

**POLITICAL  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATES**

**2023-2027**

**POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



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# FRIENDS,

Political Research Associates was founded in a time of ferocious backlash against civil rights, feminism, gay liberation, and unions—years when “Let’s Make America Great Again” was Ronald Reagan’s presidential slogan. Since our start in 1981, PRA has equipped generations of social justice strategists, civic leaders, and journalists with rigorous research to resist government repression and to arrest the advances of supremacist, authoritarian, and antidemocratic movements.

When pundits penned obituaries for White supremacy and the Christian Right and declared America a post-racial society, PRA kept our focus on the growing infrastructure, influence, and power of racist and patriarchal nationalists.

Now, with the deepening crisis of civic institutions and the rising threats of authoritarianism and political violence in the U.S. (and beyond), PRA has never been in higher demand. Nor have we felt more keenly our responsibility to level up to meet the moment.

This five-year strategic plan is not only about maintaining excellence in the spheres of research and analysis, but also about growth and evolution as we respond to changing conditions, introduce new ways of working, and provide more resources for our partners.

While our vision, mission, and strategy have shifted somewhat, our commitment has not. More than ever, PRA’s charge is to turn our research and analysis into action—and catalyze action into power.

In scores of interviews conducted for this plan, social justice organizers called on PRA to provide more research tailored to strategizing. They asked us to increase our capacity to accompany existing and emergent networks, and to make our work available to more audiences by expanding our communications infrastructure. We took these recommendations to heart.

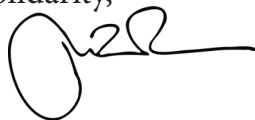
Our three-pronged approach to the long arc struggle ahead of us can be summarized as Block, Build, and Transform: Block the further cap-

ture of cultural and governing power by antidemocratic forces; Build just, visionary alternatives by providing strategic counsel to leaders and movements that hold the greatest promise of leading us forward to a multi-racial, feminist, religiously plural, democratic future; and Transform our ways of relating to each other and to the natural world, knowing that the profound social, political, economic, and climate crises of our time call for deep, systemic change.

Even as we expand and innovate, PRA will hold true to our founder's principals: rigorous documentation; nonpartisan independence; commitment to inform strategic action; defense of civil liberties; and an unwavering focus on the bigoted and antidemocratic forces we must overcome.

We at PRA are proud of our track record, grateful for our partnerships, and called to the work outlined in these pages. We invite you to share in the vision of our amazing board and staff and to join with us as we move into this exciting next phase. Please let us know what you think, and welcome to the next five years of PRA!

Solidarity,



Tarso Luís Ramos  
PRA Executive Director



## MISSION

Political Research Associates is a social justice research and strategy center devoted to supporting organizations, civic leaders, journalists, and social sectors that are building a more just and inclusive democratic society. We provide changemakers with strategic insights and actionable research in order to identify, disrupt, and compete with movements and institutions that undermine democracy, justice, and human rights.

## VISION

We envision a just and inclusive democratic society free from oppression and exploitation—a society in which supremacist and authoritarian forces no longer wield significant cultural or political power.

## IMPACT

PRA informs how changemakers understand and respond to antidemocratic threats.

Since 1981, PRA has served as a leading research and strategy resource for civil rights and social justice organizations—democracy’s practitioners and innovators. Our core research areas include religious and racial nationalism, authoritarianism, and campaigns rooted in gendered, anti-queer bigotry.

We strategize directly with values-aligned organizing, advocacy, and philanthropic partners who share our commitment to building a broadly inclusive and equitable democratic society.

PRA’s research analysts provide expert commentary and background analysis for local and national journalists and media outlets.

PRA produces investigative reports, articles, and tools, and publishes the peer-reviewed quarterly magazine *The Public Eye* as well as the online outlet Religion Dispatches.

Refer to our new 501(c)4 for reliable information to help power your campaigns.

# ***THE THREAT HAS CHANGED. TO SUCCEED, WE MUST CHANGE***

We believe rigorous research on authoritarian and supremacist groups is essential for developing more effective responses to the assault on democracy.

Movements rooted in racial and religious nationalism are moving aggressively to capture governing power in America (and beyond). After decades of building infrastructure and influence, the threat of right-wing authoritarianism has become real and imminent.

Faced with challenges unprecedented in our time, U.S. social justice and democracy groups must evolve to succeed in these new conditions.

## **WHAT'S NEEDED:**

Rigorous, values-aligned, and action-oriented sources of information and analysis about anti-democracy movements

A paradigm shift for how civil society addresses the existential crisis posed by antidemocratic, authoritarian, and supremacist movements.

Counsel and partnership on strategies for blocking threats and building powerful democracy and justice movements.

# **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

# 1. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Equip social justice organizations, civic leaders, journalists, & other partners with timely, actionable research on antidemocratic, authoritarian, and supremacist trends & movements.



