

Speaker 1 ([00:00:01](#)):

All right guys. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your patience. We're so happy to have you. Third panel of the day. Um, welcome to polyus. I'm be Ross social media producer for Voices of San Diego. We are a nonprofit investigated news organization, nonprofit, meaning we need support from people. You guys are already partaking in that, which is great. Um, but there are other ways to support us regardless. We appreciate you being here and we're excited to get into this topic today. Um, I'd like to take a minute to recognize our sponsors who helped to make this event possible. A special thanks to the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Diego for being our partner for seven years now, are thanks to the Qua Band of the Kumeyaay Nation, the United Domestic Workers Union, A a RP, the San Diego Foundation Business for Good TKI Development, the San Diego Municipal Employees Association, the Asian Business Association, planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest Atlantis Group, and the Southern California Rental Housing Association.

Speaker 1 ([00:01:04](#)):

We'd also like to rep, recognize KPPS and I News Source our partners in Public Matters. Public Matters is a collaborative that we will be embarking on through the election season and beyond. We're gonna be doing a lot of content together, sharing content to hopefully get more election information in the hands of voters and empower you all to engage in the democratic process. So that's gonna be really cool, something to look forward to. And this is very much a part of that today 'cause KPS has done a lot of coverage on incivility in public meetings. Um, and with that, I'm going to hand this off to Will Berry.

Speaker 2 ([00:01:43](#)):

Surprise. Whoa, <laugh>. That's all right. We know a little about incivility politics as well. Voice San Diego said, um, Jake was supposed to do this. Um, I'm doing this, um, but I'm a reporter. All I do is ask questions. I think I can handle it, but I am gonna let y'all introduce yourselves, if you wouldn't mind, um, since I was not exactly prepared to do that. So, Carl, can you start us off? Sure.

Speaker 3 ([00:02:13](#)):

Carl Luna, is that working? Here we go. Uh, my name is Carl Luna. I'm a professor emeritus at Political Science San Diego MEA College. I'm a visiting professor here at USD, excuse me. And I'm also the director of the Institute for Civil Civic Engagement at USD San Diego Community College District Partnership. And we've been working on trying to build civility for about 15 years. And you can see we've done a bang up job. <laugh>.

Speaker 2 ([00:02:39](#)):

Thank you.

Speaker 4 ([00:02:42](#)):

We agree to share mice 'cause we will have colts. Hi, I am La Richmond. I am the Board Vice President for Alliance San Diego. I'm an EV program manager, operations manager at uc, San Diego, and I'm the executive director and founder of greeners Inc. A nonprofit five one C3 that's devoted to engineering the future through storytelling. And I guess I should add, I'm an Afrofuturist, so that's the lens through Rich. I view everything.

Speaker 5 ([00:03:18](#)):

Hi, I am. Can everyone hear me? Yeah. Okay, great. I'm Tara Lawson Reemer, vice Chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. I am, uh, by training an economist and an attorney. And for those

who don't know, I was, uh, previously in a former life, uh, university educator, um, a reform professor. So, uh, great to be here and I'm excited to talk about this topic.

Speaker 6 ([00:03:42](#)):

Hi everyone. I'm David Loy. I'm legal director of the First Amendment Coalition, which is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to defending freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the people's right to know.

Speaker 2 ([00:03:59](#)):

Okay. Um, thank y'all for joining us. Um, I was hoping we could, um, start with you Supervisor Lawson Reer. Um, so, you know, since uh, meetings went online, the nature of public meetings has changed a lot, as I'm sure everybody in this room has witnessed. Um, you know, what we hear at those meetings gets pretty, um, intense and wild sometimes, and I think nowhere more so than the county maybe. So can you like, set the stage for us a little and talk about what the meetings have been like at the Board of Supervisors in the past few years and some of the most intense experiences you

Speaker 5 ([00:04:38](#)):

Remember? Sure. Uh, I'd first like to better understand the baseline knowledge of the folks in the room. How many people have watched at least one, uh, county supervisor meeting in the last three and a half years? Okay. How many have watched Maybe five. Okay. How many have gone in person? How many have gone in person multiple times? How many? Yeah. Thank you. Paul <laugh>. How many people would like to go in person multiple times?

Speaker 5 ([00:05:09](#)):

So I think to me, this is really the jumping off point. I mean, from my my point of view, the whole purpose of having, uh, public meetings that are, uh, brown act meetings that are on the record, that are open, where people can come, they can watch deliberations happening, they can hold their elected officials accountable for the choices they make, the decisions they make, um, but they also have an opportunity to make their positions and their voice seen and heard. Um, I think the fundamental core purpose of these meetings is to ensure that all of our constituents have the right to participate, um, and have the ability to participate in a constructive manner, um, and be part of the public dialogue, be part of this, uh, collective process of, of decision making. Um, you know, I think for me that's, that's kind of the jumping off point in general.

Speaker 5 ([00:05:58](#)):

Uh, just, uh, just the first principle, and I think what's been going on at our public meetings over the last couple years is really a collapsing of the public space. Um, a collapsing of the ability of the vast majority of the public to participate, to feel comfortable in participating, feel comfortable showing up, uh, willing to even listen or call in, um, because of, uh, kind of an, an atmosphere of, of like real aggression and hostility and toxicity that's, um, often directed towards, um, at other people in the room. Other testifiers, other commenters, um, certainly county staff. Uh, there's certainly been a very strong uptick in racist comments, anti-Semitic comments, uh, things that are just, um, frankly, uh, obscene and, um, not relevant to the, the matter at hand, not actually, uh, topically relevant, um, to, to the items that are being discussed that are sort of ad ho attacks on, you know, one thing to have an an attack on me, I, I am an elected a representative, you know, maybe not pleasant, but that's kind of just the job, but very different when these are being directed towards other members of the public, um, and, um, county staff.

Speaker 5 ([00:07:18](#)):

So I think, I think I, you all who have witnessed it, I, I think know what I'm talking about, but this is what I think is really been going on, is, um, a, a creation of an environment that's mostly about personal attacks or often about personal attacks is like very toxic and, and I think has made it very difficult to have substantive, um, conversations about the subject matters that are very important to our community, that we are there to deliberate. Um, right. And I think just to wrap it up, I, I don't know that I necessarily trace it to online versus offline whatnot. I really, I think that you can see this increase in toxicity and, um, sort of like personally driven attacks that aren't really about the issues really. When Donald Trump ran for office since 2016, I feel like, although I should defer to Carl on the date, all those kinds of questions, but from my anecdotal experience, I would say that that is, that is what I'm seeing. And, um, yeah.

