

Advancing Inclusively Democracy

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation

2024 Annual Report





Contents

Letter from the President and CEO	3
Vision, Mission, and Guiding Beliefs and Values	4
Impact for Democracy	5
Focus Areas	
Defending Inclusive Democracy	6
Information for a Democratic Society	8
Democracy and Community	10
Democracy and the Arts	12
Democracy around the Globe	14
External Affairs	16
Kettering Conversations on Democracy	18
Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy	20
David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award	22
Senior Fellows	24
Staff at Conferences	26
Strategic Communications	28
New Communications Vehicles	31
<i>The Context</i>	37
<i>From Many, We</i>	38
<i>The Stakes</i>	38
Communications for Democratic Innovation	37
Financial Snapshot	38
Charles F. Kettering Foundation Leadership	40



Letter from the President and CEO

In a momentous year for democracy worldwide, the Charles F. Kettering Foundation has positioned itself as a go-to leader in the democracy field by continuing to embrace collaborative bipartisan work in advancement of inclusive democracy, deepening its relationships with key strategic partners, and building out the work of our five focus areas.

The foundation's 2024 strategic work occurred against the challenging backdrop of global democratic backsliding; aggressive attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion; a dangerous decision of the US Supreme Court to immunize the presidency from the rule of law; and the threat that the incoming administration will attempt to implement the anti-democratic goals of Project 2025. Just miles from our headquarters, the Haitian community in Springfield, Ohio, was vilified as part of a strategy to sow division among American voters. And in states across the nation, the rights of transgender Americans have been threatened.

Thanks to our endowment, the Kettering Foundation is well positioned to continue its work in the democracy space, but organizational courage will be required to do this work in the highly charged environment that currently exists in the US and around the globe. We will continue to remain public facing, even as pressure to quiet criticism of anti-democratic actions mounts. With the approval of our Board of Directors, we have made new investments in office and convening space in Washington, DC, in anticipation of our growing work in our nation's capital.

Throughout the year, we have built awareness of our Kettering Conversations on Democracy series, engaging our named and senior fellows in conversation with other experts in the democracy field on key issues. We have attracted new research partners and improved our ability to address the information needs of diverse audiences through expanded communication channels, including a new blog series, *From Many, We*; a new podcast, *The Context*; and a new short video series, *The Stakes*. And we have grown our online presence, with a new website and increased activity on social media.

As 2024 winds down, the foundation will remain poised at the forefront of democracy work. Despite the many challenges we face at this moment, the staff are focused and energized. I remain deeply appreciative of the opportunity to work with such a dedicated group of colleagues and to lead such an outstanding organization.



Sharon L. Davies, President and CEO

Vision, Mission, and Guiding Beliefs and Values



Our Vision

We envision a world of thriving democracies where the rights of all are protected and people fulfill their civic responsibilities.



Our Mission

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation advances inclusive democracies by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism.



Our Guiding Beliefs and Values

Democratic Integrity: We believe in the rule of law and that all people have the right to free and fair elections, accountable leadership, and the peaceful transfer of power.

Civic Responsibility: We believe that people have a responsibility to participate in their communities and to make demands of their governments for the common good.

Belonging: We believe that democracy must embrace the full diversity of life experiences, beliefs, and voices of all.

Justice: We believe that all people have a right to fair and equitable treatment by institutions and systems of governance.

Trustworthiness: We believe that democracy requires civic and governmental institutions that are honest, transparent, and accountable.

Impact for Democracy

In the first full year of the **strategic plan**, the Kettering Foundation furthered its mission to advance inclusive democracies by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism. The foundation remained focused on empowering citizens to take an active role in the democratic process, ensuring their voices are heard and valued.

Each of our five focus areas saw deepened engagement and expanded impact.

In the **Defending Inclusive Democracy** focus area, we centered civil rights and freedoms in public policy discussions, advocating for equity-driven approaches to shape the future of democracy.

Through **Information for a Democratic Society**, we launched three communications channels to elevate the knowledge and expertise of thought leaders in the pro-democracy movement and foster dialogue on the promises and challenges of advancing inclusive democracies. These platforms serve as critical resources for fact-based insights and public understanding.

In the **Democracy and Community** focus area, we strengthened relationships with partners near our Dayton, Ohio, headquarters. These partnerships supported grassroots efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and support community health and well-being by amplifying local success stories as models of community-driven change.

The **Democracy and the Arts** focus area explored the role of artistic expression in telling stories of belonging and exclusion. These stories illuminate the complexities of democratic participation and create powerful narratives that connect citizens to the democratic experience.

Finally, our **Democracy around the Globe** focus area facilitated connections between scholars and civil society practitioners to identify global patterns of authoritarianism and share strategies of resistance. This international network continues to strengthen the global defense of democratic values.

Kettering's 2024 activities showcased our capacity to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from grassroots organizations to global influencers, all working to defend and promote inclusive democracy.



Focus Areas



Defending Inclusive Democracy

In the face of global democratic decline and rising authoritarianism, democracy requires a robust defense. Certain forces intentionally fragment our society rather than unite it. The **Defending Inclusive Democracy** focus area aims to strengthen public commitment to democracy and enhance our ability to recognize and respond to anti-democratic threats.

Threats to democracy, both in the United States and globally, have escalated as misinformation and culture wars are exacerbated by partisan politics. What some perceive as inefficiency in governance has led to widespread acquiescence to ideological retrenchment and political obedience, in the name of reclaiming a past where power was concentrated in the hands of a few.

Against this backdrop, the Defending Inclusive Democracy focus area prioritizes advancing civil rights, promoting equity-focused public policy, and supporting complementary institutional acting as essential strategies for fostering inclusive democracy.

In the 2024 program year, the work of the Defending Inclusive Democracy focus area included a strategic focus on the following:

1. **Influencing national policy conversations** by actively contributing to and shaping discussions that prioritize equity, access, and anti-racism, and introducing inclusive democracy themes at partner events.
2. **Expanding our partner network** by increasing the number of pro-democracy groups in our network, especially those that have not historically engaged with the foundation but hold significant influence.
3. **Increasing visibility and reach** through partnering with high visibility programs and events to elevate our initiatives, focusing on senior fellows and resident experts.
4. **Establishing a recognizable brand presence** among organizations that align with the foundation's mission.
5. **Impacting public policy and public opinion** through forming strategic partnerships aimed at catalyzing policy changes, shifting public opinion, and increasing awareness of threats to inclusive democracy.
6. **Increasing network capacity** by enhancing the ability of the foundation and its partners to tackle issues related to inclusive democracy through diverse resources, including research and multimedia products.

To put these commitments into action, we ventured into new terrain: making unconventional alliances, connecting with partners, catalyzing policy research, and supporting direct action pro-democracy efforts. Our presence at ally events underscored Kettering’s unwavering commitment to inclusive democracy. The following highlights are just a few of our activities in 2024:

- 1. Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference:** Sponsoring a panel discussion titled “Democracy at Stake: Labor, Wealth, and the Power of Our Vote.”
- 2. NAACP Annual Convention:** Sponsoring the national LGBTQ+ reception and panel discussion to foster vital conversations around democracy and LGBTQ+ rights.
- 3. Native Son Awards:** Convening pro-democracy scholars and LGBTQ+ activists to celebrate Black queer mavericks contributing to civic life and culture.
- 4. Congressional Black Caucus Foundation:** Sponsoring a session titled “*Navigating Democracy’s Challenges: Strategies for Advancing Inclusive Democracy*,” featuring two senior fellows discussing threats to voting rights and other freedoms and civil liberties.
- 5. Quad Caucus, National Conference of State Legislators:** Supporting the gathering of diverse state legislators to promote equitable outcomes for people of color in critical areas such as health and education.
- 6. Howard University Ronald W. Walters Center for Leadership and Public Policy:** *Collaborating* to address research gaps faced by lawmakers of color, leveraging resources from historically Black colleges and universities.

Reflecting on the past year, it is evident that defending inclusive democracy requires collective action and dedication. The Kettering Foundation is steadfast in its commitment to protecting civil rights and fostering a more equitable society. By working with allies and partners, we can resist authoritarianism and uphold the democratic values we cherish.



Goal: Defend inclusive democracy by raising awareness of and responding to its greatest threats.

Strategies:

- Promote public understanding of and commitment to democratic principles and values.
- Defend all citizens’ rights to participate in local, state, and national elections and have their votes count.
- Build social awareness of structural barriers and inequities that undermine belonging and limit collective action and citizen participation.



