



THE POLITICAL
REFORM PROGRAM'S

Year in Review

2020

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Letter from Mark

We'll long remember the year 2020 for its exhausting stresses on individuals, families, and the political system. It was a year that began with a presidential impeachment, moved on to a once-in-a-century health crisis that revealed deep failings in our nation's capacity to deliver public services, followed by a reckoning with race and policing, and ended — after a well-run election with remarkably high participation — with one of the deepest threats a democracy can ever face: a defeated candidate's refusal to accept the results

For those of us focused on improving the workings of American democracy, this long year reinforced some of our assumptions and pushed us to reconsider others; it left us hopeful in some respects, and in others more worried than ever. In fact, the title of Senior Fellow Lee Drutman's book, *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop*, published in January, came to seem prophetic. The forces of negative polarization, in which voters' primary motivation is opposition, dominated not only the 2020 election, but almost every other facet of our politics, too.

While the intractable polarization that has defined American politics for at least a decade crippled our response to the pandemic and economic crisis, it was also at least in part responsible for a resurgence of engagement, reflected in the highest turnout of eligible voters in any national election since 1900. Other forms of participation, such as small campaign contributions and volunteering, also far surpassed previous levels. This newfound engagement followed years of organizing and mobilization that reached into quiet suburbs and cities alike, and, if sustainable, could form the foundation for a new relationship between people and government.

At the beginning of the year we had reason to hope that 2021 might bring sweeping institutional reforms at the national level, such as those passed by the House in the comprehensive 2019 bill known as H.R. 1, along with the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. Now, incremental reforms seem more plausible and states remain an essential testing ground for innovations, like ranked-choice voting and small-donor matching systems. But as the persuasive report called **"Our Common Purpose,"** issued in June by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, noted, "improvement of our civic culture and of our institutions must go hand in hand. Each is necessary; neither on its own is sufficient." This insight has guided New America's Political Reform program since its launch, and will continue to do so.

We also operate from the principle that the measure of a political system is not just whether it feels fair and open, but its ability to reach solutions to collective problems, such as the pandemic, recession, and climate change. In 2020, we began to address the "politics of policy" more explicitly, looking at structural factors such as state preemption of local laws that made it so difficult to achieve a coherent policy response. While many essential policy decisions, such as about education, planning and health, are centered at the level of state and local government, this past year has reminded us in so many ways that "federalism" alone cannot meet all the demands of our complex system, and a comprehensive realignment of federal, state, local and non-governmental responsibilities is long overdue. Similarly, this year also proved that, as our New Models Initiative has long argued, the boundaries between foreign and domestic policy are neither as strong nor as clear as they might have once appeared. As with the development and

roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine itself, addressing many of our greatest challenges will require international cooperation. Because like the pandemic, the problems our politics must solve in the 2020s rarely, if ever, stop at U.S. borders and political institutions.

We appreciate your continued interest in the work of the Political Reform program and hope that our brilliant team of researchers and writers will continue to provide insight and useful ideas as we all work together to reinvent American self-government in 2021.



Mark Schmitt
Director, Political Reform program
New America

2020 By the Numbers



78

op-eds

covering
every aspect of
political reform

33

publications

that referenced
our work

07

staff

on our small-
but-mighty team

41

podcast
episodes

on topics recent
and historic

09

reports

exploring a
range of issues

40

outlets

that published our
articles

21

events

where we held
public and private
conversations
on timely topics

48

quotes
& citations

where journalists
referred to our
work

02

books

published with
University of
Chicago and
Oxford University
Presses

05

fellows

that broaden
the program's
work

20

radio,
podcast, &
tv appearances

where we broadcast
our ideas

Looking Back at 2020

Looking back on the chaos of 2020, two things are clear: 1) The march toward democracy reform is not easily deterred, and 2) There's still a very long way to go to redesign and rebuild our democracy in pursuit of greater health, economic, and racial equity; responsiveness and representation; civic participation; trust and trustworthiness; and institutional efficacy.

