

Hello RGI;

I have been busy planning with the **Hands Off April 5th Committee** and responding to every sign up email that I get. We are at **1008** people planning to attend and **29** cancellations! Of course, many more who have not signed with the national Indivisible website will be coming.

People have been commending me on initiating the Albuquerque version of this national event but, you know what? Saying that you are going to have a big party is a lot easier than actually planning it. I am so glad that I developed a relationship with the **Indivisible Albuquerque** (IABQ) board because they have much more experience and resources than we do and very well connected with the state's political/activist scene.

I have had to defer to them because how would we have gotten a large, trained, security team, doctors & medics for a first aid station, A PA system with someone to run it, getting the city to grant access to electricity, much less renting portable potties and folding chairs?

I hope that you can join this rally at **1 Civic Plaza** on **April 5th** from **2pm - 4pm**. Below are the links (you don't need to register but if you do, I can send the instruction email):

Link to Event through Mobilize

[Hands Off! Join the National Mobilization to Fight Back · Hands Off on Mobilize](#)

If you would like to volunteer for this event you can on this link below:

Link to Volunteer Form for Hands Off Rally

<https://forms.gle/wGG6HSAfrYij4mCW6>

If you would like to make a small donation to cover some of the cost, you can at this link:

Pay Pal Link

[Donate to help defray costs for the April 5 Rally in Albuquerque. Donations will help pay for water, signs and more.](#)

Also in this email, you can sign up for an **Indivisible seminar for effective messaging** and/or attend a **Zoom meeting with founders Leah and Ezra**.

Recently, the Albuquerque Journal printed a list of wins and losers from the New Mexico 2025 Legislature session. I had to scan it but if you magnify it, it is not too hard to read.

Last, is a brilliant article, ***Why collective action is the only way: History shows how democracy wins*** by Ian Bassin on how autocratic governments take power and how it can be stopped. Thanks to RGI member **Mary S.** for bringing this to our attention.

In Solidarity;

Steve Smith

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- **April 2, 6:30 - 8:00 ET / 3:30 - 5:00 PT - Truth Brigade AMP Team Training and Launch**
 - The Truth Brigade is launching a pilot program called "Truth Brigade AMP Teams" to boost our reach and build community. By coordinating and focusing efforts on specific tactics and platforms, we can multiply the audience for our persuasive messaging. To participate in the pilot, you must have familiarity with the platform you select in the registration form, and be committed to communicating regularly. Join us for the Truth Brigade AMP Team Launch on April 2, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM ET.
 - [Register Here](#)
- **April 3rd, 3pm ET /12pm PT - What's the plan? With Indivisible's co-founders Leah and Ezra**
 - Join Indivisible's co-founders Ezra and Leah for a live discussion about what we've learned so far from this new congress and how to prepare for what's to come. Most of our time will be spent on Q&A, so submit questions below and/or come ready to engage with your fellow Indivisible members from across the country!

- [Register here](#)

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Albuquerque Journal Summary of Bills that Passed or Failed in NM Legislature

HEALTH AND FAMILY

PASSED

- Create state-run psilocybin program for medical patients.
- Overhaul state mental health and substance abuse treatment system.*
- Create an Office of the Child Advocate to oversee the Children, Youth and Families Department.*
- Exempt public abortion providers' information from public records requests.
- Establish volunteering doula credential process.*
- Create a Medicaid trust fund.

FAILED

- Create a state-run paid leave program for workers funded by mandatory employer and employee contributions.
- Limit attorney fees in medical malpractice cases.
- Impose a 6% surtax on liquor sales.
- Set minimum staffing-to-patient ratios for hospitals. Join interstate health care compacts.

IMMIGRATION/LABOR

PASSED

- Require that projects funded by industrial revenue bonds comply with state prevailing wage laws.
- Prohibit state employees from disclosing individuals' immigration status or other sensitive personal information.
- Allow people with authorization to work in the U.S. to work in law enforcement.

FAILED

- Increase state's \$12 per-hour minimum wage.
- Ban federal civil immigration detention in state.
- Add more members to the New Mexico Border Authority.
- Create new state border security office.
- Create a reimbursement fund for local government costs incurred by state and federal border matters.