Information for a Democratic Society

The Kettering Foundation's **Information for a Democratic Society** focus area aims to inform, educate, and engage the public on critical issues related to advancing inclusive democracies and the growing threats of authoritarianism. To achieve this, the foundation launched three key communication channels in 2024: *The Context* podcast, the *From Many, We* blog series, and *The Stakes* short-form video interview series. Each of these channels serves as a vital platform to provide thought-provoking, accessible content for a broad audience. All three can be found on our **website** as well as our social channels, making them easily accessible to anyone committed to strengthening democratic principles.

The Context

The Context podcast is a critical element in Kettering's information outreach. Focused on engaging listeners through conversations with thought leaders on a range of topics, the podcast provides a space for dynamic discussions about democracy's evolution, threats, and opportunities. Whether addressing voting rights, immigration, or reproductive freedom, *The Context* brings timely, relevant insights to the forefront. As a platform for inclusive voices, the podcast works to demystify complex issues, ensuring that audiences from all backgrounds can participate in conversations about democratic reform and resilience.

From Many, We

The *From Many, We* blog series offers in-depth written reflections on the complexities and challenges facing democratic societies. The blog invites a diverse array of voices, including the foundation's senior fellows, to explore the nuances of democratic governance,

civil rights, and civic responsibility. By fostering a wide-ranging dialogue, the blog delves into the intersection of democracy and equity, accountability, and belonging. This year's topics have included analyses of democratic backsliding; legislative attacks on the LGBTQ+ community and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts; and foreign interference in US elections. Each blog post aims to deepen readers' understanding of the current state of our democracy.

The Stakes

The Stakes series of short-form video interviews adds a visual and succinct medium for exploring pressing democratic issues. These videos provide concise, impactful insights into the most urgent challenges facing democracy today. Guests come from a wide range of backgrounds and include many of the foundation's senior fellows. With a focus on making these interviews accessible and easily shareable, *The Stakes* brings attention to the immediate stakes in defending democracy and advancing citizen engagement.

Together, these three channels—*From Many, We*, *The Context*, and *The Stakes*—work in concert to provide audiences with critical, actionable information about democracy. Through them, Kettering amplifies diverse perspectives, fosters dialogue, and empowers individuals to engage with the democratic process.

THE CONTEXT

A Podcast by the
Charles F. Kettering Foundation



From Many, We
A Kettering Foundation Blog Series

The Stakes

Goal: Provide the public with information to heighten awareness of the needs of democracy and to enable the public to recognize authoritarian threats.

Strategies:

- Promote public awareness of the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.
- Produce trusted, nonpartisan research and analysis supportive of democracy.
- Counter anti-democratic campaigns and practices that diminish the critical democratic role of K-12 and higher education.
- Promote the importance of fact-based journalism and the role of a free and independent press in a democratic society.



Democracy and Community

The **Democracy and Community** focus area concentrates on the ways that inclusive democracy begins with everyday people—in our communities, around kitchen tables, on the streets, or in classrooms. We know that the work of democracy takes place in voting booths, city halls, state capitols, and Washington, DC, but sometimes we forget that democracy is fundamentally grounded in the way we live our lives. Democracy is about what we do, our voices, and the ability of everyday people to bring about the sort of lives and communities they long for.

One of this focus area's guiding principles is that people are already doing the work of inclusive democracy. The wheel doesn't need to be reinvented, and people don't need to be told what they should do. Instead, the focus area emphasizes ways to support and strengthen the work that is taking place. Our efforts include connecting people who are doing the work, strengthening on-ramps and pathways for more people to be engaged, and finding creative ways to share stories and research that can further strengthen movements and build momentum toward inclusive democracy.

In 2024, our work focused on three key points:

1. Democracy is where the people are.

We worked on getting to know people and organizations in Dayton, Ohio, and explored ways to collaborate with others who share our vision of an inclusive democracy. We know that change happens at the speed of relationships, and this year was focused on building connections, being curious about stories, and building trust.

While some meetings were held around a conference table, others were in community spaces such as the House of Healing Arts in West Dayton or at the **Collaboratory** in downtown Dayton. We met residents and conversed with them over dinner on the patio of the grassroots collective food hall, at West Social Tap & Table in the Wright–Dunbar neighborhood, in living rooms in the Twin Towers neighborhood, and in the kitchen of a community organization on Edwin C. Moses Boulevard. We also met regularly in coffee shops on Wayne Avenue.

2. Democracy needs everyday people.

One way that we have supported innovative leaders, changemakers, and dreamers is through the **Kettering Foundation Dayton Democracy Fellowship**. Fellows are people who are building movements for inclusive democracy in their communities, through their organizations, and in our world. The inaugural class is an intergenerational group who work in a range of fields, including health equity, youth and parents, wellness and healing, religion and faith, and higher education. They are distinguished by their love of place and people, their commitment to trusting and supporting everyday people to change the world, their passion for inclusion and welcome across lines of difference, and their curiosity and openness to respond to the needs of a rapidly changing political and community landscape.

The fellows met regularly to learn together, collaborate, dream, and plan for a city and world where everyone is welcome, everyone has a say over their lives and neighborhoods, and where power resides with the people. They were involved in helping to plan the Dayton Democracy Summit, shared their stories on foundation social media, and provided written narratives about what they are learning from their work.



3. Democracy requires community building.

Kettering's inaugural **Dayton Democracy Summit** was held on September 20 at Sinclair College in Dayton. This gathering was made up of people from all walks of life who wanted to learn from one another, be inspired, and be encouraged as they work to create a just and fair world. Often, those who are trying to strengthen democracy feel exhausted by the work of standing up for what is right and creating new, more sustainable, and just systems. The summit was intended to connect those doing democracy-centered work in Dayton so that they feel less alone by the weight of the task before them.

More than 200 people participated and over 100 organizations were represented from around the Dayton and Miami Valley region. They joined together in plenary sessions, workshops, and informal conversations to imagine ways to transform Dayton. The World House Choir led participants in group singing, and foundation Senior Fellow **William Barber II** gave a rousing call to action in his keynote address.

We worked hard to develop a gathering that connected people, was welcoming and inclusive, and where the voices of impacted people and communities were centered. The summit strengthened the movement for inclusive democracy in Dayton as we entered a difficult election season. After this first year of work, there is hope for the future. Innovative democracy work is taking place, and it will continue to grow.

Goal: Strengthen community voices, mutuality, and collective action for greater citizen engagement and influence over local problem-solving and government.

Strategies:

- Support local projects where people work together to improve their communities and experience the benefits of collaboration firsthand.
- Build social awareness of structural barriers and inequities that undermine the sense of community and limit collective action and citizen participation.
- Strengthen mechanisms for people to influence local government.

Democracy and the Arts

Throughout 2024, the **Democracy and the Arts** focus area concentrated on three things: learning more about how the arts can make connections between people and inclusive democracy, launching new initiatives, and developing partnerships.

The Arts as a Tool for Human Connection and Building Inclusive Democracy

The most significant challenge faced in 2024 was one of translation. Democracy and the Arts seemed like an unusual pairing to most. For elected officials, activists, and democracy or civic engagement professionals, the arts seemed abstract or even irrelevant. At best, the arts were viewed as an inspiring—but elite—activity or an entertainment. For the so-called art world, democracy was often seen as equally abstract and irrelevant to day-to-day life.

Through our interactions, we explained how arts can make democracy concrete and relevant and how it can use the senses to communicate experiences and feelings. Describing the things we value in democracy—belonging, trustworthiness, and being treated fairly—bridged the gap in understanding for many artists and arts organizations. Expanding the commonplace understanding of the arts to one that could be understood as ways of expressing and communicating through the senses bridged the gap for those not familiar with the arts.

In many conversations over the past year, the powerful impact of how belonging exemplifies inclusive democracy came up frequently. Over and over, we heard, “Oh, I get it. In an inclusive democracy, no one is excluded. Everyone belongs.”

This simple but powerful translation formed the basis of many of the year’s projects and drew people into the work of the focus area in unexpected ways.

New Initiatives to Foster Democratic Engagement

We have been actively collaborating with artists and arts organizations to further each of our four strategy areas. Here are just a few examples.

1. Leverage the unique power of the arts.

We worked with the **Dayton Performing Arts Alliance** to celebrate Black Music Month. Daytonians, many of whom had never been to the Benjamin and Marian Schuster Performing Arts Center, were invited to a reception and a concert and given complimentary tickets to an upcoming concert of their choice.

We also explored the challenges faced by **Q the Music**, an after-school music program that supports the musical, academic, and social growth of at-risk youth.