First, in the 2020 presidential primary, democracy reform issues took on an urgency not seen since the aftermath of Watergate. Before the Iowa caucuses, Mark Schmitt and Maresa Strano released a **snapshot and analysis** of 15 candidates' positions on government ethics and campaign finance reform, overcoming structural and procedural barriers to majoritarian government, and making voting more accessible and inclusive. Their positions suggested a dramatic expansion of the scope of political reform, well beyond the focus from just a few years ago on limiting the power of money in politics and lobbying. But, as Mark observed in a companion piece in ***The Fulcrum***, while those previous efforts enjoyed bipartisan support, enthusiasm for reform in 2020 was concentrated among Democratic candidates and voters.

Just a few weeks later, as COVID-19 shutdowns began, the pandemic quickly became not just a health and economic crisis, but a political one, too. In April, the program **published a report** about what the pandemic will mean for democracy beyond 2020. In six essays, we discussed the virus's impacts on a range of issues — from civic engagement and federalism to national security and trust in government — that address the invisible and historic forces driving governing decisions, or what we refer to as the “politics of policy.”

Additionally, as racial justice protests and calls for defunding the police approached a critical mass, Mark **wrote about** the importance of centering racial justice and economic equity in our program's work, and the work of others in the reform community. Among the takeaways was that reformers must concentrate on race and power at least as much as they do on traditional “good government” efforts, which tend to be rooted in an ideal of procedural neutrality.

Finally, the general election held much of our attention this year. Ahead of the election, during the voting process, and throughout the Trump campaign's drawn-out efforts to contest the results, our team addressed topics — from increasing partisanship to election polls to fact-checking — in interviews, op-eds, and, of course, on Twitter. In particular, the team collaborated on **an article** summarizing five long-term election trends and topics to watch: small donations, momentum for ranked-choice voting, redistricting, political violence, and “security” voters.

“The old shibboleths of U.S. democracy as the global model and unfettered global markets as gateways to shared prosperity have steadily rotted away over the last two decades. And the pandemic has, in one fell swoop, utterly demolished them. So, ***what political and economic frameworks will we establish in their place?***”

Lee Drutman, New America report



Our Areas of Work



The Political Reform program works on a wide range of topics. But generally, they fall into these three categories.

- 01 Reimagining Political Institutions**
- 02 Designing Governance for Civic Power**
- 03 Politics of Policymaking**



Reimagining Political Institutions

IMPROVING OUR INSTITUTIONS
TO IMPROVE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

REIMAGINING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Rethinking American Elections

If the 2020 voting experience was proof of anything, it's that our elections infrastructure is in dire need of an upgrade. In a [report](#) and accompanying *New York Times* [op-ed](#), Lee Drutman and Charlotte Hill proposed the creation of a new federal elections agency to support a democracy in which every citizen and every vote counts equally, regardless of who they are, where they live, or what party they vote for.

Similarly, the Electoral Reform Research Group (ERRG) — a collaboration between our program, the Scholars Strategy Network, Stanford University's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Unite America Institute — is organizing research to understand the benefits and challenges of ranked-choice voting and related alternatives to our current system of winner-take-all elections. With the help of the ERRG advisory board, we selected 14 proposals to develop into full-fledged research, and invited the scholars behind each project to a research workshop in February. One of the studies, [“More Expression, Less Error,”](#) has already been published, and the rest are underway. We will publish a comprehensive report of the projects' findings in 2021, alongside recommendations for activists and lawmakers working toward electoral reform at the national, state, or municipal level.

“

The COVID-19 crisis will expose more Americans — either through media, word of mouth, or direct experience — to reforms aimed at *making voting easier, more secure, and more equitable* than one would have thought possible just a few months ago.

Maresa Strano, *New America Weekly*



Lee, Maresa, and Mark with the Electoral Reform Research Group scholars and practitioners at the inaugural ERRG research development workshop in February.

