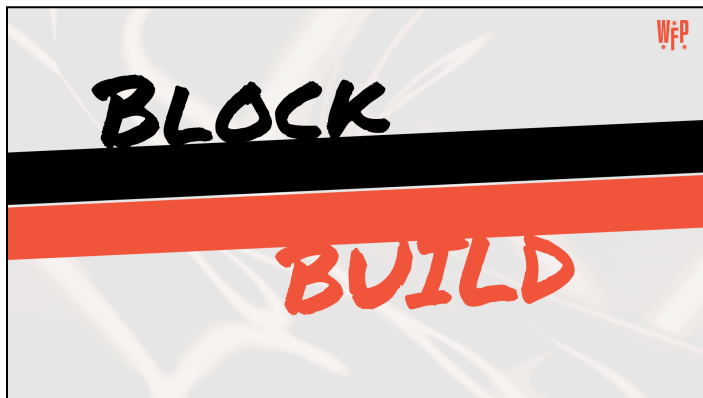


# WORKING FAMILIES PARTY **MASS CALLS**

## **Mass Call #9 - Political Education Script**



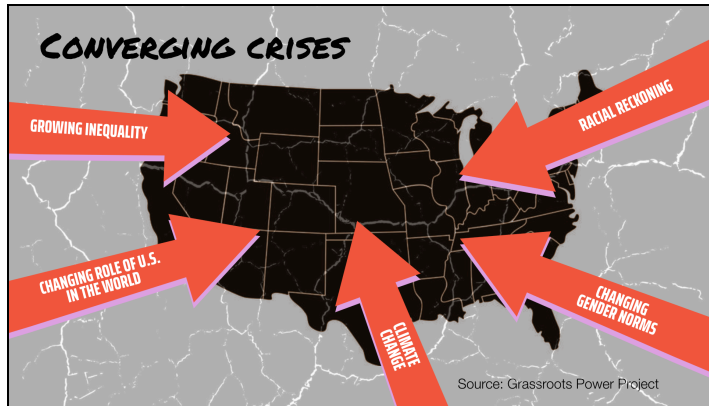
- As always on these mass calls, we want to ground ourselves in some political education. We have been doing these mass calls for a while now, if you like getting this kind of political education opportunities, you should text **MASS CALL to 30403** to find out about more.
- Today we are going to focus on the fact we are losing working class people, y'all.
- And in case you are worried we are just going to admire a problem here, we are

also going to talk about what we do about it. We are going to hear from Maurice Mitchell, the National Director of the Working Families Party a little later, who is going to lay down a plan...so stick around for that.

- When we have a shared understanding about the conditions we are organizing in, it allows us to understand that the things that our organization is doing “over here” are related to the things that organizations are doing “over there.” This bigger picture helps us break down silos and understand the full nature of the crisis conditions we are working in.
- In this section we will be talking about political parties for educational purposes only.



- In earlier mass calls we talked about the MAGA threat. MAGA is a distillation of a bunch of historical movements on the right.
- There is a historical precedent for MAGA. And second, MAGA represents something more dangerous than any of those past right-wing movements.
- The reason MAGA is more dangerous is that there's a more fundamental breakdown in the existing order going on right now. The way the world works is turned on its head. This is happening in the United States, and it is happening all over the world.



- So why is there a breakdown in the existing order of things?
- Here is a way to picture it from the US perspective. Right now there are a series of crises all converging:
  - Growing inequality
  - The changing role of the US in the world
  - Climate change
  - Changing gender norms and the backlash to it
  - And the racial reckoning and its backlash
- All of these forces are bearing down on us, intersecting in all kinds of ways. It's creating incredible pressure on the status quo. People's trust in our institutions is breaking down on a fundamental level.
- And combine this with the fact that for many, many people, life has just gotten harder on a day to day level. Groceries are more expensive. We can't afford a home. We're buried in debt.



- Enter into this mix a demagogue like Donald Trump – who is both creating AND riding the wave of this popular resentment. The conditions are ripe for MAGA to be so much more dangerous than its predecessors.
- And while it is easy to just pin it all on Trump, that's not really doing us any favors. We need to push ourselves to think more strategically about this situation. It is worth digging into those more deeply...



