

Democracy Defenders



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For Trainers: Before the Workshop

Materials

- Facilitator's workbook (one per facilitator)
- Flipchart (2, preferably with sticky back)
- Easel
- Markers (in at least two contrasting dark colors)
- Sticky notes (optional for Module 3, Task 2)
- For each participant:
 - o Participant's workbook (plus a few extra copies)
 - o Pen
 - o Name tent or name tag

Room Set Up (See Small Group Activity Method guide for more detailed info.)

- Tables and chairs set up with 4-6 people per table.
- Workbook, pen, and name tent or nametag at each place.
- Flipchart(s), easel(s) and markers in front of the room. Ensure all the seats can see the easel(s). If not, move the easel(s) and flipchart(s) to a better location.
- On a flipchart page, write what you want people to share during introductions, usually name, pronoun, and union (or workplace if everyone is from the same union). **Optional:** One word about "our democracy."
- On another flipchart page, write the community agreements.
- On a third flipchart page, prepare for the report back from Module 1, Task 1 by writing out the chart from pages 4-5.

Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome participants to the Democracy Defenders training. There's no need for a speech here.
- Both facilitators introduce themselves.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves with the information on the flipchart page.

Community Agreements

- Share—and explain—the community agreements you've written on the flipchart, then ask for a few more. You may want to include the following:
 - o Step up, step up (Explain: Step up your listening if you are a talker; step up your talking if you are on the quiet side.)
 - o One mic
 - o Assume good intentions
 - o Snaps (Explain: Encourage participants to snap their fingers to show support or when they agree with something rather than repeat the same thing.)

Introduction

Democracy is under threat in many countries around the world, and independent researchers say there is a growing chance of democratic breakdown in the United States in the near future. Experts use the term “authoritarianism” to describe a political system or set of preferences for stronger centralized government, reduced individual freedom (such as freedom of speech and the freedom to protest), and reduced opportunities to vote. Most measures show that there is a growing authoritarian threat in the U.S. today.

Unions can be a key force in combating authoritarian regimes. Strong unions can foster greater support for democracy and solidaristic values, thereby decreasing support for authoritarianism.

This curriculum will provide union members and leaders with information about the growing authoritarian threat and the potential impact on democracy. It will highlight the relationship between democracy and unions, showing how democracy is necessary for strong and vital unions, and how unions play an important role in maintaining democracies.

Module 1: The Value of Democracy for Workers

Purpose: To explore the relationship between the health of our democracy and our labor rights.

Task 1: Democracy

In your small groups, please answer the questions below. Choose one member of your group who will take notes and report back to the larger group.

1. *What is democracy?*

2. *Why is it important?*

Reminders for all report backs

During the report back, ask each group for ONE response that hasn't already been mentioned. (Number the groups if you haven't already.)

Don't rephrase what people say. Use their own words. Ask clarifying questions if necessary.

Mirror (repeat back) key words or phrases; this also helps ensure that everyone in the class hears and helps the person who is reporting capture the essence of the comment.

After going around the groups once, open the question to the whole group.

The trainer leading the discussion is responsible for keeping the discussion moving. Don't wait for each point to get written on the board. The discussion can quickly lose energy.

Reminders for writing on the flipchart

Change colors for each point to make it easier to read.

Try not to interrupt the discussion.

Don't expect the facilitator to wait for you to finish writing before taking the next answer.

Don't try to write down every word. It's better to capture some keywords accurately and allow the conversation to keep flowing.

Scribe large group discussion in the same way.

Task 2: Democracy in the Workplace

Most of us have had the experience of working in both union and non-union workplaces. In this task, we will explore the concept of democracy by looking at how it affects the balance of power in the workplace.

In your small groups, please discuss and fill out the rows in the chart below assigned to your group by your facilitators. Who makes the decisions in each setting? What voice do workers have in decisions?

All groups should also answer the question that follows the chart on page 5.

Please choose a different member of your group to take notes and report back.

Rows assigned to your small group: _____

	Non-Union Workplace	Union Workplace
1. Representation	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>
2. Due process (process, final judgment)	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>
Freedom of speech (right to criticize leadership and work conditions) and freedom of assembly (ability to act collectively)	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>
4. Health and safety	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i> (continued)

	Non-Union Workplace	Union Workplace
5. Scheduling, promotions, overtime, etc.	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>
6. Wages (overall range and wage for each worker)	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>	<i>Who makes the decisions?</i>
	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>	<i>What voice do workers have?</i>

Do you believe bosses prefer a more democratic workplace or a less democratic workplace? Why?

Task 3a: Power Over vs. Power With

Another way to frame our experience in our workplaces is in terms of power. Our experiences as workers have been mostly about power **over** us by bosses, institutions like the police, or corporations.

As an individual, please take a few minutes to write about your personal experience related to the following questions:

Have you ever experienced someone having power over you? How did it feel?

Facilitators: Ask 2-3 volunteers to share what they wrote. If they don't answer the "how did it feel" question, ask as a follow up. That's the most important part!

Consider having a brief story of your own in mind in case no one volunteers. Sharing your own story will probably prompt others to share theirs.

On the easel, take notes on the answers to "how did it feel?"

Task 3b

It's understandable that most of us think of power in terms of dominance, corruption, and fear. What if we were to approach power differently? Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said:

"Power is the ability to achieve a purpose. Whether or not it is good or bad depends upon the purpose."

People power is about building power **with**—power with workers, power with communities of color, power with immigrant communities, power with poor people, power with LGBTQ communities. It's about collective power that lets us build the kind of just and democratic society we hope for.

As an individual, take a few minutes to write about your personal experience related to the following questions:

***When did you have power with other workers and/or community folks?
How did it feel?***

Facilitators: Ask 2-3 volunteers to share what they wrote. Encourage different people to share. If they don't answer the "how did it feel" question, ask as a follow up. That's the most important part!

Consider having a brief story of your own in mind in case no one volunteers. Sharing your own story will probably prompt others to share theirs.

On the easel, take notes on the answers to "how did it feel?"

If there's time, you can have participants share their stories in their small groups.

Task 4: Less Democracy in Our Country?

We just talked about how bosses generally don't want democracy in the workplace because it interferes with their power over us. Let's talk about whether this is true for our country.

In your small groups, please answer the questions below. Please choose a new member of your group to take notes and report back.

- 1. Are there powerful entities (people, organizations, or movements) in the U.S. who would prefer to have less democracy in our country? If so, who are they?*
- 2. Why would they prefer less democracy?*

Conclusions

1. Without a union at work, bosses have almost unlimited power over us.
2. The democratic rights in the workplace that come along with union representation give us space to build power with other workers to improve our working lives and standard of living.
3. To gain even more power over us, corporations, bosses, and other institutions try to get laws passed to take away gains we've won and restrict our rights in the workplace and in society.

Key Takeaway: Working-class people are used to bosses exercising power over us. Together, we can build power with one another to protect and expand our rights.

Module 2: Undermining Democracy

Purpose: To understand threats to democracy in the U.S. and answer the question: Should expanding democracy be a goal of the labor movement?

Task 1: Is Democracy Really Under Threat?

In your small groups, please answer the question below. Choose a different member of your group to take notes and report back.

What are your agreements and disagreements with the following statement?

“Bargaining better contracts is job number one for our union. Of course we believe in democracy, but that doesn’t have much to do with the fight against our bosses and Wall Street’s power. Besides, all this talk about a threat to democracy is overblown. Political parties are always saying the other one is wrong for the country—it’s nothing new. It’s not like democracy is just going to go away.”

Agreements:

Disagreements:

Task 2: Wisconsin's Successful Attacks on People Power

There's no single definition of democracy, but one element of living in a democracy is supposed to be that we all get to participate in making decisions. While no one will always like the results of elections or all the decisions our elected officials make, we're taught that we have some guarantees, including that we will have the opportunity to put someone else in power in the future. In Wisconsin, some groups have worked hard to eliminate that guarantee and keep themselves in power no matter what.

In your groups, please review pages 13-18 and answer the questions below. Please choose a different member of your group to take notes and report back.

1. What are some examples of how democratic elections have been undermined in Wisconsin?

2. How were they able to achieve these results?

The First Step Was to Kneecap Unions' Political Power

In 2010, a new Administration took office in Wisconsin. Their first step was to strip most collective bargaining rights from public workers. Their goal was to cripple the political power of working people. They did this by passing Act 10.

Major Provisions of Act 10, the 2011 Wisconsin Anti-Collective Bargaining Law for Public Workers

- Limits collective bargaining to wages, yet wage increases are capped at the rate of inflation.
- Requires annual vote to recertify the union.
 - In recertification, the union must win a majority of all eligible members, not just those who cast votes.
- Bars voluntary payroll deductions for dues.
- Cuts pay for public workers.
 - Public workers earning \$50,000 a year saw their take-home pay shrink by about 8.5% because they had to pay more for their benefits.
- Divide and conquer: Firefighters and most law enforcement were exempted from the changes.

Other governors quickly saw the law as a model to copy. The influential conservative strategist Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, saw Act 10 as a way to diminish political power for working people.

Sources: www.wpr.org/decade-after-act-10-its-different-world-wisconsin-unions;
pbswisconsin.org/news-item/workers-lost-ground-on-wages-in-wake-of-wisconsins-anti-labor-laws

Politicians Tried to Put Themselves into Power Permanently

- Gerrymandering is a practice of manipulating the boundaries of election districts to favor one party or group of people.
- After passing Act 10, the new Wisconsin Administration worked to re-draw the maps for the state legislature, gerrymandering the districts to hold on to power.
- Wisconsin voters are split about 50%-50% politically, but gerrymandering gave one party control of nearly two-thirds of the legislative seats.

Sources: apnews.com/article/election-2020-wisconsin-voting-rights-milwaukee-archive-dafac088c90242ef8b282fbebdf5b56; www.nbc15.com/2022/05/03/mu-polls-wisconsin-shows; www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/us/wisconsin-voters.html

Making Voting Harder

Another way that democracy gets weakened is by changing the laws about who can vote or how voting is done.

The new Administration passed a restrictive voter ID law and made over 30 other changes to election laws.

Passed a more restrictive voter ID law disenfranchised Black and low-income voters and college students.

- The law imposed new requirements on IDs needed to vote. 9 percent of all registered voters did not have these required forms of ID. Black voters were about 50 percent likelier than whites to lack these IDs.
- A University of Wisconsin study found that the law kept up to 23,000 people from voting in 2016 in Madison and Milwaukee, with Black voters three times as likely as white voters to say they were deterred from voting.
- One senator allegedly admitted their goal was depressing turnout in “neighborhoods around Milwaukee and the college campuses around the state,” according to the testimony of a former legislative aide.

