

Public Square Conversation: Share Your Ideas on the Public's Role in a New Political Era

January 14th, 2025 - Notes

Below are some of the main ideas that arose in conversation, and a list of suggestions for how to stay in action.

Concerns

- We want to avoid...nuclear war, deportations, cuts to social security and Medicaid.
- We want to see state and local governments...divest from genocide, defend immigrants, embrace single payer healthcare.
- We are concerned about...the state of democracy, the rise of authoritarianism, rollbacks to environmental regulations.
- We want to understand...the 2024 electorate, how the second Trump administration will be different from the first.
- People are feeling...grief and discouragement, the need to talk.

Questions and concepts

- In trying to understand the election results, we need to resist the false dichotomy that good people voted for Harris and evil people voted for Trump.
- We want to develop a sense of belonging in order to build strong communities, rather than assuming communities can only be built based on shared beliefs.
- We should look for something bigger than ourselves that connects us, such as shared values. Then we can build solidarity based on our shared concerns.
- What happens when I embrace the idea that people different from me have something to offer?
- How do we promote the idea that everyone is deserving?

How we might make a difference

- Acknowledge leaders who demonstrate dignity. Send emails of appreciation to local leaders so they know their actions are being seen and are making a difference.
- Local and state legislation can make an impact. Make phone calls and write letters to local and state representatives. Show up to local events.
- Write down what your values are (before they start to shift in a way you don't even realize is happening due to cultural norms slowly shifting).
- Don't silence yourself in reaction to authoritarian tendencies being evidenced.

- Remember the [Martin Niemöller poem, "First they came."](#) Stay apprised of who is being attacked and work to help and defend them.

Finally, if you are looking for additional ways to take action, either big or small, we have compiled the list below. We hope this gives you a starting point for deciding how you will participate in creating a future guided by the principle of human dignity (CAPA's focus this year).

1. **Join CAPA.** [Become a member](#), and get involved in one of our two working groups: Foreign Policy or Climate.
2. **Write a blog post.** CAPA's blog, [Viewpoints](#), is now accepting submissions.
3. **Grow your network.** Join mailing lists of organizations that align with your stance. Look for ways to get involved with them.
4. **Consume wisely.** Research what businesses do and do not align with your values; email companies and organizations to hold them accountable; vote with your wallet.
5. **Diversify your media consumption.** Check out movement media, research the bias of the media you consume, ask others where they get their news, and keep an eye out for the Recommended Resources tab coming soon to the CAPA website.
6. **Learn from experts.** Read and watch commentary from experts with depth of knowledge (not just talking heads delivering sound bites).
7. **Write letters to the editor.** If you need help getting started with this, ask someone who writes regularly to support you.
8. **Organize.** Create events in your communities where the issues on your mind can be discussed, such as book clubs or teach-ins. Or just make plans to attend events together.
9. **Advocate for change.** Call and email your elected officials (federal, state and local) every week.
10. **Remember the facts.** Memorize key points you know you want to be able to cite in conversations on the topics that matter most to you.
11. **Invest in change.** Support impacted communities by funding [the most effective] projects
12. **Share your values.** Use social media to share what you stand for, not just to rant or point fingers.
13. **March/protest.** Attend a march or protest; get informed about your rights as a citizen at protests; support others at protests with supplies, etc.
14. **Reflect.** Journal, meditate, and share with others about how you are working to live by your values. Change starts at home.
15. **Join us.** Attend the next Public Square Conversation in March (more details coming soon!).