

What Can We Do? Suggestions

Often after I've given talks about my book, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, a member of the audience deeply concerned about this political moment in America asks me, "What can we do?" Here are some ideas in answer to that question. To begin with, gather friends and read Robert Reich's "the First 100 Days Resistance Agenda" (<http://robertreich.org/post/153401540180>) from which I've drawn below. The Secretary of Labor under President Clinton, Reich notes that President Trump planned, in his first 100 days, to eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency and counter the Dodd-Frank Act, giving huge tax cuts to large corporations. Trump has selected a cabinet which does not support the Voting Rights Act, public schools, paid sick leave, the minimum wage, or the reality of man's role in global warming. More concerning still, Trump has attacked the judiciary and described the entire mainstream media as an "enemy of the American people."

Below I suggest three pillars of activism -- defending democracy, reforming the Democratic platform and reaching out -- and I propose various courses of action which could advance these goals. Also see the web site of "Indivisible," (<https://www.indivisibleguide.com/web/>)

Pillar 1: Defend Democracy: President Trump has attacked the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *CNN*, *ABC*, *CBS* and *NBC* as an "enemy" with which he is at war. He has also ridiculed various "so-called judges," both Republican and Democratic, when they disagree with him. America has long been built on a Democratic system of checks and balances, and an independent press and judiciary are fundamental to it. This goal seems to me to come first; see suggestions 7 and 9 below.

Pillar 2: Reform the Democratic Party platform. The 2016 platform did not speak directly or fully to many very real concerns of the white middle and working class people I interviewed for *Strangers*. They did see in the 2016 Democratic Agenda or rhetoric a full recognition of their concerns, which include affordable training for available, secure, well-paid jobs.

Pillar 3: Reach Out to Trump supporters, with curiosity and respect, to explore possible common ground on particular issues, to inspire curiosity about alternate sources of "information," and to heal wounds. See suggestion 10 below.

Actions

1. *Get our senators and representatives to pledge to oppose Trump's agenda.* Ceaselessly call your senator and your representative and don't stop calling. (On how to do this, see www.IndivisibleGuide.com put out by progressive former congressional staffers. Also see www.callmycongress.com)
2. *March and demonstrate* in a peaceful manner. Keep the momentum alive and the message circulating
3. *Make your city and state sanctuaries* that won't cooperate with federal immigration authorities in deporting undocumented immigrants, especially those who've been here since they were very young, and advance a plan for amnesty.
4. *Boycott Trump products, real estate, hotels, resorts, everything.* And then boycott all stores (like Nordstrom) that carry merchandise from Trump family brands. And write the management of those stores to say you're doing this.
5. *Write letters to the editor of your newspaper and op-eds,* with a steady flow of arguments about the fallacies and dangers of Trump's First 100 Days policies and initiatives.
6. *Contribute to social media with up-to-date daily bulletins* on what Trump is up to, and actions in your region in opposition.
7. *Join and contribute to effective opposition groups* such as The American Civil Liberties Union, Common Cause, the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Economic Policy Institute, Inequality Media, MoveOn, and others.

Committee to Protect Journalists, <https://cpj.org/>

American Civil Liberties Union, <https://www.aclu.org/>

Common Cause, <http://www.commoncause.org/>

Planned Parenthood, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>

Natural Resources Defense Council, <https://www.nrdc.org/>

Center for Constitutional Rights <http://ccrjustice.org/>

8. *Make the resistance visible* with bumper stickers, lapel pins, wrist bands.

9. 1. *Each one, register one.* Approximately 100 million Americans who were eligible to vote in 2016 did not bother. Hillary got about 66 million, so if each one of who voted for her pledged to find someone among us (or elsewhere) who did not, and get them to register, it would make a difference.

10. *Run for state and local office – the School Board or local City Council, for example, or support others in doing so. Form or join small local groups of citizens.* Coordinate your local activity with a wider network of similar groups and across issues.

11. *Reach out to independents and Trump supporters with whom you are able to establish common ground.* Contact Joan Blades, (Joan.blades@gmail.com), the originator of *Livingroom Conversations*. This is a program which gathers people of good will from left and right to break bread and search for common ground on such issues as protection of the clean air and water acts, the minimum wage, prison reform, and protection of an independent judiciary and press. Another such group is *Hi From the Other Side*, (<https://www.hifromtheotherside.com/>)

Together, we can make a difference,

Arlie Hochschild