Disbanded the nonpartisan agency tasked with overseeing state elections and educating the public about the law, replacing it with a commission of partisan appointees.

Restricted early voting

- Cut the number of early voting days from 30 to 12.
- Reduced early voting hours on nights and weekends, when working people have more flexibility to vote. State Senator Grothman said of extended early voting hours in cities like Madison and Milwaukee, “I want to nip this in the bud before too many other cities get on board.”
- Restricted early voting to one location per municipality, hampering voters in large urban areas and sprawling rural ones.

Eliminated staffers who led statewide registration drives and made it harder to count absentee ballots.

Stripped Authority from Governor

In 2018, voters elected a new Governor, beating the incumbent governor who had passed Act 10.

Less than a month after the election, the legislature convened an unprecedented lame-duck session (the time between an election and when winners take office) to strip the new governor and new attorney general of key powers.

For example, they passed a law to give the legislature the power to permanently block any regulations written by the state's administrative agencies, which are part of the executive branch.

Another hastily passed law required the executive branch to get permission from the legislature to make any policy changes within the state's health care and public benefit programs.

While the lame-duck session was going on, thousands of Wisconsinites protested outside and inside the Capitol.

The legislature's attack on the governor's power continued even after the lame-duck session. They went on to refuse to confirm members of the new Governors' cabinet, block his appointments to key state agencies, and cut his popular budget priorities, including money for health care, schools, and roads.

Source: Ari Berman, "How Democracy Nearly Died in Wisconsin," *Mother Jones*, Jan.-Feb. 2023, www.motherjones.com/politics/2022/12/how-democracy-nearly-died-in-wisconsin-republican-gerrymandering-evers

The Forces that Attacked Wisconsin's Public Workers Had a Broader Agenda

Gerrymandering has made it extremely difficult for new politicians to get elected to the state legislature. The existing legislators have managed to stay in power while passing unpopular laws. According to Wisconsin Watch, politicians in safe rural districts stay in office and control the state legislature. Besides the voter suppression laws detailed above, they have enacted these laws:

- **Free rider law.**
 - In 2015, the Wisconsin legislature passed a free rider law (also known as a “right-to-work” law) to limit the resources and power of private sector unions.
- **Repealed prevailing wage law.**
 - In 2017, anti-democratic forces repealed Wisconsin’s prevailing wage law that since the 1930s had required a wage floor for workers on state-funded capital projects. The repeal was pushed by Wisconsin’s business lobby.
- **Abortion ban.**
 - When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, an 1849 Wisconsin law banning nearly all abortions went into effect. Polls have consistently shown that around 60% of Wisconsinites believe abortion should be legal in most or all cases, yet some district attorneys threatened to prosecute doctors. (The 1849 ban has since been blocked by a judge. The Wisconsin Supreme Court is expected to weigh in.)
- **Override local democracy**
 - A 2017 law took away local governments’ ability to pass living wage laws for public workers.

Sources: www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2021/02/08/act-10-turns-10-four-takeaways-law-shook-wisconsin/440291700; apnews.com/article/election-2020-wisconsin-voting-rights-milwaukee-archive-dafac088c90242ef8b282fbebdf5b56; www.nbc15.com/2022/05/03/mu-polls-wisconsin-shows; www.nytimes.com/2017/09/25/us/wisconsin-voters.html; pbswisconsin.org/news-item/workers-lost-ground-on-wages-in-wake-of-wisconsins-anti-labor-laws

The Billionaires Who Backed the Attack on Wisconsin Public Workers

Billionaire PAC Money Funded Walker and Helped Flip the State Legislature

The new Governor was only able to push his anti-union agenda through because of the billionaire network that propped him up. Some of the richest people in America have been waging a decades-long campaign against unions and public sector workers.

This included the Janus v. AFSCME Supreme Court decision, which allows public workers to be free riders, free rider laws for private sector workers (also known as “right-to-work” laws), attempts to privatize the U.S. Postal Service, and much more.

The president of Americans for Prosperity (AFP), which was founded by Charles Koch, spoke at the Wisconsin state capitol in favor of the anti-union bill. Even “before the new governor was sworn in, executives from the Koch-backed group had worked behind the scenes to try to encourage a union showdown,” according to the AFP president.

AFP also said it spent \$10 million in 2011 and 2012 promoting anti-union policies.

Sources: Andy Kroll, “Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker: Funded by the Koch Bros.,” Mother Jones, 2/18/2011, www.motherjones.com/politics/2011/02/wisconsin-scott-walker-koch-brothers; Eric Lipton, “Billionaire Brothers’ Money Plays Role in Wisconsin Dispute,” New York Times, 2/22/2011, www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/us/22koch.html; Jack Craver, “Dark Money: How Wisconsin’s most politically influential organizations avoid disclosing their donors,” Wisconsin State Journal, 1/15/2014, madison.com/news/local/writers/jack_craver/dark-money-how-wisconsin-s-most-politically-influential-organizations-avoid/article_8dd078f-1112-5f44-9268-cb9e5f2d3fd2.html

Task 3: Anti-Democracy Efforts Go Mainstream

There has been a concerted effort to expand the anti-democracy agenda pushed in Wisconsin to other states.

In your groups, please review pages 20-27 and answer the questions below. Please choose a different member of your group to take notes and report back.

- 2. What are ways that fear of others has been used to move a political agenda?**

Plans to Roll Back Worker Protections and Union Rights

Business organizations such as ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council) work with legislators to pass laws that give employers more power over workers. Here's a sample of ongoing efforts to undermine labor rights:

1. Eliminate prevailing wage

The Davis-Bacon Act, enacted in 1931, requires contractors working on federal projects to pay their workers the "prevailing wage" for the area. Davis-Bacon ensures that contractors don't rely on underpaying their workers in order to win contracts with the lowest bid.

A bill has been filed in Congress to repeal Davis-Bacon, which could lead to lower wages for workers, reduced job quality, and a less competitive labor market.

2. National "right-to-work" for less

A national "right to work" (for less) law has been introduced in Congress. This would create a "free rider" system in which all unions would be forced to represent workers who are covered by a union contract but do not pay any portion of union dues.

The real purpose of free rider laws is to tilt the balance of power toward big corporations and further rig the system at the expense of working families. These laws strain union resources and make it harder for working people to form unions and bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Unfortunately, 26 states already have such laws on the books. Workers in these "right-to-work-for-less" states have lower wages, worse benefits, higher rates of workplace accidents and fatalities, and other negative outcomes compared to workers in other states.

3. Abolish OSHA workplace safety standards

The "No OSHA" Act would completely repeal the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970. OSHA requires employers to keep workplaces free of known health and safety hazards, limit exposure to dangerous substances, and provide protective equipment. It also gives workers the right to refuse unsafe work.

Abolishing OSHA would leave workers vulnerable to hazardous working environments. Unions could also face challenges in advocating for safety measures, potentially leading to increased workplace injuries and health hazards while diminishing bargaining power for workers.

4. The shocking rollback of child labor laws

Since 2021, 28 states have introduced bills to weaken child labor laws, and 12 states have enacted them. In Iowa, for example, a 2023 law allows employers to hire teens as young as 14 for hazardous jobs in industrial laundries; allows state agencies to waive restrictions on hazardous work for 16-17-year-olds in a long list of dangerous occupations, including demolition, roofing, excavation, and power-driven machine operation; and extends hours to allow teens as young as 14 to work six-hour nightly shifts during the school year;

5. Eliminate the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

Eight SpaceX employees were fired after they signed an open letter about workplace concerns, including comments by CEO Elon Musk. The NLRB brought a complaint against SpaceX for illegal retaliation. Instead of challenging the complaint through the usual process, **SpaceX is trying to have the NLRB declared unconstitutional.**

Amazon, Trader Joe's, and Starbucks have joined the effort. Collectively, these companies have been charged with hundreds of violations of workers' rights, including firing pro-union workers, retaliating against organizing, and bargaining in bad faith.

This absurd lawsuit forces an already underfunded agency to spend scarce resources to defend itself, diverting resources away from protecting workers' rights. The companies have also shifted some of the media's focus away from their lawbreaking to obscure legal arguments about the NLRB.

Sources: Economic Policy Institute, Feb. 13, 2024,
www.epi.org/blog/data-show-anti-union-right-to-work-laws-damage-state-economies-as-michigans-repeal-takes-effect-new-hampshire-should-continue-to-reject-right-to-work-legislation;
www.epi.org/blog/whats-behind-the-corporate-effort-to-kneecap-the-national-labor-relations-board-spacex-amazon-trader-joes-and-starbucks-are-trying-to-have-the-nlr-declared-unconstitutional;
www.epi.org/blog/child-labor-remains-a-key-state-legislative-issue-in-2024-state-lawmakers-must-seize-opportunities-to-strengthen-standards-resist-ongoing-attacks-on-child-labor-laws

Denying the Will of the People in Order to Suppress Votes

Most Americans favor making voting easier through early voting, voting by mail, making Election Day a holiday, and more. However, state governments controlled by anti-democratic politicians have stepped up efforts to suppress votes.

North Carolina

- A new law requires that mail-in ballots now include a copy of the voter's ID along with the signature of a notary or the signatures of two witnesses.

Florida

- In 2018, 65% of Florida voters approved restoring voting rights to most people convicted of felonies who complete their sentences. However, the legislature required them to pay fines and costs first, effectively blocking many poor ex-prisoners from voting. This affects over 1.1 million potential voters, enough to swing elections. Black potential voters are most affected because institutional bias in the criminal justice system means that Black Floridians are more likely to be arrested, charged, and convicted.

Georgia

- Georgia passed a law in 2021 which limits handouts of water or food to people waiting in long lines to vote.

Alabama and Idaho

- Passed laws that broadly criminalize certain forms of assistance with absentee voting, which impacts mostly elderly voters, voters with disabilities, and voters with limited access to transportation.

Sources: www.commoncause.org/florida/our-work/ensure-fair-districts-reflective-democracy;
www.vox.com/22961590/redistricting-gerrymandering-house-2022-midterms;
www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/04/08/voting-laws-swing-states-2024;
www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/02/07/bipartisan-support-for-early-in-person-voting-voter-id-election-day-national-holiday;
www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-may-2024;
www.sentencingproject.org/app/uploads/2023/01/Florida-Voting-Rights-for-People-with-Felony-Convictions.pdf

Corporate Money in Politics

The Supreme Court's ruling in *Citizens United* opened the floodgates to corporate money in politics. It allows corporations and the wealthiest to spend unlimited funds on elections. Anti-democratic forces along with their corporate allies have taken advantage although over 70% of Americans from all political parties agree that money in politics needs to be limited and corporate lobbyists hold too much influence.

