The Road to Freedom

I. Introduction: Keystone of Democracy

On Main Street, the People are ready. Partisan politics is broken, and Americans have had enough. From chaos campaigns to dark money to the ceaseless media circus, a storm of shocks has beset our nation—a spiral of multi-decade dysfunction. The root of the problem, the core of the crisis, is clear: a system that's corrupt, tribal, and doesn't represent everyday people. As a result, passions and pathologies run rampant, and politics has become a blood sport.

The founders of the United States understood that America is an enduring project. We must constantly improve, update, and reimagine our republic. But in recent decades we've stopped—it's been half a century since we've made major democratic innovations. In the meantime, bosses, bankers, and techno broligarchs have captured the system and bent it to serve their interests. Our American Dream, built by generations, stands on the brink. The country is in a five-alarm fire. In just a year and a half—July 4th, 2026—the United States will reach its 250th anniversary. Will that date mark our demise? Or do we here highly resolve that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom?

At Assemble America, we believe hope lies not in a person or party or platform, but in one keystone change: Democracy by Assembly.

Around the world, this proven tradition of democracy is being born anew, in the form of the Citizens' Assembly. Citizens' Assemblies are a powerful process for healing our nation and restoring faith in government by the People. Drawing on America's most democratic tradition—the jury—Citizens' Assemblies use lotteries to bring together everyday people from all walks of life to solve problems. Once convened, delegates are given the time, tools, and information to talk with each other and find solutions based on common ground—and common sense.

Yet while hundreds of Citizens' Assemblies have been held over the past twenty years, only a handful have convened in the United States. And the current pace for more is way too slow. Few Americans know about Democracy by Assembly, and fewer still have seen it. **Given the rise in partisan rancor, corruption, and unrest, we must establish Democracy by Assembly as a new paradigm of self-government—before it's too late.**

How? There are many paths, yet they all depend on one thing: the People. If we can galvanize a grassroots movement for Citizens' Assemblies, a multitude of ambassadors, we can shift Democracy by Assembly to the center of our national consciousness. And if a critical mass of Americans comes together and unites behind this keystone change, **we can establish permanent Citizens' Assemblies in government and give real power to the People.**

There are many pro-democracy organizations in America doing inspiring work and making gains. From bridge builders like Braver Angels to reformers like RepresentUs, they've harnessed energy and renewed hope. **Yet no organization exists dedicated exclusively to building a grassroots movement for Democracy by Assembly.** And while Citizens' Assemblies are attracting increased attention within the democracy ecosystem, the field lacks a group with the mission to establish permanent, empowered Citizens' Assemblies. Enter Assemble America.

We have a plan for achieving the promise of Democracy by Assembly in our time. It follows the Cascades theory of change, a successful strategy from activists the world over. This theory—laid out by analyst Greg Satell and proven in places as divergent as Serbia and Egypt—encompasses six elements:

1. **Identify a keystone change.**
2. **Win over a spectrum of allies and pillars of support.**
3. **Make a plan.**
4. **Imbue a genome of values.**
5. **Create platforms for participation, mobilization, and connection.**
6. **Sustain the movement beyond initial victories.**

These steps aren't a mystery to Americans. Such strategies have catalyzed the greatest social changes in our country's history, from antislavery to women's suffrage to civil rights. We aim to breathe new life into this proud heritage. By following these strategies, we will generate a network that can produce emergent sparks and ignite a cascade of change. The rest of this document addresses how we will incorporate these principles into our mission, identity, and way of proceeding.

Mission

The mission of Assemble America is to make democracy real by putting power in the hands of Citizens Assemblies—government truly of, by, and for the People.

Vision

Democracy by Assembly is a historic form of government reborn for our time. Through this proven practice, everyday people from all walks of life are chosen by lottery to address shared problems. Once convened, they form a Citizens' Assembly, a group that truly represents us. These are people who look, think, and talk like everyday Americans: nurses, teachers, factory workers, and more. Together, they're given the tools, time, and information to dive into issues and come up with solutions—based on common ground and common sense. Unlike career politicians, these delegates engage in respectful

conversations, where all speak and everyone listens. With trained facilitators on hand to encourage cooperation, they build bridges and come to robust agreement on the path forward. This is *actual* government by the people—and it works.