2. Create art that advances democracy.

Our inaugural artist-in-residence, **Sierra Leone**, is a spoken-word poet, producer, activist, and educator with strong ties to Dayton arts and activist communities. Leone’s understanding of the relationship between arts and activist communities supports Kettering’s work to affirm and advance inclusive democracy through the arts. She has used the arts to address racial, cultural, ideological, and economic challenges. Kettering sponsored two of her initiatives this year: the Levitt Pavilion Dayton Summer Camp for teens and the **Dayton Juneteenth Celebration**.

In partnership with **Creative Ohio**, we participated in a statewide ArtsVote Ohio initiative this fall. It included the installation of five wheat paste murals by Shepard Fairey in Dayton, all designed to encourage voting. A yard sign project using work by three well-known local artists also promoted voting and directed people to a website with essential information on how and where to vote.

3. Support democratic engagement and ideals.

The Belonging Project, a collaborative effort between **The Human Race Theatre Company**, the foundation, and Sierra Leone, uses participatory theater to explore whether the aspirations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have been realized in Dayton. Through a series of listening events, the project gathered stories from residents about their experiences of inclusion and exclusion. These stories will form the basis for an original play that will be performed in summer 2025.

4. Increase the reach and impact of artistic work.

The foundation collaborated with *PBS NewsHour's* CANVAS to develop an **Art in Action** series. The series encompasses 10 long-form broadcasts, digital articles, and high school lesson plans intended to advance the public's understanding of the vital role of the arts in a democratic society.

Developing Partnerships to Advance Art and Democracy

Throughout 2024, we established collaborations with a diverse range of artists and organizations, both locally and nationally. Our partners included:

- Dayton-based artists **Willis "Bing" Davis**, James Pate, and Sierra Leone
- Local institutions such as the **Dayton Metro Library**, **Levitt Pavilion Dayton**, Human Race Theatre Company, and the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance
- Statewide initiatives like Creative Ohio
- National organizations including the **Smithsonian Institution**, **Americans for the Arts**, and *PBS NewsHour's* CANVAS
- Government programs such as Art in Embassies at the State Department



Goal: Integrate the unique power of the arts into the Kettering Foundation's work locally, nationally, and internationally.

Strategies:

- Leverage the unique power of the arts to advance the foundation's work.
- Foster citizen engagement, support democratic ideals and practices, and expose threats to democracy through the arts.
- Create art that advances democracy at the local, national, and international levels.
- Increase the reach and impact of artistic endeavors that affirm and advance democracy.





A record number of elections were held around the world in 2024. Yet, International IDEA notes in its report *The Global State of Democracy 2024* that participation in elections is declining and the elections themselves are increasingly contested. They also report that “countries experiencing net declines in democratic performance far outnumber those with advances.” Given these worrisome trends in this critical election year, **Democracy around the Globe** (DaG) launched a webinar series and supported global conversations, welcomed its second cohort to the Global Fellows Program, and actively engaged with the international pro-democracy field.

Webinar Series

DaG launched a new webinar series to explore global challenges to democracy and ways to respond. The first webinar, “**Recognizing and Countering Authoritarian Trends**,” spoke to rising authoritarianism and what has been learned from countries around the world about countering it. The second, “**How Authoritarian Leaders Use Media to Divide and Dismantle Democracy**,” focused on how identity-based disinformation campaigns sow division, looking in particular at tactics used in the Americas and the importance of multifaceted responses.

Global Conversations

The DaG team also identified an advisory group on elections to collaborate on a series of global conversations that would create opportunities for exchange among those working to advance inclusive democracies around the world. The advisory group led these conversations, inviting democracy scholars, noted experts, and practitioners to share insights.

Some conversations focused on specific elections, such as in Mexico, India, and the EU’s parliamentary elections. Other conversations explored the role of international election monitors, the impact of technology (including the dangers posed by disinformation and deep fakes), and youth democratic engagement on the African continent, which has some 400 million young people between the ages of 15 and 35. Conversations featured both on-the-ground accounts and reporting from highly regarded peer organizations, including **International IDEA**, **the Kofi Annan Foundation**, and **the Carter Center**.

Additional pilot projects used online focus groups, webinars, and conversations to explore the nature of global challenges to academic freedom as well as the rise of anti-feminist and anti-women’s rights movements and policies and what might be learned from an intersectional feminist perspective. An in-person convening was held in collaboration with

Howard University's Ralph J. Bunche Center and others to explore global responses to anti-Black racism. The DaG team also hosted online *Talanoas* addressing racism, inequality, and discrimination facing Indigenous and First Nations people.

Global Fellows Program

The foundation continued to evolve its global fellows program, welcoming the second cohort of the [Global Fellowship for Advancing Inclusive Democracies](#). The 2024 fellows came from Australia, Brazil, Kenya, Romania, and Zimbabwe. Fellows brought backgrounds in civic tech, youth and citizen engagement, and gender and racial justice movements to the work of supporting greater election integrity and more inclusive democracies. Each fellow was paired with a mentor from our international network. Fellows were matched with mentors from different countries than their own, with the goal of fostering cross-border learning opportunities.

Similarly, while in Ohio, fellows and mentors met with Dayton Democracy Fellow [Dee Wooding](#) to learn about Dayton-based initiatives. When in Washington, DC, they participated in convenings with colleagues working in the global democracy space to discuss global challenges and opportunities for advancing more inclusive democracies.

Network Building

Throughout 2024, global insights and perspectives from this significant election year appeared in the [From Many, We](#) blog series and in reports and short videos shared through the DaG newsletter, *INTERCONNECTED*, which debuted in June.

In addition, the DaG team participated in two important international conferences, which offered opportunities to discuss global democratic trends and identify new partners and initiatives.

- The [Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy](#) in Bucharest, Romania, drew more than 400 civil society practitioners, activists, academics, and political representatives from some 50 countries. The overarching theme was trust: in institutions, in elections, in citizens, and in democracy itself.

- The [Athens Democracy Forum](#), in Greece, featured leading thinkers, practitioners, democracy activists, and young global leaders. The 2024 forum's focus was on truth and its contested nature, as well as the diminishing trust in institutions seen around the globe.

Goal: Strengthen an international community of partners to promote and defend inclusive democracies around the globe.

Strategies:

- **Identify key democratic threats and elevate promising initiatives to respond to those threats.**
- **Foster a community of international partners focused on advancing inclusive democracies and countering authoritarian pressures. Support partners' initiatives and other mobilization efforts to respond to democratic threats.**
- **Document and share knowledge, global insights, experiences, and research to improve efforts to advance inclusive democracy and counter authoritarianism.**



Ziad Majed

Maria J. Stephan

Steven Levitsky

[Democracy around the Globe Webinar](#)

Kettering Foundation's Recognizing & Countering Global Authoritarian Trends

External Affairs

The Foundation's DC Office: Our Presence in the Nation's Capital

In 2024, the Charles F. Kettering Foundation's External Affairs team significantly increased its impact and visibility from our office in Washington, DC. The foundation enhanced its presence in the nation's capital by driving partnerships and network development and by being a source of collaboration between the foundation's **focus areas**. The office also supported critical programming from other organizations, convened strategic conversations, and hosted impactful public events.

Advancing Inclusive Democracy: Sponsorships and Events

The foundation was honored to support a targeted set of events and convenings moving the democracy and philanthropy fields forward, making the case for inclusive democracy.

Kettering's President and CEO **Sharon L. Davies** and Senior Fellow **María Teresa Kumar** were featured keynote speakers at a plenary session of Campus Compact's national conference in Denver, Colorado. Davies argued for greater alertness to the narratives and tactics of authoritarian movements, including attacks on higher education and diversity, equity, and inclusion, while Kumar emphasized the potential of higher education in advancing inclusive democracy.

Kettering hosted the session, "Navigating Democracy's Challenges: Strategies for Advancing Inclusive Democracy" at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference, in Washington, DC. It featured Kettering Senior Fellows Rev. Dr. **William Barber II** and **Kelley Robinson** in conversation about the urgency of advancing inclusive democracy in the context of democratic decline and rising authoritarianism—which includes issues related

to voting rights, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and other issues that undermine belonging and limit collective action and civic participation. The panel was moderated by MSNBC national correspondent and host of *The ReidOut*, Joy-Ann Reid.

Emerging Issues Luncheons: Driving Change for Inclusive Democracy

Kettering's Emerging Issues luncheon series is an ongoing program where DC policy leaders in inclusive democracy gather for candid, in-depth discussions on the most pressing challenges facing democratic governance. Launched in 2018, these luncheons have engaged over 200 participants, tackling topics such as rising authoritarianism, Supreme Court decisions reshaping democratic structures, and the role of leaders in protecting democratic norms. Held under the Chatham House Rule, these sessions create a space for open dialogue, allowing participants to explore emerging issues and share insights from their respective fields.