Billions Spent on Lobbying Keeps Prescription Drug Prices High

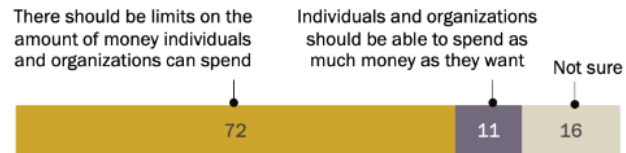
The pharmaceutical industry has more money lobbying the federal government than any other industry—\$2.9 billion over the last 10 years. It has also donated millions to political campaigns.

Meanwhile, Congress has rejected many calls to regulate drug prices even though government-funded research lowers costs for drug companies. And due to lobbying by drug companies, Medicare has been legally barred from negotiating drug prices the way it does for other healthcare services. (A 2023 law will allow negotiations on a handful of drugs.)

Drug prices for consumers have skyrocketed. For example, insulin prices have tripled in the past decade. One result is that 1.3 million Americans with diabetes have engaged in insulin rationing—the dangerous and potentially fatal practice of using less insulin than is needed in order to make the doses last longer.

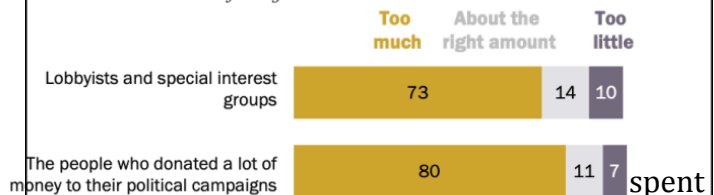
About 7 in 10 U.S. adults say there should be limits on election spending

% who say that when it comes to political campaigns ...



Campaign donors, lobbyists and special interests seen as too influential on members of Congress

% who say each of the following has ___ influence when it comes to the decisions that members of Congress make



Sources: www.pewresearch.org; theintercept.com/2022/09/27/florida-ron-desantis-campaign-fund; www.businessinsider.com/ron-desantis-accused-publix-pay-for-play-partnership-2021-4; www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/federal-and-state#industries; www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2022/11/08/diabetes-insulin-rationing

Dismantling Public Workers' Union Power

In June 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in *Janus v. AFSCME* that public sector unions could no longer collect fees from workers who choose not to be union members—but that the union is still required to represent.

A wave of state bills was then introduced to further weaken public worker unions. Here are some that became law in the last 5 years:

Anti-Public Worker Union Laws Passed 2018-2023

Arizona

- Banned public employers from providing paid union leave—except for law enforcement and firefighters.

Arkansas

- Outlawed collective bargaining by public-sector workers.
- Banned dues deduction for school employees.

Florida

- Public sector unions must get recertified if dues-paying members fall below 60%.
- Banned automatic dues deductions from paychecks
- Annual audits required for unions
- Law enforcement, firefighter, and correctional officer unions are exempt from the new law.

Kentucky

- Banned dues deduction for public workers.

Indiana

- School employees have to re-authorize dues deduction every year.

Missouri

- Public workers have to re-authorize dues deduction every year.

Tennessee

- Banned dues deduction for school employees.

West Virginia

- Banned dues deduction for state and local workers
- Outlawed strikes by public workers.

"Why don't they want us to have rights? The democracy seems to be slipping away out of Florida. It's heartbreaking."

– Ruth Doriscar, member of the United Teachers of Dade union and school social worker

Sources: Daniel Rivero, "Why Thousands of Workers in Florida Are Losing Their Labor Unions. What Happens Next?" WLRN, Feb. 21, 2024, www.wlrn.org/wlrn-investigations/2024-02-15/florida-labor-union-membership-teachers-public-sb-256; ballotpedia.org/Public-sector_union_policy_in_the_United_States,_2018-2023#Enacted_bills_by_year

Attacking Collective & Individual Rights

In Florida, anti-democratic allies have used their power to impose extreme measures that restrict collective and individual freedom—even when the majority of Florida voters oppose these restrictions.

Undermining Public Education

In 2023, Florida passed several laws that adversely impact public education. This included a school voucher program that used public tax dollars for students to attend private schools. Studies indicate that the majority of vouchers were used by students already in private schools, with 44% of these students coming from households with income over \$120,000 per year, 400% above the poverty line.

Erasing Black History, Part 1

The Stop WOKE Act regulates how public schools teach history. A key tenet of the newly approved curriculum was the notion that enslaved people “developed skills” which “could be applied for their personal benefit.”

Erasing Black History, Part 2

Anti-democratic forces banned a new Advanced Placement (AP) high school course that would give students “a comprehensive view of the culture, literature, historical development, political movements, social movements” of Black Americans.

Going after LGBTQ Floridians

In 2022, Florida passed the “Don’t Say Gay” law, which banned discussion of sexual orientation and gender identity in public schools (with very narrow exceptions in the older grades). Teachers in

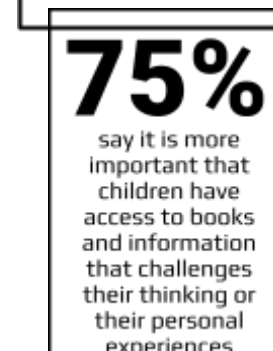
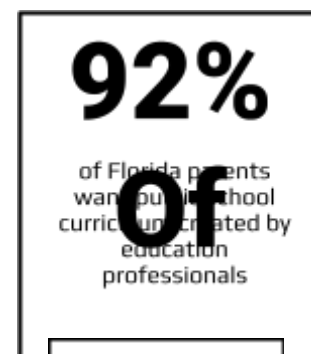


same-sex marriages left or lost their jobs.

Children of gay parents now fear mentioning their parents’ sexual identity at school.

Librarians must undergo state training on the law, and face losing their livelihood if they lend books blacklisted by the Board of Education.

According to PEN America, Florida now leads the nation in number of books banned.



Sources: www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/com_pol_fl-survey-support-public-education_v3.pdf;
www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/florida-african-american-studies-desantis-ap-rcna66983;
www.tampabay.com/news/education/2023/02/18/4-things-know-about-ron-desantis-idea-slash-ap-courses-florida;
floridapolitics.com/archives/561035-poll-majorities-oppose-ron-desantis-backed-stop-woke-and-parental-rights-laws;
www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/05/19/gay-florida-teacher-desantis-lgbtq;
www.washingtonpost.com/parenting/2023/03/08/florida-laws-parents;
[www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2023/01/18/florida-board-of-education-approves-new-rules-geared-towards-specialized-training-fo](http://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2023/01/18/florida-board-of-education-approves-new-rules-geared-towards-specialized-training-for-school-librarians)
r-school-librarians; pen.org/2023-banned-book-list

Minnesota Voters Rejected Voter ID Restrictions

Anti-democratic forces in Minnesota pushed to add a state constitutional amendment requiring a photo ID to vote. They claimed the ID was free, but it would have required some voters to obtain a \$26 birth certificate and travel up to 100 miles to a Department of Vehicle Services office to apply for their ID.

Imaginary Voter Fraud

The voter ID measure was supported by the Minnesota Majority, which illustrated the imaginary problem of voter fraud by using a picture that featured a Black man in a prison uniform and a mariachi musician waiting in line to vote.



Tireless Education Campaign

Initially, polling showed that 80% of voters supported the photo ID amendment. But “Our Vote Our Future,” a coalition of more than 80 groups, launched a tireless campaign to educate 400,000 voters about how the proposed amendment would make it harder for Minnesota’s seniors and veterans to vote, end Election Day registration, and force more people to vote on provisional ballots that might not be counted.

Thanks to the campaign, the voters defeated the proposed amendment 54% to 46%.

Bringing Unusual Partners Together

Our Vote Our Future brought in groups that wouldn’t normally dive into elections, each tailoring its message to specific voters. Advocates for ending domestic violence lent a hand

because many women in shelters lack an ID with a current address. The Land Stewardship, which organizes farmers, joined the cause since rural districts with mail-in voting might need to overhaul operations.

Other coalition members included TakeAction Minnesota, ISAIAH (faith-based), AARP, Minnesota PIRG (student environmental group), ACLU, the League of Women Voters and many more.



Source: www.thenation.com/article/archive/minnesota-voter-id-amendment-draws-youth-activists

Voting Rights Expanded

The same groups of unions and community groups who worked to elect pro-democracy legislatures worked to expand voting rights. In 2023, Minnesota pro-democracy legislators and groups had several major wins that expanded voting rights.

- Voting rights were restored to more than 55,000 convicted felons who completed their prison time. This makes Minnesota the 25th state to ensure ex-felons have the right to vote, and it's one of the most significant expansions of that right in Minnesota in a half-century.
- Passed the “Democracy for the People Act” which will:
 - Allow 16- and 17-year-olds to pre-register to vote;
 - Establish automatic voter registration at many state agencies;
 - Permit voters to opt in to a permanent absentee voter list where voters will automatically be sent a mail-in ballot every election;
 - Strengthen penalties for voter intimidation and deception;
 - Expand language access in voting materials and more.

Sources: abcnews.go.com/Politics/voting-rights-restored-55000-minnesota-felons-new-voting/story?id=97628054;
www.democracymodel.com/news-alerts/minnesota-governor-enacts-the-democracy-for-the-people-act

Democracy and Worker Power at the Workplace Expanded

Unions and community groups in Minnesota fought for years to strengthen workplace democracy and build power for workers. They had huge success in 2023, when state legislators passed a package of pro-labor measures.

Captive audience meetings banned

Employers won't be allowed to require workers to attend anti-union presentations or any other meetings to hear about the employer's religious or political views. Such captive audience meetings are often the primary way employers discourage their employees from unionizing and can be highly effective.

Noncompete and no-poach agreements banned

Noncompete agreements will become unenforceable, so workers can take new jobs without fearing they'll be sued by their former employers. The agreements have become prolific in labor contracts, affecting everyone from condominium caretakers to fast food workers to doctors. About one in five American workers — and 350,000 workers in Minnesota — are bound by noncompete agreements.

Minimum pay and benefits for workers at nursing homes

The new Minnesota Nursing Home Workforce Standards Board will create a first-in-the-nation board with the power to set minimum pay and benefits for workers at all nursing homes across the state. This comes close to the sector-wide bargaining—common in Europe—in which labor groups negotiate pay and benefits for an entire industry rather than with individual employers.

Having minimum standards removes an incentive for nursing homes to fight union efforts and raises the floor against which unionized workers bargain for better treatment. Unions say it is also critical to addressing dire staffing shortages.

