: Applying Community Values to Health Care*

#### **In This Section:**

*Talking Points and Messaging Examples*

*Fact Sheet: Community Solutions to Health Care*

*Applying Community Values to a Health Care Op-Ed*

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## Talking Points and Messaging Examples

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Community Values are a natural fit when we promote an inclusive health care system. The very nature of health insurance rests on the idea that when we share risks and benefits across a vast and diverse pool of people, we all benefit. We need to describe health care as a common resource that's stronger and fairer when we're all in it together: a system that works for everyone when everyone's included.

However, the health care industry and even advocates often frame health care as a consumer good. This reinforces a competitive and individualistic mindset. It implies that people without quality health care are just bad economic competitors. We need to emphasize Community Values over consumerism.

Another useful approach is interconnectedness. Many want universal care, but worry it will reduce their own access and quality of care. The truth is that we're all safer when everyone is healthy. And inclusive solutions will save money down the line. However, we should be careful not to imply, even inadvertently, that the only reason we should provide care is so that "others" do not infect the general population. In the cases of immigration, or urban segregation, that argument perpetuates stereotypes. It also works against the idea that "we're all in it together."

### Using the Value, Problem, Solution, Action Model

- Value:** When it comes to health care, we're all in it together. We're a stronger nation when everyone has the health care they need.
- Problem:** So when 47 million Americans lack health insurance, our whole nation's health and prosperity are at risk.
- Solution:** We need policies of connection in our health care system that will guarantee access to affordable health care for everyone in our country.
- Action:** Ask the presidential candidates if they'll embrace Community Values and guarantee health care for every single member of our nation.

### Messaging Examples

- Embracing Community Values means creating a health care system that works for everyone. Anything less leaves people behind to suffer poor health, bankruptcy, and even early death. We thrive when everyone moves forward, so making sure health care is available for everyone is critical to our nation's success.
- Health care reform should create a system that works for everyone. That means health care has to be universal, free of racial and ethnic bias, comprehensive, and designed to meet community needs. If one element is missing, the system is incomplete. For example, we might expand insurance to everyone in a state, but that doesn't mean everyone is getting the same quality of care. We need policies of connection here, that look at and address all the pieces of our health care system equally. In taking a true Community Values approach to health care, we can't overlook quality, access or other important issues when we think about coverage.
- Americans agree that everyone deserves an equal chance in life. But too many children start off with limited opportunity to keep and maintain good health. This limits all their

future opportunities. Children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow, and participate fully in our society. Our current system focuses on policies of isolation. It tells families and children to go it alone when it comes to health care. This system is failing our country's children, especially those from low-income and families of color. It's not right and it's not in our country's interest.

- When it comes to health care reform, we need to knock down any barriers based on income, race, gender and other aspects of who we are. There's a lot of evidence that people of color and people in low-income areas don't have the same access to or quality of care as others. The research says this is true *even when they have the same health insurance*. Community Values demand more from us than this. It's only sensible, fair, and right that we find solutions that offer quality care to everyone.
- When it comes to health care, it doesn't make sense to force people to "go it alone." We need to promote a Community Values approach. When we spread resources fairly, everyone gets the care they need before problems become costly and more difficult to treat. All social insurance rests on this idea of pooling resources and sharing risk as broadly as possible, recognizing that we're all in it together. This is particularly important in health care.
- If we care about Community Values, we care about putting people first in health care reform. Our system needs to consider human and community needs first and foremost - not short-term financial gain. This will pay off in the long run. We'll have a healthier society with fewer preventable illnesses to manage, for one. More importantly, caring for people over money is just the right thing to do.
- Our history shows that we're stronger when we tackle tough issues together. When we have worked together for clean and healthy drinking water, to provide child immunizations, or to reduce smoking, we've all benefited. We're currently looking for ways to address childhood obesity together. We know that this Community Values approach will work better than telling families to figure it out on their own.
- History shows we move forward when we invest in an effective partnership between government and our people. Think of child immunization programs that have wiped out devastating diseases in our country. Think of our Social Security system that has enabled millions of seniors to stay out of poverty. Medicare has kept them safer and healthier without regard to their wealth, race, or region of the country. Think, even, of the interstate highway system, which connected us as a single prosperous nation. To address our health care crisis effectively, we need to invest in those kinds of policies of connection.

## Fact Sheet: Community Solutions to Health Care

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### *Some Things Work Better When Everyone Participates*

Americans strongly believe in individual responsibility and self-determination. But we also understand that a strong and cohesive community is essential to helping individuals achieve their dreams. When we care about the progress of all members of our society, our focus is no longer just about personal success but also about our success as a people. The interdependence of individuals and communities is embodied in our nation's founding documents, in international human rights principles, and is a central teaching of virtually all of the world's major religions.

We therefore have a history of finding common solutions to common problems. We recognize that there are certain things – from public transportation to national defense, from protecting human rights to providing public safety and essential services for all – that we cannot do on our own as individuals or as individual cities, states, or corporations. Health care is among the best examples of a problem where common solutions supported by community values are better than individual solutions proffered by the “go it alone” mentality.

Americans spend far more per capita on health care than any other country in the world, yet the U.S. health care system performs poorly compared to those of other industrialized nations. Our system provides less quality, less access, less efficiency, and less equity than others do. One significant reason is our failure to provide any health insurance to nearly 45 million people and to provide adequate insurance to 16 million more. There are several reasons why everyone hurts when high numbers of people are uninsured:

- A lack of health insurance creates staggering human and economic costs for the uninsured, for the insured, and for entire communities and their institutions. People who lack insurance or are underinsured often have trouble getting quality health care in a timely fashion, which hurts their health and consequently the nation's health and productivity. The Institute of Medicine estimates that the aggregate annual cost of poorer health and shortened life spans attributable to uninsurance is between \$65 billion and \$130 billion.<sup>1</sup>
- If they do receive care, uninsured patients are more likely to receive wasteful and duplicative care because of a lack of care coordination.
- Efforts to improve the quality and efficiency of care for all are hampered when differences in insurance coverage mean that quality measurement can't be applied equally for all patients and all health care settings.
- Society as a whole pays for the costs of caring for the uninsured, which often happens in emergency rooms and is often the result of treating preventable illnesses. Billions of dollars in uncompensated care are financed through pools of federal, state, and local tax revenue and a large amount of cost-shifting to other payers. A report by Families USA finds that in 2005 premium costs for private employer-provided family health insurance

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine, *Hidden Costs, Value Lost: Uninsurance in America* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2003).

coverage rose by \$922 due to the cost of caring for the uninsured, while premiums for individual coverage cost an extra \$341 for the same reason.<sup>2</sup>

Because our society has failed to guarantee affordable health care for everyone, a growing number of people in the United States—including those in working families—lack access to health insurance. This makes access to health care less secure for everyone. Here's the evidence:

- Some 52% of workers do not enroll in employer insurance plans because they are too costly.<sup>3</sup>
- Insurance premiums have increased at a higher rate than overall inflation and workers' earnings for most of the last 15 years.<sup>4</sup>
- Since 2000, premiums for family coverage have increased by 59%, compared with a 9.7% increase in inflation and 12.3% increase in workers' earnings.<sup>5</sup>
- The percentage of U.S. families who receive health insurance coverage for the entire family has also declined, and an increasing number of families are relying on public sources of health insurance such as Medicaid or the State Child Health Insurance Program to provide coverage. This is the case even though one or more other family members may continue to receive employer-sponsored health insurance.<sup>6</sup> State and federal sources are therefore increasingly subsidizing health insurance for families who work.