Democracy by Assembly is the key to restoring our American Dream. Scholars today have discovered that the efflorescence of ancient Athens was caused by its unique form of government—a system built entirely on everyday citizens, chosen by democratic lottery. Such a decentralized regime—with its fair rules, equal access, and low transaction costs—allowed them to share knowledge, specialize skills, and cooperate toward innovative solutions. This joint action in turn generated the social and financial capital to produce an economic, cultural, and technological boom. The Athenian legacy proves that when we ask great things of everyday people, they rise to the challenge—they believe in themselves and realize their utmost potential. Through the power of Citizens' Assemblies, we can harness our national abundance and spawn a Golden Age in America.

At Assemble America, our ultimate goal is clear: government of the People, by the People, for the People, through the establishment of Democracy by Assembly. We seek to grow the popular demand for permanent, empowered Citizens' Assemblies in our governing structures. Looking beyond politics, this movement will bring Democracy by Assembly into all aspects of society, from the economy to education to culture. **In all of this work and more, we will be animated by our singular vision: Democracy in America, through the use of Citizens' Assemblies.**

Values

1. Liberty

Picture yourself seated at democracy's table, not watching from the sidelines. In DxA, you and your neighbors hold real power in your hands—deliberating, deciding, shaping the future together. When everyday Americans like teachers, veterans, and small business owners make the big decisions, that's what liberty looks like.

2. Equality

Finally—a level playing field that's more than just talk. In DxA, the nurse's voice carries the same weight as the boss's, and the factory worker's experience matters as much as the professor's. This is what real fairness looks like: Americans from every walk of life coming together as true equals to tackle our toughest challenges.

3. Dignity

Some say democracy is all about fighting and winning. We say it's about neighbors looking out for neighbors. When parents, teachers, caregivers, and community leaders come together in DxA, they bring heart and soul to decisions that affect real lives.

4. Solidarity

There's magic in what happens when Americans put aside their differences and work together. In DxA, veterans and activists, farmers and city folks, conservatives and progressives find common ground and common cause. This is how we rebuild trust in each other and remember what it means to be Americans together.

5. Integrity

“We the People” aren't just words—they're a promise. A promise that power flows from us, making decisions together. In DxA, everyday people step into their full power as citizens, exercising our sacred right to self-government.

6. Common Good

Imagine the town meetings of early America—citizens gathering to guard their freedoms and shape their future together. In DxA, we don’t just make decisions—we renew America’s sacred covenant and carry the torch forward for generations to come.

Assemble America will infuse these values into every level of our organization—from leadership to staff to volunteers. We will practice non-partisan dialogue and active listening to foster meaningful connections, while continuously evaluating and learning from experiences. We will embrace deliberative structures and empower members with meaningful agency in organizational decisions. We will treat all people with dignity and value their unique contributions. Operating with strong ethics and transparency, we will ensure fairness and accountability to our members, partners, and the public. At our heart, we are dedicated to nurturing a thriving movement that considers all members' interests and well-being, while working to advance our shared values and ideals. **Assemble America will be what we want our country to be: a community of, by, and for the People.**

II. The Case for Democracy by Assembly

Electoral systems, despite their acceptance as the definition of democracy, are fatally flawed. These problems prevent them from achieving genuine representation and good governance—from giving us a real democracy. Such pathologies are intrinsic to electoral systems, not incidental; ultimately, they cannot be solved. Understanding these fundamental defects helps explain why **sortition**—the random selection of citizens—is our best hope for achieving a real democracy.[1]

1. Real Representation

One of the most glaring failures of electoral systems is that they produce bodies that look nothing like the people they supposedly represent. Congress exemplifies this problem—it’s dominated by old, white, male lawyers, with severe underrepresentation of women (only about 25-30%), minorities, and

[1] These arguments are drawn chiefly from The Trouble With Elections: Everything We Know About Democracy is Wrong, by Terrill Bouricius.

working people. A majority of members of Congress are millionaires, creating an enormous wealth gap between career politicians and those they represent. This is not accidental—elections systematically favor those with money, connections, and PR skills. What Bernard Manin calls "the principle of distinction" means elections inherently select for elites who stand out as "superior" rather than everyday citizens. Working people, women, and minorities face major barriers to running successful campaigns.