Teachers can negotiate over class sizes

Unionized teachers will be able to negotiate over ratios of students to teachers as well as students to school psychologists, custodians, or other staff.

Paid sick days

Virtually all Minnesota employees will be eligible for paid sick and safe days—with full-time workers receiving at least six paid days off a year. Employees will accrue one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours they work, up to 48 hours a year.

Sources: minnesotareformer.com/2023/05/17/labor-victory-minnesota-lawmakers-approve-9-major-worker-friendly-changes/; www.epi.org/publication/bp235/; www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2023/01/ftc-proposes-rule-ban-noncompete-clauses-which-hurt-workers-harm-competition

Conclusions

1. Wisconsin, Florida, and other states have been testing grounds for anti-democratic and anti-labor leaders to implement their agenda of undermining democracy.
2. Because their policies are unpopular with voters, anti-democratic politicians must manipulate the political process to keep themselves in power.
3. Democracy defenders, including labor unions, have shown us a different possibility in Minnesota to expand democracy and worker power.

Key Takeaway: The power struggle between democracy defenders and anti-democratic elites playing out in many states has consequences for workers and workers' rights to organize.

Module 3: The Anti-Democracy Playbook

Task 1: Why Are Working People Angry?

Together in the large group, we will discuss the following question:

Do you believe that working people in the U.S. are angry? If so, why?

Task 2: The Threat to Democracy: Authoritarianism

When we hear about democracy collapsing in other countries, the headlines are often about a sudden military takeover of the government. But that's not the only way democracy can end. The reality is that anti-democratic forces have gotten smarter and more strategic.

The anti-democratic forces are seeking a form of government that experts call authoritarianism. Authoritarianism puts power in the hands of a few elites with no checks and balances, very little to no voice for the working class, and extreme limits on personal freedom.

We'll look at seven strategies that anti-democratic forces use to win this political power struggle and take away working people's ability to build power.

In your small groups, read pages 35-41 and answer the questions below. Your facilitators will give you easel paper and a marker to write your answers. Choose a member of your group to bring your easel sheet to the front of the room to report back.

- 1. Imagine that your small group wants to take power and end democracy in the U.S. using the strategies described in the following pages. In which order would you implement those strategies to take down democracy and establish your vision for an authoritarian government?***

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

- 2. Why did your group choose the first strategy to be first?***

- 3. How would you use working people's anger to get support for your plan?***

Make Election Administration Partisan

The Strategy

All democracies have certain functions that operate with some independence from partisan politics. Central banking, law enforcement and courts, official statistics, financial accounting and regulation, election administration, and national security—all only work properly when appropriately protected from politics.

The anti-democratic strategy is to politicize an institution that had been independent. A current example of this in the U.S. is politicizing election administration—the independent institutions that protect the voting process and ensure fair elections.

State legislatures across the country led by anti-democratic forces have used or attempted to use their legislative power to shift control of election administration to themselves, restrict the power of local elections administrators, and even create harsher criminal and civil penalties for election administrators for their decisions.

A report released by pro-democracy research groups found that as of December 15, 2021, there have been at least **262 bills introduced in 41 states that would interfere with election administration—and 32 of these bills have become law across 17 states.**

Example: Politicians Attempt to Take Over Election Administration

Some states have an election commission that is responsible for overseeing state elections. Often, they are evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, with some members appointed by the governor and others appointed by legislative leaders. But in some states, politicians are working to undermine these commissions to make them lopsided in favor of one party, or to transfer the duties to Secretary of State. While it's not uncommon to have secretaries of state oversee elections, these efforts would give ultimate authority to state legislatures controlled by one party.

It means whichever party controls the state legislature would control elections in the state.

Sources: "The Authoritarian Playbook," protectdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-Authoritarian-Playbook-Updated.pdf; s3.documentcloud.org/documents/21169281/democracy-crisis-in-the-making-report-update_12232021-year-end-numbers.pdf

Kick Checks and Balances Out the Door

The Strategy

Anti-democratic forces cannot succeed without the cooperation or agreement of legislatures, courts, and other institutions designed to provide checks and balances. In some cases, anti-democratic forces rewrite the rules to strengthen executive power and weaken legislatures, while in others they simply stack these competing institutions with their own allies or gut their ability to operate. A long-term strategy of the 1% has been to pack the U.S. Supreme Court with pro-corporate judges. The anti-democratic forces saw this as an opportunity to nominate their own anti-democratic allies.

Example: Supreme Court Hands Employers Another Weapon Against Worker Power

The 2023 Supreme Court decision in *Glacier Northwest vs. Teamsters* involved a strike by about 45 members of Teamsters Local 147. Glacier Northwest produces cement and building materials. In 2017, drivers of cement-mixing trucks went on strike while some of the trucks were filled with concrete, and the company ultimately took a loss when the product hardened and became unusable.

Glacier disciplined certain workers after the strike and the union filed a labor board charge, alleging management retaliation. Glacier then filed its own legal complaint, arguing that the drivers conspired to destroy its property by showing up to work and then walking off after cement was mixed, knowing it could harden and become useless. The case went up to the Supreme Court.

The Court ruled in favor of the company. The ruling makes it easier for businesses to sue unions and recover damages for economic harm related to work stoppages, and it creates some uncertainty about when and how workers can engage in a legal strike.

This decision has deeply harmful consequences for workers' right to strike. Even without employers filing a lawsuit, the threat of a lawsuit is likely to be considered in unions' calculations about whether, when, and how to strike.

The decision is also one **more example of the Supreme Court rejecting the value of the administrative state: the justices muddled through their own thoughts about labor relations despite the existence of an entire agency like the National Labor Relations Board with deep expertise in precisely that topic.**

Sources: www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-supreme-courts-ruling-strike-case-puts-unions-defense-2023-06-07/;
www.epi.org/blog/the-supreme-court-sided-with-corporations-over-workers-again

Spread Disinformation

The Strategy

All politicians engage in spin, and many outright lie (at least occasionally). But anti-democratic leaders go further, spreading lies through coordinated networks, channels, traditional media, and social media. Disinformation is a unique challenge for the U.S. today, as anti-democratic actors have taken advantage of our strong First Amendment tradition and strategically used social media and other online tactics.

These lies have two purposes: first, they are political weapons aimed at crippling opponents and shoring up key supporters through invented false grievances. And second, they are smokescreens for power grabs and abuses, insulating anti-democratic leaders against accountability. The goal is not always to sell a lie, but instead to undermine the notion that anything in particular is true.

Example: Working People Distrust Elections Integrity

FiveThirtyEight tracked laws restricting voting since the 2020 elections. Of the 579 pieces of voter restriction legislation, 50 have been signed into law. They were categorized into seven types (many bills fell into more than one category):

- 330 limited voting options in some way, whether that was eliminating ballot collecting or placing more restrictions on absentee voting.
- 128 bills expanded voter ID laws, which make it more difficult for seniors, young people, and certain marginalized communities to vote.
- The smallest category was the most concerning: 14 bills made election roles more partisan. One that was enacted into law in Arizona stripped its secretary of state of the authority to defend state election laws in court and instead hands that power over to the state attorney general.

In addition, this disinformation campaign has led to the harassment of election officials, who are quitting their positions around the country.

Sources: pro.morningconsult.com/instant-intel/republican-election-trust-midterms-2022; fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-big-lie-voting-laws; www.nytimes.com/2021/07/02/us/politics/2020-election-voting-officials.html; www.nytimes.com/2021/12/11/us/politics/trust-in-elections-trump-democracy.html

Crush Dissent

The Strategy

Strong democracies have strong oppositions and an independent press who alert the public when those in power are abusing their positions. Anti-democratic movements and leaders tend to weaken not only freedom of speech and the press, but the influence of any public voices that could serve as vocal counterpoints to their faction.

Authoritarian politicians can use, or threaten to use, the regulatory and enforcement powers of the state to punish the speech of journalists in a few ways, such as: initiating a government review to raise postal rates to punish newspapers; directing Department of Justice enforcement actions against media companies; interfering with White House press access; and threatening to revoke broadcast licenses.

Example: Going After Organized Groups

Restricting citizens' ability to mobilize, protest, and participate in direct actions and other peaceful forms of resistance has been a long-term strategy of anti-democratic leaders. In the last few years, several states have introduced or passed new laws, like Florida's "anti-riot" bill, which increases criminal penalties for protestors in the vicinity of demonstrations that turn violent.

Although a judge recently declared the Florida law unconstitutional, anti-democratic forces continue to push it. HB 1 criminalizes protests that turn violent and could have serious consequences for demonstrators. Protests can be deemed "mob intimidation," which is a first-degree misdemeanor that carries a penalty of up to one year in prison, or classified as a "riot," a second-degree felony with a penalty of up to 15 years in prison.

Under the new law, protesters can't post bail until after making an initial court appearance, and any damage to historical property, such as a Confederate monument, is classified as a third-degree felony, punishable by up to five years in prison. The law also protects drivers who potentially injure or kill protesters with vehicles by granting them affirmative defense, excusing them from civil or criminal liability. Polling shows 63% of Floridians do not support HB1.

Union members or workers organizing rallies or participating in other forms of direct actions could be punished if the law is implemented.

Sources: abcnews.go.com/US/floridas-anti-riot-law-legal-challenge/story?id=79224398;
www.aclufl.org/en/press-releases/aclu-florida-denounces-hb1-signed-law-governor-desantis

Stoke Violence

The Strategy

Stoking violence advances authoritarian efforts in other areas of the playbook, such as crushing dissent, but it also undermines the norms and trust among political elites, as well as the broader population, which underpin democratic stability. As feelings of insecurity rise, social divisions become deeper and more politicized and political leaders' incentives shift further towards hardball politics and away from negotiation and compromise.

Example: Threats from Far-Right Groups Grow

International observers have deep concerns about the tone of American political campaigns and the way that it raises the risk of election-related violence.

Far-right groups are overrepresented in violent demonstrations. Although such groups participated in just over 20% of “stop the steal” demonstrations in November 2020 and January 2021, they participated in over 90% of those that turned violent, culminating in the riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Surveys have found that 17% of America's local election officials and nearly 12% of its public health workforce have been threatened with violence due to their jobs during the 2020 election cycle and Covid-19 pandemic. While none of the threats against public servants appear to have led to deadly violence yet, **the volume has gotten severe enough that the Justice Department created initiatives to help combat threats against election administrators and education workers** (board members, teachers, administrators, and other school staff).