NEW AMERICA REPORT — LEE DRUTMAN AND CHARLOTTE HILL
“America Needs a Federal Elections Agency”

NEW YORK TIMES — LEE DRUTMAN AND CHARLOTTE HILL
“America Votes by 50 Sets of Rules. We Need a Federal Elections Agency”

CNN — LEE DRUTMAN AND ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER
“This one tweak to our voting system could change everything”

POLITICO — LEE DRUTMAN, contributor
“Coronavirus Will Change the World Permanently. Here's How”

NEW AMERICA REPORT — JASON MALOY
“More Expression, Less Error: Alternative Ballots Outperform Status Quo”

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT — LEE DRUTMAN
“The Coronavirus Could Change How We Vote, In 2020 And Beyond”

NEW AMERICA WEEKLY — MARESA STRANO
“How Vote-by-Mail Could Make Elections Fairer—Or Messier”

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT — LEE DRUTMAN
“There Is No Evidence That Voting By Mail Gives One Party An Advantage”

THE NEW REPUBLIC — LEE DRUTMAN
“How Democracy Dies at the Ballot Box”

WASHINGTON POST — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN
“The Democratic Party in Iowa changed the caucus rules. There could be controversy.”

NBC NEWS — LEE DRUTMAN
“Republicans' power grab in Wisconsin is more evidence the party doesn't care about the will of the voters”

Democracy & Doom Loops

Lee began the year with the release of his **book**, *Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop: The Case for Multiparty Democracy in America*, and a series of events that spread the book’s core ideas from Washington D.C. to New York City, Los Angeles, Half Moon Bay, Berkeley, and even London. He also discussed it on a wide range of podcasts, including *The Ezra Klein Show* and the *New York Times’ The Argument*.

Many months later, after a closely-contested election and a long-delayed concession, the need to escape the “doom loop” feels more acute than ever. Lee’s work continues to explore the possibilities for big structural reforms that challenge the broken status quo. Through articles, op-eds, interviews, and the podcast *Politics in Question* (which he co-hosts along with R Street’s James Wallner and Marquette University’s Julia Azari), he is helping to lead an expanding national conversation on both how our democracy stopped working — and how it might start working better in the future.

“Our democracy is **flashing warning signs**; all-or-nothing hyper-partisanship is destroying the overarching norms of democratic stability, mutual toleration, and forbearance.

Lee Drutman, Vox



Lee speaks about his book at Politics and Prose.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS — LEE DRUTMAN
Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop

THE ATLANTIC — LEE DRUTMAN
“America Is Now the Divided Republic the Framers Feared”

VOX — LEE DRUTMAN
“The two-party system is killing our democracy”

DEMOCRACY FUND VOTER STUDY GROUP — LEE DRUTMAN, JOE GOLDMAN, AND LARRY DIAMOND
“Democracy Maybe: Attitudes on Authoritarianism in America”

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT— LEE DRUTMAN
“Fact-Checking Misinformation Can Work. But It Might Not Be Enough.”

ONLINE BOOK TALK — JACOB HACKER, PAUL PIERSON, JAMILA MICHENER, AND MARK SCHMITT
“How the Right Rules in an Age of Extreme Inequality”

POLITICS IN QUESTION EPISODE — LEE DRUTMAN, JAMES WALLNER, AND JULIA AZARI WITH OMAR WASOW
“What are the politics of protest?”

CATO INSTITUTE— LEE DRUTMAN
“Escaping the Partisan Death Spiral”

POLITICS IN QUESTION EPISODE — LEE DRUTMAN, JAMES WALLNER, AND JULIA AZARI WITH MEGAN MING FRANCIS
“What will it take to achieve racial justice in American politics?”

REIMAGINING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

A Stronger Legislative Branch

Beneath Congress’s well-publicized legislative and moral failures is a fundamental failure of staff capacity. For years, Lee has worked with a bipartisan group of scholars and reformers to focus attention on the dangers of Congress’s limited capacity. In 2017 and 2018, our program sponsored the first Congressional Capacity Survey and organized the first Congressional Capacity Conference. In 2020, as a direct result of these efforts, we published the report **“Congressional Brain Drain”** by Alexander Furnas and Timothy LaPira, and the University of Chicago press published ***Congress Overwhelmed***, a collection of essays that Lee co-edited. This portfolio also helped inform the deliberations of the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress, before which Lee testified.