Democracy by Assembly solves this problem through random selection, which creates bodies that are demographically representative of the population by design. Through the science of large numbers, lotteries result in groups that actually reflect the population's makeup, background, and many viewpoints. This brings diverse perspectives, lived experiences, and ways of thinking into decision-making bodies. There are no wealth or status barriers to participation, allowing everyday citizens—rather than elites—to be in the room where it happens.

2. Knowledge Boost

Electoral systems suffer from "rational ignorance." Because individual votes have such minimal impact, it's irrational for voters to invest the time and effort it takes to inform themselves about politicians and issues. Most voters lack detailed knowledge of candidates, their records, and policy proposals. Instead of careful evaluation, they rely on party labels, superficial impressions, and emotional reactions. Campaign information is deliberately designed to manipulate rather than inform through sophisticated PR techniques. Confirmation bias leads voters to accept information that supports their pre-existing views, while rejecting contrary evidence. Even engaged voters often have a false sense of knowledge.

If that's not bad enough, politicians are woefully ignorant, too. Candidates develop campaign expertise and are savvy at public relations, but that's not policy. Even in office, career politicians often remain surprisingly uninformed about legislative details, spending up to a third of their time on fundraising alone. In fact, being in office makes matters worse: studies show that feeling powerful reduces your openness to other perspectives and makes you more likely to rely on gut instinct rather than careful analysis. And the projection of certainty required for campaigns works against the intellectual humility needed to learn.

Democracy by Assembly addresses the problem of ignorance by giving selected citizens real decision-making power, creating genuine incentives to learn and engage deeply with issues. Delegates receive balanced information, expert testimony, and time for careful study, which they readily absorb and critically evaluate. The system promotes deep learning over performative confidence, and collective wisdom over individual claims of expertise. Likewise, the smaller group size allows for real deliberation and learning rather than surface-level impressions. The focus shifts to careful consideration rather than snap judgments, and the process overcomes confirmation bias through exposure to diverse views.

3. Curing Tribalism

The two-party system forces artificial divisions even when public views are more nuanced. Parties actively promote hatred of opponents over reasoned discussion, turning politics into team sports where defeating the other side matters more than good governance. Politicians intentionally inflame divisions to energize their base rather than seek common ground. They paint opponents as enemies of democracy rather than fellow citizens with different views. Simple disagreements turn into moral crusades.

Compromise gets attacked as betrayal rather than necessary cooperation. Media and social networks trap people in partisan bubbles where party loyalty shapes how they see facts. Partisan hatred now exceeds racial hostility in many contexts, poisoning everything from family relationships to hiring decisions.

Democracy by Assembly eliminates the need for party loyalty and tribal conflict. Because they aren't picked through campaigns, delegates can evaluate issues on their merits rather than through a partisan lens. Different views get fair consideration in an environment focused on finding solutions. When people work together face-to-face rather than through tribal structures, they more easily see shared humanity and common interests. Without constant pressure to support the party line, delegates can change their minds based on new information. The artificial constraints of the duopoly fall away, allowing for nuanced positions that better reflect reality.

4. Ending Corruption

Modern campaigns require massive funding, which makes politicians serve donors rather than voters. Congressional candidates spend millions on campaigns, forcing them to raise money constantly. Campaign contributions give rich people outsized influence over every stage of governing. Career politicians meet more often with lobbyists than constituents. They shape bills to please funders rather than serve public needs. The system enables legal bribery through implied favor trading—contribute now, benefit later. Politicians waste huge amounts of time fundraising instead of governing, sometimes spending 30+ hours per week calling donors. Bills overflow with special interest favors buried in complex language. Even the appearance of corruption destroys public trust in the entire system.