The primary aim of the luncheons is to foster dialogue that drives meaningful change across the pro-democracy landscape. Discussions not only address immediate threats to democracy but also emphasize long-term strategies for strengthening democratic norms and institutions.



A selection of events and initiatives supported by the Kettering Foundation in 2024

- Advocates for Basic Legal Equality 2024 Access to Justice Awards Celebration
- Brennan Center for Justice Brennan Legacy Awards
- Campus Compact Annual Conference: Compact24
- Columbus Metropolitan Club Forum on Gerrymandering Reform
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 53rd Annual Legislative Conference
- Culture Works Presentation of the Americans for the Arts's *Arts & Economic Prosperity 6*
- Dayton Art Institute Exhibition *Riveting: Women Artists from the Sara M. and Michelle Vance Waddell Collection*
- *Dayton Business Journal* 2024 Leaders in Diversity Awards
- Dayton Metro Library Social Justice Speaker Series: *Brown v. Board of Education*
- Dayton NAACP 73rd Hall of Freedom Awards
- Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra Black Music Month Concert
- Foreign Policy Association World Leadership Forum Dinner
- German Marshall Fund Congress-Bundestag Forum
- Howard University Center for Journalism and Democracy 3rd Annual Democracy Summit
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation Columbus Dinner
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation National Dinner
- Innovation for Equity 3rd Annual Black Education Forum
- Installation of *Get Out the Vote* Murals by Shepard Fairey
- International Republican Institute John S. McCain Freedom Award Celebration
- *I Wish to Say* Participatory Art Project by Sheryl Oring
- Levitt Pavilion Juneteenth Concert
- Magnolia Theatre Company *What the Constitution Means to Me* Post-Performance Conversation about the Fourteenth Amendment
- MLK Interfaith Prayer Breakfast
- NAACP 115th Annual Convention LGBTQIA+ Reception
- National Black Caucus of State Legislators 48th Annual Legislative Conference
- National Conference of State Legislatures 2024 Legislative Summit
- National Constitution Center Liberty Medal Ceremony
- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators 22nd Annual Summit
- Native Son Awards
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor 2024 Clergy and Lay Leadership Conference: Where Legacy Meets Future
- Third Biennial Black Midwest Symposium: Adaptive Reuse
- World Indigenous Day Celebration
- YWCA Dayton 2024 Women of Influence Luncheon

A photograph of three individuals seated on a stage for a panel discussion. On the left, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a black blazer over a red top, is looking towards the center. In the middle, a man with glasses and a balding head, wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie, is speaking and gesturing with his hands. On the right, a man with grey hair, wearing a light blue suit and a blue tie, is listening attentively. The background is a simple stage setting with blue and white elements.

Kettering Conversations on Democracy

In 2024, the Kettering Foundation continued its Kettering Conversations on Democracy, a series of high-impact public events in Washington, DC. These events bring together newsmakers, thought leaders, and policy experts to foster crucial dialogues on building a more inclusive democracy.

A vital part of the foundation's strategy, these conversations forge new partnerships and expand its influence within the democracy field. By building coalitions of strategic partners, the foundation is helping mobilize collective action in support of a healthier democratic system.

This past year, the foundation hosted two Kettering Conversations. There were over 200 in-person participants and more than 200 participants on Zoom.

Political Violence in the US Landscape: Are We Ready?

January 9, 2024

Three years after the insurrection on January 6, 2021, political violence continues to threaten American democracy. We gathered thought leaders to examine ongoing threats and explore lessons learned. **Discussions** focused on historical patterns of political violence, current challenges, and the preparations needed for the 2024 election year.

The "**Perspectives on Political Violence**" panel surveyed the political violence landscape, taking stock of what has been learned since January 6, 2021, and identifying the most serious gaps for the future. The panel included Donna F. Edwards, former US Representative for Maryland's Fourth Congressional District; Alan Jenkins, professor of practice at Harvard Law School; and Alex Theodoridis, associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Kettering Senior Fellow **Kelley Robinson**, president of the Human Rights Campaign, shared **thoughts** focusing on the need to emphasize those who are most threatened in today's increasingly insecure environment.

The keynote conversation, "**The Stakes to US Democracy**," featured Kettering Senior Fellows **James Comey**, former FBI director, and **Chris Matthews**, political commentator, providing their perspectives on the most urgent threats of political violence and the implications for US electoral politics.

Democracy Is Not Partisan

May 9, 2024

At a time when US democracy is widely regarded as under threat, Americans are also bitterly divided over what democracy means and how it can be strengthened. Worse, these disagreements have been weaponized to advance partisan aims, further undermining support for democracy.

We discussed whether there is space for pro-democracy constituencies within or across the major political parties and explored ways to restore a shared commitment to democratic values and a common understanding of what democracy means.

In "**Governing across Divides**," Kettering Katherine W. Fanning Fellow **Judy Woodruff** moderated a discussion featuring David Mathews Democracy Fellow **Kathleen Sebelius** and Senior Fellow **Christine Todd Whitman**. Both are former governors who led states that generally favored the opposite party.

Kettering Chief External Affairs Officer **Brad Rourke** spoke with Sarah Longwell, publisher of the *Bulwark*, on "**Maintaining Democratic Principles within a Fracturing Movement**."

In "**The Importance of Institutions**," Melissa Murray, professor of law at New York University School of Law, moderated a conversation between Kettering Senior Fellows **Neal Katyal** and Judge **J. Michael Luttig**. They engaged in energetic dialogue, highlighting both the challenges and the essential resilience of institutions in today's political landscape.



Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy

The **Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy** is awarded to journalists and scholars from the US and around the world whose work furthers Katherine Fanning’s lifelong commitment to journalism in service of democracy. The fellowship aims to provide recipients with opportunities to speak, report, and write about some of the most urgent challenges to democracy.

Judy Woodruff

In 2023, **Judy Woodruff**, senior correspondent and former anchor and managing editor of the *PBS NewsHour*, was selected as the Fanning Fellow. A distinguished journalist for more than five decades, Woodruff is nationally recognized for her integrity, reporting, and media leadership. She is the recipient of numerous awards, among them a Peabody Journalistic Integrity Award and an Emmy Lifetime Achievement Award. She has received 25 honorary degrees.

Restoring Trust in Democracy: The Role of the Press, Public, and Politicians

Kettering is pleased to be a sponsor of *PBS NewsHour’s “America at a Crossroads,”* Woodruff’s reporting project that began in 2023. Its biweekly segments focus on trying to understand our country

better and probe why Americans seem so divided. During this experience, Woodruff learned that “the country is very divided in unexpected ways. In fact, Pew Research shows that we are farther apart today than we were 20 to 30 years ago. We have darker opinions of each other and assume cookie-cutter political identities for others.” A free and independent press can help us navigate serious disagreements, but it is in a moment of crisis, especially regarding local newspapers. And without them, democracy is weaker. Yet, Woodruff still has hope in the American people: “Despite the strong views, there are still many who want democracy to survive.”

As part of Woodruff’s “America at a Crossroads” reporting project, *PBS NewsHour* aired a primetime special, “**Crossroads: A Conversation with America,**” in September 2024. This one-hour town hall included a panel discussion with a political scientist, a political commentator, and an opinion contributor. The audience consisted of residents from the greater Milwaukee, Wisconsin, area and represented the entire political spectrum. Participants discussed the issues at the heart of our divisions, values that bind us together, and ideas for restoring civility. Woodruff found two takeaways:

1. There is the possibility for common ground. After filming ended, Woodruff observed two individuals from drastically different viewpoints

About Katherine W. Fanning

This fellowship is named for Katherine “Kay” W. Fanning (1927–2000), an innovative and influential newspaper editor and publisher who served on the Kettering Foundation board of directors for 12 years and was chair of the board from 1994 to 1996. Between 1966 and 1983, she led the *Anchorage Daily News*, which, under her stewardship, won a Pulitzer Prize for public service. Fanning also served as editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* from 1983 to 1988, and, in 1987, was the first woman to serve as president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

On the Kettering Foundation board, Fanning gave steady voice to the need for news media to act with ethical standards and for journalistic practices to serve the interests of democracy. Her commitment to those ideals sparked the foundation’s exploration of what became known as public journalism, which emphasized the responsibility of journalists in a democracy to help citizens deliberate on important issues in their communities. She also had a keen interest in the foundation’s international work and often brought the two interests together.

talking to one another. She pointed out that there just isn’t much public space for those opportunities.

2. People are tired of the division. There are strong feelings and strong principles on all sides of the political spectrum. At the same time, people want society to function, and they want to figure out a way forward.