In addition to this work on congressional staff capacity, our program also looked at the role of the Legislative Branch in the realm of national security. As the U.S. trains and advises partner militaries, sells arms to partner countries, and deploys its own forces alongside partner forces, policymakers in Congress have sought tools to make U.S. security cooperation more effective — and to rein in these security partners when they act contrary to U.S. interests. This October, Alex Stark published a **new report** exploring the tools and authorities Congress has at its disposal to hold security partners accountable, shift their behavior, or restructure partnerships.



“The small-state bias of the Senate never became a real partisan issue — until now. It will likely remain an issue, too, as long as one party is able to **win a majority in the chamber while only representing a minority** of the population.

Lee Drutman, *FiveThirtyEight*

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS — ed. LEE DRUTMAN, TIMOTHY M. LA-PIRA, KEVIN R. KOSAR
Congress Overwhelmed

NBC THINK — LEE DRUTMAN
“Donald Trump and the White House have too much power. That’s ruining democracy”

LAWFARE — ALEXANDRA STARK
“Should Congress Play a Role in Arms Sales?”

FIVETHIRTYEIGHT — LEE DRUTMAN
“The Senate Has Always Favored Smaller States. It Just Didn’t Help Republicans Until Now”

NEW AMERICA REPORT — TIMOTHY M. LAPIRA AND ALEXANDER FURNAS
“Congressional Brain Drain: Legislative Capacity in the 21st Century”

NEW AMERICA WEEKLY — MARK SCHMITT
“Overworked and Underpaid — No Wonder Hill Staff Turn To K Street”

NEW AMERICA REPORT — ALEXANDRA STARK
“Managing U.S. Security Partnerships”

RESPONSIBLE STATECRAFT — ALEXANDRA STARK
“How Congress can help end our endless wars”

REIMAGINING POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

The People Behind the Institutions

In local, national, and even international politics, this year highlighted the continuing gap between our aspirations for diversity and the reality of who wields power in our political institutions. In 2020 and beyond, the Political Reform program’s New Models of Policy Change Initiative lifts up policy innovation in U.S. security and connects it to diversity in personnel and thought. Our work explores how the *who* of policymaking connects to the *what*. This year, Heather Hurlburt and Alex published cutting-edge research to create a better understanding of how diversity in the national security policy community affects policy outcomes. We also partnered with a cohort of organizations, including the Diversity in National Security Network, Women of Color Advancing Peace and Security, and Out in National Security, that seek to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the policy world. Alongside these partners, we strive to help the national security community to embrace new ways of thinking, to bring new and diverse perspectives to the table, and create a pipeline of diverse talent by lifting up the profiles of next-generation leadership.

“Technical and policy mitigations to cybersecurity challenges will never reach their full potential until **systemic racism is addressed and diverse voices are reflected** among our ranks at all levels.

Camille Stewart, *Council on Foreign Relations*



Above: Heather, U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, U.S. Senator Bob Casey, and Jamille Bigio. Below: Anne-Marie Slaughter, Camille Stewart, Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins, Alonzo Fulgham, and Michele Flournoy.

ONLINE EVENT — AMB. [RET.] GINA AMBERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY, MIEKE EOYANG, DR. SARA Z. KUTCHESFAHANI, AND HEATHER HURLBURT
“Is the National Security Field Actually Becoming Less Diverse?”

ONLINE EVENT — HEATHER HURLBURT, GAYATRI PATEL, GAWAIN KRIPKE, JENNY VANYUR, SERRA SIPPEL, BRIDGET BURNS, & MORE
CO-HOSTED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN
“Toward a Feminist Foreign Policy in the United States”

NEW AMERICA REPORT — ALEXANDRA STARK AND HEATHER HURLBURT
“Four Data Trends in Gender, Diversity, and Security That You Should Know About”

ONLINE EVENT — U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY, U.S. SENATOR CATHERINE CORTEZ, HEATHER HURLBURT, AND JAMILLE BIGIO
HOSTED BY THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
“Virtual Roundtable: International Trade and Women’s Rights”

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS — CAMILLE STEWART
“Systemic Racism Is a Cybersecurity Threat”

ONLINE EVENT — ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, MICHÈLE FLOURNOY, ALONZO FULGHAM, AMB. BONNIE JENKINS, AND CAMILLE STEWART
CO-HOSTED WITH THE DIVERSITY IN NATIONAL SECURITY NETWORK
“Where Does the National Security Community Stand Three Months After George Floyd Changed the World?”