Despite these alarming trends, the solutions that some politicians propose to address the insurance crisis are primarily focused on individuals – such as tax breaks for those who can't afford to purchase insurance, or state mandates to purchase insurance. These strategies pit individuals against each other and fail to develop a system that works for everyone.

Common solutions to the health care crisis in the United States emphasize strategies to guarantee coverage to all, regardless of ability to pay, and share costs and risks broadly so that everyone can receive the care they need. Some of the principles of these strategies:

- Guaranteed affordable coverage for all is essential to “placing the system on a path to high performance.”<sup>7</sup> Everyone who lives in the United States should have health insurance to ensure that everyone gets the care they need, and that uncompensated care

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<sup>2</sup> Families USA, “*Paying a Premium: The Added Cost of Care for the Uninsured*” (Washington, D.C.: Families USA, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured, “Key Facts: Uninsured Workers in America,” July 2004 (<http://www.kff.org/uninsured/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=44470>).

<sup>4</sup> Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, “Trends and Indicators in the Changing Health Care Marketplace,” 2004 Update.

<sup>5</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research and Educational Trust, “Employer Health Benefits: 2004 Summary of Findings” (<http://www.kff.org/insurance/7148/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=46287>)

<sup>6</sup> H. Boushey and J. Wright, “Public Versus Private Health Insurance,” Health Insurance Data Briefs no.5 (Washington, D.C.: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 13, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> S. R. Collins, Universal Health Insurance: Why It Is Essential to Achieving a High Performance Health System and Why Design Matters, Invited Testimony for the Committee on the Budget, United States Senate Hearing on "Health Care and the Budget: The Healthy Americans Act and Other Options for Reform," June 26, 2007.

costs don't drain resources and decrease the efficiency of hospitals and health care systems.

- Risk should be shared as broadly as possible to ensure that our health care financing is as efficient as possible. Private health plans seek to segment the population and insure only those who are healthiest and least likely to incur health care costs. This leaves millions of individuals with pre-existing conditions or health risk factors vulnerable to higher costs and inadequate coverage in the private market.
- Large risk pools have more leverage to negotiate with health care providers to create coherent policies and fair payment rates for health services and pharmaceutical products.
- A universal health care system is far more likely than our currently-fragmented systems to create goals and incentives that “move all participants in the system in the same direction—toward improving access, quality, equity, and efficiency for everyone.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## Applying Community Values to a Health Care Op-Ed

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Op-eds are your chance to speak through the news media directly to policy makers, your constituents, and other target audiences. In communicating Community Values through op-eds, we encourage you to find the connections between health and other things people care about, such as education, opportunity and strong communities. Underscore how we're all in this together and how a fair system ensures that we all get the care we need. Finally, consider including a human rights angle, which implicitly ties us all together, reinforcing both Community Values and a moral approach. In addition, research shows that most Americans see health care as a human right.

The following op-ed was written in response to a plan put forth in New York State in 2006 to reorganize the state's hospital and clinic system. The plan promised to close many hospitals and advocates feared that those in low-income communities and neighborhoods of color would be particularly vulnerable. In an effort to point out the current inequalities in our system, the authors relied on community, human rights and legal frames.

### Don't Close Hospitals - Close the Gaps in Health Care for All New Yorkers

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*A recent poll found that 89% of New York state residents consider health care a right. Watching analysts and administrators argue about a state commission's recommended hospital closures this week, we can't help ask why everyone isn't more consumed with making that right a reality.*

*Access to quality health care is essential to realizing our full potential as individuals, families, communities, and as a society. It makes us stronger as a city and state, as well as a nation. Our children learn more effectively when they come to school healthy and strong. Our workforce is more productive and our economy more robust when workers and their families receive quality care. And the affordability and quality of the health care that all of us receive improves drastically when our system prevents and treats health problems early and through regular, rather than emergency, care.*

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Any opinion piece needs to start with a hook that tells the audience why they should care about this topic right now.

Here, the authors tap into new opinion research that an overwhelming number of New Yorkers are comfortable talking about health care as a right. It then turns to the current event the authors want to address.

Here the authors draw on Community Values to emphasize the connections between good health care and our strength as a country.

By talking about education and the economy, they underscore that health care is not just about the insurance industry, or even our own challenges in getting health care. Rather, it's about us all and the way we function together as a society.

By leading with Community Values, the authors pose a positive vision of what a healthy society looks like, but also hint at the threat they intend to address.

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*Unfortunately, our health care system is suffering right now, and the recommendations for further hospital closures by the Commission on Health Care Facilities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century threaten to make things much worse for all of us. Many New York communities, home to thousands of people, already lack access to basic health care services.*

In this section, the authors set out the specific problem at hand. By naming it in the first paragraph, they have given themselves a little time to discuss values and vision before tackling the problem. Audiences need to see a positive vision along with a problem. Otherwise, they are likely to give in to issue fatigue, which happens when they are overwhelmed by societal problems, but see no viable solutions. Painting a positive vision first alludes to the solutions you will include later in your op-ed.

*By allowing, and at times encouraging, the depletion of health care resources in certain communities, the State has illegally perpetuated a system in which low-income neighborhoods and communities of color are disproportionately left underserved, or not served at all.*

In outlining the problem, the authors are also careful to assign specific blame, and thus tell us who needs to do something to solve this problem. Too often, problems float, with responsibility unassigned, so solutions are less clear.

*Last fall, the State Department of Health allowed the closure of St. Mary's Hospital in Central Brooklyn, one of the neighborhood's few remaining health care institutions. It also declined to approve the offer of another hospital to preserve the facility. With this closure went an array of needed health care, including emergency, cardiovascular and maternal health services. The neighborhood, where one in four people live in poverty and 80% are African American, faces some of the greatest health care needs in New York City. The diabetes rate is a third higher than the city rate and the rate of people living with HIV/AIDS 60% higher.*

Here is the place to bring out any hard hitting statistics that will bolster your case. However, it's important not to overwhelm with numbers. In this piece, the authors needed to illustrate the inequalities in our current system, and their relationship to race.

*With the closure of St. Mary's, the state continued a 40-year trend in health care disinvestment and neglect in Central Brooklyn, while its population increased. From 1960 to 2000, the state's neglect allowed the number of hospital beds to shrink by 40%. Citywide, two-thirds of the hospitals closing between 1995 and 2005 served communities of color.*

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Audiences are often skeptical about claims of racial inequality. Providing hard data and statistics can help to change their minds.

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*Despite this dangerous pattern, this latest commission failed to address how to fix the system to meet New Yorkers' health needs. The commission instead focused primarily on hospital closings and consolidations, touting the money it hoped to save by decreasing beds.*

This section also reveals a trend in hospital closures. In showing how single events represent a larger theme, the op-ed connects the dots for audiences. Clearly, reopening one hospital is not the answer. Instead, addressing the trend in closures is the solution they are promoting.

*It's true that we can't allow our system to sink under the weight of uncontrolled costs. But research shows that investing in preventive care now will reap benefits in the future as patients will need fewer costly emergency services or long-term care for preventable and manageable conditions. And in communities suffering from a scarcity in health care services, hospitals often serve as anchors for needed preventive and primary care.*

This section holds the authors' "to be sure" paragraph. It's here that you can, and should, acknowledge your opponents' strongest arguments, and refute them

*Research also shows that closing hospitals probably won't save money, given the high costs of the proposed closures and mergers and the relatively inexpensive care that the community hospitals slated for closure give. Worse, it is likely that costs will actually increase, as more people seek care at larger teaching hospitals, where the expense of treating each patient is far higher."*

You should be thinking about the protestations your readers might be forming at this point, and then state and address such arguments.