- This is the context for a political crisis too. We have talked about this a lot on earlier calls. It is defined by four interconnected parts.
- The first part is that the Republican Party is in control of an openly authoritarian faction. This is crystal clear.



- Let's dig in deeper on points 2 and 3 on this slide.
- Bullet # 2 says "Much of the Democratic Party is controlled by ultra-wealthy people and the forces of multinational corporations"
- To be fair, both major parties are.
- Because of the increase in money in politics, BOTH parties have become increasingly dependent on corporate donations.
- This prevents Democrats from putting forward truly transformative policies for working people. It's not possible to serve two masters - the ultra-wealthy and working people at the same time.
- This is why the policy solutions look the same. They are tweaks to a system because folx who are getting rich, don't really want things to change.
- Bullet # 3 says - Democrats are losing working class people (of all races)
- The Democratic Party is losing working-class support, while the Republicans are reaching out to these voters—and it's working.
- A lot of us grew up understanding that the Republicans were the party of the board room and the country club and Democrats were the party of the union hall, the public school PTA, and maybe the Black church basement.
- Working People flocked to the Democratic Party during the New Deal era.

Attracted by transformative policies like the creation of a minimum wage that moved millions out of poverty and the expansion of unions that drove up wages and benefits, allowing many working families to begin to thrive, not just survive. Of course, there were many communities left out of those gains, but that New Deal and Civil Rights era built an alignment between working people and the Democratic party.

- But we are seeing that change. More and more, building a winning voter coalition with working class voters in an election has been like trying to fill a bucket when there is a big hole in the bottom of it.



- So the New Deal era is long over and that alignment has been breaking down.
- Today, wealth inequality is at historic levels. While America's production goes up, our workers are not benefiting. Tons of workers are now in a gig economy with low wages and no benefits.
- Since the 1970's basically every administration has adopted a neoliberal policy agenda. This is a governing philosophy that basically says that the only job for the government is to protect the market and the free flow of capital. It has led to decades of cuts to benefits, privatization of our schools and other public services, and people losing a sense that the government is even capable of helping them or their families in any real way.
- Neoliberalism has weakened the bargaining power of workers, and transferred wealth upward to the 1%. When we talk about there being a one-sided class war that the rich are waging against us...neoliberalism is their battle plan.



- But if people – and public opinion – were just products of the economy, it would be too simple. The Republican political strategist, Lee Atwater, once said, “perception is reality.” In other words, it is not enough to simply govern – it matters **HOW** people **perceive** the way you are governing, and **WHO** they **perceive** is benefitting.
- Too often both parties are fighting “culture wars” that tell a different story about who is “winning” and who is “losing.” These are stories of division that paint immigrants, gangs and petty crime, and foreign countries as the problem.
- And before you know it, we aren’t telling a story that makes everyday working people feel seen, heard, and inspired to come together. Instead we are telling a story of distrust and blame – of each other!
- We have a fractured media environment. And nowadays people are not so much voting for someone or something, but rather against it. In this context it is very easy to create these alternative narratives. And unfortunately, facts matter less than perception.