ENERGY

PASSED

- Raise maximum oil and gas royalty rates in the Permian Basin.
- Allow investor-owned utilities to implement low-income utility rate programs.
- Create a local solar access fund.
- Fund abandoned mine cleanup.*
- Fund geothermal projects.*
- Allow utilities to recover costs from expanding the capacity of existing transmission lines.
- Repurpose depleted oil and gas wells.
- Create a regulatory framework for carbon sequestration.

FAILED

- Increase penalties for Oil and Gas Act violations.
- Restrict oil and gas operations within a mile of schools.
- Retract zero-emission vehicle sales rules.
- Establish a Consumer Solar Protection Act.
- Provide tax credits for quantum projects.

CRIME/PUBLIC SAFETY

PASSED

- Allow judges to impose longer prison sentences for fentanyl trafficking.*
- Change how courts handle criminal cases involving defendants deemed incompetent.*
- Increase penalty for school shooting threats.*
- Expand state's red flag gun law to allow law enforcement officers to initiate petitions.*
- Establish a turquoise alert system for missing Native American individuals. Expand racketeering crimes.

FAILED

- Assault weapon ban.
- Enhance criminal penalties for violent juvenile offenders.
- Make it easier to hold certain defendants in jail pending trial.
- Repeal firearm sale waiting period.
- Make fentanyl trafficking a first-degree felony punishable by a life sentence.
- Increase penalties for felons convicted of firearm possession.

EDUCATION

PASSED

- Require schools adopt student cellphone policies.
- Ensure local school choice on school year length (vetoed).
- Increase starting teacher salaries to \$55,000 per year.
- Protect Spanish language and culture.
- Allow tribal regalia at graduation ceremonies.*
- Expand the state's higher education nondiscrimination policy.
- Change how the state calculates eligibility for public service loan forgiveness.
- Require defibrillators in high schools.

FAILED

- Restrict participation in single-sex sports.
- Provide free condoms in secondary and higher education institutions.
- Create an Anti-Hazing Act.
- Replace the Public Education Commission with an elected and appointed state school board.
- Require a nominating list for higher education regent selection.
- Codify an Office of Special Education.

GOVERNMENT/ELECTIONS

PASSED

- Allow voters to decide if governor should have to give reason for bill vetoes.
- Require lobbyists or their employees to disclose bill stances.
- Permit independent voters not to vote in primary elections without changing their party affiliation.
- Change state's insurance plan for state employee health care premiums.
- Establish independent election procedures for conservancy districts.*

FAILED

- Create independent commission to set salary levels for legislators.
- Change length of legislative sessions.
- Require driver's license or MVD photo ID to vote.
- Make Election Day a state holiday. Create a DOGE-inspired office to identify fraud, waste and abuse at a state level.
- Create a Reduction of Grocery Costs Commission.
- Create regulatory Artificial Intelligence Act.
- Make changes to state's public records law.

ENVIRONMENT

- Overhaul the Fish and Inland Fisheries Department.
- Funds to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Require toxic substance testing for some products.
- Create wildlife and wildfire funds.
- Establish the Clean Energy Act to fund broadband.
- Give the state more control over waters.
- Codify limits on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Allow schools to use clean energy.
- Ban single-use plastic.
- Pass Green New Deal environmental Constitution.
- Increase carbon tax and fire insurance.

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Why collective action is the only way: History shows how democracy wins by Ian Bassin, Mar 29

The first play in the autocratic playbook is not to attack everyone at once.

Rather, it's to go after one. One law firm. One judge. One university. One journalist. The strategy isn't just to silence the immediate target — it's to make others watch and learn. To convince them that resistance is dangerous, costly, and futile. To make them believe that if they just keep their head down, it'll happen to someone else instead.

The strategy works. It's why Viktor Orbán, Vladimir Putin, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan were able to consolidate power in Hungary, Russia, and Turkey without needing to bulldoze the entire system at once. They didn't need to. It was enough to pick off a few key targets, watch everyone else retreat into fear and complicity, and let the structure collapse under its own weight.

But the strategy fails — and it has failed — when societies recognize the game early enough and refuse to play along. When institutions that would normally compete or stay in their lane realize that they rise and fall together. That's what collective action is. And that's why it's so dangerous to autocrats.