This is different from arguing within your opponent's frame – don't adopt harmful language or give in to a point that isn't true.

*The bottom line, though, is that while we need a system that can support itself, our top priority must be a system that serves everyone equally.*

In this case, opponents had been using the term "right sizing" to describe hospital closings. Many advocates had been attempting to deal with this by arguing against that term. Doing so just reinforced the idea that the problem was the size of the system instead of inequality or fairness.

*Fortunately, it's not too late to create a health care system that works for all New Yorkers, aligns with our values, and adheres to human rights laws*

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After dealing with the central argument, the authors take care to return to their values-based point.

## *Community Values Communication Toolkit*

### *Section C: Applying Community Values to Immigration*

#### **In This Section:**

*Immigration Talking Points and Messaging Examples*  
*Immigration Fact Sheet*  
*Applying Community Values to an Immigration Op-Ed*  
*Applying Community Values with Letter to the Editor*

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## Immigration Talking Points and Messaging Examples

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Immigration replenishes our country's workers, communities, and traditions. While we advocate for policies that encourage integration and protect the rights of immigrants, we should point out that immigrants are, and have always been, a part of us. They are central to our society, diversity, productivity and success. Doing so reminds audiences that Community Values are more compelling than the exclusion and punishment anti-immigration advocates favor.

Our increasingly interconnected world also provides openings for talking about immigration through the lens of community values and interdependence. We can't ignore that we're participating in a global economy and labor is part of the equation. While goods and profits easily cross borders every day, workforces operate under entirely different rules. Understanding how our economy interacts with others, and the push and pull of economic forces, may help audiences to understand immigration better. However, we don't want to suggest that we only value or tolerate immigrants because of the economic contributions they make. Community values stresses the human connections we all have as well, beyond our economic interdependence.

### Using the Value, Problem, Solution, Action Model

- Value:** Immigrants are part of the fabric of our society—they are our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends.
- Problem:** Reactionary policies that force them into the shadows haven't worked, and are not consistent with our values. Those policies hurt us all by encouraging exploitation by unscrupulous employers and landlords.
- Solution:** We support policies that help immigrants contribute and participate fully in our society.
- Action:** Ask your candidates what they would do to ensure that immigrants are treated fairly and given a voice in this country.

### Messaging Examples

- For America to be a land of opportunity for everyone who lives here, our policies must recognize that we're all in it together, with common human rights and responsibilities. If one group can be exploited, underpaid and prevented from becoming part of our society, none of us will enjoy the opportunity and rights that America stands for.
- Reactionary, anti-immigrant policies – both federal and local - have repeatedly failed to fix the problem. They're not workable and they're not fair to citizens or to immigrants. We're all in this together and there's no question that we need each other. Such policies of exclusion violate the core sense of community that has always driven the policies that have moved this country forward.

- Our immigration system should reflect that immigrants have always been part of this nation and that without their contributions, we would cease to thrive. But immigration isn't just a domestic issue; it's an international reality. We need comprehensive immigration reform that works for the good of all and reflects the interdependence of nations, communities, and workers.
- Since the rise of globalization, interdependence between countries has grown. More and more, economies and labor markets are tied together. And communities and families span national borders. We need solutions that recognize our interdependence, that we're all in it together. And we need to reject divisive and impractical policies that ignore the importance of family and community.
- The economic ties between nations can be mutually beneficial, boosting well-being in both countries. But too often, some – usually multinational corporations – benefit over others. This lack of balance is destructive to communities both at home and abroad. Lacking prospects for jobs that pay enough to support their families, workers in the U.S. often find only low-wage jobs without benefits. Meanwhile, those from communities abroad, seeking out better opportunities here, are too often underpaid and exploited..
- Once here, workers rightfully set down roots and form families. By some estimates, more than three million citizen children have a parent who is among the twelve million immigrants lacking legal status.<sup>1</sup> The recent rash of raids, detentions and deportations has shown what kind of damage our nation's broken immigration system is doing to families. Even beyond nuclear families, immigrants are integral members of communities across the country with deep relationships that transcend immigration status.
- It's in all our interest for people who are here legally in this new system to become part of our society, with roots and responsibilities here. Honoring family ties is essential to that process of becoming an American and ensuring strong communities. Some propose that we ignore family ties in our immigration system. But Americans agree that honoring family is a core value, and one of the values that we most respect in others. Welcoming newcomers but separating and splitting their families is contrary to who we are as a nation.
- America's broken immigration system affects us all. Anti-immigration forces have focused on racial, economic and cultural divides that have nothing to do with our core values. At our best, we're a welcoming country that values immigrants' contributions and recognizes our common humanity. We have to reject any rhetoric or policy with undertones of racism or intolerance, or that cause or contribute to economic exploitation and poverty.

## Comprehensive Immigration Reform

- An earned pathway to citizenship for current and future immigrants is crucial to the interests of our country. It's especially important for working Americans. If our government keeps people in the shadows, without rights, or a shot at the American

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<sup>1</sup> See Press Release on "Unauthorized Migrants: Numbers and Characteristics"  
<http://pewhispanic.org/newsroom/releases/release.php?ReleaseID=33>

Dream, it will depress the wages and job prospects of all workers in this country. And it will continue to violate our values as a nation. But if we move those people into the economic mainstream, we can rise together.

- Any proposal that would allow people to work, but not become full members of society violates our most basic values. This country is built on the idea that if you come here, work and pay taxes, you have a shot at the American Dream. It's this mixture of work and hope that has fueled our country's growth from the start. We need to build on that historic value when we create a new system. We need a fair system that rewards work instead of exploiting it.

### Local Ordinances

- As long as our federal immigration system is broken, it's up to local communities to decide how to work with immigrants. Would you rather live in a place that understands the meaning of Community Values, of working together with immigrants to find solutions? Or a place that moves toward punitive, exclusionary measures? In this country, we value people, and we value treating them the right way. Cooperation and common sense solutions for the common good are the way to go.
- Communities across the country are struggling with the bind that the federal government has put them in by neglecting to address immigration. Many are finding ways to address the reality of their communities by working with immigrants – both documented and undocumented – to create workable solutions. However, in too many communities, anti-immigrant forces have exploited uncertain times by proposing divisive and mean-spirited ordinances that only exacerbate the problem, push immigrants out of the community and hurt the local economy.

## Immigration Fact Sheet

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### Community Values and Immigration

Recently, this country has engaged in a very challenging, and often gut-wrenching, debate about what immigration means in the “Land of Opportunity.” According to the United States Census Bureau, an estimated 35 million people – our families, friends, neighbors, and co-workers – are foreign born. The contributions of immigrants in America are immeasurable, and their experiences have strengthened communities far and wide for generations.

Sadly, opponents of immigration spread myths about immigrants, and the debate over immigration reform became dominated by characterizations of immigrants as criminals, illegal, and threats to American workers. Despite the fact that the reform legislation was driven by the interests of a broad coalition of workers, businesses and immigrants, the dominance of very vocal anti-immigrant forces in the public discussions about immigration had a major impact on policy-making. This past summer, Congress failed to act on a comprehensive immigration reform proposal.

Looking ahead to the politics of 2008, we can anticipate conservative candidates, as well as some moderate and progressive candidates, to use the issue of immigration to polarize and divide our community in order to advance their campaigns. In light of this political challenge, future iterations of this toolkit will include additional information that will support local efforts to educate constituencies on the impact of immigration politics on Community Values.

