

# IN COMMON

The Official Newsletter for Common Cause Members

## WE DID IT!

### Common Cause Members Earn Historic Victory



Common Cause member and plaintiff, Becky Harper, alongside Common Cause attorney, Neal Katyal following oral arguments.

Conservative Judge J. Michael Luttig called it, “the single best oral argument I have ever heard made before the Supreme Court of the United States.”

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — We held our breath as the decision was coming down in *Moore v. Harper*, one of the most critical U.S. Supreme Court election cases in history.

It had the potential to upend our system of checks and balances and hand unfettered control of our elections to state legislatures. It was pushed by election deniers who sought to end 200 years of precedent and the separation of powers.

Then the verdict. **We had won!**

Thanks to the support of allies and members like you, Common Cause brought the case to SCOTUS to protect fair maps and fair elections. We fought to protect the people’s voting power and so much more that was at stake.

However, despite this latest victory, there is more work to be done to prevent further attacks on our democracy. *“It’s why we continue to push for states to adopt fair and equitable approaches around redistricting and are calling on Congress to pass meaningful voter protections to ensure our democracy keeps power where it was intended to be, with the people of this country,”* said Kathay Feng, vice president of programs at Common Cause.

And we can’t acknowledge how far we’ve come without mentioning the heroism of one member in particular: Becky Harper from North Carolina, who was the plaintiff in the case. Harper has been fighting gerrymandering for years since joining Common Cause. Thank you, Becky!

Regardless of potential future threats to our democracy, Common Cause will be ready to continue the fight to protect our democratic rights thanks to the steady, generous support of members like you.

# Common Cause Members Join Forces to Save Local Journalism

Common Cause members submitted **6,434 comments** to the Federal Communications Commission calling for legal action to stop the merger.



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Common Cause members like you have led a successful campaign since last June to block a potential merger between hedge fund Standard General and media company TEGNA.

## This May—victory!

The merger would have caused massive cuts to both jobs and responsible journalism, putting profit over public good. The key to a strong and healthy democracy is an informed and engaged public. Receiving trust-

worthy and informative news — especially at the local level — is how we stay engaged.

The win comes after months of advocacy by Common Cause members, including submitting over 6,000 comments to the Federal Communications Commission opposing the consolidation.

Common Cause member Joseph K. wrote, *“The mandate of the FCC is to regulate and safeguard the ‘Public Airwaves’ (bandwidth) for the*

*public. The public airwaves/media outlets have been swamped with fraud and disinformation that has influenced our elections and physically threatened the functioning of our democracy. Speech is protected in this country, but fraud is prohibited everywhere. You are the watchdog. End it.”*

Thanks to the hard work of Common Cause members and allies, we stopped what would’ve been the largest hedge fund media takeover in American history.

---

# Common Cause Members Advocate for Greater Digital Equity

*Members help bridge digital divide by responding to request for comments*

**IN MAY**, Common Cause members responded to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s (NTIA) Request for Comments on three Digital Equity Act programs pushing for digital inclusion and equity.

The comments were submitted based on input from 2,500 Common Cause members and on behalf of our 1.5 million members, who believe an accessible internet is key to an effective democracy.

Common Cause submitted a letter making recommendations to ensure NTIA funding supports feasible and people-focused programs and addresses the internet connectivity needs of marginalized communities. We presented stories and testimony from marginalized

communities to supplement incomplete data and involve them in the implementation process.

Common Cause member Diane K. from Wisconsin wrote, *“I live in an apartment complex for seniors & I have a tablet so I rely on the internet to keep in touch with all activities I do [as well as] helping people to get registered to VOTE. And other things to keep me connected to my community & family & friends.”*

We thank our members who contributed to the letter, and we recommit ourselves to continuing to work to close the digital divide and ensure that all members of society are digitally prepared to participate in our democracy.

# ACP Week of Action Report Back

**THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (ACP)** is a short-term internet access affordability program meant to temporarily provide internet bill relief during the height of the pandemic. It provides eligible households with discounted or free internet. However, since the pandemic and the effects of it are ongoing, the ACP is essentially keeping millions of people from losing internet access.

In June, Common Cause hosted a week of action to promote the Affordable Connectivity Program.

We spoke to Common Cause members directly about their internet access experiences and why the ACP is so important. They shared with us how they rely on internet access not only for participating in our democracy but also in their day-to-day lives.

