



Common Cause

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





MESSAGE FROM MARTHA TIERNEY

Dear Champions of Democracy,

As Chair of the Common Cause National Governing Board, and on behalf of my board colleagues and staff across the country, I am proud to share with you our 2022 Annual Report.

This report comes after the heartbreaking loss of our late President Karen Hobert Flynn. Much of this work was the fulfillment of Karen's vision, and our shared vision, for a stronger, more inclusive, and accountable democracy. As I know Karen would want, we are continuing to push forward with our work, with Karen in our hearts and minds. We are proud to have your support to advance a democracy that delivers on its promise at every level of government.

For more than 50 years, Common Cause has been on the front lines of issues that have direct and lasting impacts on us, our families, and our democracy. From city councils to the U.S. Congress, Common Cause has helped educate, advocate, and litigate to ensure that the voice of the people is heard in the critical public policy debates happening across the country.

Alongside a set of diverse partners and supporters, we work to hold power accountable, educate the public, and protect the vote between election years, even when the pundits and political operatives have lost interest.

This report highlights this vital work, and we are proud to share it with you.

Thank you,

Martha Tierney

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (July 2021 to June 2022)



GERRYMANDERING & REPRESENTATION

- The Trump Administration attempted to exclude undocumented immigrants from the 2020 Census. In response, Common Cause and our co-plaintiffs filed the first challenge to the effort. Thankfully, President Biden issued an executive order reversing this policy on his first day in office.
- We also led the Coalition Hub Advancing Redistricting & Grassroots Engagement (CHARGE), which includes nine national organizations to train hundreds of activists to actively participate in the redistricting process. This included creating educational materials in multiple languages to teach diverse communities the benefits of more participatory redistricting processes, including a citizens' advisory redistricting committee.
- Common Cause led reforms to end prison gerrymandering in Colorado, Illinois, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania to stop the counting of incarcerated people at the locations of the prisons instead of their home communities. This will help deliver a more accurate count and fairly deliver funding to communities.
- We remained active in the fight for fair representation as the initial map-drawing phase of the redistricting cycle drew to a close and we shifted to litigation in states to include North Carolina, New York, Florida, Minnesota, and Texas. We also moved to the public education and legislation phases of our work to demonstrate the need to change how redistricting is conducted at the state and local levels, backed up by new public policyIn North Carolina, we secured a fair maps victory for the voters. The state supreme court found state legislators' maps to be gerrymandered and unconstitutional. Discontented with our victory, state legislators appealed the case, Harper v Hall, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. This would lead to a blockbuster day of oral arguments in December 2022 and our case becoming one of the most closely watched decisions of the court's 2022-2023 term.



VOTING & ELECTIONS

- In Congress, we successfully advocated for House passage of the:
 - For the People Act (HR 1);
 - John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (HR 4);
 - The Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act (HR 5746)
 - the Washington, D.C. Admission Act (HR 51);
 - the Protecting Our Democracy Act (HR 5314) and;
 - legislation to create both an independent commission and a House select committee to investigate the January 6 attack at the U.S. Capitol.
- In state legislatures, Common Cause helped stop most of the over-400 voter suppression bills introduced across the country. In places like Florida, Georgia, and Texas, where legislation to strip voting rights was able to pass, we went to court to challenge these despicable laws.

- During the same period, Congressional Republicans introduced 25-plus anti-voter bills. While none of these federal bills has become law yet, Congress could make it harder for the votes and voices of people of color to be heard and counted. Among the bills, we are actively tracking and advocating against legislation that:
 - Eliminates the National Voter Registration Act (aka "motor voter" law)
 - Prohibits ballots from being counted that arrive after the date of the election that were voted before the election
 - Prohibits states from using automatic voter registration systems
 - Prohibits states from providing absentee ballots to many voters
 - Severely restricts the use of drop boxes for absentee ballots
 - Blocks many Americans from no-excuse absentee voting
 - Prevents most individuals from voting at a polling place during an early voting period
 - Scales back state funding for election infrastructure that protects the right to vote to states to ensure that voters can have their voices heard
 - Prohibits states from receiving funds from nonprofit entities to help administer elections.
- Common Cause led the largest election protection effort for midterm elections to date, with national staff ensuring that leaders on the ground could implement effective Election Protection Programs that include litigation, election security, communications, field, and antidisinformation. Common Cause staff are developing materials, managing volunteer tools, coordinating field needs, monitoring mis/disinformation, and providing all assistance needed. In 2022, an unprecedented number of states ran primary Election Protection Programs with many led or co-led by Common Cause staff. In the second quarter of 2022 alone, programs were run in Texas, Nebraska, Ohio, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Georgia, California, New Mexico, and Illinois.