- During the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol building, protestors set up a noose and chanted “Hang Mike Pence,” before they violently pushed through police barriers and broke into the government building.
- Election officials have also been deluged with violent threats, to the point where some have left their jobs.
 - In Vermont, a man menaced a group of election officials, warning them that “your days are fucking numbered.”
 - In Missouri, a public health official was “physically assaulted, called racist slurs, and surrounded by an angry mob.”
 - In Oregon, a school board member was told that a neighbor was out looking for him—and threatening to kill him.

Yet the alignment of some political leaders with violent actors and the refusal of others to condemn violence contribute to a perception of impunity. This **kind of violence both results from and contributes to a decline in democratic norms and values.**

Sources: acleddata.com/conflict-watchlist-2024/usa/; www.vox.com/22774745/death-threats-election-workers-public-health-school; www.democracynow.org/2022/6/10/january_6_violence_washington_dc_proud; fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-many-americans-might-be-increasingly-accepting-of-political-violence

Target Already Vulnerable Communities

The Strategy

Democracy in diverse societies depends on protecting the rights of minorities. This includes political minorities who have lost at the ballot box and groups who identify as different from traditionally dominant majorities along lines of race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Anti-democratic forces tend to explicitly reject any benefits of diverse societies. They employ political strategies that target minorities in a way that energizes and reinforces solidarity among their supporters. In the U.S., where Black Americans have been marginalized for centuries, the language and rhetoric around voter fraud often nods to this history of racialized politics. But it's not just about using culture wars or racially coded language. Anti-democratic leaders also use the power of the government to target and infringe on already vulnerable communities.

Often, this strategy is used to create internal “enemies” who can be blamed for problems actually created by the powerful. For example, blaming immigrants for “taking jobs” instead of holding companies accountable for mass layoffs and outsized profits.

Example: Coming After the LGBTQ Community

The “Parental Rights in Education” law, commonly referred to as the “Don’t Say Gay” bill, was signed in March 2022.

- The law restricts classroom teaching discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity to grades K-3, barring such instruction with limited exceptions for specific health lessons.
- It mandates schools to inform parents when health services are provided to students.
- The law empowers parents to take legal action against schools for violations.

Critics argue that **the law is designed to marginalize and erase LGBTQ+ people, students, and issues from schools and classrooms.** Studies show LGBTQ+ youth already face higher mental health and suicide risks, and laws like this can further isolate and harm them.

Experts argue the vague language could have a “chilling effect” on schools and teachers, leading to self-censorship even beyond what the law requires.

More recently, in the last year in Texas, more than 40 bills were introduced that would curb transgender rights. South Dakota and Arkansas have followed, also targeting trans-youth.

Sources: Jaclyn Diaz, Updated March 28, 2022, NPR, “Florida’s governor signs controversial law opponents dubbed “Don’t Say Gay”, <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/28/1089221657/dont-say-gay-florida-desantis>

Corrupt Elections

The Strategy

The biggest innovation of anti-democratic leaders has been to maintain the facade of democratic elections while at the same time tilting the rules against their opponents. They do this by suppressing votes and biasing, distorting, falsifying, or even overturning the results—either through capturing the referees or by manipulating the electoral rules in their favor.

Example: Restricting Voting

Even in the face of perhaps the “most secure election in U.S. history,” the integrity and structural features of elections in the U.S. are being tested. We now know an effort to block the certification of the 2020 election results involved coordination among state and local officials. But it hasn’t stopped there.

Since 2020 state legislatures have introduced more than 600 bills to manipulate elections, and 62 have become law in 28 states. The laws fall into five main restrictive categories:

1. **Seek to usurp control over election results (4 bills):** These bills would give legislators or other state officials direct control over election outcomes.
2. **Require partisan or unprofessional election “audits” or reviews (26 bills):** These bills create vague post-election review schemes outside the professional standards of traditional election audits that could promote subversion and needlessly call election outcomes into doubt.
3. **Seize power over election responsibilities (34 bills):** These bills would shift election administration responsibilities away from professional, nonpartisan officials and toward partisan actors in the legislature.
4. **Create unworkable burdens in election administration (109 bills):** These bills would interfere with the basic procedures of election administration, increasing the risk of chaos and delay and enabling false claims of irregularity that could be a pretext for subversion.
5. **Impose disproportionate criminal or other penalties (76 bills):** These bills would create or expand penalties for election officials in the ordinary execution of their jobs, including criminalizing inadvertent mistakes.

Sources: protectdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/The-Authoritarian-Playbook-Updated.pdf;
protectdemocracy.org/work/a-democracy-crisis-in-the-making

Conclusions

1. Workers around the world and in the United States have faced different levels of threats to democracy.
2. The threats all have similar elements that strip away workers' rights and working class people's power.
3. Authoritarianism is a form of governing that puts the power in the hands of a few elites without checks and balances, very little to no voice to working people, and at the expense of personal freedoms.
4. The rise of this political form of governing is happening across the country in blue, purple and red states and impacting all working people whether they are a Democratic, Republican, or independent voter.
5. Elements of authoritarianism are: Rejecting democratic rules of game, denying the legitimacy of opponents, tolerating, or encouraging political violence, curtailing the civil liberties of opponents, and breaking down social cohesion to divide and rule a society.

Key Takeaway: The playbook to create a powerless society is the same abroad and here. The elements of authoritarianism in the U.S. have existed for a long time, but anti-democratic forces are hell-bent on taking all the power away from the working class and unions.

Module 4: Workers' Solidarity

Task 1: When Workers Unite, We Win

Workers in the United States have organized and won during pivotal moments when the economic elites and anti-democratic forces aligned to hold power over working people. In this task, we will look at examples of when workers united and won in four different time periods.

Your facilitator will assign one of the four case studies in the following pages to your small group. Please read your case study and answer the question below. Pick a different member of your group to be the reporter.

<p>Case Study 1: The Bread & Roses Strike: Immigrant Workers Fight for Justice</p> <p>Case Study 2: The 1936-37 Flint Sit-Down Strike</p> <p>Case Study 3: Labor and Civil Rights Activists Take on Jim Crow Racism in the South</p> <p>Case Study 4: Unions, Parents, and Students Unite for Racial and Economic Justice in Public Schools</p>

In the previous task, we looked at some strategies in the anti-democratic playbook. Based on your case study and your own experience, what strategies should be in our playbook to build worker power?

The “Bread & Roses” Strike: Immigrant Workers Fight for Justice

Driven by the Industrial Revolution’s demand for labor, the immigrant population in the U.S. surged from 3% in 1850 to 18% in the 1920s. Each new wave of immigrants faced discrimination, made worse during economic downturns when local workers grew resentful and immigrants became scapegoats.

Immigrant Workers Strike!

In 1912, immigrant workers won a significant strike in the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts. When the American Woolen Co. sped up the machines and cut wages, 22,000 workers—mostly immigrant women and children from at least 30 nations, speaking dozens of different languages—shut down their looms and walked out. Despite the language and cultural barriers, workers demonstrated an exceptional sense of unity.

Strikers Met with Employer and Government Violence

The government immediately took the employer’s side. As soon as strike leaflets were circulated, the mayor of Lawrence ordered a company of local militia to patrol the streets.

Mass picketing began, and violent retaliation and mass arrests soon followed. Mill owners



A 1912 political cartoon illustrated how Lawrence police responded to the strike

had picketers drenched by fire hoses. The strikers retaliated by throwing chunks of ice. Thirty-six were arrested and most of them sentenced to a year in prison. The judge said, “The only way we can teach [the strikers] is to deal out the severest sentences.”

The governor ordered out the state police and the state militia, declared martial law, and outlawed mass meetings. When a striker was shot by the

police, two union organizers—who were nowhere near the shooting— were arrested on charges of inciting and provoking violence and being “accessories to the murder.”

Immigrant Workers Unite—and Win!

The strikers got limited support from the broader labor movement. The AFL (American Federation of Labor) hesitated to back the foreign-born, unskilled women, dismissing the protest as “revolutionary” and “anarchistic.” AFL President Samuel Gompers had previously dismissed the notion of organizing immigrants, saying that “the AFL did indeed discriminate against Mongolians, or any non-assimilable race, and would continue to do so.”

Instead, the strikers aligned with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). They organized a strike committee representing every nationality and outlined their demands,

including a 15% wage increase, double-time pay for overtime, and protection from discrimination against strikers. Strikers and supporters organized vital resources such as soup kitchens, medical assistance, and funds to sustain their cause.

Organizers employed nonviolent tactics and creative strategies. To support struggling families and attract attention, about 120 workers marched children to the train station to be sent to be cared for by sympathetic New York women. This move alarmed local authorities, who tried to stop the children from leaving Lawrence. Weeks later, police surrounded and attacked another group of women and children at the train station, but this brutal act backfired against the police and mill owners. Congress launched an investigation.

Striking workers, including children who worked in the mills, testified before Congress about the brutal conditions and meager pay. Concerned over the public reaction to the



hearings, the American Woolen Company accepted all the strikers' demands. Textile workers throughout New England got similar raises, as mill owners feared their workers would follow Lawrence's example.

Bread and Roses

The strike became symbolized by the slogan: "WE WANT BREAD AND ROSES TOO," meaning that workers deserve not only to survive, but to live decent and enjoyable lives. (It's not clear whether picketers actually carried "Bread & Roses" signs in this strike, but this was certainly their message.)

*Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until
life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us bread, but give us roses.
As we go marching, marching, unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient call for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for, but we fight for roses too.*

—From "Bread and Roses" by James Oppenheim, 1911

Sources: Samuel Gompers, *Seventy Years of Life and Labor: An Autobiography* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925), p. 490; Joyce Kornbluth, "Bread and Roses: The 1912 Lawrence textile Strike," web.archive.org/web/20070630044427/http://www.lucyparsonspj.org/iww/kornbluh_bread_roses.html; onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/wusa.12023

The 1936-37 Flint Sit-Down Strike

Before unionization, wages and working conditions in General Motors' auto factories in Flint, Michigan, were abysmal. Wages were low, speed-up pressures were intense, serious accidents were frequent, and workers were considered expendable. As one plant manager put it in 1936, "We hire Chevrolet workers from the neck down."

Strike Preparation and Launch

At least two years of organizing preceded the historic sit-down strike. The union relied on leaflets, secret and public meetings, and a sound car to distribute its messages. Workers faced a constant onslaught of anti-union propaganda, and those who openly supported unionization were at risk of being fired; many suffered beatings from hired GM spies. It was clear that GM would never voluntarily agree to recognize the UAW. Workers began to plan for a sit-down strike to force GM to bargain.

Sit-down strikes broke out at GM plants in Atlanta, Kansas City, and Cleveland in November and December of 1936. The UAW decided it was time to spread the strike to Flint, the heart of the GM empire. On Dec. 30, workers struck two complexes: the Fisher Body "mother plants" which produced dies and chassis on which three-fourths of GM production depended. Without the chassis, all of GM would soon be shut down.



