2020 Defend Democracy Toolkit

Defend Democracy Hotline

541-714-3257

Report obstacles to voting including vandalism, intimidation & disinformation

RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT

A STATEWIDE NONPARTISAN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO ADVANCING DEMOCRACY IN RURAL OREGON

RURAL ORGANIZING PROJECT — ADVANCING DEMOCRACY IN RURAL OREGON

Introduction

This **2020 Defend Democracy Toolkit** is a companion to our 2020 STAND Election Guide.

This moment is rife with uncertainty, nervousness, and fear as we face an election during a global pandemic, recession, and in the wake of catastrophic wildfires that displaced thousands of people. Rural Oregonians pride ourselves on our fierce interdependence and how we show up to help each other out, to break bread together, to celebrate, to grieve, and to do what needs to get done so our communities can survive crisis after crisis. While these current trials are putting our communities to the test, we know that the only way forward is together.

The **STAND Election Guide** is a tool to talk with each other about our values, which we know rural Oregonians are doing already at the post office, in line at the grocery store, and on social media. What do we really care about as a community? What do we most want to see for our futures? The **STAND Election Guide** is to help rural Oregonians engage your neighbors to get past the campaign rhetoric coming out of national politics and refocus on real people's needs. The **STAND Election Guide Social Media Toolkit** is a complementary guide to move conversations about the election in your digital neighborhood. It provides messages and graphics for Facebook and Instagram and to support conversations taking place online.

Like the STAND Election Guide, this **2020 Defend Democracy Toolkit** developed by and for rural Oregonians to provide ideas, support, and resources for one another as we get out the vote in our communities while simultaneously organizing to prevent or stop intimidation, disinformation and misinformation, and other obstacles to delivering on the promise of democracy. We've broken this kit down into three sections:

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We will continue to add and share resources on our website at rop.org/democracy, on our social media, and through our ongoing outreach and organizing with our network of leaders throughout Oregon.

Let's keep working together to build a thriving rural Oregon!

Make Every Vote Count

Everyone has a role they can play to make sure voting in our communities is accessible and safe, that people turn out to vote, that every vote counts and that election results are respected. Here are ways that you can organize voters in your community to uphold our democracy:

1. **Let local election officials know you are committed to supporting them in delivering democracy this election.**

   ❏ Here's a [sample letter you can send](#) to your County or Tribal election officials (and other state and local elected representatives) about supporting a successful November 2020 election.

2. **Help voters vote!**

   ❏ Encourage voting and share how on social media. Use the [ROP STAND Election Guide Social Media Toolkit](#) with graphics and suggested posts.

   ❏ Share the ROP Hotline on social media. [Click here](#) to download a Facebook and Instagram graphic and post with the suggested message: For voting help, to report and get support in spotting and stopping voter intimidation and disinformation and other resources, contact ROP's Defend Democracy Hotline. Call 541-714-3257 or visit [rop.org/democracy](#) to enter a report and get organizing support from rural Oregonians!

   ❏ Pick up signed, sealed ballots to drop off for a neighbor.

   ❏ Identify and share trusted locations where signed, sealed ballots are being collected for deposit in an official ballot drop box or USPS mailbox.

   ❏ Keep an eye on your local USPS office, mailboxes, and official ballot drop box locations to see who's hanging out there, monitor for vandalism or graffiti, or other activity that may be intimidating to voters in your community.

   ❏ Organize a voter caravan to drop off ballots at a dropbox or USPS mailbox together.

   ❏ Vote as soon as you receive your mail-in ballot and mail or deposit it in an official dropbox. Remember the deadlines:
     ❏ Put in USPS mail no later than Oct. 27
     ❏ Put in an official dropbox by 8:00 pm on Nov. 3

   ❏ Post a sign near USPS mailbox(es) after Oct. 27 with information on where voters can find the local official ballot dropbox. [Find the dropbox locator here.](#)

Make Every Vote Count: Resources

- ❏ STAND Election Guide, by and for rural Oregonians to cut through the election spin!
  - ❏ Newsprint copies of the STAND Election Guide in both English and Spanish are still available! Call ROP at 503-543-8417 to request copies.
  - ❏ English PDF
  - ❏ Spanish PDF
  - ❏ STAND Guide Social Media Toolkit with graphics optimized for Facebook and Instagram you and your group can share to help get out the vote, educate voters, and more!

- ❏ Listen to and share the latest episode of Rural Roots Rising: Blackberries and Ballot Measures: 2020 Election Edition

- ❏ Radio Public Service Announcements about how to vote by mail, who can vote, and more in English and Spanish

- ❏ Oregon Secretary of State website link to find an official drop box near you

- ❏ A comprehensive listing of ballot drop-off locations

Track and Document

If you witness or are aware of voter intimidation or actions that impact the success of the election, here are suggestions about how best to track and document them.

ROP has established a reporting system with a hotline, email address, and online submission form:

Defend Democracy Hotline: (541) 714-3257. Add it to your phone!

