Elections & Election Integrity

Discussion Guide

Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all.   You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

*Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief.*

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Let's discuss

Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.

- In your opinion, what is the priority in maintaining fair, safe, and secure elections?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- Would you consider participating as a poll watcher? Why or why not?
- What is your opinion on requiring voter IDs?
- Should vote-by-mail options be expanded or reduced? If so, to what degree?
- What needs to be done, at the local, state, or national level, to protect against foreign interference in elections?

Let's act

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- Election fraud has [occurred in every state](#).

- There are [36 states](#) with laws that request or require voters to have some form of identification with them when they vote at their polling place.
- In [five states](#), ballots are automatically mailed to eligible voters.
- State and nonstate actors employed "[informational measures](#) to distort the media landscape during elections in 24 countries in 2019."
- Since 2014, [Russia has been linked to disinformation campaigns](#) in Hungary, Germany, Finland, Spain, the UK, and the U.S., particularly by groups associated with Russia spreading disinformation across social media platforms.
- One cybersecurity company found over 6,000 [local election officials](#) were using email systems with limited protections from phishing attacks, and over 660 were using their personal email addresses for election-related business.

Engage Locally

- *Learn more*
  - **Research your elected representatives' positions** on election integrity and their vision for how to tackle election challenges facing Americans and your community.
    - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in elections.
    - You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
  - **Explore the impact of elections in your community.**
    - Search on your state or municipality's website for your *Election Division* or *Division of Elections*, usually under the Secretary of State or Department of State. You can also contact your [State or Local Election Office](#) and see how your [state and local election officials](#) are chosen.
    - Search for laws in your state regarding [voting requirements](#), and educate yourself on the [candidates and issues that will be on your ballot](#).
    - Investigate what your state's [election security policies](#) are, and steps to become a [poll worker](#) or [poll watcher](#).
- *Reach out*
  - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
  - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
  - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
  - It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Post a Recap/Dive Deeper
- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- Decide your next meeting topic. Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? This brief is part of the Five for Active Citizenship Conversation Series. Other briefs in these series include:
  - U.S. Senate
  - U.S. House of Representatives
  - Civic Engagement
- Dive Deeper into this area. If this is an area you would like to pursue further consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for developing a message about your issue and organizing a petition to amplify your voice and raise awareness.