Speaker 2 ([00:08:24](#)):

Thank you. So I'm gonna go to Lawana next, um, who has run for school board as well. She's, she's also been, um, close to these public meetings. You know, when you heard some of these racist attacks in public meetings by people. How, how do, what do you feel like the answer potentially should be, you know, when we have this hateful speech occurring, but we also need, people need to be able to address their governing bodies. How do you see that?

Speaker 4 ([00:08:59](#)):

So, you know, we kind of get to the, the crux of why I ran for school board. Um, because a lot of it is, um, we've moved away from the standards that we used to have of just basic decency. And in terms of the answer to it, a lot of it is, um, moving into an era of accountability where we get into that tricky space with, you know, the, um, free speech and at the same time, you know, how do you, you know, winnow out, justifiable, um, indignation from attacks and sometimes the two get complained, right? And I say that because you have people who are, many of them are coming to these meetings because, um, you know, they're dealing with food insecurity, housing insecurity, um, they're dealing with real issues that affect their day-to-day lives. And so they're, um, naturally gonna be emotional and then that's conflated by people who are there, um, because they have concerns that are less, um, basic and more, um, I guess personal and more politic, more social in terms of demographic breakdowns and who you are or who not in terms of putting people in boxes.

Speaker 4 ([00:10:14](#)):

Right? I think a big answer, I mean, you know, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the human dignity campaign. We started over a year ago with Alliance San Diego, where we've come to a place where we understand that a lot of what we are seeing is, um, you know, the pendulum swings, right? And so you have people who feel when you, um, start talking about, especially the DDEI issues, um, that they're being left out. Because often when we start talking about diversity, equity, inclusion, we're breaking our focus we're shifting our focus into a specific demographic group at the moment and their specific concerns. And everyone who doesn't fit in that box, you know, has whatever feelings they feel. Whereas when you make the conversation about human dignity and treating everyone with respect, I know it sounds a little all lives matter, but it's not, trust me, <laugh>, it's really about, you know, returning to this place where we do have a baseline of civility, a baseline level of recognizing the humanity in each person that we come across.

Speaker 2 ([00:11:24](#)):

It almost sounds like you're saying like a, a cultural change though. Oh, potentially is what's necessary rather than limiting the discussion through rules somehow at public meetings.

Speaker 4 ([00:11:35](#)):

Absolutely. Um, culture is going to eat strategy for lunch. So creating rules, no, anytime you create a rule, um, anyone who wants to break that rule is going to find a way to break the rule, right? Whereas when you change a culture, um, when you do it in an effective way, it becomes a, um, a self, um, reinforcing thing, right? Um, as opposed to, um, saying you can't do this or you can't do that. Um, you focus on this is what we do, this is how we treat people. Uh, and then we start to have members of the community holding each other accountable, kind of like a, oh no, we don't do that here. Right? You know? Um, feel like the commercial where you've seen like the person leave their wallet and their watch and everything on the hood of their car because the crime, there's no crime in their area. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> and coming back and it's still there. Um, because, and there they created a culture where if somebody's belongings or someplace you don't touch different lines. I mean, maybe because you might get your hand cut.

Speaker 2 ([00:12:33](#)):

<laugh>. Um, Carl, let's go to you. Um, was what do you feel like is at stake here when we're having this discussion about those rise of incivility in public meetings and how we deal with it?

Speaker 3 ([00:12:46](#)):

Well, well, I think our whole process of government is at stake, but I'm

Speaker 2 ([00:12:51](#)):

Whoa. Okay. Just nothing big <laugh>

Speaker 3 ([00:12:54](#)):

Democracy or ability to function to get basic policy done. But I'll go even a step farther than wan because I think she's right. It's a cultural issue. And no matter rule changing under the current format's gonna fix that, I've progressively become more and more disenchanted with the entire way we do this process in this, the 21st century. Okay, we've got a public meeting process. What does that mean? It means whoever wants to show up and talk, and a county, what, what are we, 3 million in the county? 2 million in the city. You're gonna have louder voices, coordinated voices trying to influence things. The vast majority of San Agans are never gonna make it down to 2 0 2 C street. And thank goodness, if you've been in that council chamber, it's not a thing you want to have to experience to make it down to the board of supervisors.

Speaker 3 ([00:13:38](#)):

They've got lives to live. The people who show up are typically either people who are part of the system, people who are average citizens trying to have their voice heard, but they get drowned out now, increasingly by the people making all the noise, uh, there is a deliberate effort to disrupt public meetings for political purposes. Uh, the, the, uh, supervisor, uh, the laws reamer, I think you participated in our research that we had done. We, we sent out to all the different elected officials, we being the, the Crop School of Peace Studies, uh, our institute that did a big survey about how are these threats and all affecting you, the disruptions you're feeling. And, uh, you had mentioned it's kind of like part of the job. It was always kind of there, but it was really around the, the pandemic. It just exploded. People found out that they could use public meetings to advance either political agenda or to advance their own social media careers.

Speaker 3 ([00:14:32](#)):

You've got people going place to place just to look big on their social media feeds, and it crowds everybody else out. It's having an impact. A majority of people we've surveyed said they wonder why they went into public life and wouldn't recommend going into public life. And it's disproportionately two

to one woman are saying, I may leave public life 'cause they're being, being hoed out. The process we have, based on like the 19th, 18th century, we'll all come to the town hall and discuss things out. It's archaic. I just came out of the Digital Democracy Center session from Cal Matters. There are far better technologies out there to capture public opinion and public interest that would include all members of our community and not just the people who are making the most noise. We really need to re-envision what we're doing. The Brown Act exists for a reason, insiders who are making decisions. Uh, but the way we now have it where everybody believes they have a right to say whatever they want, they're crowding out everybody else from the public space. It's a privilege to use public time. You want to write a letter to somebody, go right ahead. But to stand up on the things that our elected officials have to endure and the public has to endure, we need to draw a line. And the current system cannot be fixed to accommodate people who are willfully wanting to be disruptive.

Speaker 2 ([00:15:49](#)):

So, uh, let me get to David real quick. If y'all, if y'all don't mind. Um, I, I want to hear about the solutions that, that you envisioned. Definitely Carl, um, that that's super enticing point you brought up. Um, but, uh, David with the, um, first Amendment Coalition, um, let's get a, a little First Amendment take here. Carl's saying we really need to draw a line that there's like real issues here. Um, do we need to, to draw a line in, in that way? Or, you know, do we need to be protecting this speech?