Designing Governance for Civic Power

RETHINKING GOVERNING STRUCTURES TO BETTER
REALIZE OUR DEMOCRACY'S PARTICIPATORY PROMISE

DESIGNING GOVERNANCE FOR CIVIC POWER

A Moment of Historic Engagement

This year, the United States saw historic levels of civic engagement, from mutual aid networks to record voter turnout. In the face of emergencies that emphasized the failures of our governing institutions, there were nationwide movements dedicated to education, donations, and community engagement, as well as efforts to use civic tech to connect residents with their local government during COVID-19. The 2020 election underscored the importance of building these kinds of civic and organizing infrastructures, and highlighted the powerful impacts they can have, as we saw in multiple newly-blue states. Throughout this year, Hollie Russon Gilman and Elena Souris tracked these developments, looking at **engagement** across the country and studying participation in individual cities. As the challenges driving these movements continue into 2021, we'll follow future trends in how Americans participate in their democracy — and how our democracy can best support that engagement.



We need an inclusive democracy where frontline communities not only can organize and make demands but have the civic power *to shape the actions of their government.*

Hollie Russon Gilman and K. Sabeel Rahman, *The Forge*



EDWARD ELGAR PUBLISHING — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND TIAGO CARNEIRO PEIXOTO, ed. STEPHEN EISTUB AND OLIVER ESCOBAR
“Digital Participation”

APOLITICAL — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN
“What civic fellows bring to the governing table”

STANFORD SOCIAL INNOVATION REVIEW — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN
“Civic Health and Social Distancing”

ONLINE BOOK TALK — SARAH J. JACKSON, DAVE KARP, ERIN LONGBOTTOM, AND MARK SCHMITT
CO-HOSTED WITH THE NEW AMERICA FELLOWS PROGRAM
“#HashtagActivism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice”

NEXT CITY — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN
“From the COVID-19 Crisis to Rebuilding our Public Technology Infrastructure in Local Government”

THE FORGE — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND K. SABEEL RAHMAN
“Organizing in the Age of Coronavirus: Building Civic Power in the COVID-19 Crisis”

NEW AMERICA WEEKLY — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN
“Calls to ‘Defund the Police’ Could Transform Public Budgeting as We Know It”

ONLINE EVENT — MARIA TORRES-SPRINGER AND AFUA ATTA-MENSAH IN CONVERSATION WITH HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND K. SABEEL RAHMAN
HOSTED AT THE 92ND STREET Y
“Local Civic Engagement for a Broad Impact”

Collaborative Governance for 2021

Collaborative governance models redesign government to channel people's energy into concrete powersharing arrangements, facilitate cooperation between **traditional and nontraditional allies**, and produce better, more sustainable policy. We believe 2021 will have fertile ground for experimenting with co-governance models and learning from previous efforts, both foreign and domestic. For example, recent calls to defund the police sparked a new willingness to experiment inside and outside government, and new public interest in municipal budgets. But defunding is only half the equation: Building an affirmative alternative is just as urgent, and will require co-governing models like participatory budgeting that are inclusive, trustworthy, and involve a power transfer from decision-makers to communities.

As we've seen this year, when governments make decisions without the full representation, enfranchisement, and participation of their constituents, the consequences are severe for long-marginalized groups. The appetite to correct these wrongs is stronger than ever. However, practicing co-governance models can be difficult.