All people fare better when every individual – regardless of citizenship status – has a fair chance to fulfill his or her dreams.

### Dispelling Myths about the Workplace and Emergency Care Use

Immigration policy that relies solely on economic and wage analysis is neither comprehensive nor truly accurate. The body of research around the “competition question,” that is, whether immigrants replace native workers in available jobs, is widely divergent. Thus no single conclusion can be drawn regarding the displacement of native-born workers by the foreign born. A compilation of research by the Migration Policy Institute found that:

- Although immigrants make up 14% of the workforce, they are disproportionately represented in the low-wage population (20%). Still, immigrants make up higher proportions of the workforce in several high-skill occupations and sectors.
- Policies that address only the enforcement of immigration laws are meant to limit the number of undocumented workers in the U.S. A study of U.S.-Mexico border communities revealed that an enforcement-only approach had no positive effect on the wages of native workers.
- Research from 15 large states showed a correlation between an influx of immigrants and a shift in the employment sectors that relied on the skills of the new immigrants. This finding asserts that local markets are capable of absorbing immigrant workers without causing wages to fall.

Using Census Bureau data at the state level, the Pew Hispanic Center analyzed the affect of foreign-born population growth on native-born workers from 1990 to 2000, and then again

from 2000 to 2004. After factoring for education levels, age, and growth rate, the presence of foreign-born workers had no impact on the employment of native-born workers in the time periods 1990–2000 and 2000–04. Among the findings were:

- In 2000 nearly 25% of native-born workers lived in states with rapid foreign-born population growth from 1990 to 2000 and where favorable employment outcomes for native born were associated.
- Between 2000 and 2004 there was a positive correlation between foreign-born population growth and employment for native-born workers in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Native-born workers in those states accounted for 67% of the nation's native-born workforce.
- Although many of today's newcomers lack education and are relatively young, their arrival in the U.S. had no clear impact on their native-born counterparts: workers ages 25–34 with low levels of education.

A study of emergency departments in 12 nationally representative communities found that the highest rates of use were not by patients who were uninsured, low-income, racial or ethnic minorities, or noncitizens. The study, conducted by the Washington D.C.-based Center for Studying Health System Change, found instead that:

- Immigration is not a contributing factor to emergency department crowding nationally, even in communities with a large population of Hispanic immigrants.
- Compared to citizens, noncitizens had much lower levels on average of emergency department use: about 17 fewer visits per 100 people.

## Facing Inequality and Discrimination

Community Values mean we all have equal access to the benefits, burdens, and responsibilities of our society. In order to fully contribute and participate in society, immigrants and the native born alike should be treated equally regardless of race, gender, religion, country of origin, and other aspects of what people look like and where they come from.

- Between 1992 and 2003 nearly 8,500 complaints were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) on the basis of national-origin discrimination.
- The number of national-origin discrimination complaints filed with the EEOC by women increased 29% during this period.
- In 2005 foreign-born noncitizens were nearly twice as likely to live in poverty as native-born citizens. Strikingly, naturalized citizens had a poverty rate that was lower than that of native-born citizens.

## Recommendations

If America is to fulfill its promise of opportunity, we must implement an integration strategy that welcomes immigrants and gives newcomers an equal chance to fully contribute to and participate in society. We recommend the following measures:

Several strategies must be developed, including greater support for programs such as health care, English-language classes, and other social services that provide basic assistance to immigrants.

- Immigrant workers should be assisted in learning about workplace rights, fair wages and benefits, and the means to garner legal assistance to protect these rights.
- Other programs should encourage public education and outreach to raise newcomers' awareness of the federal naturalization process, and to increase the availability of civics education and other programs useful for gaining citizenship.
- Voter-education programs and other efforts to increase political participation should be provided to stimulate political engagement and empowerment among new citizens.

## Applying Community Values to an Immigration Op-ed

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Op-eds are a good opportunity to talk directly to a number of different audiences. You have a higher degree of message control than in other pieces, so it's important to be mindful of your framing themes and language.

Practically speaking, op-eds should usually run no more than 500-700 words. Many outlets include op-ed guidelines and instructions for submission on their website. In pitching an op-ed, you need to make the case for why the topic is of interest now, why you are the person to address it, and why your angle will interest readers.

It's important to remember that while it can be tempting to launch directly into a litany of complaints in an opinion piece, it is a prime place to use the Value, Problem, Solution, Action model.

### *Conflict or Community?* By Alan Jenkins

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*With the failure of Congress and the president to pass immigration reform this year, states, cities and towns around the country are moving forward with their own policies to address the issue. Some, like the city of New Haven, Conn., and the state of Illinois are attempting to integrate immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—into their communities in the absence of federal solutions. Others, like Hazelton, Pa., and Prince William County, Va., are adopting policies that punish undocumented immigrants and, with them, many citizens, families, small businesses and whole communities.*

*The better course, by far, is integrating new immigrants in ways that move everyone in the community forward.*

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The opening paragraph links the issue the author wants to discuss with current events. This is important not only in telling the reader why they should care, but in interesting editors in publishing the piece in the first place.

The author is also careful to incorporate Community Values right off the bat to describe who this issue affects – not just undocumented immigrants, but everyone.

The author follows up the description of the problem with a quick mention of solution. It's important to pair the two whenever possible so that your piece is not just another list of complaints.

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*On July 26, a federal court struck down anti-immigrant ordinances in Hazelton as unconstitutional. The voided provisions would, among other things, have required tenants to register with City Hall and fined landlords who rent to people without verifying their immigration status. The federal district court held that the ordinances would have violated due process and are preempted by federal immigration laws.*

This section gives context and specifics to the problem. In this case, the author is able to draw on several examples, which frames the issue as about our entire society, not isolated groups, towns or individuals.

*Prince William County recently passed a similar ordinance that would bar undocumented immigrants from public facilities and services like clinics, libraries and schools, and have police inquire about the immigration status of people whom they stop. The American Civil Liberties Union reports that 40 similar ordinances have passed in cities and towns around the country.*

*Contrast this with the city of New Haven, which has moved to integrate immigrants while improving the quality of life of all of its residents. The city has adopted a municipal ID card that is available to all residents, irrespective of their immigration status. The card allows the holder to open a bank account, access municipal parks, libraries and other services.*

Contrasting the negative with the positive is also effective in pointing out the systemic aspects of the issue. Additionally, solutions are given a full description.

*In adopting the card policy, the city recognized that not only undocumented immigrants but many other New Haven residents lack a driver's license or other official ID, preventing them from opening a bank account, thwarting savings, and making them vulnerable to robbery and exploitation. At the emotional level, the card offers a sense of community belonging and cohesion that is often lacking from urban life.*

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Audiences can also understand here what positive solutions look like and that integrating immigrants is the norm in some places, in spite of the divisive rhetoric that has dominated the national conversation.