Right now, we are at the tipping point. Major law firms, universities, and media outlets are under pressure in the United States in ways that would have been unthinkable a decade ago — even six months ago. And so far, the response has been chillingly familiar: silence, retreat, and passivity. Or worse: capitulation. If that doesn't change — and quickly — the next phase will be easy to predict. We've seen it before.

The good news is that we also know how this story can end differently. History teaches us how collective action works, why it works, and why it's the only defense that has ever stopped the rise of autocracy. The question is whether we are willing to learn the lesson in time.

The anatomy of collective action — and why it's hard

There's a reason collective action is so difficult — and why it tends to emerge only under extreme duress. Game theory explains part of it: institutions often face a classic prisoner's dilemma when they are under attack.

If a law firm comes under political or legal attack, other firms might have a temporary advantage in standing back and doing nothing. If Perkins Coie is attacked over perceptions about its past work, Kirkland & Ellis or Cravath might reason that they are better off distancing themselves — protecting their reputation, avoiding scrutiny, and even picking up the clients that Perkins Coie might lose.

This is precisely why autocrats attack institutions one at a time. It exploits this self-interest calculation, encouraging institutions to defect from each other rather than defend each other.

But history shows that this calculation is shortsighted — and ultimately self-destructive. Because once the first institution falls, the next one becomes more vulnerable. The cost of resistance rises after the first defeat because the autocrat now knows that the strategy works. The incentives shift, and what seemed like a rational choice to stay quiet quickly becomes a trap.

● The Hungarian media collapse

Orbán's consolidation of the Hungarian media was a textbook case. When Népszabadság was targeted, other outlets refused to come to its defense — hoping to avoid similar treatment. Orbán's government learned that it could silence critical media without consequences. Within five years, the entire Hungarian media landscape was either directly controlled by the state or dominated by Orbán-friendly private owners. What seemed like rational self-interest turned out to be suicidal.

☑ Polish judges' resistance

By contrast, when Poland's government tried to purge the judiciary in 2017, the response was collective and immediate. Judges within Poland and across Europe mobilized in defense of their Polish colleagues. Public protests reinforced this solidarity, and the European Court of Justice raised the diplomatic and political costs of continuing the purge.

The Polish government backed down, still weakening judicial independence but pulling back from its most aggressive assaults — not because it was persuaded by moral arguments, but because the cost of continuing the attack had become politically unsustainable. The logic of collective action worked.

So which path has the American legal industry taken? One by one, each successively targeted firm has had to fend for themselves. In patriotic and inspiring fashion, Perkins Coie, WilmerHale, and Jenner & Block each decided to fight the unconstitutional attacks on them (notably, as this was going to press, all three have now won restraining orders in court against these EOs). Whereas Paul Weiss and Skadden negotiated one-off deals with the administration. The industry has thus far failed to come together in collective defense. By allowing firms to be shaken down one-by-one, the sector has virtually assured that the hostage-taking will continue.

We are seeing the same failures within higher education. The administration singled out Columbia for its first line of attack. What did America's universities come together to say in Columbia's defense? Nothing. Crickets. It fell to several courageous associations to put out strong statements (and a lawsuit we filed earlier this week), but the universities themselves crawled back into their turtle shells hoping not to be next. And so the administration continued its advance, moving on from Columbia to the University of Pennsylvania. Unless the universities join together to push back, the attacks will continue.

Why collective action raises political costs

Autocrats rely on a fundamental asymmetry: They have a centralized source of authority and a powerful platform. The institutions they attack — media, universities, law firms — are fragmented. That gives the autocrat a structural advantage in the contest for public opinion.

But collective action changes the balance of power by raising political costs in three key ways:

It creates social proof. Public opinion is not formed by facts alone — it's shaped by social cues. When a single institution speaks out, it can be ignored or written off. But when dozens of institutions deliver the same message, it signals to the public that there's a consensus — that the attack is illegitimate, dangerous, and unacceptable. This is how social movements work. It's how public opinion on civil rights, marriage equality, and even environmental issues shifted over time. When enough voices say the same thing, it becomes harder for the public to dismiss the message — and harder for the autocrat to claim they are merely facing isolated critics.

