

Dēmos



IDEAS & ACTION TO TRANSFORM AMERICA

"It's not just comforting but essential to have sane countervailing voices like Dēmos to remind us that government action is necessary to plan for the common good, to set proper rules for economic activity and to be a bulwark against predatory practices in the private sector."

- Bob Herbert, New York Times, April 9, 2010

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Dēmos is a non-profit policy, research and advocacy center dedicated to generating new ideas and catalyzing social change, to help everyone achieve the American dream. We believe that all Americans should be empowered to take part in our democracy, to make choices that will shape an economy that offers opportunities for all, to have a government that can provide for our common interests and shared needs, and a country that engages in the world with respect and accountability.

Through five core programs, a partnership with *The American Prospect* magazine, and additional special projects that address new challenges as they arise, Dēmos combines cutting-edge research with support for on-the-ground action to make equality and democracy more than just ideals. By publishing reports, books and articles, organizing events, and through television and radio appearances, we work to help the public and policymakers see in a new light the challenges we face as a country, and the underlying causes of those challenges. And in this new light, policies, laws and lives are changed, and we move closer to the America we all hope is possible.

TRANSFORMING THE DEBATE

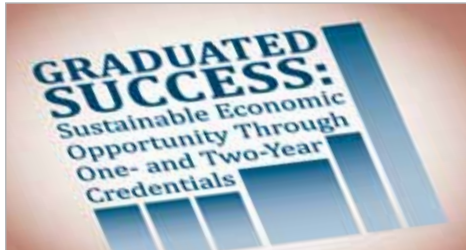
FROM REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES TO POLICY SOLUTIONS

From the People. At Dēmos, we understand that bold ideas matter to shaping our country's future. We also know that these ideas don't just come from think tanks and traditional opinion leaders. Dēmos is helping to re-shape the public discourse by elevating the issues that matter to everyday people.

With the Grassroots. Dēmos is a national policy organization with deep connections to local, community-based organizing; a “think-and-do” tank willing to take positions and organize to win them. Our policy work supports advocates in the field from almost all 50 states, as well as at the federal level.

Ahead of the Debate. Dēmos' commitment to our core values means that our work is not always bound by today's politics, or even by the politics of the next election. Often, our research-and-reform focus leads us to challenge entrenched ideas and create policy solutions that are just beyond the horizon of what's currently possible.

HOW WE DO IT



CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH

Dēmos shapes the policy debate with research that illuminates some of America's most pressing challenges. Our emphasis on the story and effective messaging helps compel audiences – grassroots activists, journalists, policymakers and everyday citizens – to question the conventional wisdom on issue after issue.



SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

At Dēmos, we don't let our research sit on the shelf. We understand that print, radio, television and social networking media coverage can move ideas and people into action, and we are constantly innovating and evolving our platform to best engage our audiences. Our experts appear in over 1,000 stories per year, and our website *demos.org* incorporates the best of web 2.0, and was an *Oprah Magazine* top-pick in 2009. In 2010, we have formed a strong institutional partnership with *The American Prospect* magazine, in order to expand our joint capacity to elevate and champion progressive ideas in the public debate.



GIVING BOLD IDEAS A NEW FORUM

Dēmos Events are a forum for debate on some of the most challenging public questions of our time. Audiences have the opportunity to hear leading authors, community leaders and scholars in our New York headquarters, on our live webcasts, and in special events across the country. Since 2000, Dēmos has conducted nearly 1,000 public events.



DĒMOS FELLOWS

Dēmos is helping to develop and sustain more than 25 fellows from diverse backgrounds, who produce books, research reports, magazine features, op-eds and media appearances to shape a more vibrant and informed public conversation about policy. We recently launched an Emerging Voices fellowship program, which will help create the next generation of thought leaders on domestic and global issues.



TRANSFORMING OPPORTUNITY

FROM INEQUALITY TO PROSPERITY

At the heart of the American Dream is the belief that each generation can provide its children with a better life. Yet today's young people have inherited an economy marred by inequality and barriers to opportunity that can't be easily overcome by hard work and determination. **The decline in economic opportunity is no accident.** Public policy helped build the American middle class, and recent policy shifts have helped erode it. More and more Americans are working harder, but are unable to get by—much less get ahead. **Another way is possible.** Working at the cutting edge of economic and social policy, Dēmos is advancing reform ideas to **strengthen and expand the middle class** and to create a **path to economic prosperity for young Americans and future generations.** We choose issues that focus the media and legislators on the struggles common to millions, and we show the public that solutions do exist. By combining rigorous statistical analysis with winning legislative strategies, Dēmos is helping develop a new social contract for a new generation and those to come.