In May, the foundation hosted **Kettering Conversations on Democracy: Democracy Is Not Partisan** in Washington, DC. Woodruff **moderated a discussion** between Kettering’s Mathews Democracy Fellow Kathleen Sebelius and Senior Fellow Christine Todd Whitman on governing across divides. Woodruff guided the discussion as it focused on how well our democracy is doing to work across divides—whether the in-party fighting seen in the GOP or examples of successfully working across party lines to pass state legislation.



David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award

The **David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award** allows the foundation to benefit from the experience and insights of leaders who have had distinguished careers in government, philanthropy, higher education, and other fields. Their experiences and insights will, in turn, enrich and enhance the Kettering Foundation's research and activities on behalf of democracy. This award honors the charitable and civic work of David Mathews by awarding a recipient in recognition of past civic achievements, which advanced the role of citizens in democracy to promote civic life and encourage future work by the public in line with the overall mission of the foundation.

Kathleen Sebelius

In 2023, former Kansas governor and Obama administration cabinet member **Kathleen Sebelius** was selected for the inaugural David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award because of her commitment to selfless public service and leadership. Sebelius served as the secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services from 2009 to 2014.

The Challenges to Governing and How to Overcome Them

Kettering has benefited from Sebelius's insights into polarization and the challenges to governing at the state and local levels. Sebelius has highlighted some

of the troubling signs that she feels drive polarization: strained institutional checks and balances and social media. Unlike when she held public office, today's political environment is driven by personal animosity. While there is tension between what voters want and what elected officials do, the states are still the "innovators of public policy and laboratories of democracy." While we have many challenges to overcome, she says, "[I find hope in the] remarkable younger generation. They are more generous and open and see themselves as global citizens."

In May, the foundation hosted **Kettering Conversations on Democracy: Democracy Is Not Partisan**, in Washington, DC. Sebelius joined Kettering Senior Fellow Christine Todd Whitman in a panel discussion on **governing across divides** that was moderated by Kettering Fanning Fellow Judy Woodruff. Sebelius, a Democrat, was governor of Kansas from 2003 to 2009, traditionally a red state. During her tenure, she leveraged the relationships and trust she built while previously serving in the state legislature. Sebelius contended that today, a broad coalition of people committed to a functional governing system and effective governance is needed. This includes both elected officials and voters.

When "voters say one thing, the legislature does another," she said. "I think the solution in this case is not only more talking and listening but going in and firing the [politicians] who are blocking that democratic process."

About David Mathews

This fellowship award is named for David Mathews, who served as president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation from 1981 to 2022. While at Kettering, he led the foundation's research on the work of democracy, focusing on the capacity of citizens to govern themselves and resolve their common problems. He led the creation of the National Issues Forums, which encourages deliberative dialogue over public issues. Mathews is the author of eight books and has written extensively on deliberation and democracy, education, and public policy.

Mathews served as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Ford administration, focusing on restoring public confidence in government and reforming the regulatory system. From 1965 to 1980, Mathews taught history at the University of Alabama and served as president from 1969 to 1980, an era of significant change and innovation, including the integration of the institution. Mathews received an AB degree in history and classical Greek, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Alabama, and a PhD in history from Columbia University. He is the recipient of 17 honorary degrees. In 2007, the Alabama Center for Civic Life was renamed the David Mathews Center for Civic Life in his honor.





Senior Fellows

The Kettering Foundation’s **senior fellows** are champions of democracy: bold, visionary leaders committed to advancing democratic principles with courage and conviction. This bipartisan group of visionary leaders from diverse sectors—including government, civil society, journalism, higher education, law, and faith communities—address the urgent challenges facing democracy today. In 2024, they played an instrumental role in advancing the foundation’s mission. This includes expanding Kettering’s audience to engage more people in the work of defending an inclusive democracy.

Senior fellows made significant contributions in several key areas, including public policy, civil rights, and citizen engagement. Their work emphasized equitable participation in democratic processes, protecting fundamental freedoms, and dismantling systemic barriers that prevent many citizens from fully exercising their civic responsibilities. Their thought leadership helped elevate the national conversation around inclusive democracy.

Some of their notable contributions in 2024 included publishing influential op-eds, filing **amicus briefs** in landmark Supreme Court cases, and writing books that exposed weaknesses in democratic systems. They also appeared on major news platforms, confronting pressing issues such as voter suppression, identity-based attacks, and the erosion of democratic norms. Their voices were critical in reminding the public of the power of collective action—of “we the people”—in shaping a more inclusive and just democracy.

By amplifying these efforts, the Kettering Foundation is raising awareness of current threats to democracy while highlighting its promise. Senior fellows are mobilizing communities, shaping public discourse, and offering trusted expertise to guide us toward a future where democracy serves all citizens, equally and equitably.

Kettering's Senior Fellows in Action

- **Maureen O'Connor** and **David Pepper** put a spotlight on how partisan redistricting (**gerrymandering**) is deeply undemocratic and empowers politicians to choose their voters.
- **María Teresa Kumar** joined Kettering's President and CEO, Sharon L. Davies, at Campus Compact's annual conference, where they discussed their work to advance inclusive democracy and the challenges and opportunities facing both higher education and democracy.
- **Johnnetta Betsch Cole** sat down with Kettering President and CEO, Sharon L. Davies, and shared her insights on a range of issues, including inclusive democracy, the arts, youth, and education. She also reflected on the 70th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision by the US Supreme Court.
- On the third anniversary of the attack on the US Capitol, **James Comey** and **Chris Matthews** addressed the most urgent threats of political violence and the implications for US electoral politics.
- **Steven Levitsky** participated on an **international panel** focused on countering global authoritarian trends.
- **Neal Katyal** and **J. Michael Luttig** drew on **their legal expertise** and experience to provide insights on two of the most important constitutional cases before the US Supreme Court on presidential immunity and interfering in the peaceful transfer of power under Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment.
- **Kelley Robinson** and **William Barber II** relentlessly advocate for and inform diverse populations and others around the country about the issues affecting their lives and their civic responsibilities as informed voters.
- In interviews and blog posts, **Alexander Vindman** discussed how the war in Ukraine, the role of NATO, and the global response matter to the future of democracy.
- In interviews and blog posts, **Christine Todd Whitman** emphasized the need for election integrity and rule of law.



Staff at Conferences

Throughout 2024, Kettering's staff participated in 37 conferences. Staff were also panelists or presenters for numerous conference sessions.

- American Academy of Psychotherapists 69th Annual Institute and **Conference**
- American Academy of Religion **Annual Meeting**
- American Political Science Association **Annual Meeting***
- Aspen Congressional **Meeting**
- **Association of American Colleges and Universities**: Protecting Higher Education's Legitimacy, Autonomy, and Academic Freedom to Educate for Democracy
- Athens Democracy **Forum**
- Campus Compact Annual Conference: **Compact24**
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 53rd Annual Legislative **Conference**
- Eradicate Hate Global **Summit***
- Frontiers of Democracy **2024**: Violence, Nonviolence, and Robust Democracy*
- Future **Summit** 2024
- Future of Democracy **Forum**
- German Marshall Fund Congress-Bundestag **Forum**
- Global **Forum** on Modern Direct Democracy 2024*
- Howard University Center for Journalism and Democracy 3rd Annual Democracy **Summit**
- Imagining Community **Symposium** 2024
- Innovation for Equity 3rd Annual Black Education **Forum**
- International City/County Management Association 110th Annual **Conference**
- Invest in Louisiana Policy **Conference** 2024*
- Leadership Now Annual **Conference**
- NAACP 115th Annual **Convention**
- National Academy of Public Administration 2024 Fall **Meeting**
- National Black Caucus of State Legislators 48th Annual Legislative **Conference**
- National Civic League 75th Annual All-America City Award **Event**
- National Conference for Community and Justice of Greater Dayton Fall Teen **Summit***
- National Conference of State Legislatures 2024 Legislative **Summit**
- National Endowment for the Arts and the White House Domestic Policy Council: A **Summit** on Arts and Culture in Our Communities



- National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators 22nd Annual **Summit**
- National UNITY **Conference** 2024
- National Urban League **Conference** 2024
- PACE Post-Election **Convening**: Philanthropy's Next Move
- Philanthropy Ohio Philanthropy **Forward** '24
- Rogue Media Group 7th Annual iLeadership **Summit** and Awards*
- Samuel DeWitt Proctor 2024 Clergy and Lay Leadership **Conference**: Where Legacy Meets Future*
- Third Biennial Black Midwest **Symposium**: Adaptive Reuse
- Western Political Science Association 2024 Annual **Meeting**
- Yale Divinity School Inaugural Public Theology and Public Policy **Conference**

*denotes presenter

Strategic Communications

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation's communications team helped drive the foundation's work, reach, and influence in 2024 through significant advances in brand identity, [website](#) development, social media engagement, and media outreach.

