Taking Democracy to Scale™

AmericaSpeaks was founded in 1995 to explore and develop new and innovative mechanisms to link citizen voices to national governance. We are dedicated to making sure that Americans can participate more directly and with greater impact in the governance processes that most affect their lives.

AmericaSpeaks’ 21st Century Town Meeting technology transforms the traditional “town meeting” by integrating the best of face-to-face, facilitated dialogue with state-of-the-art technology to support forums of several thousand people at a time. Through the use of interactive television, we have expanded the town meeting format to a national scale, connecting thousands of people across multiple cities simultaneously while preserving the intimacy of face-to-face dialogue and meeting time-tables demanded by the media and policymakers.

The event was designed to be a prototype for more deliberative processes at the local level, with all public officials and candidates invited to participate.

For more information, contact AmericaSpeaks at info@americaspeaks.org or call (202) 299-0570.

Building the Deliberative Democracy Movement

Across the nation, a wide array of innovative organizations have been experimenting, many on a larger scale, with different models for establishing deliberative processes that link citizen voice to policymaking.

Over the last year, AmericaSpeaks has conducted research on the nascent field of deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy engages a broadly representative portion of the public in neutral, iterative discussions of issues and policies that are directly linked to governance. At its core, deliberative democracy is concerned with ensuring that the reasoned voice of citizens impacts the public policy process.

AmericaSpeaks believes it is time to create formal mechanisms at the national level, that will connect citizens to the national policymaking process in ways that are honest, fair, and absent the typical partisan politics that currently dominate the process.

With the recent convening of an international conference of researchers, practitioners, technologists, journalists, academics and government officials, AmericaSpeaks has joined with more than 20 other organizations to create a national consortium for deliberative democracy that will:

- Demonstrate national public deliberations on critical policy issues using multiple methods to support participation
- Integrate online and face-to-face approaches
- Develop the elements of a national infrastructure for democratic deliberation that is connected to local capacity
- Integrate research and practice in the field
- Reduce barriers to inclusion for any reason.

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