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*Then-Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich took a similar approach late in 2005, recognizing in an executive order that "it is beneficial for new immigrants, the host communities, the state, and the nation for immigrants to quickly adjust to life in Illinois, learn English, become citizens, buy homes, start businesses, send their children to college, and thrive economically." The executive order initiated the creation of a New Americans Immigrant Policy and ordered state agencies to develop New Americans plans.*

*Time will tell what results these and other initiatives around the country achieve. But the New Haven and Illinois initiatives are clearly moving in the right direction. The best immigrant integration policies are practical, forward-looking and consistent with our country's best values. The 12 million undocumented immigrants in the US are here to stay—it would be both impossible and contrary to our values to round them up and deport them. And vindictive anti-immigrant policies have consistently failed to solve the problem.*

*Inclusive integration policies recognize that both documented and undocumented immigrants are part of our communities and part of our nation; they are our neighbors and co-workers and part of our country's economic engine. At the same time, they recognize that many American citizens are struggling for decent jobs, education, services and financial security. The best policies unite instead of divide our communities. They represent a search for solutions that help us all to rise together.*

*But there's more that must be done. While undocumented immigrants contribute economically to our communities, they are frequently subject to underpayment and exploitation on the job. That's bad for all of us, as it depresses wages and conditions for all workers.*

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This paragraph hints at the arguments opponents are likely to make in response to this piece. The author addresses the idea of deportation and also admits that there is a problem – not knowing the identities and whereabouts of 12 million people here. But the paragraph rejects anti-immigration policies as viable solutions.

Here the author invokes Community Values in pointing to inclusive solutions. By tying together our economic fate, and emphasizing positive, shared solutions, the author points the reader in a clear direction.

Building on the integration argument, the author goes further, again invoking Community Values to show how we're all connected. This argument then allows the author to reject the bad treatment of immigrants on both moral and practical grounds.

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*Rather than adding to the mistreatment of immigrants—and furthering their economic vulnerability—cities and states must insist on decent workplace conditions and living wages while teaching all residents about their rights and responsibilities.*

Here the solution names specific actors and continues to tie together everyone's interests and fates.

*In addition, racial discrimination persists as a problem for native-born people of color as well as immigrants. In many workplaces, immigrants are preferred over African Americans and other minority citizens for low-paying jobs, while higher paying jobs are reserved for whites. Cities and states have a responsibility, as does the federal government, to identify and eliminate discriminatory practices and ensure equal employment opportunity.*

*Finally, while it's convenient to blame immigrants or the undocumented for overcrowded hospitals and under-resourced schools, these problems existed long before today's immigrants arrived in our country. Providing quality services is government's most basic responsibility, and it must do so in ways that serve the whole community.*

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The final paragraph again rejects popular anti-immigrant arguments by invoking a government responsibility and Community Values frame. It ends by reminding us of what our priority should always be: solutions that serve the community.

## Applying Community Values with Letters to the Editor

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Letters to the editor are a quick and effective way to weigh in on issues that the media frequently cover. Often, more people read the letters page than the pages where the original article appeared or the opinion page, so there is great potential for readership here. Letters do need to be short and straight to the point and shouldn't exceed 150 words, which can be a challenge. It's usually best to focus on one point. In the examples below, the letters focus on weaving Community Values into a call for federal immigration reform.

It's also important to note that letters do not need to be negative. Responding to an article that positively portrayed an issue you care about can set a tone friendlier to Community Values than the confrontational tone central to letters of disagreement.

The letters below respond to an article that examined how immigration was affecting Marshalltown, Iowa in both good and bad ways.

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*"To the Editor:*

*Your recent article about Marshalltown, Iowa and its experience with immigration was a real eye opener. In the divisive rhetoric we hear in the immigration debates, I feel that this human story of community values is so often lost. Absent in this story were the one dimensional stereotypes of oppressive law enforcement or problematic immigrants. Instead, we saw a community-minded portrait of people working together to make the best of a system over which they have no control.*

*I believe we need more realistic reflections about what immigration really means to communities like Marshalltown, Iowa. Immigrants are already clearly a part of the community, why can't the federal government not clear the way for positive integration, so that everyone can move forward?"*

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This letter poses itself as from an everyday reader who doesn't necessarily have strong feelings about the immigration debate. Often advocates, or those with an obvious side, are more likely to be dismissed by on-the-fence readers. Unlike op-eds or other communications, letters to the editor can strike a more neutral tone and still be effective.

By emphasizing and approving of the community portrait the article offers, the letter consistently promotes the idea of Community Values.

After priming the audience with a reasonable tone, the letter offers a solution and mentions the actor responsible.

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*“To the Editor:*

*Thank you for your informative portrait of one town’s experience with immigration. While this piece shows that we still have a long way to go, it also illustrates the community values that will ultimately help us address this issue. In each community connection she describes, the author shows how the residents of Marshalltown, Iowa understand the complexities and realities of our current immigration system.*

The letter starts by referencing the article to which it is responding.

The letter uses the term Community Values to describe solutions and underscores this with complementary terms like “community connections” and “community-spirited.”

*Marshalltown needs and values immigrants, their work, and their contributions to the community. Yet the town’s ability to welcome its newest residents continues to be strangled by the federal governments’ inability to pass reasonable legislation. Instead of giving into the politics of division and isolation favored by anti-immigration forces, these Iowans have chosen to think about immigration in a community-spirited, humane and practical manner. The federal government should take note.*

The letter embraces the positive parts of the article. Doing so reminds those who have read the original article of only the good points. It also paints a specific picture for those who didn’t read the original piece.

In calling for solutions, the letter names specific actors and actions.

## *Community Values Communication Toolkit*

### *Section D: Applying Community Values to Worker Justice*

#### **In This Section:**

*Worker Justice Talking Points and Messaging Examples*  
*Applying Community Values to an Economy Op-Ed*

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## Worker Justice Talking Points and Messaging Examples

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When we talk about Community Values and our economy and labor market, we need to emphasize the importance of everyone benefiting from the wealth we all create. Creating shared wealth requires that we treat every worker fairly and with dignity. We also need to manage economic growth and development in ways that sustain rather than destroy our community and environment. When economic downturns happen, our community values mean that we minimize harm and pull together so that everyone can provide for their families. These priorities reflect what each of us wants for ourselves, and for our neighbors.

When we talk about economic inequality though, it becomes clear that there are real divisions. Currently, some benefit disproportionately and unfairly from wealth that we all help to produce. We need to underscore that our shared economy is better and stronger when we all benefit. But we also need to take care not to vilify people - even those who have benefited from the current “go it alone” economic system. The real problem today is not the business owner or rich person, but the values system that prioritizes individual wealth and accumulation over the economic well-being of the entire community.

Another challenge we may face when using Community Values to talk about our economy is the belief that an economic system that reflects our values would undermine economic growth. However, if we work to ensure our prosperity is shared, our environment is protected, and a meaningful safety net exists for those who fall upon hard times, we can create an economy that makes room for entrepreneurship, growth and equity.

### Using the Value, Problem, Solution, Action Model

- Value:** We know that the economic well-being of our community depends on all of us being able to make ends meet.
- Problem:** But the structure of our economy and our economic institutions has resulted in more families struggling economically while inequality rises, leaving wealth concentrated among a select few.
- Solution:** We need policies that support both growth and equity, create jobs that pay a fair and livable wage, and protect the rights of workers.
- Action:** Ask the candidates what they will do to ensure that our economy works to benefit all of us, not just a few.

### Messaging Examples

- Embracing Community Values means that we share a basic concern about one another, and accept that the well being of each one of us, and each of our families ultimately depends on the well being of all of us. As a wealthy nation, we have a shared responsibility to use our collective wealth to establish and support programs that help people rise out of poverty.
- The fates of all workers are connected. When some employers pay workers below the minimum wage or don't pay them for working overtime, these practices quickly spread and other employers try to profit by following these bad examples. This type of race to the bottom ultimately leaves workers competing with each other over lower wages and

fewer benefits. Instead of emphasizing cost-savings and competition, we need to encourage ethical and compassionate business practices that are accountable to the community, and cooperation among workers.