Speaker 6 ([00:16:20](#)):

Well, lemme step back for a moment and I'll, I'll just say personally, obviously I would prefer a world where everyone is always reasonable, thoughtful, and respectful about everything all the time. That's my personal, you know, utopia. Um, unfortunately our, we do not live in Utopia yet. Um, I also would like to step back, and I, well, I certainly don't doubt the very solid research that's been done, um, that there is certainly an uptick in aggression and incivility. Um, in recent years. I'd like to step back for a minute, take a bit of an historical perspective and reflect that at the same time, the Federalist papers were being published and debated at the highest levels. There were, you know, scores of not hundreds of anonymous pamphlets circulating, accusing Washington jumps and Adams of, you know, fathering, you know, children out of wedlock. And it was down in Derby,

Speaker 2 ([00:17:14](#)):

I'm sorry, it was down in Derby.

Speaker 6 ([00:17:15](#)):

It was been down in Derby since the founding of the Republic. You know, we had Joseph McCarthy Raney on the Senate floor. We had Spiro Agnew chattering about the nattering map, bobs of negativity. So this is not new in our politics. Um, the other point I'd like to make is, without doubting the lived experience that people have to sit through these meetings, oftentimes one person's incivility is another person's speaking truth to power. And norms of civility have been deployed to discredit and silence voices of resistance and dissent, voices of resistance and dissent to slavery, uh, to, uh, disenfranchisement of women, to oppression of people across the board and by historical norms. Yes, it's offensive what occurs in certain public meetings, but we do not have, at least last I heard anything remotely resembling Preston Brooks, uh, beating Charles Sumner to within an inch of his life on the Senate floor in 1856 after Charles Sumner delivered a virulent anti-slavery speech.

Speaker 6 ([00:18:23](#)):

So yes, we have historical problems. Now, with that all in mind, I would like to preface my thoughts with a few principles. One, there is of course, no such thing as a system without costs. A system that prioritizes freedom of speech carries cost, but also there's also no such thing as power given it does not eventually

power abused. And if you don't want your political enemy to have the power to censor speech, then be careful about giving it to your political friends. I'm always immensely wary of the unintended consequences of any regime of censorship that allows the silencing of speech based upon its viewpoint, however repugnant that viewpoint may seem. Because unless there's someone smarter than me who's figured this out, I don't know any way to, uh, allow the speech that I prefer without tolerating the speech that I hate. Now, there are limits that can be enforced there.

Speaker 6 ([00:19:28](#)):

The Brown Act and the First Amendment recognizes particularly in the context of public governing board meetings, brown act meetings, time limits can be enforced. People can be required to stay on topic if they go off topic. They can be cautioned, admonished, and necessary removed. If they speak over other people, if they fail to observe the, uh, viewpoint neutral rules of the form that are baked into the Brown Act, you know, they can be cautioned and warned and removed. If they genuinely disrupt a meeting, what they cannot be is silenced because people just don't like what they have to say. And that may be offensive and hateful. But again, what was offensive and hateful at one time is now the accepted dogma. Once upon a time, it was hate speech, so to speak, to call for the abolition of slavery. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>. And it was silenced. There was a rule against debating slavery in the Florida House of Representatives, the floors in con walls of Congress. So we very careful about the unintended consequences of any rule that says we can shut down people because we don't like what they have to say.

Speaker 2 ([00:20:35](#)):

Right, right. But thank you for that, that perspective. Okay, so this is a tricky panel to moderate. I see everybody scribbling nubs furiously, and there's four people. So I'm just gonna try to aggressively let everybody get their time. So I'm gonna come back to you, supervisor Lawson Reamer. Um, I know there's been some discussion at the Board of Supervisors about maybe limiting Zoom comments. I think that was an option that got pulled or something at one point. Um, where are, you know, where are you at with the limiting public comments that you know in, in any way that you think might be necessary?

Speaker 5 ([00:21:10](#)):

I, I actually don't, uh, think that there is any, um, any tension, um, at all or any, uh, how do I say this? Uh, any contradiction between, uh, protecting the broad right of everyone to participate in a meeting and protecting the right of specific individuals to participate in a meeting. I think that those things are quite a, quite, um, congruent. And so what I mean by that is, I think it is, I think to David Lloyd's point, it is absolutely vital, um, to be content neutral and viewpoint neutral in any kind of rules that we would put in place for how a meeting is conducted. Um, people have every right to show up and say things that other people might think are hateful. Um, that is an important right to protect, uh, but everybody has that the right to participate, um, and make their voice heard.

Speaker 5 ([00:22:03](#)):

And so our job, I think at the county is to create and enforce rules that are protect all of those rights equally. And that's what we've really been looking at. Um, we've asked county council to take a really careful look at what could we do to better protect everyone's rights, uh, to participate in these public meetings. So what does that mean in practice? Um, I think in practice it means when someone is disruptive in a meeting and genuinely disruptive, like they have been told, uh, that their time is over limit and they continue talking and talking and talking, and then the sheriff, uh, has to remove them, that you should not then, uh, just be able to walk back in the meeting and do it again. Right? That, that is a disruption of everyone else's right to participate. Um, so, uh, if you're removed from a meeting, you don't just come, you have to come back into the meeting or, uh, these, uh, kinds of rules around if you have lots of speakers to have time limits.

Speaker 5 ([00:22:59](#)):

So everyone has the opportunity to participate and to make their voice heard. Um, you know, rules around requiring that people actually speak to the topic and are their comments are relevant, um, and that they're not off topic. Because there is a time during the public meetings, uh, there that's called non agenda, public comment, where you can come say whatever the heck you want. And that is the purpose, right? Is to say, come and make your voice heard on issues that are not on the agenda. But when you're speaking to a specific agenda item that's really important, uh, that impacts our community and, uh, everyone has a viewpoint and is trying to share it. And we as supervisors are really trying to listen and understand what people are saying that it's, it's really important that those comments are about that, um, that agenda item. And if it's not on topic, then those comments should be in the appropriate time, which is during public comment. Um, that's the non agenda public comment. So what we are now looking at is, um, kind of how to better create those kinds of rules that we already have in place. Um, but I think we all think could be a little cleaner and a little clearer, um, in terms of making sure that everyone knows the rules of the road and that those are applied in a way that's even fair to everyone in a meeting.

Speaker 2 ([00:24:17](#)):

Thank you. Well, let's just keep coming right on down the table. One, I saw you scribbling away. What, tell us what you're thinking.

Speaker 4 ([00:24:26](#)):

So I'm thinking about like the difference between roles and cultural shift and like, what are some of the things that are in place already that are being properly utilized? Um, for example, a lot of times when people go to these public meetings and they're at the point of granting, um, there are many commission meetings and other meetings before whatever decision that's about to be made could have been adjudicated that they didn't attend or participate in. Um, so how do we increase opportunity and awareness of how to actually engage in a way that makes a difference? I mean, because showing up to a meeting and being a spectacle after a vote has already been made. It's, yeah, it's great for the media I guess, but in terms of effectively impacting policy, um, there are other approaches. Um, I look at, um, you know, when I talk about cultural shift, I look, think about the people I know are responsible for like recruiting people to serve on commissions and boards and how they struggle to, one, get people to sign up, two, get people to attend.