Democracy by Assembly removes money's corrupting influence: no campaigns means no donations (cough, bribes). Delegates serve the public good rather than donors since they don't need a massive war chest. Short terms limit opportunities for corruption to take root—there's no time to build the cozy relationships that enable favor trading. Professional staff answer to the delegates rather than special interests, providing objective analysis instead of lobbyist spin. Delegates spend their full time governing rather than fundraising. The focus returns to good policy rather than pleasing fat cats and big wigs.

5. Long-term Solutions

Election pressures force politicians to obsess over the next campaign rather than long-term needs. They ignore critical issues that don't help win the next election, even when delay makes problems much worse. They react to crises rather than prevent them since prevention rarely gets headlines and never wins votes. They dodge difficult choices even when clearly needed because short-term pain brings electoral punishment—even if long-term benefits are enormous. Climate change exemplifies a vital issue neglected due to electoral pressures: politicians avoid necessary actions because costs come now while benefits arrive too late to help win re-election. The interests of future generations get perpetually ignored since they can't vote or donate.

Democracy by Assembly frees delegates to focus on long-term public good without worrying about re-election. They can make hard but necessary choices that would doom political careers. Democracy by Assembly tackles problems in advance rather than waiting for a crisis, since delegates face no electoral punishment for short-term challenges. Without campaign calculations to limit their options, delegates can consider the interest of future generations. Sustained focus on long-term challenges

becomes possible. Complex issues receive the sustained attention they require rather than being shelved until crisis forces action.

6. Actual Accountability

While in theory elections hold politicians to account, this rarely works in practice. Voters lack enough information to judge performance, especially on complex issues resolved through insider deals. Safe districts protect incumbents from real challenge, with most races essentially decided before any votes are cast. Party loyalty matters more than individual actions—voters overlook serious flaws in their team while exaggerating minor issues from opponents. Voters often blame the wrong people for complex problems, punishing politicians for events beyond their control while missing real failures. Even obvious corruption rarely faces electoral punishment as partisan voters find ways to excuse their side's misdeeds. The vast majority of incumbents get reelected every cycle—and when voters do throw the bums out, it's not based on any sound judgment.

Democracy by Assembly creates real accountability. Delegates keep each other honest through what's called "peer accountability"—just like on juries (which produce a high degree of trust). And because they aren't motivated by corrupting influences, they feel greater accountability to do right by the people. Moreover, regular rotation of delegates and multiple bodies checking each other creates additional accountability measures. Short terms limit corruption opportunities since there's no time to build entrenched power. Professional staff face oversight from multiple bodies rather than entrenched interests, maintaining independence and objectivity. The focus shifts to making good decisions rather than dodging blame or protecting careers. And bad decisions can be reversed by subsequent groups without electoral dynamics getting in the way.

7. Deep Deliberation

Legislative debates serve as political theater rather than real discussion. Parties decide positions before any debate occurs, meeting in private to set strategies for public conflict. Career politicians stay closed to persuasion or changing views since admitting error brings electoral punishment. They focus on demonizing the other side rather than finding solutions, delivering speeches aimed at campaign ads rather than colleagues. Complex issues get reduced to sound bites and talking points that hide rather than illuminate real trade-offs. Most members vote without understanding bills, blindly following party leaders and lobbyists. The committee system means even diligent members are ignorant about most bills they vote on.

Democracy by Assembly enables genuine deliberation without political pressure. Delegates can openly change views based on evidence without fear of attack ads calling them flip-floppers. Complex issues receive deep examination rather than superficial treatment since there's no need to reduce everything to campaign slogans. The goal becomes finding optimal solutions rather than winning political points. All delegates engage in understanding issues rather than deferring to party leaders and donors. Real discussion replaces partisan posturing. The focus stays on substance rather than style.