In January, to coincide with the launch of our new strategic plan, the foundation launched a new brand identity and website. Our new brand embodies Kettering's forward-thinking and inclusive mission: To advance inclusive democracies by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism. It is apparent in all we do. Whether you are attending a Kettering event, experiencing us through a sponsorship, visiting our website or social media pages, or stopping by our Dayton or Washington, DC, offices, our vibrant brand uplifts all our work. The team continued to revise and refine the website throughout the year, with an even more interactive version that went live in September. These ongoing improvements have resulted in a dynamic website that invites people to visit again and again.

We also expanded our social media presence across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#), [Vimeo](#), [X](#), and [YouTube](#), leading to increased follower engagement and content sharing. This included experimenting with short video campaigns, which allowed us to highlight our [Dayton Democracy Fellows](#), [The Context](#) podcast, and Kettering Conversations on

Democracy. Our newsletter, *News & Notes*, continues to gain subscribers and is a significant way that we share news both about the foundation and work with partners.

We also established a stronger media presence, particularly in our hometown of Dayton, Ohio. Kettering press releases are regularly picked up and lead to articles in newspapers, including the *Dayton Daily News*. WYSO, Dayton's public radio station and NPR news affiliate, has also frequently aired Kettering podcasts and keynote addresses on its program, *Think Twice*, and has interviewed senior staff.

At the heart of all our communications work is the following brand promise: The Charles F. Kettering Foundation inspires and connects individuals and organizations in the work of advancing thriving and inclusive democracies around the globe. We believe all people belong and have the right to fair and equitable treatment by institutions and systems of governance.





New Communications Vehicles

The Context

The Context, Kettering’s biweekly podcast launched in January 2024, explores the history, trends, and ideas shaping democracy in the United States and around the world. In each episode, host **Alex Lovit**, historian and senior program officer, does a deep dive with today’s thought leaders and newsmakers in the democracy space: scholars, politicians, journalists, and public servants who offer unique, firsthand perspectives on how we got to where we are and what they’ve seen.

Tackling Questions of Democracy

The questions animating conversations on *The Context* are the same guiding all the foundation’s work: What does inclusive democracy look like, and how do we advance it? How do we hold government accountable? How do we counter authoritarianism? How do we engage citizens? The captivating stories and ideas shared by distinguished guests help drive the foundation’s efforts to answer those questions.

The podcast’s long-form format (each interview ranges from 40 to 60 minutes in length) allows for revealing and thoughtful conversations about guests’ fascinating careers and their insights into democratic function and dysfunction. In addition to many of the foundation’s own senior fellows, guests include foundational critical race theory scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, award-winning historian Martha Jones, political superstar Stacey Abrams, and leading scholar on democratic dysfunction Rachel Kleinfeld. Several Kettering staff members have also appeared on the show to highlight the foundation’s mission, vision, and work.

Increasing Digital Reach

The Context is but one vehicle that is broadening the foundation’s communications reach and enlarging its audience. Short video clips of each guest are posted across social media platforms. These serve not only to promote the podcast, but also to ensure that thousands of social media users are exposed to pro-democracy messages associated with the Kettering Foundation. There have also been several cross-promotion opportunities with podcast guests and external partners. In addition to shares and reposts, a transcript of one episode was published in the *National Civic Review*, and several episodes have been broadcast on local National Public Radio affiliate **WYSO**.

In today’s fractured media landscape, podcasts are just one small part of the information ecosystem informing citizens’ beliefs, behaviors, and votes. While some of the most popular podcasts today promote anti-democratic views, *The Context* ensures that Kettering is part of the solution by providing trustworthy information and arguments for inclusive democracy in an entertaining and engaging format.



Episodes

- Steven Levitsky: Institutional Reform Won't Save Democracy in 2024. What Will?
- James Comey: Maintaining Faith in Democracy Amidst a Fog of Lies
- J. Michael Luttig: We Haven't Learned Anything from January 6th—Yet
- Kimberlé Crenshaw: What Is Critical Race Theory, Anyway?
- Maureen O'Connor: Citizens Can End Gerrymandering
- David Pepper: The Heart of the Attack on Democracy Happens in States
- Justin Gest: America Is Hopelessly Diverse—In the Best Way Possible
- Martha S. Jones: History Tells Us Who We Have Been and Who We Aspire to Be
- Matthew Delmont: *Brown v. Board*—What It Achieved and Where It Fell Short
- Katherine Gehl: Elections Are Broken. How Do We Fix Them?
- Kelley Robinson: Defending LGBTQ+ Rights Is Defending Democracy
- Alan Jenkins & Gan Golan: Reimagining Democracy Through Art
- Neal Katyal: SCOTUS Is Delegitimizing Itself
- Alexander Vindman: Stop Giving Demagogues Permission Slips
- Stacey Abrams: DEI Is in America's DNA
- Christine Todd Whitman: One-Party Governance Is Not Healthy Democracy
- Rachel Kleinfeld: US Systems Amplify Polarization—But They Don't Have To
- Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg & Ruby Belle Booth: Will Gen Z Vote?
- María Teresa Kumar: Latinos and America's Promise
- Melissa Murray: For the Supreme Court, Dobbs Was Just the Beginning
- Donald Moynihan: Project 2025's Threat to Democracy
- Steven Levitsky and Roberta Saba: Elections Have Consequences—Just Ask Argentina
- Chris Matthews: The Election's Over. Now What?
- Hahrie Han: Belonging Comes Before Belief
- Donald Moynihan: Frictions, Frustrations, and Fear in Government Bureaucracies
- How Novels Defend Democracy



"With great power comes great responsibility."



THE
CONTEXT

Alex Lovit Interviews

KEI KAWASHIMA-GINSBERG

Nowhouse Director
Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning and Engagement

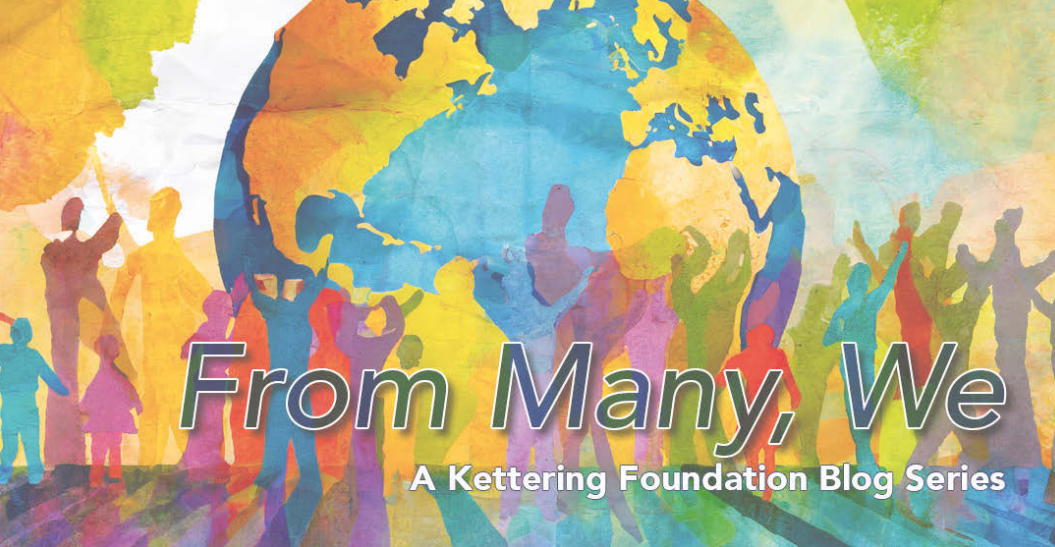
RUBY BELLE BOOTH

Researcher
Center for Information & Research
on Civic Learning and Engagement



I want people to know that **this** is still a democracy.





From Many, We

A Kettering Foundation Blog Series



Boosting Youth Voter Turnout: Strategies for the 2024 Election

By Michael J. Pomante II

#FromManyWe

From Many, We

At the end of 2023, the foundation **announced** a new blog series, *From Many, We*, to highlight the insights of thought leaders—including foundation senior fellows and staff. The series draws inspiration from the United States’ motto E Pluribus Unum, “From Many, One.” However, we rather than *one* more explicitly names the aspiration for a complex unity that welcomes and values diversity. Specifically, the series focuses on three key goals:

- To distill the goals and ideals of inclusive democracy,
- To raise awareness of authoritarian creep and patterns of exclusion, and
- To provide information in response to urgent and immediate threats to democracy.

