



INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY (IDEA)

Dear friends,

I'm so pleased to reach out today with the inaugural issue of IDEA's new quarterly newsletter! We have been growing rapidly for the past couple of years, adapting our Deliberative Town Hall model from its origins in the U.S. Congress to parliaments and jurisdictions all over the world. We have added new staff and global NGO partners, among other developments. I'm excited to start sharing updates on our work more regularly.

From Washington, D.C. to Bende, Nigeria, our team is helping elected representatives and their constituents collaborate more constructively. Below, we report on some highlights from the year so far. If you have any feedback, questions, or just want to say hello, please feel free to write us back any time — we'd love to hear from you!

— Michael Neblo, IDEA Director



Deliberative Town Halls in Nigeria

IDEA organized the first-ever Deliberative Town Halls in Nigeria last year, with some of the most surprising results we've ever seen. We're planning to dig even deeper to understand those results as we head back to Nigeria in the coming year to conduct further research

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Rebuilding Democracy's Social Foundations

The organizers of the 2025 Chautauqua Forum on Democracy invited IDEA director Michael Neblo to participate in the forum, which focused on rebuilding democracy's foundations in norms, trust, and civic culture. The forum featured keynotes by Melody Barnes of the Karsh Institute of Democracy at UVA and David French, an opinion writer at the *New York Times*.

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On-Campus Navigating Promises and Practicalities with Dr. Kevin Kosar

In January, IDEA and [Listen. Learn. Discuss.](#) hosted AEI Fellow Kevin Kosar for a two-day event on Congress, Chevron, budget gridlock, term limits, and governance requiring expertise and citizen engagement.

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Michael Neblo Named 2025 Distinguished Scholar

Michael Neblo has received The Ohio State University's 2025 Distinguished Scholar Award, one of the university's highest honors. The award recognizes his global leadership in deliberative democracy and his impact in bridging theory and practice.

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From IDEA to the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership

Following a six-year journey with IDEA, Dr. Bear Brown, a recent Ohio State Ph.D. graduate, has joined the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership at the City College of New York as an assistant professor.

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Coming Soon ...

Deliberation and Constituency Development in Malawi

Members of Parliament. The project will evaluate how public input shapes decisions on the IDEA has begun a new pilot study in Malawi to assess how Deliberative Town Halls can influence participants.

AI Research

Ryan Kennedy led research development using AI polling techniques for deliberative and public opinion research and partnered with Cloud Research Platform.

About IDEA

We are a multi-disciplinary research institute advancing evidence-based democratic innovations that connect citizens and elected officials for civil, valuable conversations. We design, implement, and evaluate programs like Deliberative Town Halls and Common Ground for Action, Connecting to Congress (C2C), and Connecting Classroom to Congress (CCC) with leaders in the U.S. and abroad.



Engage with IDEA



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