HOW WE DO IT



STRENGTHENING TOMORROW'S MIDDLE CLASS

America needs a new social contract between government, employers and citizens to ensure a vibrant and inclusive future middle class. Dēmos provides cutting-edge analysis and ideas, examining trends in economic security and opportunity, with a focus on today's new generation of young workers. Our work also examines financial barriers students face in completing college, with a focus on the experiences of community college, low-income and first-generation students.



EXPLORING HOUSEHOLD DEBT AND ASSETS

As household income stagnated and basic costs rose over the last decade, low- and middle-income households often borrowed to make ends meet. Dēmos' original survey research on indebtedness provided unparalleled analysis about why households borrow – revealing that millions are borrowing in the wake of job loss or to pay for basic necessities. Widely cited in the media and routinely used by policymakers, our research on debt helps shine a spotlight on the economic fragility of households and the deregulated lending products that exacerbate insecurity.



REVOLUTIONIZING RETIREMENT SECURITY

Not so long ago a secure retirement consisted of Social Security, a pension and individual savings, but that formula no longer works for the vast majority of Americans. Dēmos aims to protect and strengthen Social Security – the foundation of retirement security for the majority of retirees – while advancing proposals for a publicly supported, universal pension system to replace the failed 401(k) system.



TRANSFORMING DEMOCRACY

FROM EXCLUSION TO ENGAGEMENT

The **democracy America deserves** is still to come. Too many of us—particularly low-income and young people and other historically underrepresented groups—still face unnecessary hurdles to registering and voting. Vote suppression and voter intimidation endure, now only more sophisticated than before. The true promise of democracy envisions all residents being **empowered to participate in public life** and inform the policies that affect them, regardless of personal wealth. Attaining this deeper level of democracy would fundamentally transform American politics and reshape economic opportunity.

For that very reason, Dēmos works to achieve a broad and ambitious election reform agenda while defending the hard-won voting rights that exist today. Our team brings to bear the expertise of legal experts, advocates, scholars and leading strategists, **working together in pursuit of America's best democracy**. And as a national organization committed to supporting a democracy reform network, Dēmos is a resource for advocates across the country and worldwide.

HOW WE DO IT



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Dēmos works to eliminate the many structural barriers that keep people from fully participating in our democracy. We focus on key reforms that will make it easier to vote and increase participation: Same Day Registration, a proven reform to increase turnout, especially among young voters; and Public Agency Voter Registration, which ensures access to voter registration for low-income citizens. Dēmos' research, litigation, testimony and on-the-ground support to community organizations has made us a trusted resource for state legislators, election officials and election reform advocates nationwide.



ADDRESSING DEEP DISTORTIONS IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Dēmos is working to end prison-based gerrymandering – the practice of counting incarcerated persons as residents of the prison in which they are held, as opposed to their home community – that distorts representation in state legislatures as well as in local redistricting. Also, our long-standing work on campaign finance reform seeks to democratize the role of money in politics and ensure that government remains accountable to people, not to corporations.



ENGAGING A BROAD AGENDA FOR DEMOCRACY REFORM

Dēmos plays a key role in convening democracy reform organizations across a broad range of practices – collaborative governance, deliberative democracy, electoral reform, youth engagement, transparent government – that seek to engage citizens in decisions that affect their lives and improve democratic processes. This work knits together these perspectives to ensure the democracy movement is as strong as the challenges we confront.

TRANSFORMING PUBLIC WILL

FROM SKEPTICISM TO SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

In this new century, all of the challenges we face and the opportunities we seek will require **an active and supported government**. But for the past 30 years, an anti-government, anti-tax movement has sowed distrust and disengagement in the American people. The result has been decades of disinvestment and the dismantling of core public protections, reducing the capacity of state and federal government to meet **our collective needs**. Now more than ever, we need to reconnect Americans to the essential role that public systems and structures play in the well-being of our society and the health of our economy. Through Public Works: The Dēmos Center for the Public Sector, we are working to **rebuild support for the public good**.



HOW WE DO IT



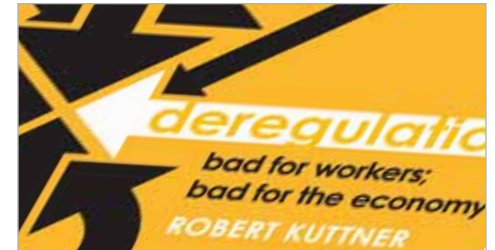
GROUNDBREAKING, IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

Our unique communications research goes beyond studying static public opinion data to deeply examine how Americans think about government, and how to evoke a different way of thinking about government's role in our democracy and economy. Dēmos applies the findings from our research to help leaders across the country more effectively make the case for public structures and systems and to advance policies for the common good. Our work informs a range of issue-based advocacy, from tax and budget issues to the environment.



