

MESSAGING GUIDE





**WE
MAKE
THE
FUTURE**

dsO 
COMMUNICATIONS

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WE MAKE THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION: MESSAGING FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

The past few years have redefined what it means to reckon with our past, advocate for better in our present and expand the possibilities for our future. In 2020, the pandemic and summer uprising following attacks against Black people rapidly transformed our lives, exposed the injustices that the powerful few have unleashed since our founding, and opened up the possibility for a radical realignment in our politics in a pivotal election year. We turned out in record numbers to elect new leaders who would care for us and we ensured that the will of the people prevailed.

Now, advocates have the opportunity to build on our transformational wins by focusing public attention on creating a country where everyone is safe and free, with a care system and economy that works for all of us, no exceptions.

But we must also contend with the race-baiting and fear mongering of the opposition. A powerful few seek to hold onto power by unleashing new horrors in order to distract and divide us based on what we look like or where we come from. They fuel hardship by laying off Americans by the millions, denying relief in a pandemic, and erecting barriers to voting in an attempt to silence Black, Indigenous, young and new Americans.

We have a clear vision for a better future: by coming together to rewrite the rules and make the wealthiest few contribute their fair share, we can ensure that everyone — Black, white and brown, native and newcomer — can earn a good living and have a good life; we can resource our schools so that every child can pursue their dreams; and we can provide families with the care we all need to get and stay well. But too often, we focus on merely mitigating the harms the wealthy few have created, unintentionally putting our progressive vision out of sight and making the vision of something better feel out of reach.

To succeed in this moment, we must combat this cynicism and understandable despair that undermines our base's desire for sustained participation. We need to cut through the sense of inevitability our opposition has built. The truth is that the future is the sum of the changes we demand, the courage we display, and how we stand with and for each other when things get tough. The truth is that *we make the future*.

ABOUT WE MAKE THE FUTURE

We Make The Future (WMTF) is the new implementation home for the Race Class Narrative (RCN).¹ We combine strategic communications and coalition building to develop a shared narrative that motivates our base and persuades the middle for wins that benefit working people across issues, campaigns and geographies. Working in partnership with researchers, content creators, and community based organizations, we aid in the implementation of messaging research by building the capacity of communicators, organizers and spokespeople.

Through this messaging guide and other resources we offer content that can be adapted for different contexts. Everything contained here is available open source for use by your organizations and campaigns.

Learn more about We Make the Future at: wemakethefuture.us

ABOUT ASO COMMUNICATIONS

ASO Communications applies tools from cognition and linguistics to uncover where people are capable of going and how to use our words, images and stories to move them. We have more than a decade's experience crafting, testing, and implementing narratives to achieve progressive wins in the U.S., Australia, U.K. and elsewhere. In collaboration with Race Class Narrative Action (now We Make the Future), ASO played a major role in shaping the 2018 and 2020 election cycles in several states, helping craft and then launch statewide brands for progressive, multi-racial coalitions.

¹ *The Race Class Narrative originated through collaboration between Ian Haney López, Heather McGhee, Anat Shenker-Osorio, Lake Research Partners, Brilliant Corners, SEIU and Demos.*

HOW TO USE THE 'WE MAKE THE FUTURE' MESSAGING GUIDE

The core narratives in this guide can be used in many ways: in conversations on a canvass or among friends; in public statements, letters, and op-eds; in interviews and speeches; on social media and more. While they can be memorized like a script, they can also be adapted to your particular needs and circumstances.

When rolling out a branded campaign, you should integrate your campaign name as much as possible into your public communications. Therefore, your messages should incorporate and repeat your brand to create a surround sound effect that reinforces identity with your campaign across issues. Below, you'll see how we incorporated our brand of We Make the Future into several of the sample message frames.

Please use the guidance in here freely and as you see fit! We're absolute believers that if our words don't spread, they don't work and as such we are honored to have folks use this language verbatim.

OUR WINNING MESSAGES

All too often, progressives are asked to keep issues of racial justice and economic well being separate – or to remain silent about race at the risk of alienating the mythical middle we’re told we must appease. But our research shows that the way to persuade the middle is to mobilize our supporters to relentless repetition. To do that requires that we speak effectively on issues of race and class. Moreover, we find that effective messaging on multi-racial populism engages persuadable voters and acts as a critical response to the division and fear the opposition keeps peddling.

