

RONALD REAGAN CENTER ON CIVILITY AND DEMOCRACY

AUTUMN 2024 NEWSLETTER



► A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR, FREDERICK J. RYAN, JR.

Introducing the Center on Civility and Democracy

Americans of all political persuasions are frustrated with the deep divisions and increased polarization that is dividing our country and putting our democracy at risk.

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute has launched the [Center on Civility and Democracy](#) to work with organizations across America to promote civil discourse, help us to find common ground and advance our democracy through informed patriotism. We will follow President Reagan's example of reaching across the aisle, despite political differences, to promote the interests of all Americans and make our country stronger.

This, the first of our quarterly newsletters, focuses on false information, which is a major contributor to the divisions and distrust in America. With the election just weeks away, it is essential that all Americans have access to accurate information as we make our decisions. Foreign actors and some domestic groups are pumping out false and deceptive information at a scale that we have not seen before. Their goal is to confuse and mislead voters, further dividing us and portraying to the world that democracy is a flawed form of government.

We have been at work to raise awareness of this threat by [convening experts](#) and bipartisan conversations with elected officials, scholars, and experts. We've also published [a simple one-page document](#) that we can share with our family and friends to alert them to the risks of receiving and passing on false information.

Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President of Microsoft, is our guest contributor and offers his thoughts on the threats of adversarial influence campaigns to our democracy.



► GUEST CONTRIBUTOR BRAD SMITH

Confronting the threat of cyber influence campaigns on our democracy

This year is monumental for the world's democracies, with more than 2 billion people voting in elections of consequence. Here in the U.S., the presidential election is just weeks away. These elections are taking place in a time of global uncertainty and rapid technological advancements, particularly with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in consumer spaces. This is all taking place against the backdrop of continuous cyber influence campaigns by foreign nations.

The use of propaganda to mislead and deceive people is not new. From wartime propaganda to yellow journalism, the battle to discern the truth has always been crucial for democratic resilience. However, modern and adversarial nation-state influence campaigns pose a heightened threat to the integrity of our democratic processes and the trust citizens place in their institutions. As we navigate this evolving information environment, it's crucial to understand these challenges and take proactive steps to build a more resilient society.

One of the most concerning aspects of foreign influence campaigns is their ability to exploit existing societal divisions...

KEEP READING



► CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

“Election monitors and poll workers are there for love of country or love of community.”

- Senator Mark Warner

Over the past quarter, the Center on Civility and Democracy has held wide-ranging conversations with public figures across the political spectrum to address the challenges polarizing our country.

Disagree Better: A Conversation With Governor Spencer J. Cox: The Ronald Reagan Center on Civility and Democracy hosted Governor Spencer Cox to discuss the genesis of his [Disagree Better Initiative](#) as Chairman of the National Governors Association. In this effort, governors join forces to reduce partisan animosity and foster healthy debate.

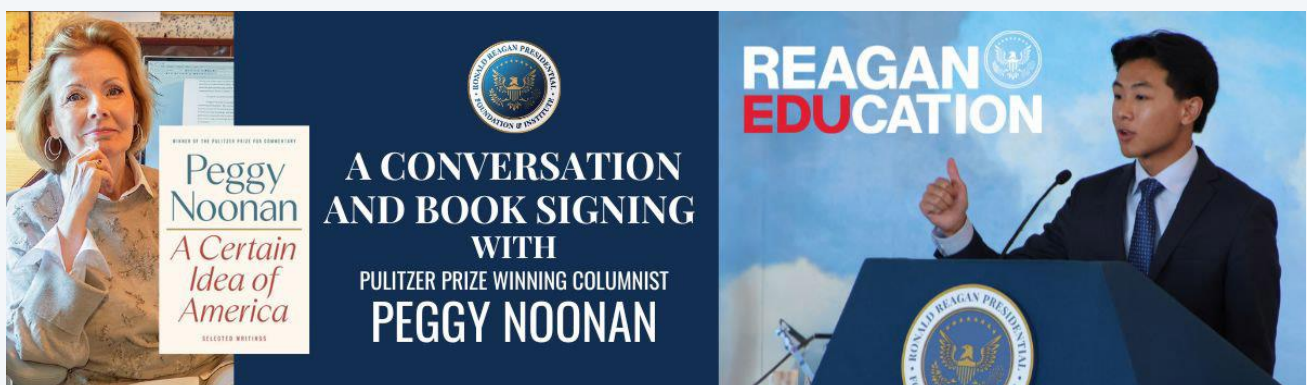
[Watch the Conversation ►](#)

Foreign Influence Operations on American Elections: The Center on Civility and Democracy joined with Freedom House to host Senator Mark Warner, Representative Brad Wenstrup, and other experts, to discuss the detrimental effects of foreign disinformation on American elections. Senator Warner emphasized the threat to election trust, while Representative Wenstrup advocated for individual vigilance against misinformation.