MEDIA & DEMOCRACY

- After lengthy advocacy with extensive decision-makers and stakeholders in 2022, the Senate failed to confirm President Biden's pick, Gigi Sohn, to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Now, the agency will remain deadlocked with two Democratic commissioners and two Republican commissioners. As a result of this inaction, we will witness a perpetuated and deadlocked agenda that could have restored net neutrality, strengthened Lifeline, and enacted other critical media and democracy reforms.
- In May 2021, the FCC launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program. The program provides a \$50 monthly discount (\$75 on Tribal lands) for eligible low-income households to purchase a broadband connection. In collaboration with allies, Common Cause developed outreach and education materials to foster program understanding and propel enrollments.
- In February 2022, Standard General and Apollo Global Management announced their intended acquisition of Tegna Inc.'s 64+ television stations for \$5.4B. Approval of the deal would result in more reporter layoffs, consolidated newsrooms, and a degradation of local news. Common Cause is one of the leading groups challenging this deal, having filed multiple pleadings to block the merger. In May 2023, Standard General and Tegna abandoned their plans to merge.



COMBATING DISINFORMATION

- Following the havoc wreaked by the January 6 insurrection, we continue to deploy campaign strategies that hold social media platforms accountable for their roles. Following our May 2022 coalition letter to these platforms calling on them to take actions to combat disinformation, we met with many of their representatives to learn how they plan to comply with our recommendations.
- Two years after President Joe Biden's inauguration as president, false election claims proliferated, and our research revealed demonstrably false claims aimed at undermining public faith in the legitimacy of President Biden's election. This same disinformation and growing public distrust have been harnessed by state legislators to pass anti-voter laws across the country targeting the freedom of Americans to vote — particularly in Black and Brown communities.
- Common Cause expanded our anti-disinformation program in 2021 and into 2022 when we saw voter suppression migrate from offline to online, and Common Cause's Stopping Cyber Suppression team works 'round the clock to protect voters from disinformation.



JUSTICE AND DEMOCRACY

- In partnership with Communities for Sheriff Accountability, a coalition of directly impacted organizers, Common Cause produced a one-of-its-kind report that exposes the conflicts of interest and ethics issues raised by the political giving of corporations and individuals seeking contracts and business with law enforcement agencies. Our research, conducted across 11 states, documented approximately 13,000 apparent conflicts of interest, primarily between 2010 and 2021. The patterns are strikingly clear: business interests establish relationships with sheriffs by sending contributions, with even small donations impacting the criminal justice system. "The Paid Jailer: How Sheriff Campaign Dollars Shape Mass Incarceration," released January 2022, identifies upward of \$6 million, approximately 40% of all examined contributions that create potential conflicts of interest.
- Common Cause and The Sentencing Project partnered to bridge the gap between voting rights and criminal justice reform by working to establish a coalition centered on universal suffrage for people impacted by the criminal legal system. We aimed to create a space where nonprofits that support universal suffrage can: (1) widen organizational support for universal suffrage, (2) educate the public and the media to normalize the idea and focus attention on the problem, and (3) rally activists and allies to adopt reforms in states. To date, we have engaged 18 organizations to join us in this effort.
- Common Cause joined the Jail and Post-Release Voting Working Group of the Election Protection Coalition. Specifically, we co-lead the Program Development and Implementation Subcommittee with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund and State Voices. The goal of the subcommittee is to create and implement jail and postrelease restoration of rights and voting programs, including meeting with 28 municipal/state stakeholders. We also co-created and disseminated public education materials with a resourcesharing committee.



ETHICS & ACCOUNTABILITY

- In the fall of 2021, following a Wall Street Journal investigation that found more than 130 federal judges failed to recuse themselves in cases in which they had a financial stake, along with ongoing interest in Justice Thomas's (and his spouse's) conflicts, we witnessed renewed attention to judicial ethics. Although the For the People Act included strong judicial ethics reform language, it wasn't included in the modified Freedom to Vote Act (or the Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act) that the House and Senate voted on. The Courthouse Ethics and Transparency Act, which essentially applies the STOCK Act to federal judges – and which Common Cause actively supported - passed both the House and Senate, and is now law.
- Other ethics bills were also introduced, including the Supreme Court Ethics Act (H.R. 4766/S. 2512), the 21st Century Courts Act (H.R. 7426/S. 4010), and the Supreme Court Ethics, Recusal, and Transparency Act (H.R. 7647/S. 4188), which we actively supported. House and Senate Judiciary Committee hearings in 2022 resulted in markups and approvals, and we continue to drive support for these bills and will mobilize our supporters to contact their members of Congress in advance of any vote.
- We secured victories from the Biden administration, including a strong ethics executive order and a commitment to many recommendations from Accountability 2021, a broad national coalition of experts that Common Cause co-leads, with a focus on accountability and oversight in the federal government. This was a significant victory that Common Cause is proud to have co-led the way toward, and continues to strengthen even further.