The workers inside moved unfinished Buick bodies in front of all entrances to form a gigantic barricade. They welded a steel frame around every door. Bullet-proof metal sheets covered every window, while holes were carved in them and threaded to allow the nozzles of fire hoses to be screwed into them to dump ice cold water on police and guards when they tried to take the plant by force.

Outside, family members ran a huge strike kitchen and organized mass pickets, including a children's brigade, to protect the strikers inside the plants. A Women's Emergency Brigade was instrumental in preventing GM thugs from breaking picket lines on several occasions.

"Battle of the Running Bulls"

On January 11, GM shut off the heat to the occupied plants, and the police smashed the ladders the strikers were using to receive food and visitors. When picketers rushed the entrance, a street brawl broke out. Half of Flint's police force descended on the protesters with clubs, tear gas, buckshot, and firebombs. The workers in the plant threw metal hinges, nuts, and bolts and blasted frigid water from the roof with a fire hose. They overturned four police cars to form a barricade. The fight dragged on for hours, eventually drawing thousands of onlookers. Genora Johnson, an organizer and the wife of a striker, appealed to the witnesses. Inspired by her words and the scene unfolding in front of them, hundreds of citizens marched into the middle of the fight and the police retreated.

New Deal Political Climate Crucial

The day after the confrontation, Michigan governor Frank Murphy, a staunch New Dealer and supporter of the autoworkers, sent in the National Guard, not, as GM demanded, to crush the strike, but to protect strikers from local police and hired guns.

Murphy's actions reflected the crucial changes in the political climate that accompanied the "New Deal order." In previous strikes like Homestead, Haymarket, and Pullman, state and federal troops had been deployed to crush strikes, shooting down scores of strikers. But as Murphy told a friend during the strike, "I'm not going down in history as 'Bloody Murphy.' If I sent those soldiers right in on the men there'd be no telling how many would be killed. It would be inconsistent with everything I have ever stood for in my whole political life."



Murphy, elected in the FDR landslide in November 1936, took office as Governor on January 1, 1937, just days after the Flint sit-down began. Murphy was under tremendous pressure from GM and its allies in the business community to send the National Guard in to evict the sit-downers, but he managed to delay until a contract agreement was finalized.

The Final Strategy

As the strike wore on, leaders decided that taking Chevrolet Plant No. 4 could end the strike, since most engines were built there. But No. 4 was too heavily guarded for workers to seize the plant directly, so leaders began circulating secret instructions that on Feb. 1 there would be a sit-down in Chevy No. 9.

UAW leaders went through an intricate, "secret" procedure to fool the company. A contingent of strikers rushed Chevy No. 9 as a decoy to draw all the company guards away from No. 4. GM completely fell for the trick, sending its entire armed force to No. 9. Meanwhile, strikers easily occupied Chevy No. 4. This choked off what little GM production remained.

With tens of thousands of workers in Flint surrounding the plants and refusing to surrender, with nearly 5,000 sit-downers prepared to "fight to the death," and with both Governor Murphy and President Roosevelt extremely reluctant to use troops to displace the strikers, on February 11, the 44th day of the sit-down, General Motors signed a 1-page, 6-month contract recognizing the UAW as the exclusive bargaining agent for all its plants throughout the nation. All union members were to be rehired and would suffer no discrimination. Union buttons, a real organizing tool at that time, were permitted to be worn inside the plants. The workers left the Fisher Body plant in a state of jubilation. It was the greatest victory of industrial unionism in the history of the country.

*Sources: Adapted by the University of Iowa Labor Center from an article by Walter Linder and from Striking Flint, by Genora (Johnson) Dollinger; UAW, "Flint Sit Down Strike," youtu.be/mZ7v1FQJTiQ; "UAW Presents . . . Sitdown," youtu.be/5GdDupP8m6g; "With Babies and Banners: Story of the Women's Emergency Brigade," youtu.be/pa75V-tdBko; Sidney Fine, "The General Motors Sit-Down Strike: A Re-examination," pp. 691-713, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (April 1965); *This Day in Labor History*, lawyersgunsmen.wpengine.com/2012/02/this-day-in-labor-history-february-11-1937; "The 1936 Strike That Brought America's Most Powerful Automaker to its Knees," www.history.com/news/flint-sit-down-strike-general-motors-uaw*

Labor and Civil Rights Activists Take on Jim Crow Racism in the South

The Civil Rights Movement led by Black communities across the south had won huge victories by the late 1960s to end racial discrimination and gain equal rights under the law. But Black workers still faced dangerous, low-paying jobs, and racist bosses.

On February 1st, 1968, two Memphis garbage collectors were crushed to death by a malfunctioning truck. Eleven days later, frustrated by the city's response to the latest event in a long pattern of neglect and abuse of its Black employees, 1,300 Black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike. Their strike became famous for the iconic "I Am A Man" signs they carried to demonstrate their demand to be treated with



dignity.

The Memphis Sanitation Workers had attempted a strike in 1966, but failed in large part because workers were unable to gain the support of Memphis' religious community or middle class. Conditions for workers worsened in 1968 under mayor Henry Loeb.

Memphis Black Community Mobilizes

The day after the February 11th strike, police used mace and tear gas against nonviolent demonstrators marching to City Hall. It was then that Memphis' Black community was galvanized. Their movement grew as students and local Black church members joined sanitation workers in a wave of marches and sit-ins, facing down police violence and tear gas.

Meeting in a church basement on February 24th, 150 local ministers formed the Community on the Move for Equality (COME), under the leadership of local minister James Lawson. COME committed to the use of nonviolent civil disobedience to fill Memphis' jails and bring attention to the plight of the sanitation workers.

By the beginning of March, local high school and college students, nearly a quarter of them white, were participating alongside garbage workers in daily marches.



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Joins the Fight

Dr. Martin Luther King arrived on March 18th to address a crowd of about 25,000—the largest indoor gathering the civil rights movement had ever seen.

Dr. King praised the group of labor and civil rights activists and members of the powerful Black church, saying, "You are demonstrating that we can stick together. You are demonstrating that we are all tied in

a single garment of destiny, and that if one Black person suffers, if one Black person is down, we are all down."

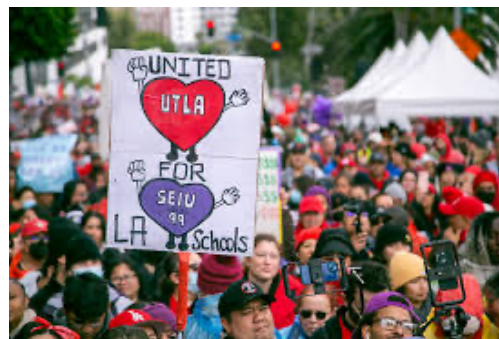
Tensions were high in Memphis as Dr. King delivered his famous “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to a meeting of sanitation workers. The following evening, Dr. King was shot and killed on the balcony of his motel.

Victory, At Last!

After Dr. King’s assassination, On April 8th an estimated 42,000 people, led by Coretta Scott King, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, and union leaders, silently marched through Memphis in honor of Dr. King, demanding that Loeb agree to the union’s demands.

Negotiators finally reached a deal on 16 April, allowing the City Council to recognize the union and guaranteeing a better wage.

Unions, Parents, and Students Unite for Racial and Economic Justice in Public Schools



Public education funding has been on the chopping block for decades. From small rural schools to big city schools, educators and students have faced the same message: there is no money. At the same time, the rise of unjust and racist disciplinary action has impacted mostly students of color.

In 2019, Los Angeles teachers, parents, and students decided they had enough. The educators' union, the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), went on strike elevating a wide range of demands, including smaller class sizes and more nurses and social workers. After listening to students about their top concerns, strikers highlighted the issue of random searches where students were yanked out of class to be frisked.

Students Not Suspects

The student-led group Students Deserve, which also includes parents and teachers, reported that students in magnet schools and advanced classes were rarely searched. Black students got searched most often.

UTLA teamed up with Students Deserve and the American Civil Liberties Union to launch the Students Not Suspects campaign. They organized forums and protested at school board meetings. High school students designed and handed out 18,000 #studentsnotsuspects buttons. Students and parents spoke up about why searches weren't making schools safe.

By the time they walked back into work, they had won a partial victory. Now these searches are coming to an end district wide—landing a blow against racism in the schools.

Fight Continues

Again in 2023, the district's two largest unions, together comprising 65,000 workers, would stop working and grind the education system to a halt.

The 30,000 teachers' assistants, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and other support staff who make up SEIU Local 99 had been working under an expired contract since 2020. Members were making an average of \$25,000 a year in one of the nation's most expensive cities. Many were juggling multiple jobs.



UTLA's proposals were a 20 percent wage increase over two years, class-size reductions in every grade at every school, and “common good” demands like a plan to use vacant properties held by the district to create affordable housing for students and their families.

Strikers got creative, traveling in delegations to busy intersections, even getting together with those from neighboring schools to plan banner drops. Media coverage highlighted the

abysmal pay of support staff, large funding surpluses, and the absurdly high pay of the superintendent, \$440,000 per year. Students, parents, and community members came bearing donuts and tamales; every neighborhood in Los Angeles was blanketed in UTLA red and SEIU purple.

Victory!

Workers, students, and families were able to claim victory four days later!

- SEIU Local 99 announced a tentative agreement that would bring members' average salary up to \$33,000, along with improvements to hours and benefits. The district also agreed to electrify more school buses and install solar panels, dedicate funds to supporting Black students, and filter the lead out of the water in school drinking fountains.
- Besides the raise and a reduction of two students in every class at every school over the next three years, the agreement increased staffing of counselors, psychologists, and social workers, and added more support for special education.
-



Task 2: Responding to Divisive Tactics

Together in the large group, we will discuss the following questions:

- 1. How do anti-democratic candidates try to divide groups to win votes?***

2. *How might union members and leaders intervene to lead to different outcomes?*

Conclusions

1. Workers have won big demands when they organized and build power with other workers.
2. Anti-democratic leaders have used different tactics to divide workers – who is acceptable and who is not acceptable - and move their own anti-worker, anti-democratic agenda.
3. Tactics have included using racism, sexism, xenophobia (the fear of foreigners), and homophobia and transphobia (the fear and oppression of different sexual orientation and gender identity).
4. We must make a choice to either fall for the dividing tactics and work against each other or to build power with each other and other communities.

Key Takeaway: Authoritarians create divisions in society, dividing people into “in groups” and “out groups” to keep us from organizing together.