- We, as a community, must demand that all workers are fairly paid for the hard work they do. This doesn't just make sense from the perspective of workers, but it's good for society as a whole. Providing workers with a living wage makes it possible for them to better care for their families, save for the future, contribute to the community and build a stronger America.
- In the last century, factory owners recognized that they needed to pay their employees a fair wage. Then workers could buy the goods they produced with their own hands. Higher wages were good for business and good for workers. The same thing is true today. In our interconnected society, when workers are fairly compensated, they buy more goods and services for their families, and their purchasing power bolsters the economy..
- History shows us that our government has an important role to play in making sure that everyone is treated fairly. Cut currently, our government doesn't adequately enforce laws that protect the health, safety, and economic stability of workers. We need to pursue policies of connection that will make sure that workers are not subjected to unethical business practices. When employers do violate those community standards, the community needs to be able to call on the government to hold employers accountable for the harm they've done to their employees and the entire community.
- As a society that values looking out for each other, we need to make sure that all worker standards are enforced. Currently, too many practices that endanger the health, safety and economic stability of workers slip between the enforcement cracks. We need to show that we are serious about protecting workers' safety and about ensuring that all workplaces are run in a safe and fair manner.
- Workers know that they are stronger when they work together to take on unfair practices by employers and advance their collective interests. But the law doesn't recognize or support this fact because it forces workers to individually file complaints against employers. When workers are forced to comply with this go it alone mentality, they open themselves up to threats and retaliation. The law should recognize the real connections among workers by allowing organizations, organized workers and worker centers to file complaints on behalf of groups of workers.
- Laws governing worker complaints need to reflect our community values better. Currently, the law forces workers to file complaints as individuals, opening each worker up to threats and retaliation. Instead, the law should recognize the community formed by people who work together by allowing organizations, unions and worker centers to file complaints on behalf of groups of workers. Workers are stronger when they come together, and strong workers lead to strong communities.
- A business is just another part of our community. But all too often, most of the people in the community have little or no voice or power in the business decisions that affect the community. We need business interests to recognize that they are part of us and have a responsibility to respect the needs of the community. That means paying workers a fair wage, being good stewards of the environment that we all share, and giving back to the community.

## Applying Community Values to an Economy Op-Ed

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Op-eds are your chance to communicate directly to policy makers, your constituents, and other target audiences. Since you have a higher degree of message control than in other pieces, it's important to be mindful of your framing themes and language. While it can be tempting to launch directly into a litany of complaints in an opinion piece, it is a prime place to use the Value, Problem, Solution, Action model.

Practically speaking, op-eds usually run no more than 500-700 words. Many outlets include op-ed guidelines and instructions for submission on their website. In pitching an op-ed, you need to make the case for why the topic is of interest now, why you are the person to address it, and why your angle will interest readers.

This op-ed lays out a new term for describing contrasting ways of thinking about economics, and it connects community values to economic policy.

### **Rejecting the YOYOs by Jared Bernstein**

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*The way the polls tell the story, American politics may be closing in on a tipping point. Even among traditional supporters, the Bush agenda is wearing thin. Sure, presidential approval ratings bounce around, but the depth and the persistence of Bush's negative trend suggest that this isn't just about the cost of a gallon of gas. A majority of the electorate may well be ready for a change.*

The author starts with a news hook – recent polls – to indicate why the op-ed is timely.

*If so, the result would be a shift in power from conservatives to Democrats in the midterm elections. Simply changing the guard, however, won't ensure that we start to address the broadly-shared sense that somewhere along the way, we've gotten fundamentally off-track.*

The author then introduces his values-based argument, explicitly outlining the debate as one between individualism and a collective approach.

*It's time for the WITTs to take over from the YOYOs.*

*Come again?*

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*American politics have always been a balancing act between protecting the rights and privileges of individuals, and working together to meet profound challenges. Yet in recent years the emphasis on individualism has been pushed to the point where it is hurting our nation’s standing in the world, endangering our future, and, paradoxically, making it harder for individuals to get a fair shot at the American dream. The message, sometimes implicit but often explicit, is, You’re on your own , or YOYO.*

Using the term “you’re on your own” disparages the individualistic approach. By painting this as a battle of ideas, or of messages, the author avoids explicit attacks on the people promoting the argument. This is a useful, as well as a community values oriented approach.

*Under YOYOism, whatever economic challenges we face as a nation—globalization, health care, inequality—the best solution is for people to fend for themselves. Its central goal is to shift economic risks from the government and corporations onto individuals and their families. You can see this beneath the surface of almost every recent conservative initiative: Social Security privatization, personal accounts for health care, attacks on labor market regulations, and the perpetual crusade to slash the government’s revenue through regressive tax cuts—“starving the beast”—and block the government from playing a useful role in our economic lives.*

Using specific policy examples, the author defines the “you’re on your own” approach in recognizable terms. By using more than one example, he underscored that this approach is an ideology, not an idea about a specific policy. The trend applies to many issues, one of which is bound to strike a chord in individual readers.

*While this fast-moving reassignment of economic risk would be bad news in any period, it’s particularly harmful today. The challenges we face are generating both greater inequalities and a higher degree of economic insecurity in our lives.*

*Even with unemployment low in historical terms, the earnings of most workers have failed to keep pace with inflation, much less with our impressive productivity growth. Productivity growth is up 15 percent over the current recovery and the profit share of national income is at a 39-year high, but the inflation-adjusted weekly earnings of the median, or typical, full-time worker are actually down by two percent.*

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*Conservatives are in denial about these facts, continuing to cite GDP growth, etc., as if such top-line statistics will make workers feel better about their squeezed paychecks. And it's no surprise that they're stuck with an economic message that amounts to "it's all good." Under YOYO economics, there is no explanation for an economy that's doing fine except for the people in it.*

*Meanwhile, Democrats are generally following the adage, "when your opponent is beating himself up, sit down and watch."*

*"We're not them" could be a winning platform right now. But to stop there sacrifices a unique opportunity to introduce a new, optimistic agenda with the potential to reach an electorate that understandably seems stuck between apathy and cynicism.*

*Such sentiments grow right out of the YOYO narrative: in our competitive, global economy, the best your government can do is give you a tax cut, a private account, and get out of your way. After that, if you're not skilled enough to compete, well, "we feel your pain."*

*We need an alternative vision, one that supports individual freedom but also emphasizes that such freedom is best realized with a more collaborative approach to meeting the challenges we face. The message is simple: We're in this together, or WITT.*

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Here, the author offers a positive solution using the language of community values.

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*Where YOYO economics explains why we cannot shape our participation in the global economy to meet our own needs, or provide health coverage for the millions who lack that basic right, or raise the living standards of working families when the economy is growing, WITT policies target these challenges head on. These outcomes occur not through redistributionist Robin Hood schemes, but through creating an economic architecture that reconnects our strong, flexible economy to the living standards of all, not just to the residents of the penthouse. As the pie grows, all the bakers get bigger slices.*

He explains how applying this new vision could look, emphasizing that our prosperity is something to share and grow. He doesn't rely on old competitive economic arguments, a frame with which we are all familiar, but rather discusses an economy with room for everyone.

*Step one is to restore some fiscal sanity and basic competence at all levels in national government, a step we'll hopefully begin taking in November. Beyond that, there are actually a number of good, big ideas floating around to create precisely the architecture America needs.*

*There are doable plans for universal health coverage, boosting retirement savings, and for creating an ambitious partnership between business and government to seriously pursue energy independence. There are roadmaps for tapping the growth-enhancing benefits of globalization to replace the domestic labor demand it saps from our job market*

By emphasizing that a community values approach is not only the right thing to do, but also workable and practical, the author reassures the audience.