Carol S. from Washington spoke about how internet access leads to education access and said, *“I live solely on my Social Security income, and the Affordable Connectivity Program helps me pay my internet bill. I am a volunteer elementary school tutor and need access to the internet to take classes about the latest scientific findings about learning.”*

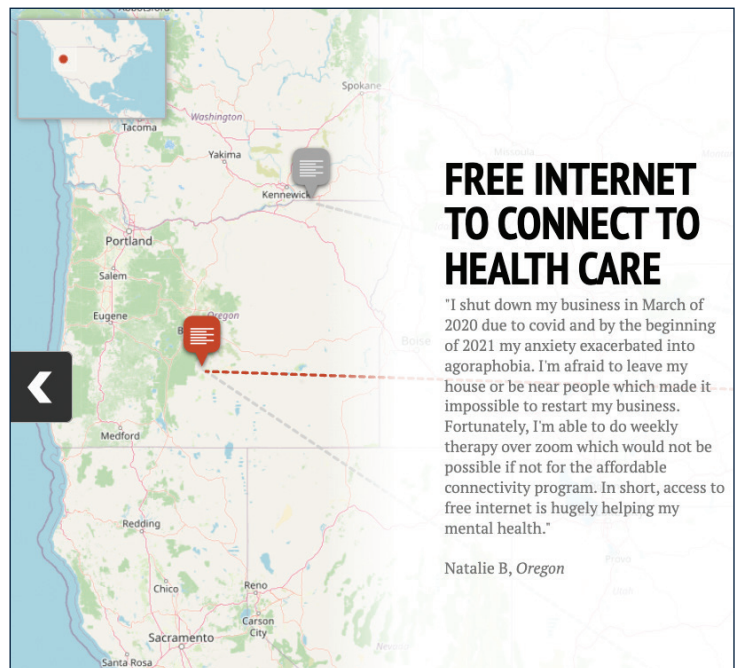
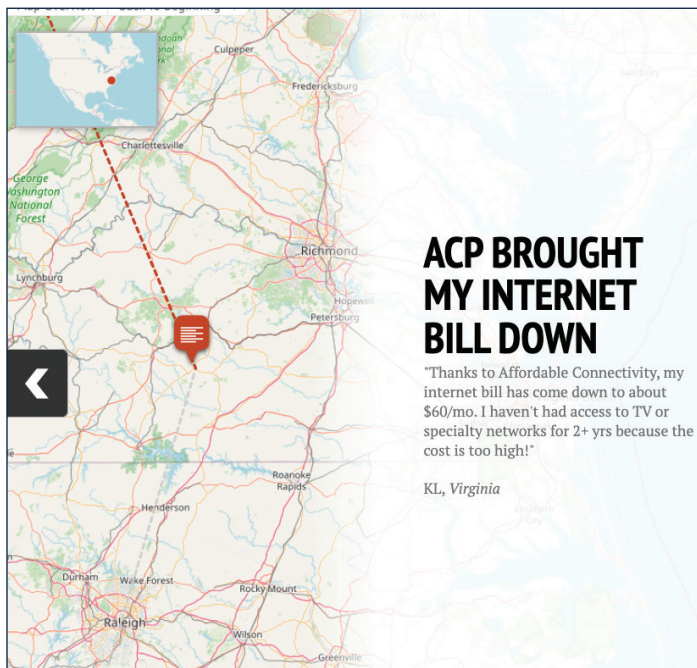
Other members expressed general gratitude to the ACP for taking away their internet bill. Deborah D. from North Carolina said, *“Actually, I really like this service.*



*It's faster than my previous one, and other than a glitch during installation, I've had excellent service. I am very grateful to be eligible for the ACP so I pay zero every month to access the internet.”*

To read more stories on member experiences with the Affordable Connectivity Program, go to

[www.commoncause.org/acp](http://www.commoncause.org/acp)



# Common Cause Members Take Big Step Toward Fixing the Broken Electoral College

We all know it. The Electoral College is broken.

It's an unjust system that allows some votes to count more than others. And it can put candidates in the Oval Office who have earned fewer votes than their opponent.

That is why Common Cause members have been working so hard in recent years to fix the broken Electoral College by passing the National Popular Vote Compact.

Since 2019, you've help add Colorado, Delaware, New Mexico, and Oregon — pledging 24 more electoral votes of the 270 needed to enact the Compact.