Module 5: Democracy Powered by the People

Task 1: Framing the Moment

Stories have the power to help us make meaning of the world. They can make us feel, think differently, and encourage action. Over our lifetime, we absorb thousands of stories that teach us how to live and be in the world. These stories are imbued with powerful ideas and themes. This is a narrative.

Narrative defines what we imagine is possible and why, what we aspire to become and how, and whether we feel we have power with or over others—or none at all.

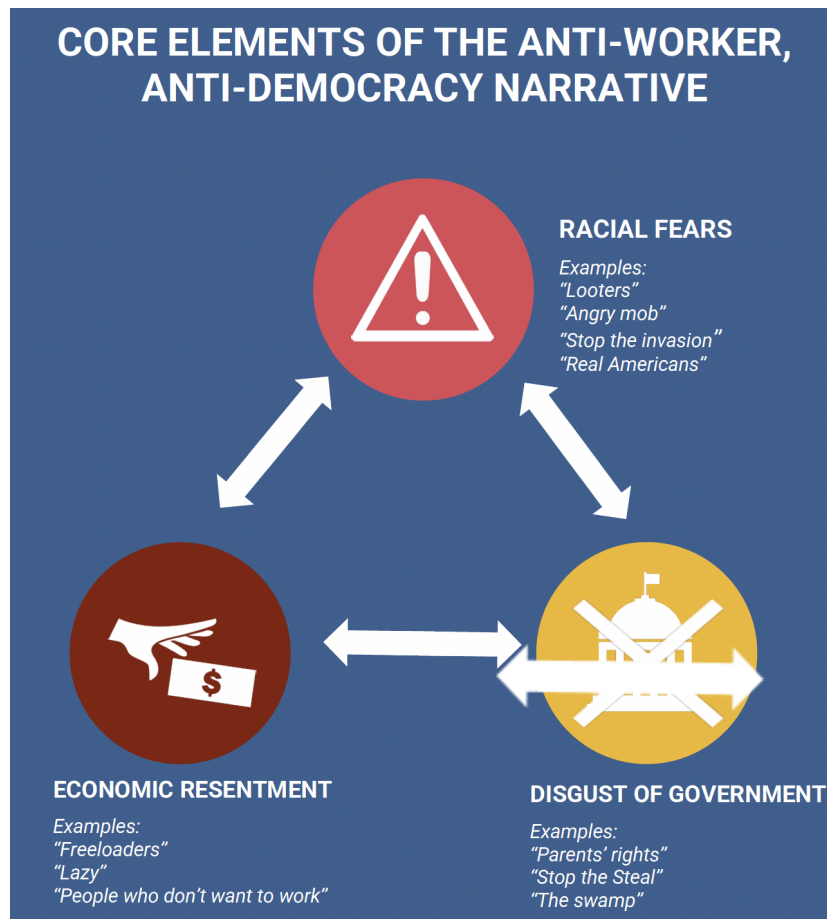
In your small groups, please review the information sheets that follow. Page 58 describes the core elements of an anti-worker, anti-democracy narrative. Page 59 offers the core elements of an alternative pro-worker, pro-democracy narrative.

After reviewing these pages, please brainstorm in your small groups some words and phrases for each element of a pro-worker, pro-democracy narrative in the chart on page 60.

Narratives Can Be Used to Divide Working-Class People

Anti-democratic movements try to create division and pit one group of people against another. They push economic resentment, racial fears, and disgust with government to advance their ideals and values.

For example, they use the economic insecurity that so many of us feel to create resentment by pushing blame onto people they claim are “lazy” or “freeloaders” or “don’t want to work.”









A Different Narrative Can Help Shape a Different Future

Many labor unions and social justice organizations have created a different narrative that inspires people to join the movement to expand democracy, fosters racial, gender and class solidarity, and builds confidence in our ability to hold the government accountable to all.

Here are the core elements of that narrative:



In the chart below, please brainstorm words and/or phrases we can use to develop a pro-worker, pro-democracy narrative. Please choose a different group member to take notes and report back to the larger group.

Elements of Anti-Worker/ Anti-Democracy Narrative	Their Words and Phrases	Elements of Pro-Worker/ Pro-Democracy Narrative	Your Words and Phrases
 ECONOMIC RESENTMENT	<i>"Freeloaders"</i> <i>"Lazy"</i> <i>"People don't want to work"</i>	 SHARED PROSPERITY & RACIAL JUSTICE	
 RACIAL FEARS	<i>"Looters"</i> <i>"Angry mob"</i> <i>"Real Americans"</i> <i>"Stop the invasion"</i>	 CROSS-RACIAL SOLIDARITY	
 DISGUST WITH GOVERNMENT	<i>"Parents' rights"</i> <i>"Stop the Steal"</i> <i>"The swamp"</i>	 GOVERNMENT FOR ALL	

Task 2: Sharing Our Narrative

We need ways to share our narrative that are powerful but concise. Think about the messages from social media influencers, memes, and the daily interviews we see on cable news channels.

Imagine that one member of your small group is going to be interviewed on a cable news show today. Using the best of the words and phrases the groups came up with in the previous task, prepare a short (2 minutes maximum) script for the interview.

Please choose one member of your group to deliver your message.

Cable host: Welcome to the show! Today we are talking about democracy in America. With us are leaders from the labor movement who are here to talk about labor's interest in promoting and expanding democracy and their fight to keep the country from falling into authoritarianism. Why don't you introduce yourself and tell us what your movement is all about?

Your group: Thank you. I'm _____, representing
_____. I'm here to talk about our movement to
protect and expand democracy. We believe that democracy should include:

Cable host: Well, good luck with your mission and thank you for joining us today.

Task 3a: Making it Mainstream through Pop Culture

Popular culture can reflect society's values and beliefs. Music, TV shows, movies, art, books, magazines and other forms of pop culture have a history of influencing and being influenced by political moments of the times.

In your small group, you will write song lyrics that promote a pro-democracy, pro-labor narrative or story that builds power with working class people of all races.

Step 1: Choose one song from the list below and choose one or more of the ideas that you included in your interview script.

Step 2: Listen to the song you chose. You'll find the lyrics and links to the songs on the following pages.

Step 3: Rewrite the lyrics to your song (at least the chorus and one verse).

Step 4: Pick one or more members of your group who will sing, rap, or share the new lyrics with the room. (No one will be required to perform.)

Choose a song:

- Cruel Summer by Taylor Swift
- I Wanna Dance with Somebody by Whitney Houston
- Never Gonna Give You Up by Rick Astley
- Texas Hold 'Em by Beyonce
- Three Little Birds by Bob Marley and The Wailers
- Watermelon Sugar by Harry Styles

Facilitators: Tell groups that they have 5 minutes to write their lyrics. You can add on more time as needed, but by giving them a time limit, you'll encourage them to jump in and start writing, which will spur their creativity.

Your group's chosen song: _____

Idea to inspire your new lyrics: _____

Group's singers/rappers: _____

Facilitators: Encourage groups to spread out, including moving to different rooms/hallways.

Make sure participants understand that there is no pressure to perform. Volunteers only!

Cruel Summer by Taylor Swift*(scan for original version of song)***Your Lyrics***(scan for karaoke version of song)*

Fever dream high in the quiet of the night
You know that I caught it
Bad, bad boy
Shiny toy with a price
You know that I bought it
Killing me slow, out the window
I'm always waiting for you to be waiting below
Devils roll the dice, angels roll their eyes
What doesn't kill me makes me want you more

CHORUS:


And it's new, the shape of your body
It's blue, the feeling I've got
And it's ooh, whoa, oh
It's a cruel summer
It's cool, that's what I tell 'em
No rules in breakable heaven
But ooh, whoa oh
It's a cruel summer
With you

Hang your head low
In the glow of the vending machine
I'm not dying
You say that we'll just screw it up in these
trying times
We're not trying
So cut the headlights, summer's a knife
I'm always waiting for you just to cut to the
bone
Devils roll the dice, angels roll their eyes
And if I bleed, you'll be the last to know

REPEAT CHORUS

I'm drunk in the back of the car
And I cried like a baby coming home from the
bar (oh)
Said, "I'm fine, " but it wasn't true
I don't wanna keep secrets just to keep you
And I snuck in through the garden gate
Every night that summer just to seal my fate
(oh)
And I screamed for whatever it's worth

<p>"I love you," ain't that the worst thing you ever heard? He looks up grinning like a devil</p> <p>REPEAT CHORUS</p> <p>I'm drunk in the back of the car And I cried like a baby coming home from the bar (oh) Said, "I'm fine, " but it wasn't true I don't wanna keep secrets just to keep you And I snuck in through the garden gate Every night that summer just to seal my fate (oh) And I screamed for whatever it's worth "I love you," ain't that the worst thing you ever heard?</p>	
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<p>Three Little Birds by Bob Marley and The Wailers</p> <p><i>(scan for original version of song)</i></p> 	<p>Your Lyrics</p> <p><i>(scan for karaoke version of song)</i></p>
<p>CHORUS:</p> <p>Don't worry about a thing 'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright Singing, "Don't worry about a thing 'Cause every little thing is gonna be alright!"</p> <p>Rise up this morning, smiled with the rising sun Three little birds pitch by my doorstep Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true Saying, This is my message to you-ou-ou</p> <p>REPEAT CHORUS</p> <p>Rise up this morning, smiled with the rising sun Three little birds pitch by my doorstep Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true Saying, "This is my message to you-ou-ou"</p>	

REPEAT CHORUS	
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Never Gonna Give You Up
by Rick Astley
(scan for original version of song)



Your Lyrics
(scan for karaoke version of song)

We're no strangers to love
You know the rules and so do I (do I)
A full commitment's what I'm thinking of
You wouldn't get this from any other guy
I just wanna tell you how I'm feeling
Gotta make you understand

CHORUS:


Never gonna give you up
Never gonna let you down
Never gonna run around and desert you
Never gonna make you cry
Never gonna say goodbye
Never gonna tell a lie and hurt you

We've known each other for so long
Your heart's been aching, but you're too shy to say it (say it)
Inside, we both know what's been going on (going on)
We know the game and we're gonna play it
And if you ask me how I'm feeling
Don't tell me you're too blind to see


REPEAT CHORUS 2 TIMES

We've known each other for so long
Your heart's been aching, but you're too shy to say it (to say it)
Inside, we both know what's been going on (going on)
We know the game and we're gonna play it
I just wanna tell you how I'm feeling
Gotta make you understand