8. Healthy Personalities

Elections attract and reward problematic personalities: narcissists, overconfident people, and psychopathic individuals who want control over others. In fact, sociopathic traits show up more often in politicians than the general public. The skills needed to win campaigns—self-promotion, attacking opponents, promising simple solutions to complex problems—often conflict with good governance. Power tends to corrupt judgment over time, leading to hubris and detachment from reality. Moreover, the system rewards incivility over cooperation, punishing politicians who extend olive branches or change positions based on new evidence. It demands group loyalty over independent thinking, forcing members to support party positions they privately oppose.

Democracy by Assembly avoids this. Through the science of large numbers, random selection of people from the normal population results in a vast majority of delegates with prosocial personalities. On top of that, regular rotation limits the corrupting influence of power: no one serves long enough to develop a sense of self-importance. The absence of career politicians reduces ego-driven decisions, since delegates return to regular life after service. Independent thinking and cooperation flourish. The result brings more balanced personalities and emphasizes group wisdom over individual ambition. Humility and openness to changing views become strengths rather than weaknesses.

9. Smart Agendas

Electoral incentives push politicians to choose issues for political benefit rather than public need. They dodge difficult problems that might hurt re-election chances, leaving crucial challenges unaddressed. Media focuses on horse race coverage rather than substance, treating politics like sports rather than governance. Complex issues get ignored in favor of wedge issues that drive votes but matter little for most people's lives. Public attention gets manipulated for political gain rather than directed toward pressing needs. Special interests shape priorities through their influence over elections, ensuring their concerns dominate while broader public interests get neglected.

Democracy by Assembly allows difficult issues to be tackled without electoral fear. Public needs rather than political advantage drive the agenda. Issues receive systematic consideration rather than opportunistic treatment based on polling. The system handles complexity rather than reducing everything to simplistic choices designed for campaign ads. Professional staff provide objective analysis of pressing challenges rather than focusing on political implications. Public interest rather than special interest sets priorities. The focus stays on solving real problems rather than winning news cycles.

10. Better Choices

Elections force voters to accept package deals combining personality and policies. Leadership qualities get separated from actual expertise since campaign skills rarely match governing needs. Charisma and attractiveness matter more than competence, because voters must judge based on limited information. The status quo gets reinforced through limited choices between pre-selected candidates filtered through party systems. Binary options ignore complexity by forcing choices between artificially opposed alternatives. Personality and appearance overshadow policy since campaigns emphasize empty spectacle over specific plans.

Democracy by Assembly brings in specific expertise as needed rather than through elections. Issues rather than personalities stay central since there's no need to market candidates. Collective wisdom matters more than individual leadership since decisions emerge from group deliberation. The system remains open to change and new approaches rather than being constrained by party orthodoxy. Multiple options receive consideration rather than binary choices between party positions. Substance trumps style since there's no need to sell policies through personal appeal. The focus stays on finding optimal solutions rather than optimal messengers.

Why Electoral Reforms Won't Work

These problems are features of electoral systems, not bugs. Partisan politics creates incentives that systematically produce bad governance regardless of the individuals involved. Many reformers, recognizing these deep problems with electoral systems, have proposed various solutions to fix them while maintaining elections as the basic mechanism of democracy. But these reforms consistently fail to address the fundamental flaws inherent in electoral systems. Understanding why these reforms fail helps clarify why more radical change through sortition is necessary.

Campaign finance reform represents perhaps the most common proposed solution to electoral dysfunction. The corrupting influence of money in politics is widely recognized, leading reformers to advocate for public financing of elections. But research shows that public financing does not fundamentally change who runs or wins elections. Money finds ways around restrictions, special interests maintain their influence over policy, and wealth and connections still determine candidate viability. Most importantly, public financing does nothing to address the problematic psychological traits selected for by electoral competition. And it fails to make legislatures more representative of the general population.

