



## Rebuilding Trust in American Democracy & Institutions

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### American Democracy in Peril

Distrust in our most cherished institutions is the like a “termite invasion” eating the core of American democracy and our confidence in our values. (see [State of Trust in America](#))

- People don’t [trust our institutions](#).
- Our [youth are disillusioned](#).
- [Our nation is the most polarized since the Civil War](#).
- [Malevolent Authoritarian Forces](#) are seizing the upper hand.

*Without trust,  
everything defaults to  
politics & polarization*

**The collapse in trust in institutions portends the collapse of democracy itself.**

#### The Problem will Worsen

Left unchallenged, the problems of discord and polarization will get worse, not better. Why?

Fundamental changes in our culture have changed the America. Institutions, such as churches, schools, health care, and government -- which were trusted by the large majority of people two generations ago -- are now scorned by most citizens. Education, which once gave students a foundation in moral character development, has abandoned this role (see [Education on the Edge](#)).

These shifts make it extremely unlikely we will “bounce back” unless we take heed of our Founders.

#### Combining Wisdom with Breakthroughs in Trust – a Four Phase Strategy

The *Rushmore Strategy* offers *realistic solutions*, and *inspiring results*, embracing our [forbearers’ ideals and insights](#), combined with a bold, tested next generation [Architecture of Trust](#). It has four phases:

1. **Visibility – Making Trust a Central Organizing Principle for America.** Leaders, Media, Educators, and Government Officials must be adept at Trust Building. This needs Congress to lead the charge.
2. **Proliferation of Practice – Building Mindsets & Skillsets:** Empowering articulate leaders and educators to engaged in infusing America with [collaborative leadership excellence](#).
3. **Destination Purple - Civic Affairs:** Curing the polarization that’s paralyzing America by enabling politicians to transform polarity into paradox, then into innovative joint solutions.
4. **Trust in Institutions - Local Communities:** Rebuilding trust in institutions starts with committed local leadership of government, businesses, education, churches, police, and community organizations.

#### New Roles of Congress

Congress’ role in the future must protect democracy, advocate for an enlightened 21<sup>st</sup> century citizenry, and chart a *bi-partisan, proactive initiative* aimed at three critical leverage points:

- 1) **Politics:** Create a “*New Politics Beyond Problem Solving*” based on [Principles of Trust](#). This initiative requires adept civic leaders and political candidates who’ve mastered a new set of *competencies* – especially *trust-building*, [collaborative leadership](#), and *collaborative innovation*.
- 2) **Education:** Our education system has lost its capacity to *build moral character* – with disastrous results. The Rushmorian were deeply committed to develop citizens with a deep sense of American values. This initiative must be supported by federal policies, funding, and programs.
- 3) **Capitalism:** Socialism will never be the solution to economic inequality. In its stead, we have identified a realistic and promising 21<sup>st</sup> century *antidote*: “[Collaborative Capitalism](#).” It creates greater equity between investors and workers, and generates significant competitive advantage.

**We are Fast Running Out of Time, but it’s not too late to Turn the Tide – [Read Full Strategy](#)**