Over the last few years, Hollie and Elena have studied such **collaboration models**, particularly at the municipal level. In 2021, the program will build upon this research and expand our focus, looking at the federal level and toward the field of international development for new models, cooperation tools, and best practices. With our findings, we hope to help communities and public servants at all levels to create a deeper democracy where residents are regularly empowered to engage in decisions, not just during elections or crises.



NEW AMERICA REPORT — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND ELENA SOURIS
“Global Answers for Local Problems”

NEW AMERICA WEEKLY — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND ELENA SOURIS
“Democracy is Hard. These Cities Are Finding Ways to Pull It Off.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES — HEATHER HURLBURT
“The World is Helping Americans Who Don't Always See It”

BEECK CENTER, MEDIUM — HOLLIE RUSSON GILMAN AND SONAL SHAH
“We Need New Models to Rebuild Trust in Institutions”

KENTUCKY CONVERSATION COMMITTEE — HEATHER HURLBURT
Annual Meeting Keynote Address

“Bringing residents into the governing process...requires implementing equity, opening doors within bureaucracy, and being open to **rethinking traditional infrastructure and processes**, while also respecting the political process.”

Hollie Russon Gilman and Elena Souris, New America report



Politics of Policymaking

**BROADENING THE AGENDA AND
STUDYING HOW SUSTAINABLE POLICY IS MADE**

Governing for a New Era

The measure of a political process is not just whether it follows the formal practices and norms of democracy, but whether it produces outcomes that improve people’s lives. We expect democracy to involve a kind of feedback loop, in which voters reward improvements and reject policy failures. But years of accumulated polarization, misinformation, media segmentation, and aggressive use of institutional power seem to have broken those structures, if they ever worked that well to begin with.

Rather than looking at political norms in isolation from their policy outcomes, our program has sought to reconnect the two realms, exploring policies that have democratic consequences, such as state preemption of local laws or health policies that can provoke backlash. People’s experience of government, when it provides or fails to provide services, shapes their perception of democracy. Maresa continued her work on these issues this year, writing about how preemption has impacted affordable housing and cities’ COVID-19 responses.

At the same time, policy itself can shape what’s possible in the political world, and perhaps even construct a more responsive democratic politics in which equitable feedback matters. Our program is interested in the relationship between money in politics beyond political campaigns, such as Lee’s recent work on lobbying and the coronavirus relief bill. We also work on the relationship between citizens (and non-citizens) and government, including Mark’s writing about rebuilding trust

in government after its COVID-19 failures. This work requires breaking through the traditional boundaries of “political reform” to include debates on economic policy, health, climate, and national security.

As we enter a new era with the election of Joe Biden and Kama-la Harris, however, the new administration must first confront the institutional damage done by Donald Trump. As Mark wrote in the New York Times this year, remnants of that damage will be long-lasting, and any new governing efforts must take those realities into account.

“All these [Trump era] regulatory changes, and the complexity of reversing them, will be *like sand in the gears* in the implementation of any action on climate, student loans or health care, as well as to the ordinary functioning of government.

Mark Schmitt, *The New York Times*

THE NEW YORK TIMES — MARK SCHMITT
“Joe Biden Will Face This Overlooked Crisis on Day 1”

THE NEW YORK TIMES — MARK SCHMITT
“A Democratic President Cannot Undo All of Trump’s Damage in 100 Days”

VOX — MARK SCHMITT
“Donald Trump is Richard Nixon’s revenge”

NBC THINK — LEE DRUTMAN
“What does a coronavirus relief bill have to do with a Ritz Carlton? It’s all about the lobbyists.”

WASHINGTON MONTHLY — MARESA STRANO
“Conservatives Made It Easier for Coronavirus to Spread”

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC — MARESA STRANO AND TIM ROBUSTELLI
“Want More Affordable Housing? Let Arizona Cities Regulate AirBnB, Vacation Rentals”

DEMOCRACY JOURNAL — MARESA STRANO
“A Coronavirus Treatment for U.S. Democracy”

NEW AMERICA WEEKLY — MARK SCHMITT
“In the Wake of Its COVID-19 Failure, How Do We Restore Trust in Government?”