Speaker 4 ([00:25:30](#)):

If like, just some of the people that like to, um, fill the halls on the day of like a supervisor or city council meeting is like just some small percentage of those people would commit to like regular engagement. Perhaps they can influence things in a different way. Although I'll also, um, acknowledge, you know, having participated in some of these activities myself, uh, that the recommendations of these committees are not always right honored. And that's one of the reasons you get the blow back. And so when you think about a social contract, I think part of it is, you know, if you charge people with doing the work to identify a task towards a solution to a problem that you, you know, give some regard to their effort when considering, um, having that approach and respond.

Speaker 2 ([00:26:22](#)):

Okay. Um, Carl, we'll come to you and, uh, feel free to respond, but I don't know if now's a good time to tell us about what you think that new democracy should look like. I'm very curious about, you know, how, how you envision things in a way that they could be revolutionarily different than the way meeting and public input works now.

Speaker 3 ([00:26:44](#)):

Alright, let's reinvent public life in five minutes. <laugh>.

Speaker 2 ([00:26:48](#)):

Yes.

Speaker 3 ([00:26:49](#)):

We'll see if we can get there. Um, I remember when Billy Joel was doing one of his last tours. He did an interview and he said, you know, there I am in a stadium full of people and I'm banging away at piano man. And everybody's going nuts. And I'm actually thinking when I get back to the room, do they have like a corn beef on rye door <laugh>? And, and that's my fear for a lot of public meetings is you, you sit up there as the, the representatives who are elected and you've gotta listen to hours and hours of this. No human being can pay attention that long. And I, I begin to wonder just does it have an impact really on what people can do? Or is it just a box? We check to say that we have done public input and well-intentioned or otherwise? My nightmare is these public comments actually do have an impact. And you have a small number of people who can fit in the room. And because they're in there, they can sway public policy for millions of people in the county. The purpose of public discussion and input is to help to shape good public policy. It's not just

Speaker 2 ([00:27:49](#)):

Like the Thomas Paynes though. They're like the Thomas Paynes coming in writing their pamphlet at the microphone allowed to have an influence. Yep.

Speaker 3 ([00:27:56](#)):

But you could have let them write their pamphlet and then have other ways to capture that. I mean, we have an opportunity. I said, how would, how would I do it? I don't even, my first job out got the graduate school was actually computer sciences working on AI 40 years ago. And I've kind of lost it. I don't know where the science is now, but there are ways you can collect a group opinion and be able to have a much better read of what the public we're trying to serve wants for public sessions. I always tell my students that, uh, I don't care what your opinion is, I care what your informed opinion is. You know, you don't have an, you haven't put the time in to become informed. Your opinion just doesn't up the weight of the people who have really tried to become

Speaker 2 ([00:28:39](#)):

Informed. But is that not, I mean, you know, not to put my foot on the scale here, but is that not a little dangerous that people would have to be informed to be allowed to have an opinion?

Speaker 3 ([00:28:47](#)):

No, no. You can have an opinion, but how you get to say it becomes this issue that you're gonna take public time for anybody to say whatever they want. I don't know if that's efficient. Here's what I would do. You have people like the National Conflict Resolution Center leading women voters. You're gonna come to a public meeting and speak. You should invest a half hour of time to go through kind of a moderated discussion just to learn something about the issue just so that you are now and then find other people in the audience who have the same view. And now you can have groups of people who are bringing their opinion forward rather than an individual just wanting to sound off. That's if you keep the public format that it's currently done. I'm not convinced in the 21st century, that's the best way to really understand what the public wants and not either vested interests, people with power that are trying to advance it or cranks are trying to advance it, crowding out average citizens who really just want to have a voice heard.

Speaker 2 ([00:29:40](#)):

Would polls be involved in this method potentially then? And I and I, and I don't mean polls in a bad way. I think polls are actually great for public opinion.

Speaker 3 ([00:29:48](#)):

I was just saying that to my daughter when I was listening to the ai, the, the thing next door. Really good informed polling is such a good science now for getting ideas. It would provide a better picture. You've got 30, you've got all you people out here who might have an opinion on are the pottery gonna make it to the World Series. You get some focus group, you get some, uh, polling in. And the wisdom of crowds is really valuable to making policy, the wisdom of individuals. It's either gonna be the cranks or the powerful who get a disproportionate say

Speaker 2 ([00:30:20](#)):

My last question to Carl. Um, and, and I think, you know, clearly the, the incivility has become rotten, but then when you talk about people having to sit down for an informative thing before they can weigh in, I'm sorry, the only example I can come up with is a poll test. But is that not a little bit like a poll test, like forcing somebody to do something to participate?

Speaker 3 ([00:30:45](#)):

We're already doing that. Chief, if you want to participate, you've gotta have the time to drive down to 202 C Street, find parking, go up to the city council chamber and be able to speak. You have to be able to go out to the county board of supervisors. We notice congressmen don't do this at the federal level. We don't have anything like this. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative>, uh, I don't think that's good. I think we should have more public feedback at the federal level. But the public discourse, and then you get into the Zoom, you have the problem on Zoom AI bots, there's a revolution going on on that. I've been hearing, do you know the person this size a real person? We got out to figure out a way to catch up to the technology. 'cause as Lawa was pointing out, the culture shifted until you shifted back. Our basic approach to discussing things isn't working. And as Mr. Wood is pointing out, yes, it's not as bad as when a Civil War senator pre-Civil wars beating the king. That's when we were on the brink of a civil war. We don't want dialogue to degenerate to that because once it does, then we end up with bigger problems than we currently have.

Speaker 2 ([00:31:44](#)):

Thank you Carl. David, let's, uh, give you a chance to respond.

Speaker 6 ([00:31:47](#)):

So I am all for increasing opportunities for public participation, civic debate, you know, adding onto the framework of, you know, open public meetings of the Brown Act. And if there are new and innovative ways to solicit public input beyond that, you know, I'll be your first cheerleader. Politics has always been won by those who show up. And yes, it is an inconvenience to show up for governing board meetings, but it is also a time honored tactic of community organizers to show up and pack the room. That is politics in action, that is collective action. That is community organizing. You show up in the packed room with tenants who are protesting substandard housing conditions. You show up and you pack the room with LGBTQ plus people who are demanding protection from oppression and harassment. You show up and you pack the room with African Americans and other people of color protesting racial injustice and inequity. And it is uncomfortable. It is messy by design. And free speech is the oxygen of civil society and dissent. And yes, that carries costs. There are risks, there are the cranks, there are the people who will show up and try to hijack the meeting. But if you start shutting down the oxygen supply, be careful what

Speaker 2 (00:33:17):

You wish for. Go ahead. You wanna jump in Supervisor <inaudible>?