Advancing Inclusive Democracy

To center *From Many, We* within the foundation’s distinct approach to democracy, the series was launched with a post arguing that **inclusive democracy** is a necessary concept in order to recognize the inherent exclusionary tendencies of democratic majorities, while highlighting the importance of a strong **civic ethos** that values diversity. It also featured reflections on the state of inclusion 70 years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision launched America on the path toward an integrated multiracial democracy and discussed **strategies for engaging youth**, an important demographic for advancing inclusion.

Raising Awareness of Authoritarian Creep

From Many, We also aims to recognize **emerging forms of authoritarianism** and exclusionary politics that are undermining democracy in America—at the state level, particularly in the foundation’s home state of Ohio—and worldwide. Numerous examples of an authoritarian playbook employed by the American far right were cited, which aims to consolidate political power by exploiting fears of difference, scapegoating and targeting vulnerable groups, and undermining democratic institutions. Pieces looked at the numerous threats to democracy—such as growing **extremism** in the far right and the use of disinformation by **Russia** and other international bad actors to sow division and undermine American democracy—and argued for strengthening the **role of journalism** in proactively combatting authoritarianism.

From Many, We also documented Ohio’s continued movement toward a single party autocracy and grassroots efforts to mobilize in **defense of democracy**. This included articles about the **roots of gerrymandering**, the **manipulative ballot language of Ohio’s Issue 1** (a redistricting proposal), and ways to strengthen the independence of local institutions to resist pressure from partisan critics.

The authoritarian threats observed in the US echo other electoral autocracies around the world, notably Vladimir Putin’s Russia and Viktor Orbán’s Hungary. *From Many, We* sought to highlight connections between authoritarianism in the US and similar movements in other countries. Pieces focused on an emerging **authoritarian playbook in Argentina** and the **fragility of democracy in South Africa**.



To Counter Authoritarianism, Can Journalism Promote Democratic Culture?

By Subramaniam Vincent

#FromManyWe

Wrecking the Public Sphere:

Democracy Is Undermined by Bad Actors, Not Platforms

By Simone Chambers

#FromManyWe

Anti-LGBTQ+ Violence and Authoritarianism: Defending Democracy Must Be Inclusive

By Maura Casey

#FromManyWe

Providing Information in Response to Threats to Democracy

Perhaps the most urgent threat to democracy is Project 2025, the conservative presidential transition initiative to expand executive power and politicize the federal government. *From Many, We* pieces focused on Project 2025’s many threats to American democracy: undermining civil service protections through **Schedule F**, the exclusionary **ideology** of its “pro-family” policy agenda, the **global implications of Project 2025** in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and growing coordination between the US and global far right.

From Many, We also sought to provide information on state legislation targeting higher education (including Ohio’s proposed Senate Bill 83, which threatened to limit the educational benefits of diverse campuses and institutions’ ability to discuss racial inequality), threats to **LGBTQ+ rights in Russia**, and a controversial anti-NGO law regarded as a sign of **democratic backsliding in the country of Georgia**.

Overall, *From Many, We* presents a concerning picture: far-right actors around the world are using an authoritarian playbook of exclusionary politics to foment division, spread misinformation, and consolidate power. At the same time, a counter-playbook is also emerging: grassroots movements are standing up against the politics of hate and fear. They are beginning the hard work of transforming existing institutions into democracies worth fighting for. And, they are developing aspirational narratives of welcoming and belonging. *From Many, We*’s commitment to highlighting the ongoing threats to democracy and promising counter efforts will continue in 2025.

Contributors

- Max Altman
- Roman Badanin
- William Barber II
- Derek W. M. Barker
- Maura Casey
- Simone Chambers
- Johnnetta Betsch Cole
- Kristina Hook
- María Teresa Kumar
- Yelena Litvinov
- Alex Lovit
- Tendai Murisa
- David Pepper
- Michael Pomante
- Roberto Saba
- Joel Simon
- John Stoehr
- Subramaniam Vincent
- Alexander Vindman
- Christine Todd Whitman
- Ethan Zuckerman

The Stakes



Christine Todd Whitman

Former New Jersey Governor and Former EPA Administrator
Charles F. Kettering Foundation Senior Fellow



Kathleen Sebelius

Former US Secretary of HHS and Former Kansas Governor
Charles F. Kettering Foundation Mathews Democracy Fellow

The Stakes

Launched in early 2024, *The Stakes* is a dynamic video interview series hosted by **Brad Rourke**, chief external affairs officer. Influential leaders from various fields join him to explore critical issues shaping democracy today in 15-minute episodes.

From constitutional scholars like Kettering Senior fellow **J. Michael Luttig** discussing the implications of the Fourteenth Amendment, to thought leaders like Stacey Abrams addressing voter suppression, the series looks at the most pressing challenges facing inclusive democracy and democratic institutions. With a focus on practical solutions and civic engagement, *The Stakes* connects viewers with insights from legal experts, political leaders, and advocates committed to defending democracy in an era of polarization and misinformation. The series has rapidly developed a following, with some episodes generating hundreds of thousands of views.

Stacey Abrams: Voter Suppression and Protecting Democracy

Abrams: “That type of censorship: What you get to know, what you get to do, how you get to vote is a precursor to totalitarianism. It’s not imminent, but it’s absolutely possible.”

J. Michael Luttig and Maureen O’Connor: The Legal Community’s Role in Safeguarding Democracy

Luttig: “American democracy and the rule of law are the issues of our times.”

María Teresa Kumar and Kelley Robinson: Disintegrating Democracy and Threatening LGBTQ+ Rights

Kumar: “We have to recognize that if our multiculturalism is our superpower, it’s our racism that is our Achilles’ heel.”

Robinson: “What we are looking at is rolling back and undoing of all the progress that we’ve made for marriage equality, all the progress that we’ve made for workplace nondiscrimination, all the progress that we’ve made against discrimination in health care. All of that is at stake right now.”

James Comey and Donna Edwards on Political Violence

Comey: “The most important thing we can do as a country is what we’ve been doing since January 6th, and that is send a message of deterrence that if you engage in that sort of behavior, the United States of America will ruin your life.”

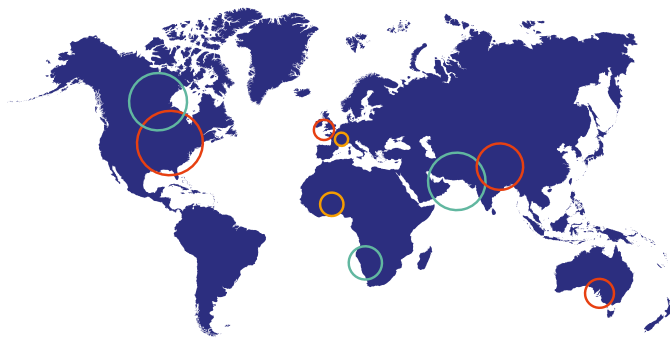
Edwards: “I think that in order to prevent this kind of political violence, it requires communities to stand up.”

Episodes

- Judge Luttig Says “Sec. 3 of the 14th Amendment Should Disqualify Trump for Reelection”
- Senior Fellow Alexander Vindman: Trump’s Invitation to Putin
- Chris Matthews: Democracy Is Accepting Defeat If You Lose
- Ilyse Hogue: Abortion Just the Tip of the Spear
- Christine Todd Whitman: We Believe in the Rule of Law
- Dahlia Lithwick: Supreme Court Captured by Special Interests?
- Katyal and Luttig: Presidential Immunity Unconstitutional?
- Project 2025 Part One: Pepper and Vindman on the Threat to American Values
- Project 2025 Part Two: David Pepper on Defending Democracy
- James Comey and Donna Edwards on Political Violence
- James Comey and Donna Edwards on Executive Power and the Future of Democracy
- Kumar and Robinson on Project 2025: Disintegrating Democracy and Threatening LGBTQ+ Rights
- Protecting Democracy: Insights from J. Michael Luttig and Maureen O’Connor
- Stacey Abrams: Voter Suppression and Protecting Democracy
- Combatting Censorship: Art, Culture, and Defending Democracy
- Steven Levitsky on Democracy at a Crossroads
- Former Cabinet Officials Sebelius and Whitman on Dangerous HHS and EPA Picks
- Sherrilyn Ifill: Don’t Ignore Race in the 2024 Election Analysis