Term limits represent another popular reform aimed at preventing the entrenchment of career politicians. Yet term limits do not change the type of person selected by elections—they merely ensure more rapid turnover among the same elite political class. In fact, term limits may actually reduce accountability while creating a revolving door between legislative service and special interests. Inexperienced legislators become even more dependent on staff and lobbyists for expertise. The wealth barriers to running remain unchanged. Some studies indicate term limits can increase the frequency of corruption incidents, though perhaps at a smaller scale.

Reforms aimed at **increasing voter participation** through easier registration and voting also fail to address core problems. Making voting more convenient does nothing to solve rational ignorance—voters still lack incentive to study issues in depth when their individual vote has negligible impact. Higher turnout does not lead to better informed choices. In fact, making voting easier without addressing knowledge barriers may actually *reduce* the quality of decision-making by encouraging less informed participation. And such reforms have little impact on the representative makeup of legislatures.

Primary election reforms like open primaries or top-two systems are often proposed to reduce partisan polarization. But these reforms do not moderate policy positions or increase voter knowledge. They still select for the same problematic personality types and maintain the fundamental problems of campaigns. The wealthy and well-connected maintain their advantages regardless of primary structure.

Proportional representation also fails to address core electoral problems. While potentially allowing for more parties, PR still favors elite candidates and maintains party dominance over the political agenda. It does nothing to address rational ignorance or improve deliberative quality. Some research

suggests PR systems may actually strengthen radical parties. Special interests simply adapt to maintain their influence through the party system.

Redistricting reform through independent commissions has been widely promoted to increase electoral competition. Yet studies show neutral redistricting does not significantly change outcomes or increase competition. Demographics and geography naturally create safe seats regardless of how lines are drawn. The problems of voter knowledge gaps and party dominance persist. Wealth continues to determine who can run viable campaigns.

Direct democracy through referendums might seem to bypass the problems of representative elections. However, voters remain rationally ignorant about complex ballot measures. Special interests often dominate referendum campaigns through superior resources. Complex issues get reduced to simplistic yes/no choices without real deliberation. Money typically determines outcomes as manipulative campaigns shape public opinion.

As the late Maurice Pope writes, "What strengthens an electoral system must also strengthen an oligarchic one, for they are two sides of the same coin." Trying to reform elections is like trying to reform monarchy—the problems are inherent to the system itself. Understanding reform futility also explains why simply adding sortition to existing electoral institutions, as some propose, is unlikely to succeed. The defects of electoral systems would inevitably infect and undermine sortition bodies operating alongside them. Democracy by Assembly offers a fundamentally different approach, one that aligns incentives with good governance. How can we bring it about?

III. Cascades of Change

The strategy of Assemble America consists of three major components: we will form a network of networks; launch a multifaceted, story-based campaign; and spark a dynamic grassroots movement. By these state and national efforts, we will engage millions of Americans in our movement, spreading awareness and generating deliberative encounters across the country. These successes—and the momentum they generate—will form the social capital that will establish permanent, empowered Citizens' Assemblies. Our commitment extends beyond government, too, as we aim to integrate Democracy by Assembly into all sectors of society. From education to business to culture, we will bring about the democratic renewal of America: a land of justice, freedom, and prosperity for all.

Throughout, we will strive to be the connective tissue between aligned organizations, creating a **network of networks** that coordinates their efforts**.** We will then tap the energy of this network to create a **story-centered communications strategy** through radio, television, print, digital platforms, and the arts. Finally, we will roll out a **people-powered movement** that will galvanize everyday Americans and form them into ambassadors for Citizens' Assemblies. Our campaigns will tap their energy in order to win structural change at the state and national level.