MONEY IN POLITICS

- In FEC v Ted Cruz for Senate, the U.S. Supreme Court took another step in the wrong direction for campaign finance regulation, holding that the law preventing repaying federal candidate loans over \$250,000 with money raised after the election was unconstitutional. This flies in the face of American campaign finance laws designed to limit political giving that overly indebts officeholders to donors and results in political favors. At stake in this case was a provision in the Federal Election Campaign Act that set a modest \$250,000 limit on post-election fundraising to retire candidate loans, which had largely operated without controversy since its adoption as part of the McCain-Feingold Act in 2002. Common Cause joined as an amicus litigant.
- Americans deserve to know who is trying to influence the voices and votes of their elected and appointed officials. Disclosure allows voters to evaluate the strength, content, and agenda of political candidates and their messages and is a crucial tool for holding people accountable to the voters. Please see "State Highlights" for local-level action and activities.



CONSTITUTION, COURTS & OTHER DEMOCRACY ISSUES

 Freedom to Vote Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act: In early 2022, Common Cause staff continued an "inside-outside" pressure campaign, and we were one of the key groups involved in helping to lead the effort. We had daily interactions with key Senate and House offices and provided ongoing policy, coalition, and grassroots support for the campaign. We had regular meetings with Congressional and White House leadership about a path forward.

Common Cause op-eds about the importance of passing federal voting rights legislation ran in dozens of newspapers. We significantly ramped up our phonebanks and in-state actions in several key states, and we organized several sign-on letters and other actions to maximize pressure on reluctant senators. Our grassroots members sent 40,959 emails to Senate offices, called 2,273,521 voters, urging them to demand action from their senators, mailed 578,400 postcards, submitted 5,065 letters to the editor, and recruited more than 1,500 small businesses to support the legislation. In mid-January, the two bills were combined and renamed the "Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act" (HR 5746). The House then passed this updated bill on January 13, 2022, and sent it to the Senate. Following the debate, Senate Republicans filibustered the motion to invoke cloture. Although we were not successful (this time) in passing a major voting rights bill, we helped move between 12 and 15 Democratic senators who were previously reluctant to modify the filibuster to now support changing the filibuster so that the work of the people can be accomplished in the United States Senate, including protecting voting rights.

Article V: A federal constitutional convention was last held in Philadelphia in 1787, when the Constitution itself was drafted. Since then, the U.S. Constitution has been amended 27 times through the first of two processes described in Article V. The second, never-used path is for twothirds of state legislatures to pass resolutions applying for a new constitutional convention. A new constitutional convention — called under a little-known provision in Article V of the U.S. Constitution — would be a recipe for disaster. If a convention is called, our current Constitution could be entirely rewritten. The Bill of Rights erased. The rights and freedoms you hold most dearly taken away. For years, Common Cause has been a leading defender against this nightmare scenario, and during the 2022 state legislative sessions, we helped stop 126 new calls for a convention in 35 states.



ALLIANCE FOR EMERGING POWER

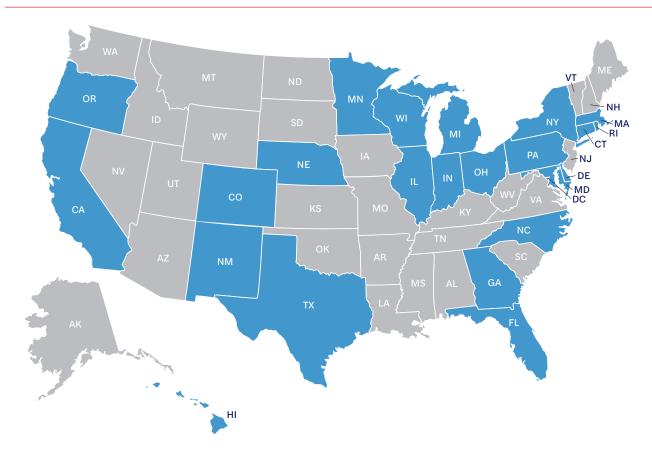
- Formerly our Youth Civic Engagement Program, Common Cause's Alliance for Emerging Power will house our internships, the Student Action Alliance Democracy Fellowships, the Ambassador Program, and Election Protection Fellowships. As we continue to grow our youth civic engagement work, we plan to engage in more research and launch a student journalism program.
- In early 2022, Common Cause Democracy Fellows registered hundreds of students and collected hundreds of pledges to vote in preparation for the midterm primaries. Fellows throughout our program states launched civic education campaigns for their campuses this spring. The work of the Fellows continues to increase our base of support on campuses from North Carolina to California.
- Common Cause's 2021 edition of Writing for a Just World: Engaging Essays by Youth includes the blogs of students from Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia, as well as artwork from select activism contest winners.