Communications for Democratic Innovation



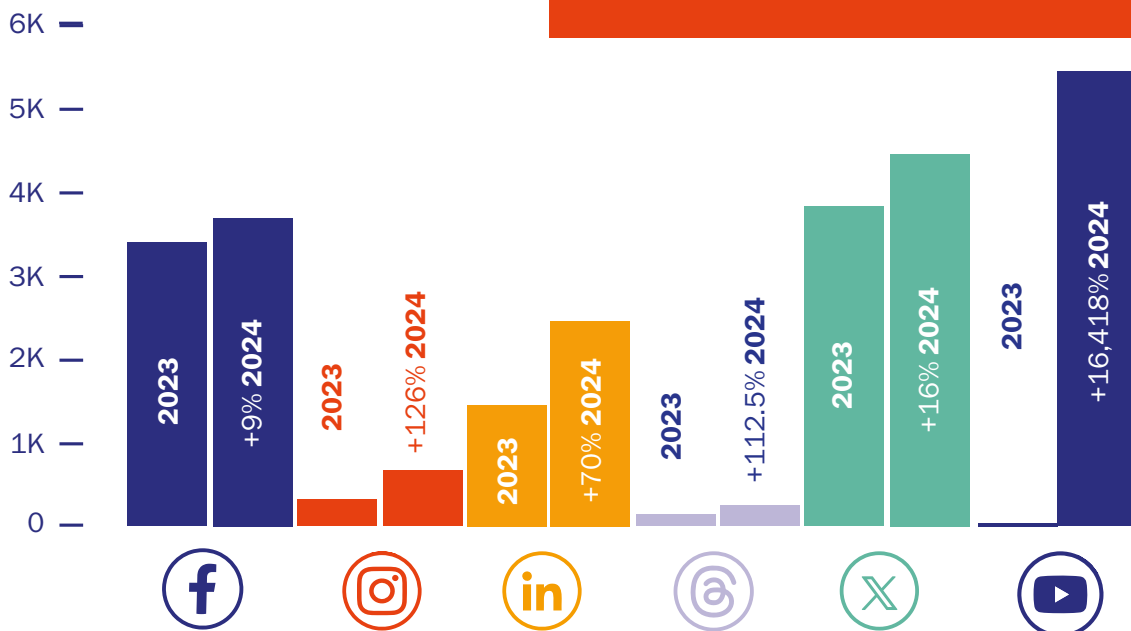
185,300 Website Views Globally

Website

Views of Kettering’s website were up 29.5% over 2023.

Our website visitors come from all over the globe including Canada, China, Germany, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

Social Media Followers and Subscribers



Impressions and Engagements: The most engaged posts of 2024 reflect Kettering’s growth in communications, from new communications vehicles to coverage of events.

YouTube Katyal and Luttig: Presidential Immunity Unconstitutional? Senior fellows Neal Katyal and J. Michael Luttig join *The Stakes* to discuss the Supreme Court’s ruling on presidential immunity in *Trump v. United States*.



X May 9 Kettering Conversations on Democracy: Democracy Will Not Self-Correct Senior fellow J. Michael Luttig *argues* that we must save democracy because it won’t save itself at the Kettering Conversations on Democracy event in Washington, DC.



Instagram The Dayton Democracy Summit Event Coverage, September 19 to 21 The *inaugural summit*, held September 20 at Sinclair College, brought together people from the Dayton area from all walks of life, including nonprofits, schools and colleges, businesses, government, service and tech industries, and more.

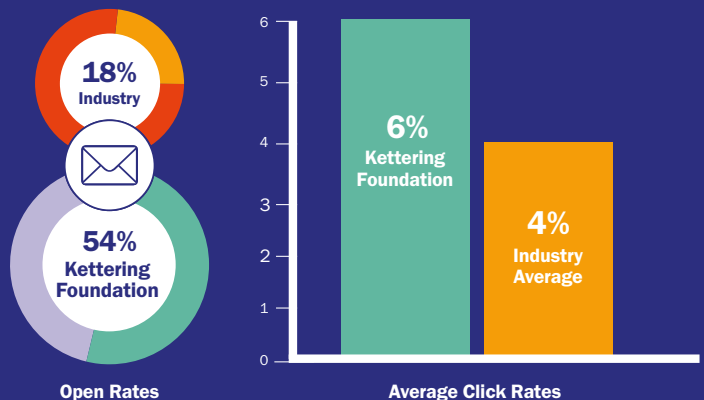


Facebook Stacey Abrams Joins *The Stakes* On this episode of *The Stakes*, Stacey Abrams discusses voter suppression and its impact on marginalized communities.



News & Notes, Kettering’s monthly newsletter, highlights the work of the foundation throughout the month and prompts readers to visit our website or social media channels. A mid-month update is also released, which spotlights key communications efforts—like *The Context*; *From Many, We*; and *The Stakes*. As the numbers reflect, our average open and click rates consistently outperform the industry average.

Visit our [website](#) to subscribe.



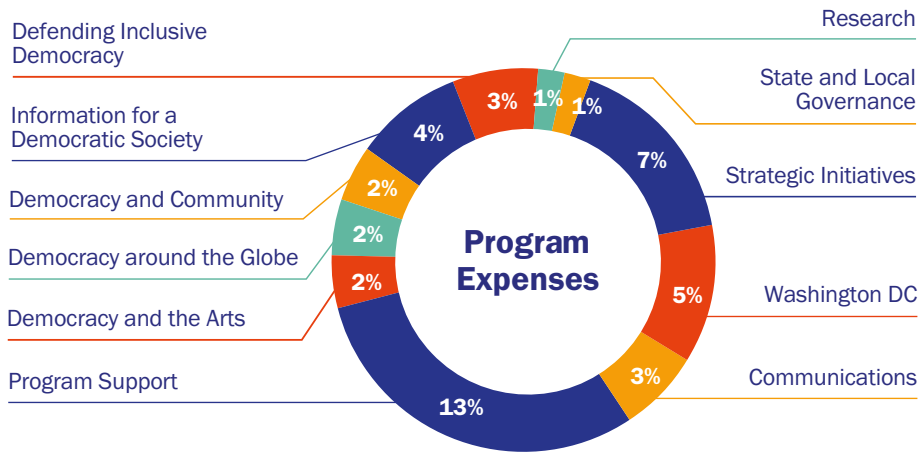
Financial Snapshot

Assets	2024	2023
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7,230,579	11,437,061
Investments	467,564,538	435,571,651
Dividends and Interest Receivable	347,745	347,563
Prepaid Expenses	20,415	225,674
Property and Equipment, Net	3,711,626	3,476,943
Operating Lease Right-of-Use Asset	474,284	474,284
Total	\$479,349,187	\$451,533,176

Liabilities and Net Assets	2024	2023
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	214,152	960,758
Accrued Compensation and Related Liabilities	64,123	64,156
Accrued Postretirement Benefit Costs	3,980,509	3,980,509
Operating Lease Liability	498,090	498,090
Total	\$4,756,874	\$5,503,513
Net Assets		
Without Donor Restrictions	474,581,063	446,018,413
With Donor Restrictions	11,250	11,250
Total Net Assets	\$474,592,313	\$446,029,663
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$479,349,187	\$451,533,176

The financial information is preliminary and presented as of January 9, 2025.

Expenses			
Program	2024	% of Program	% of Total
Defending Inclusive Democracy	483,072	6%	3%
Information for a Democratic Society	653,845	9%	4%
Democracy and Community	318,459	4%	2%
Democracy around the Globe	427,806	6%	2%
Democracy and the Arts	456,306	6%	2%
Program Support	2,405,592	31%	13%
Communications	596,118	8%	3%
Washington DC	859,833	11%	5%
Strategic Initiatives	1,249,781	16%	7%
State and Local Governance	93,120	1%	1%
Research	184,500	2%	1%
Total Program Expenses	\$7,728,432		



	2024	% of Total
General Operating		
Personnel and Directors	8,411,084	46%
Operations, Facilities, and General	2,047,791	11%
Total General Operating Expenses	\$18,187,307	

The financial information is preliminary and presented as of January 9, 2025.



Charles F. Kettering Foundation Leadership

Senior Team

Tayo Clyburn, Chief Strategy Officer and Senior Advisor to the President

Sharon L. Davies, President and Chief Executive Officer

John R. Dedrick, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Mindy LaBreck, Vice President for People and Culture

James Martin, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

Brad Rourke, Chief External Affairs Officer and Director of DC Operations

Maxine S. Thomas, Vice President and General Counsel

Board of Directors

Sharon L. Davies

Ed Dorn

Beverly Wade Hogan

Les Ihara Jr.

Peter Levine

Sherry Magill (Chair)

Hank Meijer

Suzanne Morse Moomaw

Roberta Saba



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