## PRA WILL:

- Produce strategic assessments of antidemocratic groups, leaders, and campaigns
- Distribute interactive research tools for the democracy and social justice fields
- Expand capacities for trend spotting & early detection of new threats
- Generate investigative research and journalism on underestimated risks
- Design actionable tool kits for organizers



# 2. NARRATIVE CHANGE

Shift the paradigm for how civil society addresses the existential crisis posed by 21st century antidemocratic, authoritarian, and supremacist movements.

**RELIGION DISPATCHES**  
CHRISTIAN RIGHT DENIALISM IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER: A REPORTER'S GUIDE TO THE NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION

1 GOVERNMENT  
2 MEDIA  
3 ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT  
4 BUSINESS  
5 EDUCATION  
6 REGION  
7 FAMILY

**npr**  
< She was a popular yoga guru. Then she embraced QAnon conspiracy theories

Transcript  
GUERIN: One of the central concepts in QAnon is that there's a secret alternative truth. Ben Lorber is a researcher at Political Research Associates, a think tank that monitors right wing movements.  
BEN LORBER: And you see that in also a lot of yoga and wellness communities - right? - where, you know, you stumble upon a kind of hidden knowledge that only you and a select few others have access to.

**teenVOGUE**  
The Narrative on Trans Rights Is Being Shaped by Right-Wing Media

This op-ed argues that the LGBTQ+ movement needs to do more to fight misinformation about trans people.

By **Alejandra Caraballo** and **Heron Greenesmith**  
March 17, 2022

In February, the indicted Texas attorney general Ken Paxton sent a letter to Texas state representative Matt Krause offering his legal opinion on gender-affirming care for trans youth. His opinion, despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, is that such care amounts to child abuse. Texas governor Greg Abbott then vouched for Paxton's opinion, directing state officials and even private citizens to report and investigate the families of trans youth for affirming their children's gender identity.

What happened in Texas did not happen in a vacuum. The foundation for these cruel actions has been years in the making, and the signs were ignored by mainstream advocates and movement leaders who thought it could never get this bad.

What led us here?

## PRA WILL:

- Expose and challenge White nationalist, theocratic, and other bigoted actors and campaigns
- Replace outdated frameworks and false solutions
- Shift narratives toward a systems-oriented understanding of threats and solutions
- Work with other “watchdog” groups to support democracy and justice organizing
- Connect our experts to legacy and social media

# 3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with justice-oriented groups and organizers at national, state, and local levels on strategies for blocking antidemocratic movements.

## PRA WILL:

- Provide sustained strategic counsel to key civil society partners
- Support national initiatives and select regional strategies
- Document and disseminate strategic lessons learned
- Publish reliable information about the electoral Far Right and other campaigns through our c4



# 4. INTERNAL CULTURE

Establish the optimal resources, infrastructure, and talent to achieve results in an environment where staff can grow and thrive.



## PRA WILL:

- Prioritize culture of equity, inclusion, and transparency to foreground sustainability of the work
- Raise resources from donor activists and institutions to expand PRA's capacity to meet the needs of our field
- Emphasize feedback, evaluation, and learning to ensure that PRA endures as an adaptable, strategic, and effective organization





**Political Research Associates  
provides the analysis needed  
to create influential  
interventions and transform  
national narratives.**



# Our Team



Tarso Luís Ramos  
Executive Director



Amanda Hukanović  
HR & Operations Director



Greeley O'Connor  
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Koki Mendis  
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Orlisha Fox  
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Steven Gardiner  
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Abigail Hadfield  
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Evan Derkacz  
Executive Editor -  
Religion Dispatches



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Communications Manager



Olivia Lawrence-Weilmann  
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Zoe Newton  
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Ben Lorber  
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Ethan Fauré  
Senior Research Analyst



Frederick Clarkson  
Senior Research Analyst



Heron Greenesmith  
Senior Research Analyst



Hialy Gutierrez  
Deputy Research  
Director



Micaela Pacheco Ceballos  
Research Program Manager

**Not pictured:**

Habiba Farh  
Research Analyst

# Our Board

**Fatema Ahmad, Saqib Bhatti, Kevin Bruyneel, Linda Burnham, Ginna Green, Jeyn Levison, Orson Moon, Carin Mrotz, Charles Ocitti, Connie Razza, Serena Sebring**

# SUPPORT US

Your support enables us to provide changemakers with strategic insights and actionable research to block antidemocratic forces.

[Informyourresistance.org/get-involved/](https://informyourresistance.org/get-involved/)

*Political Research Associates is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.  
All donations are tax deductible.*



# THANK YOU

PRA extends our heartfelt thanks to the amazing team who helped put this strategic plan together: Political Research Associates staff and Board; Linshuang Lu and Molly Mead of Praxis Consulting Group; Kai Alegre of Kai Alegre Designs; and our partners.

Dedicated to the memory of our visionary founder, Jean V. Hardisty.

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*WITH HEARTS OPEN, FISTS UP, AND FEET FIRMLY GROUNDED IN THE FACTS,  
POLITICAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, 2023*





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