COALITIONS

- Nationally, Common Cause leads an Election Protection coalition of more than 70 groups and boasts leadership and active supporters in nearly 20 states. Throughout 2021, we debriefed and evaluated 2020's Election Protection work, incorporated lessons learned, and developed systems, tools, and strategies to improve our impact and efficiency in 2022 and 2024. These took the form of regular meetings of the expanded steering committee (which includes NAACP, Disability Rights Network, and Verified Voting in addition to Common Cause Education Fund (CCEF), State Voices, and the Lawyers' Committee), participating in external evaluations by advocates and funders, and sustaining working groups to address specific needs.
- Common Cause Education Fund (CCEF) anchors CHARGE, a collaborative hub of nine leading national organizations that provides training, support, and resources to state partners advancing fair redistricting. The nine groups are APIAVote, Center for Popular Democracy, Common Cause, Fair Count, League of Women Voters, Mi Familia Vota, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, National Congress of American Indians, and State Voices. Our training curriculum served as the basis for codeveloping a modular training curriculum, Redistricting Community College, to teach about the Voting Rights Act, community mapping, advocacy, and coalition building.

STATE HIGHLIGHTS



In California, we sponsored a lobbying reform bill that will create more timely and useful lobbying disclosure in California, end anonymous lobbying pressure tactics, and close loopholes in California lobbying reporting practices.

In Colorado, we helped pass the Vote Without Fear Act, which will ban the open carry of firearms at polling places, at vote counting centers, and within 100 feet of ballot drop boxes.

In Connecticut, we led a campaign to amend the Connecticut Constitution to allow no-excuse absentee voting.

In Delaware, we pushed for legislation that makes voting by mail a permanent option for voters in the First State.

In Florida, we joined with FairDistrictNOW and the Florida NAACP to challenge the DeSantis Congressional Map, based on the grounds of intentional racial discrimination.

In Georgia, we joined an anti-gerrymandering lawsuit to protect voters from a "cracking and packing" tactic that is being used to dilute the power of voters in congressional districts across the metro Atlanta area.

In Hawaii, members helped to pass three priority bills advocating for expanded ranked choice voting, requiring language translation services for voters, and broadening public involvement in board and commission meetings.

In Illinois, we worked to enhance the transparency and accessibility of electronic voter registration data. At a time when our democratic institutions are under attack, we can't afford to make it so difficult to reach Illinois voters.

In Indiana, our team mobilized grassroots action and prepared testimony and fact sheets to stop legislation seeking partisan school board elections. This was yet another attempt to politicize public education.

In Maryland, we pushed a vote-by-mail bill that establishes a tracking system so voters can know where their ballots are, and when they are received and counted.

In Massachusetts, we were the driving force behind 1) passing the VOTES Act, a landmark bill that includes allowing voters to vote by mail without an excuse, 2) expanding early voting options, and 3) making sure that eligible voters who are incarcerated are able to request a mail ballot and vote.

In Michigan, we pushed back against attempts to incorporate harsh new voter ID laws.

In Minnesota, we filed suit to make sure the redistricting process is part of a healthy, accountable, multiracial democracy. Unlike other active lawsuits, ours focuses solely on disenfranchised communities' interests, and not incumbent protection or political party control.

In Ohio, we celebrated in January 2022 when the Ohio Supreme Court struck down the gerrymandered congressional and state legislative maps.

In Oregon, we backed legislation to restore voting rights to incarcerated voters, as well as campaign finance reform, and several other bills addressing equity in the democratic process.

In Nebraska, we worked on redistricting, campaign finance, and voting rights bills.

In New Mexico, we supported the expansion of Native American voting access to permit nations, tribes, and pueblos to request additional polling locations in their communities.

In New York, we continued fighting for the expansion of voting rights, strengthening campaign finance regulations, and ethics reform.

In North Carolina, we secured a historic victory in February when the state Supreme Court ruled in our favor and set a clear precedent that partisan gerrymandering violates the state's constitution.