Our Plan

1. Allies & Pillars

Crucial to our effort is identifying and engaging with a **Spectrum of Allies** and **Pillars of Support.** These are the groups and sectors of society who harbor varying levels of support for or opposition to Democracy by Assembly. **We seek to win them over through a positive, inviting, good-faith effort.**

The Spectrum of Allies is made up of five segments: Active Allies; Passive Allies; Neutrals; Passive Opposition; and Active Opposition. Building a broad, diverse coalition of Active and Passive Allies is crucial for implementing Democracy by Assembly. Our members will focus on identifying the respective groups in these segments and developing specific strategies for gaining their support. We will then build alliances with Active Allies, and engage Passive Allies, Neutrals, and Passive Opposition through outreach and communication efforts. The movement will address the concerns and misconceptions of Neutrals and Passive Opponents so as to win them over and convert them into Active Allies. Active Opponents will require targeted efforts to mitigate their influence and counter any disinformation they may spread about Citizens' Assemblies.

Pillars of Support constitute the key institutions in society, who overlap in membership with the Spectrum of Allies. Building strong alliances with these sectors will strengthen our movement, paving the way for significant changes in the governance and political system of the United States. In America, Pillars of Support include: political parties; politicians; media outlets; civil organizations; academia; local governments; community leaders; the business community; religious and faith-based organizations; youth and student organizations; labor unions; philanthropic foundations; and legal experts. Winning over these pillars will require tailored strategies, effective communication, and persistent advocacy. Elected officials and party leaders present a unique opportunity and challenge, requiring specialized approaches and fine-tuned outreach.

2. Critical Mass

Any path to political reform requires one thing: a grassroots movement. Social change in the age of networks is marked by a paradox. On the one hand, the cascade effect can produce a ripple of events that emerge and converge at once. On the other, such sparks often come after a long period of germination and organizing. Drawing on the lessons of social campaigns around the world, we aim to engage a critical mass of Americans in our movement. Research by political scientist Erica Chenoweth demonstrates that once 3.5% of a population supports a non-violent movement in an active, sustained manner, it achieves many of its goals. **3.5%—that's the tipping point for success. To this end, Assemble America will—through recruitment, training, and activation—engage at least 12 million Americans (and ideally many more) in our movement.** These members will operate primarily in local chapters and volunteer cohorts, spreading the word and advocating for Democracy by Assembly both in their immediate locales and at the state, regional, and national level.

3. Public Alignment

Citizens' Assemblies have been studied and researched in American academic institutions for almost half a century. Yet to this day, relatively few Americans outside higher-ed have heard of them or know what they are. Unlike in Europe, Citizens' Assemblies do not currently occupy a prominent place in our national discourse—in media outlets, activist circles, or at the dinner table. **The first prong of our campaign, therefore, is to move the promise of Democracy by Assembly from the margins to the center of America's national consciousness.** Through differentiated media, marketing, and outreach—tailored to individual demographics—we will make Citizens' Assemblies the keystone change all Americans want. Our goal at Assemble America is major media saturation by Election Day 2024, with an overwhelming majority of the public believing in Democracy by Assembly and desiring its implementation in government.

4. Structural Transformation

The greatest argument for Democracy by Assembly is witnessing it in action. In Europe, Canada, and Australia the public has seen—over two decades of experimentation—that Citizens' Assemblies work. The United States needs to catch up. We seek to expedite this process, with the social and financial capital of our movement. **Through the advocacy and networking of our members, Assemble America will bring about transformative change: the instituting of Democracy by Assembly as a new paradigm of government.**

We propose a dual strategy that combines an initial state-level campaign with a national movement for a Citizens' Assembly. By pursuing both national and state-level strategies, we will create multiple pathways for democratic renewal. The state-level approach allows for experimentation and proof of concept, while the work to design and implement a national Citizens' Assembly will provide a transformative vision for the country.

A. State Citizens' Assemblies

This campaign will establish a permanent, empowered Citizens' Assembly, selected by sortition, in one initial target state. The initiative aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of deliberative democracy and create a replicable model for democratic reform nationwide. By focusing on one state at first, we can concentrate resources and build a proven track record of success. Our approach will combine grassroots organizing, public education, direct action, and strategic advocacy, culminating in a push for constitutional change. State campaigns allow for:

1. **Achievable Victories:** State-level reforms are often more achievable than national ones, allowing for efficient use of resources and providing a manageable test ground.
2. **Innovation Hubs:** States can serve as incubators for democratic designs, allowing us to refine our models before scaling nationally.
3. **Diverse Contexts:** Working across different states allows us to adapt our strategies to diverse political and cultural contexts, enhancing our learning and impact.
4. **Constitutional Pathways:** Many states offer more accessible paths to constitutional amendment than the federal level, providing opportunities for structural change.