[Watch the Event ►](#)

Conversation with Supreme Court Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch: Supreme Court Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch joined Center on Civility and Democracy Director Fred Ryan onstage at the Reagan Presidential Foundation to discuss his latest book, "Over Ruled: The Human Toll of Too Much Law". Justice Gorsuch explored the delicate balance between essential laws that protect freedoms and the potential risks of excessive legal constraints impacting ordinary Americans.

[Watch the Conversation ►](#)



► UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Join us for an event or activity this fall!

Conversation and Book Signing with Peggy Noonan

Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, former speechwriter to President Reagan, and bestselling author Peggy Noonan has been thinking aloud about America in her much-loved Wall Street Journal column for a quarter century. In this new book, she demonstrates the erudition, wisdom and humor that have made her one of America's most admired writers. Her newest work, *A Certain Idea of America: Selected Writings*, is a celebration of what America has been, is, and can be.

Noonan will join the Center on Civility and Democracy in Washington, DC, and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute's main campus in Simi Valley, CA, for public conversations on her book, followed by book signings. These conversations will also be [streamed live](#) from the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute's YouTube channel. Sign up today to attend in person!

[Register for Washington, DC \(November 18th\) ►](#)

[Register for Simi Valley, CA \(December 4th\) ►](#)

Ronald Reagan Oratory Competition

We're excited to announce a fantastic, free opportunity to enhance public speaking skills and promote civic engagement: the Ronald Reagan Oratory Competition. This contest brings President Reagan's words to life through today's youth. Ten middle school (grades 5-8) and ten high school (grades 9-12) finalists will be selected, with all travel, hotel, meals, and VIP treatment covered for the student and a chaperone.

Participating is easy and free! Until November 15, 2024, students can submit their entry by reading and emulating an excerpt from one of President Reagan's radio addresses using the link below. If you have any questions, contact Megan Gately at mgately@reaganfoundation.org. We can't wait to celebrate the next generation of Great Communicators!

[Enroll Now ►](#)

News
Literacy
Project



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► **FEATURED ORGANIZATIONS**

Organizations Responding to False Information

Below are nonpartisan organizations helping citizens detect and ignore false information while providing ways to obtain reliable information:

News Literacy Project: The News Literacy Project works with educators and journalists to help students develop the skills they need to discern fact from fiction and to know what to trust.

[Visit Website ►](#)

AllSides: AllSides identifies news from all sides of the political spectrum so people can better understand the world — and each other.

[Visit Website ►](#)

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism: The Lenfest Institute provides free tools and resources for local journalism leaders to develop sustainable strategies to serve their communities.

[Visit Website ►](#)

If you would like to highlight efforts to address the issues raised in this newsletter, civility, or democracy more broadly, please share them with us.

EMAIL US



► TOP READING PICKS

“The sophistication of misinformation efforts... raises a troubling problem for democracy.”

Below are news stories and reports you can read to gain a deeper understanding of the problem of the spreading of false information and potential solutions.

America’s “Most Potent Adversaries” Spread Election Misinformation: Axios highlights how malign foreign actors are spreading false information to undermine trust in democracy.

[Read Article ►](#)

Foreign TikTok Networks Pushing Political Lies: Reporting from The Wall Street Journal finds that foreign actors are using AI to spread false information about the 2024 presidential contest. (Paid subscription needed to view.)

[Read Article ►](#)

Countering Disinformation Effectively: An Evidence-Based Policy Guide: A nonpartisan, in-depth guide from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace reviews proposals for how democratic governments, platforms, and others can counter disinformation.

[Read Article ►](#)

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Promoting constructive solutions to restore
and renew American democracy.

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