Speaker 5 (00:33:25):

Yeah, I mean, I

Speaker 2 (00:33:27):

Would you, I guess I'll ask your a question too. Yeah, please. Um, you know, the, I feel like we have Carl saying there should be some kind of revolutionary changes and David's saying like, no, this is the fundamental thing about America that we can, uh, you know, come and try to sway things. Do you, do you think that that's something you've gotta navigate as a public official? Or are you trying to navigate between those two polls?

Speaker 5 (00:33:55):

Um, yeah, so I'll just say a couple thoughts. Um, you know, I think my, my first political commitment, um, was, was, has always been to the First Amendment. Uh, you know, I got involved in, uh, basically in, in public life as a plaintiff, uh, in an A CLU lawsuit suing the city of San Diego for a youth curfew ordinance that required, um, me to be home, uh, by 10:00 PM even if I might have had a soccer game or a water polo game, or wasn't doing anything at all. Uh, we said that this was over broad, um, and lent itself to be abused, uh, through racial profiling. And we won that case in the ninth circuit. So, uh, that's, that was, uh, I was 16, uh, when I called the A CLU and said, we gotta sue, uh, because this is, this is violating my rights <laugh>.

Speaker 5 (00:34:49):

So I think just a little context of sort of how I come at this and where I come from. Um, on the other hand, I did not only maybe a kind of in in continuity, I did, um, do a lot of First Amendment law in law school. It was there as i, I spent the most time working on and was very, I'm very interested and focused on, um, what are the fundamental rationales behind, uh, first Amendment protections. And some of it, um, is certainly to defend the right of the speaker, but some of it's also to defend the right of the listener. We know that there's always, um, appropriate time placed in manner restrictions that are, um, absolutely essential to protect the public interest. You can't shout fire in a crowded theater. Um, you can't lie about the contents of, uh, the ingredients on, um, thing on items that you're selling that's not, it's not lying to consumers is not, um, protected First Amendment speech.

Speaker 5 (00:35:50):

So while, uh, while there's the rights of the speaker, there's also the rights of the listener. And so I really approach, um, the, the, the situation I find myself in now, um, with attention to both, you know, what is the right, what are the rights of the speakers? What are the rights of the listeners? And what are the rights of all the speakers? And how do we ensure that the rights of the speakers and the rights of the listeners and all the rights of all the speakers are equally protected. I, I, um, so I just wanted to kind of, uh, frame my comments in this regard. I, I, I appreciate, uh, Carl's suggestion that we could be more creative in, um, gathering public opinion. I love that. I agree that the board meetings are woefully insufficient. I think that's right. Um, I actually did do a poll of my constituents, um, when I was elected to say, Hey, what's everyone's top priorities?

Speaker 5 (00:36:42):

And said, you know, I'm a political economist by training. I thought that would be a very methodologically sound way of getting a more statistically accurate understanding of the, uh, priorities of

folks in my district. So you already have a con on that one. Um, but, you know, so yes, more, more focus groups, more, um, more polling, more opportunities to engage on the front end. One of the things that we always ask staff to do before they come to us with any recommendation is to engage in a stakeholder process and to engage in those stakeholder meetings and to go out and talk to the community and have more in-depth grounded conversations. And that's something I look very carefully at. When an item comes before me, what do these stakeholder groups say? Right? Not just in the board meeting, but before it got to the board meeting.

Speaker 5 ([00:37:31](#)):

When, uh, we asked staff to go meet with all the impacted community members. That's really, really important. And we have to have a board meeting where it's a brown Act board meeting, and people have the right to come express their view sometimes because they were overlooked and sometimes because they said what they had to say and nobody listened. And now it's in front of us for a vote. And sometimes because they just have a different opinion on all sorts of reasons. Uh, why we have, um, board meetings where you have to have public opinion. I don't think it's either or. I think it's both. And I think more polling, more focus groups, more stakeholder engagement on the front end allows us to be more informed as public decision makers. And, um, there have been multiple times where, uh, folks have turned out for meetings and I knew the way my colleagues were likely to vote.

Speaker 5 ([00:38:21](#)):

Um, you never know for certain, but you, you get a pretty good sense of who the folks are that you're working with day and gout, you know what they're probably gonna do. And you watch their faces change, um, in the, in light of the public testimony. Um, and, and the vote changes. And I think that's really powerful, right? That's really powerful. That is the kind of public participation I wanna see. I wanna see exactly what David is talking about. Uh, impacted folks packing the room with people who have real opinions about something that's really meaningful to their lives, that is incredibly important, incredibly constructive. And that, I think my, my orientation towards this sort of challenge that we've seen with our board meetings is we need to create and preserve that space for those real discussions to happen about the things that are really meaningful and really impactful in people's lives.

Speaker 5 ([00:39:12](#)):

And one of the things I keep hearing all the time, especially from a lot of, frankly, women in my district who say, we will not come to those board meetings, we are uncomfortable, we are scared, we feel like it's toxic. We don't wanna participate. So we need to make sure that everyone can have a voice. And that means making sure that people are able to attend meetings, um, and then they're not afraid. So when I talk about, I'd love to know more about culture shift. I'd love you to come down and organize some culture shift, be great at board meeting, very invited to come organize culture shift. Uh, but from, I don't really think I have a lot of power over culture shift, but I do think I have, uh, some power over how our meetings are run. And so that's, that's what I've really been looking at is how do we look at, uh, sort of more effectively, um, making sure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak, that people aren't speaking for so long that some people leave the meeting because the item has, has gone on forever.

Speaker 5 ([00:40:13](#)):

That we have, you know, time limits that are reasonable, that everyone gets a chance to participate. Um, that we ensure, as I said, that talk, that comments are relevant to the topic. And if they're not relevant, then they need to be a non agenda, public comment. Um, if people are, uh, you know, doing a civil disobedience action in the middle of the board meeting, um, and they're removed by the sheriff, then they can't just walk back into the board meeting and do it again. And this is coming from a person who has a history of civil disobedience actions. Uh, I think part of the power of a civil disobedient action is, um, the

conscious assumption of the consequences. Right? I, you know, I think anyone who's read a lot of Mark Luther King knows, you know, I I was very influenced when I was younger about, by a letter from a Birmingham jail and really thinking deeply about the purpose and the time and the meaning and the impact of civil disobedience in, um, challenging, unjust systems of power.