BUILDING A NEW CONSTITUENCY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Dēmos has held hundreds of trainings with state and local advocates and officials, helping them rethink their own relationship to government and how they communicate about the public sector to the thousands of Americans they connect with everyday. These trainings have demonstrably helped advocates change the debate in their states and as a result helped advance key progressive reforms.



DEFINING REGULATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Dēmos provides a much-needed counter to 30 years of deregulatory zeal, making the case for responsible regulation in areas including financial services, transportation and the environment. Our research and writing provide a commonsense case for modernizing and improving regulations to protect the public interest.

TRANSFORMING AMERICA IN THE WORLD

FROM IMPERIAL TO INTERDEPENDENT

More than ever, in an **age of global interdependence**, the United States must work with other countries to confront the most pressing challenges of our time – from climate change to poverty to terrorism. This engagement abroad should be guided by the same values that Americans embrace at home: **inclusive democracy, shared prosperity and the belief in the dignity of all human beings**. The U.S. must defend its national interests, to be sure, but we do that best when we lead the struggle for a world that is more fair and just.

Nowhere is U.S. leadership more crucial than in reshaping the rules of global governance. At Dēmos, we believe in open trade and robust markets to spur new prosperity. But we also insist on **stronger protections for workers and the environment**, along with new steps to amplify democratic voices in world forums. Globalization should benefit everyone, not just a privileged few, and today's economic growth cannot come at the cost of tomorrow's ecological future.



HOW WE DO IT



BUILDING AN INTERDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

Dēmos is working with partners around the world to deepen understanding of global interdependence. Our annual Interdependence Day Forum, held each year in a different world city, brings together scholars, activists and youth leaders.



NEW IDEAS FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Dēmos brings together leading thinkers in our monthly Global Governance Seminar to debate and develop cutting-edge proposals for creating a more just and democratic system for global decision-making.



BUILDING A GLOBAL MIDDLE CLASS

Dēmos is advocating for changes in U.S. trade policy and foreign aid to help ensure that more workers in developing countries share in the fruits of globalization and can join a growing global middle class.



RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS

Dēmos is working with the Sierra Club and other environmental groups to demand that nations receiving preferential trade benefits from the U.S. do more to uphold their environmental laws.

TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP

FROM THE STATUS QUO TO NEW VOICES

Dēmos is committed to helping **cultivate leaders that reflect America's great diversity** —in class, gender, age, race, education and ideology. Through our Dēmos Ideas for Change Forums, Fellows Program and Women's Leadership Initiative, we give a wide range of thought leaders a platform for sharing their ideas. We also support the leadership and growth of other organizations, because at Dēmos, **collaboration is key to achieving change**. We believe that strengthening other institutions and leaders strengthens our own work, and helps get us all closer to living in the America we believe is possible.

HOW WE DO IT



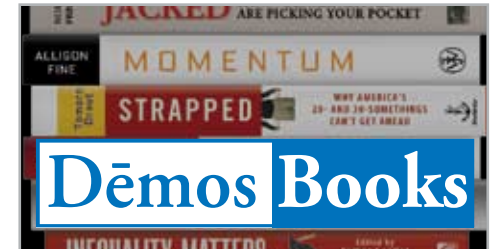
EMERGING VOICES

Dēmos' Emerging Voices Initiative nurtures the careers of exciting young thought leaders, particularly those of color, to help address the profound lack of diversity among public commentators and to bring urgently-needed new ideas into the debate.



CULTIVATING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Dēmos understands that social change requires a seldom-discussed element: balanced leadership with a critical mass of women empowered to set priorities. Dēmos is advancing this goal through books, convenings and policy proposals.



DĒMOS BOOKS

Thought leadership and the power of ideas often gain the most currency, and help shape the debate, through the form of a book. Recognizing this, we have established the Dēmos Books project, which helps fellows, staff and partner organizations develop their ideas into compelling proposals, manuscripts and then into published works. In partnership with leading publishing houses, Dēmos helps authors build a broadcast, print, social media and event platform that elevate their crucial arguments into the public and policy realms.

TRANSFORMING THE FUTURE

FROM DĒMOS' FIRST DECADE INTO THE NEXT



Dēmos has dedicated its first decade of work to making a difference on key challenges that confront our society—from economic fairness to democracy’s deficits—and to building an institution capable of playing a constructive role in the policy debates that shape our future.

In this next decade, we will continue to advocate for policies that improve the everyday experience of Americans. We’ll also invest in developing the big ideas that will fuel the structural transformations of tomorrow. Our nation’s promise doesn’t lie in the change that happens from one election cycle to the next. It rests in the constant questioning that leads to profound changes in the way we view ourselves and our nation.

We believe in sustainable progress for our institution and the nation. Working collaboratively with partners and communities around the country, we are looking forward to helping shape a new era of transformational change.

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