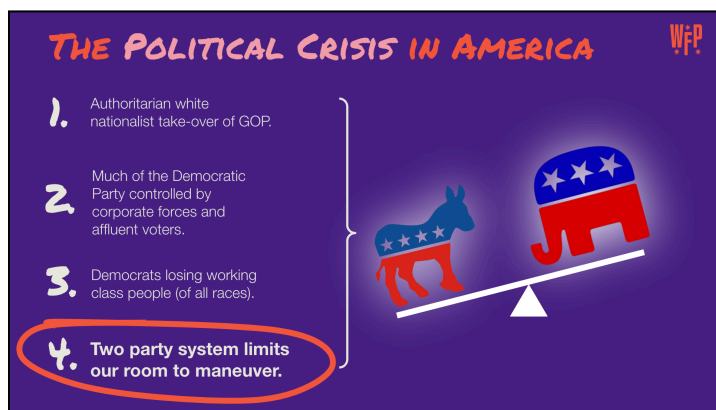


- None of this is unique to the United States.
- When inequality grows, corporations and the rich often support authoritarian leaders who will keep things as they are. We're seeing the trend of authoritarian forces growing worldwide.
- The far right is gaining power in places like the UK, India, and Germany, and working class people are moving right too.
- The traditional right party in the UK, the Tories, has been taken over by a hard right. Their election too took on racist and anti-immigration themes. While the Labour party prevailed in the most recent elections, they are reacting by moving to the right.
- In India, Narendra Modi has weaponized Hindu nationalism to become one of the most powerful prime ministers' in the country's history.
- And in Germany, a country whose entire post-war political culture has been built around the idea of "never again," the far-right is now the second strongest party in the country and is winning state-level elections already.
- So let's be real: there is a global movement which is seeding chaos around the world. The details are always a little different from country to country, but the basic tendencies towards ethnic and religious nationalism, towards a working class that is moving to the right, and towards rightwing movements that are not only stronger, but bolder and less willing to play by the traditional rules of the democracies in which they operate – these tendencies are all there.

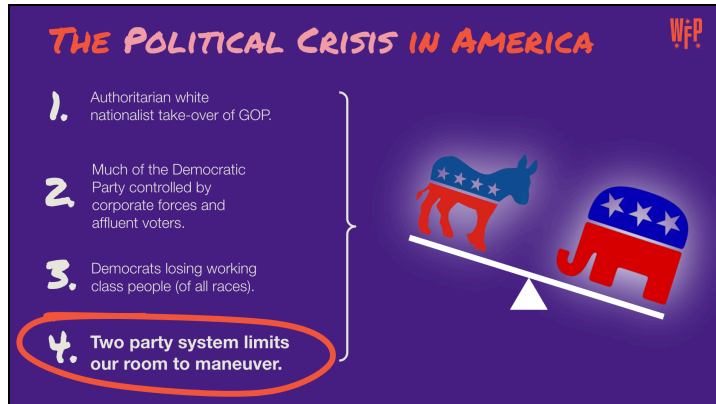




- The final aspect of the political crises in America is the two party system.
- Unlike the other countries we just talked about, which are all multi-party political systems, the United States has a rigid two-party system. Why this is can be a subject for us to talk about at another time.
- The first thing to say, though, is that just changing the system in the US won't make any of these problems go away. If that were the case, all of these multi-party systems we just discussed would be doing just fine. But to ignore the role that the two party system plays in our particular situation in the United States misses a key piece of the puzzle.



- Our political system works as a zero-sum equation. If the Republican Party loses strength, it mechanically translates into strength for the Democratic Party.



- It works in the other direction too. If Democrats lose support it directly translates into strength for Republicans.
- This makes it really hard for working people that are angry and want to punish elected officials and parties, and to do so without unintended consequences.
- And because the margin of victory in many races like for President is so small, there is basically no wiggle room in this equation right now. It doesn't matter if that loss of support is in the form of people staying home, voting for the other party, or voting for a third party candidate. All of it mechanically transfers power to the other side of the two party equation.
- So if you have a situation where, for both economic and cultural reasons, working class people are pulling away from the Democratic Party, even if they do not automatically join up with the Republican Party, it still tips the scale.
- Again, we don't mention this as either a cop-out or to suggest that if we had a different political system all of our problems would be magically solved. But we do need to understand the ways in which this dynamic shapes the set of options we have.

## MINORITY RULE vs. A MASS MOVEMENT

- What this boils down to is that all of us on this call have an urgent need to build and rebuild our power.
- The political crisis we have been talking about has been decades in the making, and it won't be an easy fix to solve it. It won't happen in one year, or even four or eight years.
- In a little while we are going to hear from Maurice Mitchell, the national director of the Working Families Party, about what we need to do to be building and rebuilding our power. And spoiler alert: the things that we do over the next few weeks will either put us on the path towards that goal, or move us further away.

Watch the recordings and download the materials at:

[www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls](http://www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls)

### MASS CALL #1: WHAT'S THE SCORE IN AMERICA

In this call we talk about the threat posed by the MAGA movement, and the need for a united front strategy to defeat it. We make clear that in the context of the ongoing political crisis in America, elections are a doorway, not a destination.

Download the Curriculum



(Sample slides from the curriculum)



- If you like what you see in this political education module, or if you want to get caught up on the political education sessions we have been doing on these calls since this spring, you can watch all the recordings at [www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls](http://www.workingfamilies.org/masscalls).

- If you want to get reminded about our next WFP mass calls and keep learning with us, text MASS CALL to 30403!