Speaker 5 ([00:41:12](#)):

And you, we, we know that the reason that that sit-in on the bridge in Selma changed the course of civil rights history in America was because they broke the law, that they suffered the consequences, and America saw that the law was wrong. The, the visual and visceral experience of America watching an unjust law in action is what caused that law to change. And so, I don't want us to, uh, I don't want anyone to, to think that, um, requiring someone to leave a board meeting is somehow not, um, acknowledging the power of civil disobedience. If, if in fact it's the opposite. If something is worth getting arrested for because it's wrong, it's worth getting arrested for because it's wrong. Right. Um, so I'll, I'll stop with about Martin Luther King. I don't know if that was the topic at hand.

Speaker 2 ([00:42:08](#)):

You were feeling it, we were feeling it. Um, so Ana, you, I've seen you have a lot of thoughts since you have been talking, so I wanna let you get in there before I ask another question.

Speaker 4 ([00:42:17](#)):

Okay. Yeah. Because my notes start to get stale, <laugh>. So, um, first of all, in terms of vision, um, you know, I'm gonna double down I culture shift. And I think that it's not an individual responsibility, it's a collective responsibility. And when you look at effective cultural change, you actually engage with those stakeholders in agreeing on what is and is not the direction they want to move in. Um, the other part in terms of how to source information, um, I think probably was right when we started talking about touching on ai, the fact that, um, we can crowdsource everything and the wisdom of the crowd has been proven to be correct time and time again over individuals. Um, unless you just happen to randomly select the individual with the right answer, <laugh>. Um, and now with, um, voice to text and the ability to collect data in so many different ways, um, I think that we're able to capture and, um, process more data, um, in order to be informed, in terms of public opinion. 'cause sometimes when you look at polls and other things, it all depends on who has access to people. Um, you know. Yeah. And I'm definitely not in favor of people having to test in order to be civically engaged because yes, immediately the thing that came to mind was the, um, poll tax. And, um, we have to always remember that quite often the person who believes something that's very different from what's accepted as conventional wisdom sometimes ends up being the person who is right. Mm-Hmm. <affirmative> because like, the earth is not flat.

Speaker 2 ([00:43:47](#)):

Well, it sounds like there's a lot of agreement on this panel, actually, <laugh>. Um, and I think, you know, to, to this point, you know, I guess let's talk about the moment we're in and how much society's changed. Because I, we're all talking about a lot of people coming in, showing up, wanting to influence something and how that's good. But you know, in a way it was also where I began to notice the real rise in meetings getting wild was like during Covid. And there were a lot of people who all felt, um, the government was taking too much control of their lives and vaccine was trying to kill them. And, and you know, things like that were disinformation, right? And so you had a massive group of people showing up try to influence something, but they were being influenced by disinformation. Um, and that is a problem that breaks my brain a little bit. So if one of y'all could help put my brain back together, that'd be great. I mean,

Speaker 4 ([00:44:52](#)):

A big part of that, you know, really we have to go back to education, um, and discernment. We are in an age where it becomes increasingly more important to be able to understand how the difference between primary data, secondary data, and I guess anecdotal what you're saying, and what I mean by that is asking

Speaker 2 ([00:45:08](#)):

A lot from the citizenry Luana.

Speaker 4 ([00:45:10](#)):

Well, I mean, yes. And the reality is in this age of deep takes and the proliferation of, you know, anyone can be a publisher or a broadcaster or a news reporter, not so anybody can go live on Instagram and say, here I am with a live report of blah, blah, blah. Right? Absolutely. And so we've got to look at how do we infuse more critical thinking and discernment earlier, um, in this age where we've been teaching, um, people to be lock stock, like all the standardized testing, all of the, um, the pressure on rote memorization. I know we went into, um, common core and try to change things a little bit <laugh>. But, um, even then, you know, there it is still a struggle. And so if we, as we become a more sophisticated society, if we don't also, um, educate people, um, to be able to deal with all those different nuances, we're going to have, um, a preponderance of people whose judgment is not up to the task.

Speaker 4 ([00:46:17](#)):

Um, 'cause there are some people who think, you know, I've had people say, oh, this person has a business card, they must be legit, or It's on the internet, it must be true. Or, you know, whatever litmus test that we all know is, um, false, um, is what they set their sights on. You know, there are some people that a person says, I'm Dr. So and so, whether they know or not, you know, like, where did they go to school? Did they actually do a dissertation? Is an honorary doctorate, or did they just decide to adopt the name doc because it was, um, you know, so yeah, I mean, you know, and yes, it's asking a lot, but we are in a time where, um, you know, we have, we've had politicians say, I love the uninformed analysis because they're easy to take advantage of, right? I filled in the quiet part. They didn't say out loud, <laugh>. So yeah, that's like, to me at the core is, um, getting back to critical thinking in discern

Speaker 2 ([00:47:11](#)):

Carl, what do you think is at the root of the incivility that, that seems, you know, you referenced the Civil War and how we don't want to be at that point again, but, you know, I think we've all felt tension building in society. What, what do you think is at the root of it and um, you know, do you think we can defray it with democracy

Speaker 3 ([00:47:36](#)):

And how to explain the problems in American society in two minutes? <laugh>,

Speaker 2 ([00:47:40](#)):

Sorry. It's a good

Speaker 3 ([00:47:41](#)):

Question. It is. What the professor, I, I'm, I'm, I'm a reform professor. Um, the problem is in a nutshell, the world is changing faster than our institutions are adjusting to, and people are feeling insecure. I mean, I think back, um, with our elected offices, we have, uh, the, the, the superintendent supervisor, Lawson Reer is part of five members of the board of supervisor for a city of, or a county of like 3 million people, 3.3, 3.3. Shasta County with a population on Think 16 has five boards of supervisor members. Wow. This is a system which has not really kept up with the time. Why five, why not 20, why not 30? Why not 115?

You tried to run a corporation this way and said we're gonna have five. How do you feel about that Terry's

Speaker 2 ([00:48:30](#)):

50 50 board of providers, <laugh>? I mean, you think, uh, government moves slow down <laugh>,

Speaker 3 ([00:48:37](#)):

That's the constant response. But that's like saying that an er, we have a problem, we got five surgeons and we're being overwhelmed with patients. Let's go down to four. We have the technologies to make this work, but, and no business would run the way we really do government. And I feel sorry for the people that are on the board of supervisors in that there's five people trying to deal with a fire hose of information and a process that doesn't allow it. I think of my students, I feel bad for them. When I had to write a paper, a term paper, 40 some odd years, 50 years ago, I'd go to UCSD Central stats, find five books and write a paper. There is limitless information out there and people can't parse through it. Yeah. That's where disinformation gets its ability, because people at the end of the day, like stuff that makes them feel good, yet that reconfirms what they basically already believe. And as a result, people weaponize that as Mr. Lawyers' point out, yes, you cannot yell fire in a garage theater. You also shouldn't be able to yell, there is no fire in a theater that's on fire. We haven't figured out how to deal with that side of things effectively. And until we do, people can use that to bad intent, which is really to disrupt our entire system.

