



The National Constitution Center's "Restoring the Guardrails of Democracy" Initiative

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August 29, 2022

In the wake of the 2020 election, the National Constitution Center launched its "[Restoring the Guardrails of Democracy](#)" initiative. We commissioned three teams—conservative, libertarian, and progressive—to identify potential reforms to address current threats to American democracy and strengthen its institutional guardrails. Team Conservative included [Sarah Isgur](#), [Jonah Goldberg](#), and [David French](#)—all of *The Dispatch*. Team Libertarian included [Clark Neily](#) and [Walter Olson](#) of the Cato Institute and [Ilya Somin](#) of the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University. Team Progressive included [Edward Foley](#) of The Ohio State University and [Franita Tolson](#) of the USC Gould School of Law.

The three teams worked independently, but they converged in important ways. All three teams called for reforming the Electoral Count Act of 1887 (though Team Conservative's report didn't say this explicitly because, as Sarah Isgur explained during our [launch program](#), it was so important they "just thought that went without saying"). The conservative and progressive teams both proposed reforms to the primary system. They also both described education as central to preserving democracy, with Team Conservative calling for reinvigorating history education and focusing on teaching students critical thinking skills, and Team Progressive calling for strengthening civic numeracy (whereas Team Libertarian focused on expanding foot voting as an alternative to increasing civic knowledge).

We hope that the Guardrails of Democracy Initiative, like other National Constitution Center projects such as the [Madisonian Commission](#) and the ongoing [Constitution Drafting Project](#), contributes to a nonpartisan national conversation about the most important challenges facing American democracy and the best ways to meet them.