For voting assistance, to report and get support for spotting and stopping voter intimidation and disinformation and other resources, contact ROP's Defend Democracy Hotline.

Email: democracy@rop.org

Online submission form: rop.org/democracy

❏ **Hotline flyers.** Here are flyers (in color and black-and-white, in 8.5x11 and for copying 2 up on one 8.5x11" page) that you can print out and make copies of.

❏ **Hotline stickers.** Call the hotline or email us and we'll mail them to you!

Tracking and Documenting Local Activity

If you witness or become aware of voter intimidation and other obstacles to voting, document everything you can!

- Videos
- Photos
- Screenshots of Facebook and other social media posts
- Descriptions of people, cars, license plates, signs etc.

Track and Document: Resources

- "Tips For 'Patriot' Watching" section (pages 120-121) of Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement.
- The 3Ds of Disinformation: Detect, Document, and Debunk
- Oregon Justice Resource Center's Know Your Rights Guide to Voter Intimidation

Fight Back: Take Action!

If you witness or are aware of voter intimidation or actions that impact the success of the election, here's a whole list of ideas and resources for action!

- Call the ROP Hotline at (541) 714-3257 to share what you've seen or know is happening and get support in making a plan with an organizer about how to proceed.

- Know that you don't need to organize alone! Reach out to ROP at democracy@rop.org to make contact with a group in your community or for help in forming one!

- Email your county's election officials to report on and get them to join you in stopping misinformation or voter intimidation. If you've already sent a letter (like the sample provided in this kit), reporting can take the form of a reply to the email thread you already started with them. Find your county clerk's contact information here.

- If there's activity at a ballot box or elsewhere that has made voters in your community fearful about getting their ballots in to be counted, make a plan to avoid the bad actors to get everyone's ballots counted! Collect your neighbors' signed, sealed ballots and take them to a ballot box where they can be deposited together more safely.

- Talk with your neighbors! Share your expectations about an election that's free of voter intimidation, where every vote counts and all votes should be counted:
    - Send a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper
    - Call in to your local radio stations
    - If you're a reporter, or if you know local reporters, encourage local coverage of:
        - Voter intimidation and steps being taken locally to address it, what a successful election looks like, and the issues at stake for the community in the election.
    - If you're an elected official (or know one):
        - Show leadership! Support and encourage people in the community to vote.
        - Advocate and support local elected officials in advocating for an election where no voter is intimidated, every vote counts, and all votes are counted.

- If you're seeing misinformation or disinformation or hate speech online, build your skills to combat social media manipulation:
    - "The 3Ds of Disinformation: Detect, Document, and Debunk"
    - Review the ReFrame Disinfo Defense Toolkit, starting on pages 51-58, to make sure you're not amplifying disinformation.
    - How to Spot and Fight Disinformation Leading Up to the U.S. Election by Access Now
    -

- Assess threats and build safety and security into your community's approach. The top three ROP safety and security tools that local groups have found helpful:
    - A brief one-pager on what a threat assessment is, why they're important, and how to do one
    - A guide to security planning for actions and events
    - Safety team basics for rural organizers

- Need to de-escalate members of a militia or people aiming to intimidate voters?
  - [Tips for de-escalation: a presentation for organizers on de-escalation provided by Ahjamu Umi for ROP in June 2020](#).

Post-Election

If the election is contested, or a victor is declared before the results are in, here are some examples of actions that groups across the state are planning:
- Hold a vigil or rally for democracy in conjunction with [Protect the Results](#)
- Perform street theatre about the current political moment
- Wear all black to bear witness to the death of democracy, and stage a photo for posting on social media
- Submit letters to the editor or publish signature ads in your local paper with signatures of community members demanding that democracy be upheld
- Share songs of resistance like the new album from [Resistance Revival Choir](#). Roll down your windows and turn up the volume as you drive through town, sing with your neighbors and friends as you walk down main street, or share digitally with community members who aren't able to leave home.
- **Are you planning a post-election action that you'd like to add to the list? Email us at democracy@rop.org.**

Take Action: Resources

- Upcoming Trainings:
  - [Hold the Line: A Training to Defend Democracy](#): October 27 from 4:30 - 6:00 pm PT
  - [The Frontline: Election Defenders! Training Series](#): Various days and times starting October 20 through November 4
  - Choose Democracy: [How to Prevent a Post-Election Power Grab](#): Trainings October 27 through November 5
- [Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement](#) published by ROP and Political Research Associates
- [Protect the Results](#) Toolkit and Action Map: Find a Rally in your area, or organize and host one of your own!
- [Hold the Line Guide](#). A guide to support "political newcomers, as well as experienced activists, take action to ensure that we have a successful election in November 2020."
- ReFrame [Disinfo Defense Toolkit](#)
- [Fighting Misinformation in Small Towns and Rural Communities](#).
- [Fact Sheet: Unlawful Militias in Oregon](#) prepared by the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) at Georgetown University Law Center
- [How to face right-wing violence while defending the election — a conversation with George Lakey](#)
- Choose Democracy: [Prepare](#): Handbook for How to Stop a Coup