Speaker 2 ([00:49:46](#)):

Right? But then, you know, I, how much does bias come into this? You know, can you educate people beyond their bias when they don't want to see a fire is hard to tell them there's a fire

Speaker 3 ([00:49:57](#)):

Just to jump on that quickly. That's not the job of the average person. That's the job of the people we elect. That's the job of people who are in government. They're supposed to be there because they can try to sort through that. I always tell my students, you can call and, uh, an art bark an avocado, but if you try to make guacamole out of it, it's not gonna taste at

Speaker 2 ([00:50:15](#)):

The end of the day,

Speaker 3 ([00:50:16](#)):

Facts have a terrible tendency to win out. And if you don't make base public policy on facts, societies don't function well. And then you get even more animosity plus

Speaker 6 ([00:50:27](#)):

Bridges fall down. So certainly, I don't think anyone can defend the merits of purposeful disinformation as a policy matter, but this is a problem as old as speech, as old as politics, as old as democracy. Yes, we have new technological challenges. Yes, falsehoods can be disseminated far more quickly and efficiently through social media and the platforms that we have. But lying in politics, lying in society is as old as the republic. This is why we have a First Amendment. The First Amendment presumes that is the business of the people in civil society to sort this out. It is never the business, the government be legislating what is true and what is false. I'm not hearing anyone here's advocating that to be clear. So I'm not critiquing anyone on this panel. I wanna be a hundred percent clear. We, the government should never become the ministry of truth or we're living in 1984.

Speaker 2 ([00:51:23](#)):

You don't think the speed of information, though, has changed enough to fundamentally change the situation a bit. Go ahead. See if you wanna

Speaker 5 ([00:51:30](#)):

Go. Yeah, I mean, okay, now we get to talk about root causes. So I get to sort of take off my supervisor hat of what would I do in the board meeting and kind of step back, do

Speaker 6 ([00:51:39](#)):

The professor thing.

Speaker 5 ([00:51:40](#)):

Um, you know, you look at, um, one of the biggest like kind of shakeups that happened in modernity, and it was the rise of the print printing press when Gutenberg invented the printing press. And that, you know, led to the collapse of power of, uh, the Pope, the rise of nation states, like a completely different world configuration that we're still living in, um, that you really can trace to technological shift in, in communication that led to the ability to mass produce information instead of transcribing, um, by hand a, a document. Um, when we saw even more recently, um, elections that were shifted in a fundamental way when there was the first, uh, really widely watched Televis presidential debate and you had, um, Kennedy Nixon and, and people thought, oh, that young guy, he looks presidential <laugh>. Um, so I do think that we have to center the role that, uh, the internet and social media is playing in how people are making sense of the world, how people are consuming and understanding information.

Speaker 5 ([00:52:54](#)):

And we all know that, that, that there's a huge, uh, splintering of our information markets, right? Uh, people are reading and consuming and watching information that, um, doesn't necessarily give them a different point of view, but just reconfirms their existing point of view. Um, and it makes it really hard to have that, uh, marketplace of ideas that the first on which the first Amendment is premised. You know, the first amendment's premised on the notion that lots of people are gonna say lots of things and many of 'em get wrong. And the ones that are false, someone else will tell everybody it's false and the smart people are gonna figure it out. Um, and unfortunately in our, when we have the situation we have currently with our, um, with the way that social media and the internet works, we have a problem. We have an information problem.

Speaker 5 ([00:53:44](#)):

Um, I do think that this is far bigger, it goes far, kind of far deeper than, you know, how you run a board meeting, right? This is how we consume and exchange information in the digital age, uh, and what do we do about that? I mean, I agree, uh, with the premise that David put out. We don't want to be, have the, have the government in the business of saying, uh, what is true and not true. But on the other hand, um, you can't just spread falsehoods or, uh, even worse, right? Like there's been a lot of other terrible things that aren't just lies about politics, but are much even, even even fundamentally worse than that. Um, and I think it is helpful to think about what would be the appropriate liability, um, that should be placed on platforms. You know, ultimately the way that our social media, um, companies profit is by the virality of, of how information is shared.

Speaker 5 ([00:54:45](#)):

And the more bananas it is, the more it's shared. So if we said that you can't, um, get, you can't tie advertising revenue to the virality of, of content, that itself would reduce incentives, um, from social

media platforms to allow stuff that's blatantly false for which they could be held, potentially be held legally liable, even though it was increasing profits. If you, if you disentangled the profit incentive from the sharing of, of intentionally false information, if you looked at, um, standards, uh, that pa that newspapers, um, have to adhere to if you're publishing and if, if our social media platforms potentially had similar standards. So again, um, I think it is important to say that yes, there's something about culture here. It's certainly not just about a board meeting, it's really about how information is created, shared and disseminated. And I think we as a society have not caught up to say, well, okay, this is, this is an incredible tool. It's an extraordinary tool to share information, but how do we ensure that, um, it doesn't allow, um, it doesn't, it doesn't create an environment where, uh, truth spreads faster than fiction where there's no accountability for, you know, deliberate deception. So those are my non-accounting related thoughts. Thank you very much.

Speaker 6 ([00:56:09](#)):

One small foot note that

Speaker 5 ([00:56:10](#)):

Don't let you get in there. Law, I assume

Speaker 6 ([00:56:12](#)):

Ready too. Yeah. Obviously a debate on whether to reform section two 30 is way beyond the scope of this panel. Uh, I think Electronic Frontier Foundation might have some interesting things to say about that. But let's leave that to one side. And you know, for those who are nostalgic for the days when there was sort of a, a elite gatekeeping function of information by mainstream media and opinion leaders, you know, it's easy to be nostalgic for those days, but let's not forget it was the elite gatekeepers who cheer led us into the Vietnam War. It was elite gatekeepers who cheer led us into the Iraq War.

Speaker 2 ([00:56:48](#)):

Feel like you're blaming the media a little bit now, David <laugh>

Speaker 6 ([00:56:52](#)):

Not only the

Speaker 2 ([00:56:53](#)):

Media,

Speaker 6 ([00:56:54](#)):

Many co-conspirators in these, but

Speaker 2 ([00:56:56](#)):

We're independent non-profit. This actually, my hands are clean.