5. **Building a Movement:** State campaigns help us build a robust, nationwide grassroots movement essential for long-term success.

B. People's Constitutional Convention

Our national campaign will a People's Constitutional Convention to rebuild the American Republic. This approach is inspired by successful citizens' assemblies in countries like Ireland, Belgium, and Canada. While state-level work is crucial, we also need a bold, national vision to address the fundamental issues in our federal system, including constitutional renewal and transformation:

1. **Comprehensive Reform:** A national People's Convention can address systemic issues that cross state boundaries and require national action.
2. **Legitimacy and Representation:** By using sortition (random selection) to choose delegates, we can create a truly representative body of the American people.
3. **Deliberative Democracy:** The assembly process allows for informed, thoughtful consideration of complex issues, transcending the limits of our current political discourse.
4. **Transformative Vision:** A national People's Convention can articulate a holistic vision for 21st-century democracy, inspiring broad public engagement and steering the U.S. out of its deepening crisis.
5. **Historical Precedent:** We draw inspiration from the tradition of constitutional renewal transformation in U.S. history, updating it for our time.

These initiatives are grounded in the philosophical foundations of popular sovereignty and the inherent right of the people to alter their form of government, as articulated in the Declaration of Independence and supported by constitutional scholars.

To achieve these ends, Assemble America will pursue proven paths to democratize the political system—including legislation, ballot initiatives, and constitutional revision. At the same time, we will use our movement to bring large numbers to the cause and innovate additional strategies.

All of these routes rely on two realities: first, sustaining and expanding our grassroots organizing, driven by our members. Secondly, and relatedly, forging alliances with the Pillars of Support that undergird the current system. **Once we align these disparate institutions with our vision—by tying their interests to the establishment of Democracy by Assembly—we will create the will for establishment elites to accept the legitimacy of Citizens' Assemblies.**

IV. Conclusion: Surviving Victory

The final step of Cascades is surviving victory. **To secure lasting success, the movement for Democracy by Assembly must be prepared for the long haul.** And, even more importantly, for counter-movements. Given the inertia of the status quo, the resistance of Active Opposition, and the propensity for societies to backslide, Assemble America will plan to sustain our movement beyond our initial goals. We will do so by becoming the ongoing stewards of democracy in America. Our network will monitor the

implementation of Citizens' Assemblies into government and use our movement to generate ongoing democratic innovation.

Our primary means of survival will be our values: liberty, unity, and humanity, integrity, justice, and the common good. Above all, democracy—being of, by, and for the people. Staying true to these principles will allow us to adapt to changing circumstances and new phases, keeping our network connected and our members engaged.

Building a sustainable movement for Democracy by Assembly also requires adaptable strategies and fostering distributed leadership. Embracing inclusivity and engaging people from diverse generations—especially youth—will ensure our movement's relevance over time. Likewise, being crisis-ready with contingency plans will allow us to weather challenges and emerge stronger. Collaborating with partners abroad will also foster a global exchange of experiences and knowledge, enriching our impact.

The most promising avenue for survival lies in taking the practice of Democracy by Assembly beyond government. As our movement grows and our network enlarges, Assemble America will work with our Spectrum of Allies to adapt Citizens' Assemblies for social, civic, and economic institutions. These include business, labor, cultural, educational, and media organizations—anywhere large groups must make decisions.

By seeding our network and movement into these areas, **Assemble America will germinate the democratic renewal of society.** Our working groups will brainstorm and design best practices and models for this integration, leading to a cultural efflorescence not seen since ancient Athens. **Democracy is an ongoing project, ever improving itself as We the People become a more perfect union.** This work is truly eternal. **America, Assemble!**