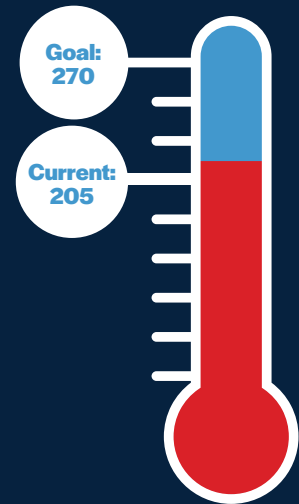
And we just added Minnesota and its 10 electors ... bringing our total to 205 electoral votes.

Common Cause members were real heroes. While our issue experts worked in the Capitol to educate legislators from both parties, our members poured on the pressure — driving over 550 letters to elected officials in support of the bill.

**It's a win in Minnesota, but a victory for every voter.**

Next, we have our sights set on Michigan and possibly 16 more electoral votes. We'll need the ongoing support and advocacy of every member to succeed.

## Number of Electors Pledged to National Popular Vote



*Congratulations*  
**2023 GRADUATES!**

Hannah Anderson	Timesha Hall
Diavian Brewton	Rheyann Kirby
Ajhani Carroll	Alexis Lawson
Charlie Collins	Tanika Powell
Jordan Collins	Jessica Ross
Lindsey Dodson	Ryan Shaw
Saliha Garcia	Thaddeous Stewart
Michael Gilyard	Eugenia Williams
Rondez Green	Alexis Wood

## Congratulations to Our Graduates!

*Common Cause would like to congratulate our fellows who graduated this summer!*

Here are this year's graduates from the Common Cause youth program. Known as the Alliance for Emerging Power, it includes our Internship Program, Student Action Alliance Democracy Fellowship, Ambassador Program, and Election Protection Fellowship. Thanks to generous support from our members, we are working to build the next generation of democracy leaders through advancing their advocacy and leadership skills. We equip them with the tools they need to hold power accountable on their campus, in their community, and beyond. We expand their network and move them up the ladder of civic engagement to boost either their career or their volunteer trajectory.

# Members Taking Action

## YouTube: Stop election denialism

**36,932 signers**

Members are writing to YouTube CEO Neal Mohan to stop the spread of election disinformation. YouTube and other social media sites have become the target of right-wing attempts to spread harmful content. This is jeopardizing consumerism and putting our democracy at risk.



## DOJ: Trump is not above the law

**18,154 signers**

Members are demanding that the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) uphold its mission to hold everyone accountable to the law – including former President Donald Trump. Trump was indicted for stealing and sharing national defense secrets and trying to conceal his wrongdoings. Trump has violated our national security and put our democracy in danger. DOJ must take action if Trump is found guilty.

## George Santos: You must resign

**29,925 signers**

Constituents deserve to have elected officials who are accountable to them and to the law. Representative George Santos lied to make his way to Congress and is under investigation by the DOJ and House Ethics Committee. We are calling on George Santos to resign.



## State Legislators: Protect our elections

**19,178 signers**

Big Money must stay out of elections. Earlier this year, legislation was being introduced to allow corporations to vote in Delaware's town elections. That could mean corporate owners could vote in Delaware while still voting in their actual hometowns – effectively allowing wealthy business owners to vote twice! Our state legislators MUST protect our democracy against anti-voter legislation.

## Congress: Pass Supreme Court Code of Conduct

**60,491 signers**

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has several ethical issues, including private donations made to him and his family by members of the GOP. We must ensure our justices are acting with respect for the laws they work to uphold and are held accountable when they don't. We are calling on Congress to pass a Supreme Court code of conduct.



Ready to take action? Go to [www.commoncause.org/petitions](https://www.commoncause.org/petitions)

# THANK YOU, VERNELL GRISSOM

After 45 years at Common Cause, Vernell Grissom, the Common Cause director of membership services, has retired.

When she joined Common Cause in May 1978, her desk was located next to Common Cause founder John Gardner's office. She has known every Common Cause president. She has mentored hundreds upon hundreds of employees, interns, and volunteers. She has helped thousands and thousands of members make their voices heard and exercise their rights.

Vernell has been our constant. She has been a friend, a colleague, and an inspiration.

Before her passing, late Common Cause President Karen Hobert Flynn shared this about Vernell:

*"Sometimes there's nothing quite like a good old-fashioned phone call. That voice on the other end can brighten your day. And for the past 45 years, one voice has been on the other end of a call to Common Cause ready to brighten our members' day."*

Vernell was the last Common Cause employee to work alongside John Gardner, and we think it's appropriate to share her favorite quote of his with all of you today:

*"The society which scorns excellence in plumbing as a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy: neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water."*

**Thank you, Vernell, for being the best plumber in the business for 45 years.**