*Put it all together, and we create the potential to reconnect the well-being of working families to the growing economy.*

*The YOYOs chickens are coming home to roost, and many of us await with great hope the arrival of the much more optimistic, can-do, WITT agenda. The only question: who has the vision to lead the way?*

A final challenge to the reader is implicit: challenge your candidates to embrace a community values approach rather than the old-fashioned "you're on your own" mentality.

## *Community Values Communication Toolkit*

### *Section E: Tools and Exercises for Applying Community Values*

#### **In This Section:**

*Worker Justice Talking Points and Messaging Examples*  
*Applying Community Values to an Economy Op-Ed*

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## Model Press Release

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Press releases are more than an opportunity to publicize an event or report. They are also messaging vehicles. While the main text of the release should be primarily informative – who, what, when, where, and why – you have a lot of room in the quotes you provide for elevating Community Values.



### **Heartland Presidential Forum Challenges Candidates:** *How can we embrace community values?*

**For Immediate Release:** [date]

**Contact:** [contact name, phone numbers]

DES MOINES – Ten presidential candidates will gather at Hy Vee Hall on Saturday, December 1 to answer Iowans’ questions about community issues ranging from health care and education to social justice and factory farming. Organizers, who expect an audience of over 5,000, say the theme of the debate, “Community Values,” is meant to focus candidates’ attention on the idea that the common good is too often overlooked in favor of individual interests.

“These core issues are important to Iowans,” said [speaker]. “And it’s important that we focus on solving the challenges they present through the lens of community. When we think of how we’re stronger together, how we solve our problems more effectively when we’re all involved in the process, we all come out ahead.”

[Event details]

“Community values are such an obvious fit for Iowans,” said [speaker]. “We look out for each other here, and we resist the politics of isolation that tell us that we have to solve societal problems on our own. Whether it’s health care or the environment, we’re going to do this together, with a positive role for government, and leave no one behind.”

[Continued details]

“We became involved in this event because of its focus on community,” said [speaker]. “There’s a lot of lip service to valuing community, but we wanted to force candidates to explain what that really means to each of them on a policy level. We need more policies of connection that recognize how we’re all in this together, and draw on our collective strength. So we’re actively rejecting the “go it alone” approach to policy.”

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## Calendar of Community Values News Hooks

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Use this 2008 calendar as a planning tool. It can help you identify opportunities to get out your message about community values. Connecting your press release or op-ed to a holiday or notable/historic date in a unique way can help it get better coverage.

### **JANUARY**

- 1:** Last day of Kwanza  
1863: Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation  
1892: Ellis Island opens as a gateway for immigrants  
1994: The North American Free Trade Agreement comes into effect
- 2:** 1945: Executive Order 9066 is rescinded, ending Japanese internment
- 3:** Iowa Caucuses
- 8:** New Hampshire Primaries
- 10:** 1946: United Nations General Assembly convenes for first time
- 15:** Michigan Primaries
- 19:** Nevada Caucuses, South Carolina Primary (R)
- 21:** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (date varies)  
1974: Lau v. Nichols decided by the Supreme Court, expanding the rights of limited English proficient students
- 22:** 1973: Roe v. Wade decided by the Supreme Court, legalizing abortion
- 25:** Hawaii Caucus (R)  
1890: United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) is founded
- 29:** Florida Primaries, South Carolina Primary (D)

### **FEBRUARY** *Black History Month*

- 1:** Maine Caucus (R)
- 5:** Alabama Primaries, Alaska Caucuses, Arizona Primaries, Arkansas Primaries, California Primaries, Colorado Caucuses, Connecticut Primaries, Delaware Primaries, Georgia Primaries, Idaho Caucus (D), Illinois Primaries, Kansas Caucus (D), Minnesota Caucuses, Missouri Primaries, Montana Caucus (R), New Jersey Primaries, New Mexico Primary (D), New York Primaries, North Dakota Caucuses, Oklahoma Primaries, Tennessee Primaries, Utah Primaries  
1993: Family and Medical Leave Act enacted
- 7:** Lunar New Year (date varies)
- 9:** Kansas Caucus (R), Louisiana Primaries, Nebraska Caucus (D), Washington Caucuses
- 10:** Maine Caucus (D)
- 12:** District of Columbia Primaries, Maryland Primaries, Virginia Primaries  
1909: The NAACP is founded
- 18:** President's Day
- 19:** Hawaii Caucus (D), Wisconsin Primaries  
1942: Executive Order 9066 is signed into law, resulting in the forced internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans
- 21:** 1965: Malcolm X is assassinated
- 25:** 1870: Hiram Rhodes Revels becomes the first African American sworn in as a U.S. Senator

### **MARCH** *Women's History Month*

- 4:** Massachusetts Primaries, Ohio Primaries, Rhode Island Primaries, Texas Primaries, Vermont Primaries  
1913: U.S. Department of Labor is created
- 5:** 1914: The Ford Motor Company doubles the daily wage
- 6:** 1857: Dred Scott Case decided by the Supreme Court, ruling that people of African descent could not be U.S. citizens, whether they were slaves or free
- 8:** Wyoming Caucus (D)

- International Women's Day
- 11:** Mississippi Primaries
- 20:** 2003: U.S. invasion of Iraq begins
- 21:** 1965: Selma to Montgomery march begins
- 22:** 1974: U.S. Congress passes the Equal Rights Amendment, which would amend the constitution to guarantee equal rights regardless of gender, but state legislatures failed to ratify the ERA
- 1988: Congress overrides President Reagan's veto of the Civil Rights Restoration Act
- 25:** 1911: The Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire kills 146 workers, mostly young immigrant women; the outrage over unsafe working conditions helps to solidify support for unions
- 30:** 1870: 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment is adopted, guaranteeing voting rights regardless of race
- 31:** 1927: Birthday of Cesar Chavez

#### **APRIL**

- 8:** 1935: Works Progress Administration established by Congress, providing jobs and income to millions during the Great Depression
- 11:** 1968: Fair Housing Act enacted, prohibiting discrimination in housing
- 15:** Tax Day
- 22:** Pennsylvania Primaries  
Earth Day
- 29:** 1854: first African American college chartered (now called Lincoln University)

#### **MAY** *Asian Pacific American Heritage Month*

- 1:** International Workers' Day, commemorating the Haymarket Rebellion of 1866
- 5:** Cinco de Mayo, commemorating initial victory of Mexico over France in 1862
- 11:** Mother's Day
- 13:** Nebraska Primary (R), West Virginia Primary (D)
- 17:** 1954: Brown V. Board of Education decided by the Supreme Court, paving the way for integration of schools
- 20:** Kentucky Primaries, Oregon Primaries  
1996: Romer v. Evans decided by the Supreme Court, ruling against an amendment to the Colorado Constitution that allowed discrimination against gays and lesbians
- 26:** Memorial day
- 27:** Idaho Primaries