POLITICS IN QUESTION EPISODE — LEE DRUTMAN, JAMES WALLNER, AND JULIA AZARI WITH JAMILA MICHENER
“Will Americans hold the government accountable for its pandemic response?”

POLITICS OF POLICYMAKING

Building Resilience to Political Violence

Since 2019, New Models' work with our partners at OverZero has drawn on international conflict and peacebuilding research to identify risk factors for political violence around the U.S. election — as well as strategies to build community resilience to such violence. **Survey research** conducted by Lee, Larry Diamond, Tod Lindberg, Nathan P. Kalmoe, and Liliana Mason, also analyzed trends and current patterns in Americans' beliefs about political violence.

Unfortunately, political violence was often in the headlines this year, from the murder of Black Lives Matter supporters in Kenosha to attempts to kidnap elected leaders. As Alex and Heather have **recently written**, strategies to strengthen participation in democratic institutions, support targeted communities, and engage the media to create effective programming will be critical to restoring trust in our political institutions and preventing political violence around the next election.



The challenge for violence prevention, both between states and within them, is to pay attention to new conflict dynamics in order to better understand how peace, security, and their opposites ***play out in the lives of the authorities and governed around the world.***

Heather Hurlburt, Alex Stark, and Rachel Brown, *Foreign Affairs*



NEW YORK MAGAZINE — HEATHER HURLBURT
“Coronavirus and Autocracy Are An Extremely Dangerous Mix”

FOREIGN AFFAIRS — HEATHER HURLBURT, ALEXANDRA STARK, AND RACHEL BROWN
“How the Coronavirus Sows Civil Conflict”

VOICE OF AMERICA — HEATHER HURLBURT INTERVIEW
“A Conversation on Political Polarization”

ONLINE EVENT — HEATHER HURLBURT, panelist
DEPOLARIZATION SUMMIT, HOSTED BY MILLIONS OF CONVERSATIONS, FETZER INSTITUTE, COMMUNITIES OVERCOMING EXTREMISM, AND VANDERBILT
Depolarization Summit, “Understanding the Problem, Assessing the Policy Options: Law and Military”

ONLINE EVENT — HEATHER HURLBURT, BOB YATES, ROMAIN VAKILITABAR, AND STEVEN OLIKARA
CONFERENCE ON WORLD AFFAIRS, HOSTED BY UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER
“Can We Talk? Communicating With Those You Don’t Agree With”

THE HILL — LEE DRUTMAN, JOE GOLDMAN, AND LARRY DIAMOND
“Our democracy could be in peril from within — will leaders step up?”

POLITICO — LEE DRUTMAN, LARRY DIAMOND, TOD LINDBERG, NATHAN P. KALMOE, AND LILIANA MASON
“Americans Increasingly Believe Violence is Justified if the Other Side Wins”

Redefining National Security Policy

The COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice movement this year brought a reckoning about what security means and whom U.S. security policies help — or harm. These crises highlighted the rising centrality of issues that, while they deeply affect the ability of individuals, communities, and nations to live in peace and security, don't fit easily into existing national security frameworks. The New Models of Policy Change Initiative continues to lead conversations around how to **redefine security policy** in ways that enhance equity. For example, our work on trade looks at how we can increase economic well-being for the broadest swath of Americans and our partners, while also extending opportunity to women and people of color and promoting environmentally-friendly development.



Heather Hurlburt and Amb. Susan Rice

“Most importantly, in both the short- and long-term, Americans must fundamentally re-orient how we think about national security. Instead of securing the flow of oil, fighting terrorism, and arming proxies with terrible governance records, our Middle East strategy **must elevate human security to a central priority.**

Alex Stark, *Just Security*

PANEL EVENT — AMB. SUSAN RICE AND HEATHER HURLBURT
FOREIGN POLICY FOR AMERICA'S FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Book Talk and Keynote

WASHINGTON MONTHLY SYMPOSIUM — HEATHER HURLBURT, JULIANNE SMITH, BETH BALTZAN, FRANCESCO CERRUTI, ANDY GREEN
“How to Save Liberalism in the U.S. and Europe”