It creates a defensive shield. When law firms, universities, or media organizations defend each other, they create a collective shield that raises the cost of targeting any one institution. If attacking Perkins Coie means provoking a coordinated defense from the entire legal community, it's no longer an easy win — it's a complicated, high-cost fight.

It forces public officials to pick sides. Politicians are risk-averse. When one institution is attacked, most political figures will avoid taking a stand. But when an entire sector mobilizes — when law firms, universities, and media outlets issue coordinated statements and legal challenges — it raises the political stakes. Staying silent becomes politically costly. Politicians are forced to either back the autocrat or defend the institutions — and that polarization strengthens the resistance.

It's not just law firms or universities that have failed to heed these lessons. Republican elected officials are a canonical case study in this failure. During the 2016 primary, Donald Trump's opponents failed to join together in collective opposition and thereby allowed him to win the presidential nomination — despite his having only plurality support within the party. And then repeatedly in the years since, it has been left up to individual members — from Jeff Flake to Mitt Romney to Adam Kinzinger to Liz Cheney — to take turns as the voice of opposition. But that approach, while noble on their personal parts, doesn't work as a strategy — the failure of their colleagues to act with them just made the heroic ones easier individual targets. At no point has there been any meaningful effort for those forces within the GOP who don't agree with the autocratic actions we've seen to engage in collective action.

I have heard Republican electeds make many arguments for why this is so, with one of them simply being that taking such a position would put them at odds with the majority of their voters. But as the first point about collective action makes clear, the only way to begin to change that public opinion is to create social proof in favor of democracy and the rule of law and against autocratic approaches. But that's only possible if a critical mass who privately believe those things — and make no mistake, most elected Republican officials do — take collective action to make that case.

The stakes are higher than just saving institutions

This is where the lesson from history becomes clear. The real goal of collective action isn't just to protect individual institutions — it's to protect democracy itself.

The societies that survived authoritarian threats didn't just rely on internal solidarity within the press, the courts, or academia. They succeeded because those institutions linked arms across sectors — forming a broad, popular front that transcended professional and even political boundaries.

During the rise of fascism in Europe, the countries that resisted early — like Belgium and Finland — saw labor unions, political parties, and the press form coalitions to resist authoritarianism.

During the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, independent press, labor unions, and the church supported each other — even when they disagreed on broader social issues.

In South Korea's 2016 "Candlelight Revolution," the media, labor unions, and student groups worked together to force the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye.

Indeed, if there's one clear dividing line between democracies that have survived recent illiberal populist autocratic movements (Poland, Brazil, Czech Republic) and those that have not (Hungary, Turkey, Venezuela), it's whether a broad pro-democracy coalition came together across pre-existing divides to stand together for the most foundational elements of democracy. In the first set of countries, people of different policy preferences and institutional affiliations and backgrounds formed functional coalitions that worked together to shift the broader public away from illiberalism and back towards liberal democratic systems; in the latter set of countries, the opposition to autocracy fragmented and fell into infighting, allowing the autocratic movement to consolidate power and entrench itself.

That's why the next step required here is clear: After institutions learn to defend themselves within their own sector, they need to defend each other across sectors and form a broad coalition on the side of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. That's how democratic resilience is built.

An attack on a law firm must provoke a response from universities and media outlets. An attack on a journalist must be met with legal action from the bar and peaceful protests from students. Labor unions — consistently a key piece of each of the successful anti-authoritarian movements noted above — must be protected and strengthened by others. This is how you raise the cost of autocracy — not by waiting for the next attack, but by forcing the autocrat to fight on every front at once.

So that is what is needed: a broad, cross-ideological and cross-sectoral, popular front coalition in opposition to autocratic governance and in support of democracy. An effective coalition would: (1) align on what issues and fights to prioritize; (2) coordinate its strategy for advancing democratic values and practices; (3) elevate key leaders; and (4) advance a clear narrative about democracy's importance and autocracy's failures.

This is how you bend public opinion. This is how you make democracy's immune system fight back.

Autocrats succeed when their targets stay isolated. They fail when people and institutions unite. The choice is stark. Stay silent and watch the system collapse — or stand together and survive.

History shows which one works.

The only way out is together.