REPEAT CHORUS 3 TIMES

<p>I Wanna Dance with Somebody by Whitney Houston <i>(scan for original version of song)</i></p> 	<p>Your Lyrics <i>(scan for karaoke version of song)</i></p>
<p>Aah Yeah Woo Hey yeah Haa Ooh yeah Ah-ha Yeah I wanna dance</p> <p>Clock strikes upon the hour And the sun begins to fade Still enough time to figure out How to chase my blues away I've done alright up 'till now It's the light of day that shows me how And when the night falls, loneliness calls</p> <p>CHORUS: Oh, I wanna dance with somebody I wanna feel the heat with somebody Yeah, I wanna dance with somebody With somebody who loves me Oh, I wanna dance with somebody I wanna feel the heat with somebody Yeah, I wanna dance with somebody With somebody who loves me</p> <p>I've been in love and lost my senses Spinning through the town Sooner or later, the fever ends And I wind up feeling down I need a man who'll take the chance On a love that burns hot enough to last So when the night falls My lonely heart calls</p> <p>REPEAT CHORUS</p> <p>Somebody who, somebody who Somebody who loves me yeah Somebody who, somebody who</p>	

<p>To hold me in his arms oh I need a man who'll take the chance On a love that burns hot enough to last So when the night falls My lonely heart calls</p> <p>REPEAT CHORUS</p> <p>Ooh ooh (dance) Come on baby (dance) Ooh, yeah (dance) Now get with this Whoa! Don'tcha wanna dance with me baby? Don'tcha wanna dance with me boy? Hey don'tcha wanna dance with me baby? With somebody who loves me? Don'tcha wanna dance, say you wanna dance, don'tcha wanna dance Don'tcha wanna dance, say you wanna dance, don'tcha wanna dance Don'tcha wanna dance, say you wanna dance, ah-ha With somebody who loves me Dance, dance, dance (hey baby!)</p>	
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<p>Texas Hold 'Em by Beyonce <i>(scan for original version of song)</i></p> 	<p>Your Lyrics <i>(scan for karaoke version of song)</i></p>
<p>CHORUS: This ain't Texas (woo), ain't no hold 'em (hey) So lay your cards down, down, down, down So park your Lexus (woo) and throw your keys up (hey) Stick around, 'round, 'round, 'round, 'round (stick around) And I'll be damned if I can't slow dance with you Come pour some sugar on me, honey too It's a real life boogie and a real life hoedown Don't be a bitch, come take it to the floor now, woo, huh (woo)</p>	

There's a tornado (there's a tornado) in my
city (in my city)
Hit the basement (hit the basement), that
shit ain't pretty (shit ain't pretty)
Rugged whiskey (rugged whiskey) 'cause we
survivin' ('cause we survivin')
Off red cup kisses, sweet redemption, passin'
time, yeah
Ooh, one step to the right
We headin' to the dive bar we always
thought was nice
Ooh, run me to the left
Then spin me in the middle, boy, I can't read
your mind

REPEAT CHORUS

Woo-hoo (3 times)

There's a heatwave (there's a heatwave)
coming at us (coming at us)
Too hot to think straight (too hot to think
straight)
Too cold to panic (cold to panic)
All of the problems just feel dramatic (just
feel dramatic)
And now we're runnin' to the first spot that
we find, yeah
Ooh, one step to the right
We headin' to the dive bar we always
thought was nice
Ooh, you run to the left
Just work me in the middle, boy, I can't read
your mind

REPEAT CHORUS

Come pour some liquor on me honey, too
It's a real life boogie and a real life hoedown
Don't be a-, come take it to the floor now,
ooh
Take it to the floor now, ooh
Hoops, spurs, boots
To the floor now, ooh
Tuck, back, oops (ooh, ooh, ooh)
Shoot
Come take it to the floor now, ooh
And I'll be damned if I cannot dance with
you
Baby, pour that sugar and liquor on me too
Furs, spurs, boots

Solargenic, photogenic, shoot	
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Watermelon Sugar by Harry Styles

(scan for original version of song)



Your Lyrics

(scan for karaoke version of song)

Tastes like strawberries
On a summer evenin'
And it sounds just like a song
I want more berries
And that summer feelin'
It's so wonderful and warm

CHORUS:

Breathe me in
Breathe me out
I don't know if I could ever go without
I'm just thinking out loud
I don't know if I could ever go without
Watermelon sugar high
Watermelon sugar high
Watermelon sugar high
Watermelon sugar high
Watermelon sugar

Strawberries
On a summer evenin'
Baby, you're the end of June
I want your belly
And that summer feelin'
Getting washed away in you

REPEAT CHORUS

I just wanna taste it
I just wanna taste it
Watermelon sugar high

Tastes like strawberries
On a summer evenin'
And it sounds just like a song
I want your belly
And that summer feelin'
I don't know if I could ever go without
Watermelon sugar high (8 times)

I just wanna taste it I just wanna taste it Watermelon sugar high I just wanna taste it I just wanna taste it Watermelon sugar high Watermelon sugar	
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Task 3b: Sharing our Narratives

Now, volunteers from each group will share their new lyrics. You can sing, rap, or simply read them to the large group. You can also ask for volunteers from other groups to help you out.

Facilitators: It's very important that this be volunteers only! Don't pressure anyone to perform. Groups can ask people from other groups to help them sing/rap if needed.

Task 4: Our Narratives Drive Change

Together in the large group, we will discuss the following questions:

- 1. What were common themes we heard from the different lyrics?*

- 2. How can sharing a new narrative help spark social change?*

Conclusions

1. In the world of social change, the narrative that we use can be an extremely powerful tool in shaping public opinion and influencing policy.
2. It's up to us to help create a powerful narrative about the kind of democratic society we need for all working people of all races.

Key Takeaway: To build a democracy powered by people, we need to share our vision of the future we want.

Module 6: Mobilizing Union Members as Democracy Defenders

Task 1: Our Union Plan

Union's Strategy:

[Add a short paragraph explaining the union's strategy.]

Union's Plan:

[Add a short paragraph explaining the union's plan.]

Task 2a: Identifying and Targeting

Now that we understand our goals and strategies, we need to figure out who to start having conversations with first when we try to mobilize members. In this task we will break down our work locations based on our knowledge and the “Target Strategy.”

Let’s review the rings in our target. It’s important to note that our goal is not to judge other members but only to assess how likely they are to get involved in this particular campaign.

Our “target” has at least three rings:

- Supporters: They support the union and are politically active. They are likely to support the “democracy defenders” campaign.
- Neutrals: They are union supporters but not active in the union, and not likely to be engaged in a campaign.
- Against: They are either against the union, and/or against the “democracy defenders” campaign.

In your small groups, please answer the following:

1. *Where do you fall on the target?* _____

2. *Thinking about your work location, which rings have the most members?* _____

3. *Identify one co-worker that falls into each ring (first names only):*

Supporter _____

Neutral _____

Against _____

Task 2b: Where Do We Start?

In the large group, we’ll discuss the following question:

From which ring would you begin the mobilization effort? Why?

Conclusions

1. Unions are engaging in fighting anti-democratic forces, but we need to make it a mass movement that builds real solidarity across working class folks of all colors.
2. We need a plan to take on these anti-democratic threats in our states and at the national level.
3. We need to be clear about who we are organizing and how we are talking to other people to build a democracy powered by working people.

Key Takeaway: Unions have to be at the forefront of battling against the forces that threaten democracy. The collective power of unionized workers is the heart of upholding and expanding democracy.

Democracy Defender Oath

Facilitators: Find a rousing way to end the workshop. One option is to ask participants to take an oath like the one below. Have all participants stand, raise their right hand, and then repeat after you.

I will faithfully, to the best of my ability, organize my co-workers to preserve, protect, and defend our democracy. I am proud to be a Democracy Defender for my union, the mighty

Facilitators: Remember to have participants fill out the post-training survey before they leave. Scan or photograph the surveys and send them to stephluce@gmail.com

Glossary

There are many terms used to describe different types of governments and there is not always clear agreement on the definitions.

Democracy itself has many definitions and forms. A simple definition is:

Democracy	A universally recognized ideal where human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed and respected, people's freely expressed will is exercised, all adults have equal rights, and people are free from discrimination.
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But there are many additional concepts used to describe democracy more fully, which include:

Checks and Balances	Mechanisms that distribute power throughout a political system to prevent any institution or individual from exercising total control. This principle is core to all modern democracies
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Constitution	The basic principles and laws of a nation, state, or social group that determine the powers and duties of the government and guarantee certain rights to the people in it.
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Constitutional Republic	A system where laws and policies are voted on and approved by members of Congress – representatives whom the people from each state directly elect. The U.S. is a constitutional republic.
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Direct Democracy	A system where the nation's citizens vote on every federal law, similar to the referenda that some states hold.
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Economic Democracy	A system where people share ownership and decision making over the power and resources in their communities. Rather than profit and pure self-interest, it is grounded in values of solidarity, cooperation, democracy, and sustainability.
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Terms to describe political systems where power is held by just one person (such as a king or dictator), or a small group of people, include:

Authoritarianism	Often defined as the concentration of power in a small group of people who act in ways that are not constitutionally accountable to the people they are meant to represent and serve.
Autocracy	A system of government by one person with absolute power.
Dictatorship	Form of government in which one person or a small group possesses absolute power without effective constitutional limitations.
Fascism	A political philosophy, movement, or regime that glorifies nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized government headed by a <u>dictatorial</u> leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.
Oligarchy	A small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution.

Resources

Handling Difficult Conversations

- The British Trades Union Congress created an on-line training for union members on how to talk to co-workers and others about difficult topics where you might disagree, such as immigration. The training can be done on your own time. It is free but you must register: www.tuc.org.uk/resource/handling-difficult-conversations

Video: Our Democracy is in Danger

- 7-minute video on the state of our democracy:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbQmoqj8kLw

Additional Readings

- “What Unions Are Doing to Protect American Democracy,” Steven Greenhouse, 2022, tcf.org/content/report/what-unions-are-doing-to-protect-american-democracy
- “Unions across the globe develop, defend democracy,” Tula Connell, Solidarity Center, 2022, www.solidaritycenter.org/unions-across-the-globe-develop-defend-democracy
- “File Under S for Solidarity: Union Members Defend Local Library,” Stephanie Luce, Convergence magazine, 2023, convergencemag.com/articles/file-under-s-for-solidarity-union-members-defend-local-library
- “We Build Democracy through Grassroots Organizing,” Interview with Molly Shack, Ohio Organizing Collaborative, Convergence magazine, 2023, convergencemag.com/articles/we-build-democracy-through-grassroots-organizing
- “Hard Truths and Good Signs for Labor’s Role in Defending Democracy,” Bob Master. Convergence, 2023, convergencemag.com/articles/hard-truths-and-good-signs-for-labors-role-in-defending-democracy