

TRACK 5: REBUILDING CIVIC AND LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

Goal: To promote the development of civic and leadership networks at the regional and state level to achieve broadly shared prosperity

Objectives

- To familiarize attendees with PA's democratic reform movement
- To familiarize attendees with efforts to organize and develop progressive leaders across constituencies, within the faith community, and to engage with the political process
- To brainstorm about how to build on existing efforts to strengthen progressive civic and leadership networks at the regional and state level
- To brainstorm about linking more progressive scholars with KRC

Possible Action Steps

- Identify a role for KRC that could advance the PA democracy movement
- Establish a community-labor leadership institute in a PA region
- Create the "New Pennsylvania Society"
- Design a follow-on convening of scholars with KRC

JUNE 1

Workshop Session 1: 10:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Is Democracy Working in Pennsylvania?

Moderator: Charles Bacas, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania

Panelists: John Baer, Philadelphia Daily News; Kathleen Daugherty, consultant and Board Member, KRC; Tim Potts, Democracy Rising; Greg Vitali, House of Representatives, Pennsylvania General Assembly; Mark Widoff, Board Chair, KRC

The economy is a game that is not working well for the average person or family. The economy exists within the framework of democracy. Many agree that PA democracy, also, is not working for the average person. What are the opportunities to change that – now that a movement for reform of the PA political process has emerged that includes a "strange bedfellows" array of conservatives and liberals? What specific transparency, lobbying, or electoral reforms would resonate broadly and have a chance to become law? What is the potential for a Constitutional Convention to lead to more responsive government? What actors and actions, including strategic research, might capitalize on the opportunities?

Workshop Session 2: 1:15 – 2:45 p.m.

Issue Education and Leadership Development for a Better Way

Moderator: Chris Benner, Penn State University (PSU)

Panelists: Rebecca Miller, America Votes; Jordan Schwartz, Center for Progressive Leadership; Kathleen Fernicola, Building Partnerships USA

America Votes brings together membership organizations from the environmental, women's, and labor communities to cooperate on issue education with the potential to enlarge the electorate, increase voter turnout, and shift public policy debate in a progressive direction. The Center for Progressive Leadership recruits for a nine-month Fellows Program, future leaders with an interest in public service, public office, or assisting candidates for office. The leaders of these two organizations in PA will describe their missions, activities, and challenges. Kathleen Fernicola of Building Partnerships USA will also describe her organization's "community-labor institute" (CLI) approach to issue education and leadership development. This model recruits leaders from diverse constituencies to learn about a region's economy

and power structure, and to learn how to shift regional policy to achieve family and community well-being. Should a PA region launch a CLI?

Workshop Session 3: 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Civic and Leadership Networks for the Public Good

Moderator: Sandy Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Panelists: Carl Choper, Interfaith Alliance; Alan Jennings, Community Action Agency of the Lehigh Valley

Civic-minded Pennsylvanians struggle to overcome fragmentation into single issue groups perceived as special interests. Often, it seems, no one is attending to the community as a whole or offering a compelling overall vision that can compete with “small government, low taxes, the free market.” This workshop will feature regional and statewide efforts to fill the vacuum in advocacy for the public good – the engagement of Lehigh Valley civic leadership around an agenda aimed at promoting the health of older communities, and a new effort by the PA faith community to organize itself as a progressive force. What accounts for the success of the Lehigh Valley effort? What action steps could strengthen and diffuse efforts such as these? For example, do we need a network of regional think tanks along the model of the PA Economy League – but responsive to the community as a whole? Do we need a “New PA Society” with an explicit mission to transcend single issues and the resources, including wage insurance, to give leaders freedom to privilege the public good over organizational turf?

JUNE 2

Workshop Session 4: 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Roundtable: Linking Scholars and Students to Progressive Advocacy and Policy in PA

Moderator: Erin Carlin, KRC Consultant

Roundtable Participants: Chris Benner, PSU; Bev Cigler, PSU; Sean Flaherty, Franklin & Marshall College; Ebru Kongar, Dickinson College; Kenneth Mash, East Stroudsburg University; Graham Roth, America Votes

Mutual advantage might result from more cooperation between PA academics and KRC. Academics could expand their opportunities to “make a difference” and find internships for students. KRC might expand its research capacity, find spokespeople on key issues, get KRC reports into course curricula, and find quality staff. How can this potential be realized: what experience have scholars had collaborating with KRC or other progressive policy organizations? What models exist for effective cooperation between scholars and progressive think tanks? Are there specific ideas that would link KRC better with academics (e.g., a research advisory committee, a campus-based KRC office, a rotating senior research fellowship)? Who would help design a more sustained engagement between KRC and progressive scholars?

Workshop Session 5: 10:45 – 11:30 a.m.

Organized by Track: What did you learn? How will you apply it?

Facilitator: Sandy Strauss, Pennsylvania Council of Churches

General Session 3: 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Report Back from Workshop 5 – Group Discussion of New Rules for a New PA Economic Game