WASHINGTON MONTHLY — HEATHER HURLBURT
“Europe and America Must Redefine Security”


JUST SECURITY — ALEXANDRA STARK
“Putting People First: COVID-19 Reveals Shortcomings of U.S. Approach to Security in the Middle East”

ONLINE EVENT — HEATHER HURLBURT, REP. RO KHANNA, AND DR. STEPHEN GRAND
HOSTED BY FOREIGN POLICY FOR AMERICA
“The New Normal: Foreign Policy in a Post-Pandemic World”

FOREIGN POLICY — ALEXANDRA STARK
“Give Up on Proxy Wars in the Middle East”

THE WASHINGTON POST — HEATHER HURLBURT
“On foreign policy, a call to ditch the grim worldview and re-awaken idealism”

PROJECT SYNDICATE — ALEXANDRA STARK AND ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER
“Crafting a Diplomacy-First U.S. Foreign Policy”



The Political Reform Team

OUR PEOPLE, FUNDING, AND
WORK BEHIND THE SCENES

Leadership Behind the Scenes



Hollie Russon Gilman presented best practices for municipal civic engagement to the incoming class of Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative mayors, representing cities from across the country, and gave an address at MySociety's TICTeC conference. She also advised multi-sector leaders from across Europe on civic tech and New York City's Civic Engagement Commission.

Lee Drutman virtually testified before the House Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. He also participated in Unite America's Invest in Democracy Summits.

Heather Hurlburt and Alex Stark briefed their trade and economic security work to policymakers and convened Congressional and NGO leaders to explore approaches to promoting gender equity in trade policy. Heather co-led the Peace and Security Funders' Group's initial Courageous Conversation considering the relationship among historical injustice, diversity and U.S. foreign policy.

About Us



Our Team

Lee Drutman, Senior Fellow
Heather Hurlburt, Director, New Models of Policy Change Initiative
Hollie Russon Gilman, Fellow
Mark Schmitt, Director, Political Reform Program
Elena Souris, Policy Analyst
Alexandra Stark, Senior Researcher
Maresa Strano, Policy Analyst

Lydia Bean, Fellow
Didi Kuo, Fellow
Jeannette Haynie, Fellow
Camille Stewart, Fellow



You can stay in touch with the Political Reform program by following us on ***Twitter*** (@PolReformNA) and signing up for our ***seasonal newsletter here***, where we share all of our team’s latest work throughout the year.

Friends of the Program

In addition to our core staff, fellows help broaden and deepen our team’s work. Political Reform added two new fellows this year, Camille Stewart and Dr. Jeannette Haynie:

Camille Stewart is an attorney whose crosscutting perspective on complex technology, cyber, and national security, and foreign policy issues has landed her in significant roles at leading government and private sector companies like the Department of Homeland Security and Google. Camille is Head of Security Policy for Google Play and Android where she leads cybersecurity, privacy, election integrity, and misinformation policy efforts.

Dr. Jeannette Haynie is a career Marine Corps officer with a PhD in International Relations whose research focuses on the intersections of gender, leadership, and security. She has advised senior leadership on critical and creative thinking for warfighting effectiveness, served as a subject matter expert on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, and developed the planning guidance for strategic talent management for warfighting effectiveness.

Just like the fellows, our program’s friends and collaborators are a crucial part of our team.

Political Reform and the Better Life Lab at New America have partnered with the Diversity in National Security Network Out on their 2020 next generation leaders lists: The **2020 LGBTQIA+ Out in National Security Leadership List**, **Black American National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders**, **Latino National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders**, **Middle Eastern and North African American National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders**, and the **Asian American Pacific Islander National Security and Foreign Policy Next Generation Leaders**.

In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd, we were proud to join the **Organizations in Solidarity** initiative launched by **Women of Color Advancing Peace, Security and Conflict Transformation**.

Additionally, our Electoral Reform Research Group partners include the **Scholars Strategy Network**, **Stanford University**, the **American Enterprise Institute**, and the **Unite America Institute**.

Our Funders



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- Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the Harvard Kennedy School

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