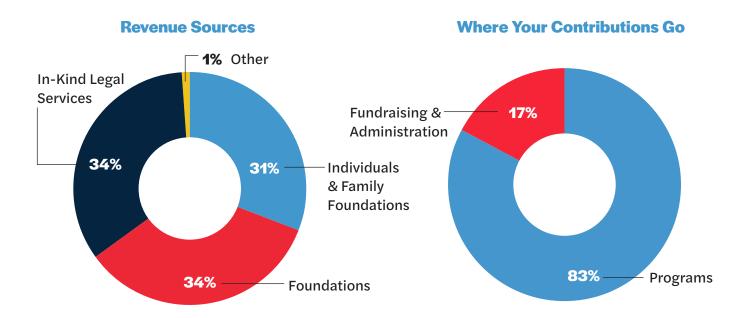
In Pennsylvania, we assisted the Pennsylvania secretary of state in establishing risk-limiting audits as the post-election auditing model for all Pennsylvania elections.

In Rhode Island, we helped pass the Let RI Vote Act — the largest expansion of voting rights in Rhode Island in a generation.

In Texas, we began building the largest network of Election Protection volunteers in Common Cause Texas history, for the 2022 midterms.

In Wisconsin, we testified against a dozen new voter-suppression measures that included making it harder for the elderly and for persons with disabilities to receive and return absentee ballots. More than 3,000 Common Cause members also contacted their legislators to denounce the measures.

FINANCIALS



The financial information presented here is a consolidated statement of Common Cause 501(c)(4) and the Common Cause Education Fund 501(c)(3).

For our full financials, please visit www.commoncause.org/about-us/financials/

DONORS

We would like to thank our generous donors for investing in our success. Their partnership provides the funding that fuels our programs and drives us forward toward a democracy that works for everyone.

\$1,000,000+		Stephen M. Silberstein Foundation	CA
Bernard and Anne Spitzer Charitable Trust	NY	Stiefel Freethought Foundation	DE
Wellspring Philanthopic Fund	NY	Telesis Corporation	DC
		The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation	GA
\$500,000+	D O	The Educational Foundation Of America	CT
North Fund — Fair Representation in Redistricting Action Fund	DC	The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund	CA
Skoll Foundation	CA	The James Irvine Foundation	CA
Tides Foundation	CA	The Leadership Conference Education Fund	DC
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Democracy Fund	DC	\$50,000+	
Democracy Fund Voice	DC	Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation	CA
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Estate of Adelma T. LoPrest	CA	Wallace Global Fund	DC
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FJC — A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds		Hawai'i Community Foundation	HI
Gaia Fund	CA	Square One Foundation	IL
Hopewell Fund — Advancing Equitable and Responsible Fiscal Policy	DC	Democracy NC	NC
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Melissa Johnson Associates	NY	Ohio Voice	ОН
Mertz Gilmore Foundation	NY	The Collins Foundation	OR
NEO Philanthropy State Infrastructure Fund	NY	BMO Charitable Fund	PA
New Venture Fund — Center for Secure and	DC	Pennsylvania Voice	PA
Modern Elections		Estate of Wilma E. Stellingwerf	WA
New Venture Fund — Fair Representation in		Nancy S. Nordhoff	WA
Redistricting		Hopewell Fund — The Impact Project	
Park Foundation	NY	\$25,000+	
Patti & Everett B. Birch Foundation	NY	Benevity Community Impact Fund	FL
Piper Fund, a Proteus Fund Initiative	MA	Bessemer Giving Fund	NJ
Present Progressive Fund		Campbell Foundation	MD
ProGeorgia	GA	Carol & Velma Saling Foundation	OR
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	NY	Colorado Gives/Community First	CO
Schwab Charitable Fund	CA	Dean A. Mordhorst	OR
Sixteen Thirty Fund — Center for Secure and Modern Elections Action	DC	Estate of Adrienne V. Humphrey	CA
Sixteen Thirty Fund — Economic Security Fund		Estate of Anne W. Bleich	СТ

Fair Fight Action	GA	Fund for Change	MD
Gerbode Foundation	CA	GiveGab	NY
Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund	NY	Heyday Foundation	FL
Greenbridge Family Foundation	CA	Irving and Sulamith Blackberg Charitable	NJ
Greg Diskant and Sandra Baron	NY	Foundation	
Guy Lewis Revocable Living Trust	OR	Itzkowich Family Foundation	CA
Howard and Geraldine Polinger Family	DC	Janet L. Axelson	WI
Foundation		Jessica Case	WA
Impact Assets	MD	Jewish Federation of Cleveland	ОН
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Unite America		Olena Lacy	CA
Vanguard Matching Gifts	RI	Paul Mitchell	CA
\$10,000+		Petschek Foundation	VA
Actblue Civics Inc.	MA	Phil West Spirit of CC RI Fund	RI
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