Speaker 6 ([00:57:00](#)):

All I'm saying is my point is, before you start being nostalgic for a golden age that wasn't, be careful what you wish for,

Speaker 2 ([00:57:08](#)):

Uh, Lawana, would you like to jump in? Uh, repeat the question? Um, we went through the printing press and then the gate came. Yes, the gatekeepers are So, you know, David was just saying that that information has traditionally been gate kept, and that has been a problem, you know, has led to many inequalities and many wars. Now we find ourself with no gates on the information whatsoever, it seems like, and we have to enter this next phase together, uh, in some form of civility. Um, so does anyone want to try to say how they think we do that?

Speaker 4 (00:57:49):

Okay, so I think there was a question. There's somewhere maybe I'm gonna pretend like that one

Speaker 2 (00:57:54):

<laugh>.

Speaker 4 (00:57:56):

Um, so there are a few things that came up. I think, you know, one thing that came up a lot is the echo chambers that we all find ourselves in, where everybody goes, where they're going hear the things that echo what they believe. You know, I think it's called confirmation bias. Um, and, you know, I, I hate to like be a dead horse, but education is at the core and education at all levels. I think sometimes people get to the point where they're like, you know, I finished school. I don't need to learn anything else. I know everything I need to know. Society continues to move forward, and the people that don't continue to learn, um, don't necessarily keep up. Um, at that same time, you know, I don't think we should like lock down anything. I do think that yes, there is a space, um, and there's a value in civil disobedience.

Speaker 4 (00:58:41):

I think that the problem is like, how do you to find civil, right? Because we've become desensitized and sized to the degree where we've normalized, um, a degree of incivility that wouldn't normally be acceptable. And yes, there obviously there have been ebbs and blows. We are at the point now where there's gotta be a call for a change. And yes, we can make more rules and yes, we can limit time and I'm all for those things. And, and we are ripe for cultural shift. Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>, um, the, the fact that we are at this space, and I know I've seen the impact of cultural shifts on organizations large and small, and they can transfer. And there are, there are areas, there are neighborhoods where people still act like they're people and, you know, know who their neighbors are and all those good things. So I know it sounds old fashioned, but I'm saying we can use tech at the same time.

Speaker 4 (00:59:38):

I mean, yeah, they're, you know, if we lose sight of our humanity as we continue to move forward, what are we doing it for? And a lot of, a lot of the incivility is directly related to our humanity. And I look at this like through an Afrofuturist lens. If we want to have a society in the future where we can all thrive together, we're gonna have to get to a point where we can all live together. And how do we do that? We don't do that by, um, in continuing to inflame and throw bonds at each other. We learn how to have civil conversations because it's never been a, a matter of I to you to agree with me. Um, it's how do you disagree, agree with it.

Speaker 2 (01:00:22):

Thank you for that. La So we're almost out of time, but before we finish, I want to, um, hand the microphone over to an Aaron Price fellow. Um, maybe you've heard of the Aaron Price Fellowship. I have a script about it, but it's not in front of me. Um, they, there's about 30 fellows a year chosen out of 3000 people who are high school students in the county. They get a lot of amazing leadership

opportunities. A lot of them have gone on to do really great and amazing things in the community. And, um, yeah. So we have one here who's gonna ask a question. Will you introduce yourself?

Speaker 7 ([01:00:58](#)):

Uh, hi everyone. I'm Matthew. I'm a current high school student at San Diego High School. I'm a senior and, uh, I'm also a proud Aaron Price fellow. My question for the panelists is that education culture shift that you talked about, all of that takes resources. Resources, especially in schooling, taking away from things like teaching kids how to read and do math and do science. How have we reached a point that the civic incivility has gotten so bad that elected leaders need to dedicate time and resources from other priorities to improve civility and reduce disinformation, and importantly, should tax payers be willing to take on that burden?

Speaker 4 ([01:01:34](#)):

Okay, so, I mean, I've been beating the horse about cultural shifts, so I guess I'll, I'll start by saying, can we afford not to? Um, because the thing that you didn't factor into your question is the time and resources associated with what we're currently experiencing. And, you know, what is it a, a, a, a ounce of cure? I mean, ounce of prevention will do much more than a pound of cure. So the other part of that is to assume that cultural shifts are not already integrated into what's happening. Much of what we learn about how to treat each other, we learn in kindergarten as we're learning to read based on the material that we're given to use as, as we learn those lessons. So I don't think it's an

Speaker 6 ([01:02:18](#)):

Either or thing. It can always be an <inaudible>

Speaker 8 ([01:02:23](#)):

Carl.

Speaker 3 ([01:02:25](#)):

Yeah, that, that's well said. And by the way, the answer is hell yes. Yeah. That's something you have to prioritize. It occurs to me is we've had this whole discussion about civility. We haven't really declined it. David pointed out that too often in our history, civility has been used to silence people. I mean, it was the gentile South, the basis of civility that used its ability to hide the absolute horrors of slavery. Just to take that off the table discussion for our institute, we stole the definition of civility from Malin Berman who said it's community before self and without getting into the Greco Roman roots, that's what civility is about. It's about building civilization. It's that which brings us together the so speaking truth to power about things that divide us and exclude, uh, that is being civil. That civil disobedience is based on trying to advance that idea of community. We have lost that in our schools, which are so busy trying to do everything else that we've lost the community aspect. We are not just teaching students to be workers, we're teaching them to be vibrant parts of our community. And we really have fallen down on the job on that. And that requires, again, one more major thing that we have to re-envision for the 21st century or become atomized everybody living in their own little world and we don't work toward the common good

Speaker 8 ([01:03:45](#)):

To add <laugh>,

Speaker 6 ([01:03:46](#)):

I would only say if we're teaching children to read and write as we should, I think part of teaching literacy in the 21st century is teaching literacy in electronic media. Not only how do you read a book, how do you

read social media? What critical thinking skills should you bring? And it's not different in principle from the same critical thinking. It's been the foundation of a solid liberal arts education from the beginning of the academy. But applying those lessons to digital media the 21st century.

Speaker 2 ([01:04:19](#)):

Um, well that is basically all our time. I want to thank you all so much, uh, for that interesting and broad discussion.

Speaker 8 ([01:04:29](#)):

Uh,

Speaker 2 ([01:04:35](#)):

Anything else housekeeping wise or,

Speaker 1 ([01:04:46](#)):

Okay, I think the next panels start in about 20 minutes. If you guys want to hang around for my panel, which is in here immediately after this, we'll be talking about the affordability crisis. Um, but yeah, thank you all for coming.