#### **JUNE** *Gay Pride Month*

- 2:** 1924: Indian Citizenship Act signed into law, guaranteeing full citizenship rights to Native Americans
- 3:** Montana Primary (D), New Mexico Primary (R), South Dakota Primaries
- 13:** 1967: Thurgood Marshall becomes the first African American appointed to the Supreme Court
- 14:** Flag Day, commemorating adoption of the U.S. Flag in 1777
- 15:** Father's Day
- 19:** Juneteenth Day, commemorating the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865, roughly two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation
- 22:** 1944: GI Bill of Rights is enacted, providing veterans of World War II with greater opportunities, especially to go to college
- 23:** 1972: Title XI is enacted, prohibiting gender discrimination in schools
- 25:** 1938: Fair Labor Standards Act is enacted, establishing a minimum wage, guaranteeing time-and-a-half for overtime, and prohibiting child labor
- 27:** 1905: Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is founded in Chicago, with the motto "an injury to one is an injury to all"
- 28:** 1969: Stonewall Rebellion helps to spark the gay rights movement

#### **JULY**

- 2:** 1964: Civil Rights Act signed into law, prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion,

sex, and national origin

- 4:** Independence Day, commemorating the Declaration of Independence in 1776
- 5:** 1935: National Labor Relations Act enacted, protecting the rights of workers to organize
- 9:** 1868: 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, establishing the citizenship of former slaves and all people born in the U.S.
- 19:** 1848: First women's rights convention in U.S. held in Seneca Falls, NY
- 26:** 1990: The Americans with Disabilities Act is enacted, prohibiting discrimination based on disability

## **AUGUST**

- 6:** 1965: Voting Rights Act signed into law, to eliminate actions that limited voting rights (like literacy tests) and guaranteed new voter protections (like multilingual ballots)
- 14:** 1935: Social Security Act enacted, providing social insurance for elderly and disabled
- 18:** 1920: 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote
- 25:** Democratic National Convention begins in Denver, CO
- 28:** 1963: Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers "I have a dream" speech

## **SEPTEMBER** *Hispanic Heritage Month runs Sept. 15 – Oct. 15*

- 1:** Labor Day  
Republican National Convention begins in St. Paul, MN
- 11:** 2001: Terrorist attacks made on the World Trade Center and Pentagon
- 21:** International Day of Peace
- 25:** 1981: Sandra Day O'Connor becomes the first woman appointed to the Supreme Court
- 30:** 1962: The National Farm Workers Association is founded (the union is later renamed the United Farm Workers)

## **OCTOBER**

- 2:** International Day of Non-Violence, commemorating the birth of Mahatma Gandhi
- 11:** National Coming Out Day, commemorating 2<sup>nd</sup> March on Washington for LGBT Rights
- 13:** Columbus Day, also celebrated as Indigenous Peoples' Day, International Day of Solidarity with Indigenous People, and Dia de la Raza
- 16:** World Food Day, to raise awareness of issues of poverty and hunger

## **NOVEMBER** *American Indian Heritage Month*

- 4:** Election Day
- 11:** Veterans Day
- 27:** Thanksgiving Day

## **DECEMBER**

- 1:** World AIDS Day
- 10:** Human Rights Day, commemorating the adoption of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- 15:** 1791: Bill of Rights (first ten amendments to the constitution) are ratified
- 18:** 1865: 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment is ratified, abolishing slavery in the U.S.

## Exercise 1: Applying Community Values to Candidate Questions

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Asking questions of candidates, either directly, or via the media (“what I’d really like to know from the candidates is this:”), is a great messaging opportunity. It’s helpful to remember the Values, Problem, Solution, Action model for this as each component is important to include.

**Use the VPSA model to craft three more Community Values candidate questions, using the issues you work on or care most about.**

### **How to Apply VPSA to Candidate Questions:**

- “I believe” or “Americans believe” in VALUE, and how it applies to the issue I’m going to address.
- But: PROBLEM, include relevant statistics or background information here.
- Describe your SOLUTION, or the vision you think the solution should reach.
- Ask what ACTION the candidates will take to make sure the SOLUTION happens?

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### **General Example:**

- *In America, we believe that we’re all in it together; that we share responsibility for each other.*
- *But lately, we’ve seen a real drift toward the idea that we’re all on our own, responsible only for ourselves.*
- *It’s time to reject these politics of isolation and change our policies so that they reflect our best values: community values.*
- *What would you do to promote Community Values in your administration’s policies?*

### **Issue-Specific Example(s):**

- *As a person of faith, I believe that we’re all connected and share a sense of responsibility for each other.*
- *But we’re not fulfilling that responsibility today, with [47 million people uninsured, left to fend for themselves AND/OR 7 million working people living in poverty AND/OR immigrants being demonized and exploited].*
- *A caring and responsible community would [provide health insurance for everyone AND/OR pay all workers a living wage AND/OR welcome and respect newcomers and their valuable contributions].*
- *What would you do to return to the Values of Community and the Policies of Connection?”*

## Exercise 2: Going On the Offensive

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In weaving Community Values into all of our communications, we also need to work on attacking messages that are opposed to Community Values when we see them.

When going on the offensive, it's important to remember:

- We need to counter the idea of extreme individualism rather than attack the person stating it.

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*“That’s just another example of the ‘go it alone’ mentality. We all know we’re stronger together.”*

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- Most audiences value both personal responsibility and community– trigger shared responsibility first.
- Use a positive vision to counter opponents’ negativity.

**Below are some examples of messages reflecting extreme individualism in politics today. In small groups, craft an overall approach for attacking the individualistic rhetoric and develop some community values messages.**

### Message 1

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*“The health of our nation can be improved by extending health insurance to all Americans, not through a government program or new taxes, but through market reforms.*

*It’s a conservative idea, **insisting that individuals have responsibility for their own health care**. I think it appeals to people on both sides of the aisle: insurance for everyone without a tax increase.”*

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### Message 2

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*“I believe that the only way to make a major improvement in our educational system is through privatization to the point at which a substantial fraction of all educational services are **rendered to individuals by private enterprises** ... Nothing else will provide the public schools with the **competition** that will force them to improve in order to hold their **clientele** ...”*

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### Message 3

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*“We showed the world that power and wealth are the product of freedom and not the other way around. The freedom to pursue **your aspirations**, to seize **your opportunities**, to rise as far as **your own industry and imagination will take you**, to make a better life for your children than you inherited, and to build together a civilization for the ages, in which all people share in the promise and responsibilities of liberty.”*

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### Message 4

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*“People are fed up with illegal immigration, and they’re demanding we do something about it. It’s the overcrowded houses, the job market with the **day laborers bringing down the wages**, the health system with hundreds of millions being spent in Virginia hospitals on illegal aliens, and all those **ESL classes taking away resources from other kids**.”*

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## Exercise 3: Local Media Exercise

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**Clip 8 – 10 articles from local newspapers that talk about a crisis facing your community.**

Be sure to track these articles over a period of weeks and include different media sources and perspectives. Once you've assembled the articles have your leadership review them.

**Consider the following questions:**

- What is the frame expressed through these articles? What are the central messages?
- How do they either support or oppose Community Values?
- Who do local media look to for comments on these articles?
- How does the frame shape the response of everyday people, both those affected by the crisis as well as those looking in from the outside?

## Exercise 4: Injecting Community Values Into Campaigns

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Use some of the language from the basket of phrases and general talking points to re-think a local campaign. Brainstorm about how changing your message creates new media opportunities or the potential to attract new allies.

### **Consider the following questions:**

- How can we see our local campaign through the lens of Community Values?
- Do our current messages reflect values that undercut what we really want for our community?
- How can our local campaign respond to negative, go-it-alone rhetoric from the other side?
- What are the current dominant frames?
- Do we think the local media will accept our frame for our campaign or will they resist it?
- How and where can we build on Community Values frames and where can we make a point of attacking individualistic ones?