SAMPLE NARRATIVE LANGUAGE	ELEMENTS OF A RACE CLASS NARRATIVE
<p>No matter where we come from or what our color, most of us work hard for our families.</p>	<p>Begins rooted in unity and shared values, overtly naming race in a way that includes everyone</p>
<p>But today, certain politicians and their corporate donors profit by dividing us. They try to make us fear each other so we won’t come together to demand the schools, health care, and jobs all of our families need.</p>	<p>Names racial scapegoating and/or deliberate division as a weapon that enables economic harms to all of us</p>
<p>We need to go all in for all of us, joining together with people from all walks of life to make a better future for us all.</p>	<p>Emphasizes unity and collective action to solve problems</p>
<p>[OPTIONAL ADDITION] ...just like we won better wages, safer workplaces, and civil rights in our past.</p>	<p>...counters cynicism by evoking previous wins through cross racial solidarity</p>
<p>Together, we make the future, and we will rewrite the rules to make this a country where all of us can prosper.</p>	<p>Connects working together to positive benefits for all, activating the brand</p>

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF	BECAUSE
<p>People of different races and from different places</p> <p>Black, brown or white</p> <p>Whether you're Black or white, Asian or Latino, Native or newcomer...</p> <p>Whatever your... [<i>race / gender / color / religion / zip code / job</i>]</p> <p>No matter... [who you are / where you're from / what language you speak / how you pray / who you love / the color of your skin / where you live / what you do for a living / how much money you have in your wallet]...</p> <p>Whether we were born here, or chose to make this our home...</p>	<p>All people</p> <p>Everyone</p>	<p>Explicit reference to race engages people of color while keeping white listeners on board.</p> <p>We recommend using creative formulations to hook the audience while establishing a shared value at the outset of a message. The examples on the left are just a start — these opening phrases can be tailored closely to your community, issue, or geographic location. For example, Charles Booker used “from the Hood to the Holler” in Kentucky, while in Minnesota advocates used “from North Minneapolis to North Mankato, from Red Lake to Red Wing.” Broader geographic descriptions work too, such as “whether we live among corn fields or bodegas, forests or freeways.”</p>
<p>No matter our differences, most of us want pretty similar things</p>	<p>United we stand, divided we fall</p>	<p>“United we stand” can be a confusing set up from which to move to explicit division; it may be heard as a description of the present, not an aspiration for the future</p>
<p>Join together across racial differences</p>	<p>Join together in our communities</p>	<p>Making racial reference increases interest of our base and persuadables</p>

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF	BECAUSE
Our opponents blame new immigrants, Black people, and people struggling to make ends meet for our hard times	Our opponents are racist against new immigrants, Black people, and Muslims	Reframing racism as scapegoating helps draw the causal connection to economic concerns shared across race
Wealthy few who rig the rules Certain politicians	Powerful elites; the wealthy	Critical to specify we mean only certain people, thus adding “few,” and to name by behavior, not category or class
Corporation	Company	Company evokes small and local; people are measurably more hostile to “corporations”
Working people	Workers	Calling people workers reduces them to the role they play and eclipses their basic needs and desires as humans
Certain politicians deliberately deprive schools in Black and brown communities, denying students the resources to thrive A powerful few choose who will live and who will die through color-coded barriers to healthcare Corporations rig the rules to take from working people	Education/achievement gap between Black and white students Most fatal for people of color Growing disparities between rich and poor	The language of “disparities” and “gaps” obscures how these differing outcomes came to be, suggesting that they exist naturally — or worse, that the people harmed are the ones to blame (e.g. Black students aren’t working hard enough).

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF	BECAUSE
<p>Shared contribution</p> <p>Contribute our fair share</p>	<p>Tax burden; tax relief</p>	<p>“Burden” and “relief” reinforce the notion of taxes as an affliction</p>
<p>Residents</p> <p>Community members</p>	<p>Taxpayers</p>	<p>Labeling people taxpayers foregrounds finances and anti-government biases</p>
<p>Schools where our kids learn</p> <p>Roads we drive on</p> <p>Buses we take to work</p>	<p>Public education</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>Public transit</p>	<p>The more tangible we can make our messages, the more people are drawn to and motivated by them</p>
<p>Fair return on our work</p>	<p>Hard work should be rewarded</p> <p>We need a raise</p>	<p>We must make clear that the money to pay people comes from the work that we do</p>
<p>Take resources from our communities</p> <p>Undermine our schools</p> <p>Free ride off what we contribute</p>	<p>Tax breaks</p> <p>Avoid paying taxes</p> <p>Get away with not paying taxes</p>	<p>People resent taxes and thus understand desire to avoid them; we must foreground what taxes buy, not the taxes themselves</p>

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF	BECAUSE
<p>Ensure our schools and communities the resources they need</p> <p>Ensure we can stay in our homes</p>	<p>Close corporate loopholes</p> <p>End tax breaks</p> <p>Stop rent gauging</p>	<p>We must affirm what we are for, not merely what we oppose</p>
<p>Resource our schools</p> <p>Provide community services</p>	<p>Generate \$X billion dollars</p> <p>Pocketing \$X</p>	<p>Bringing money top of mind makes people more selfish and primes individualism</p>
<p>Be a voter</p>	<p>Vote</p> <p>Go vote</p>	<p>Identity precedes action for GOTV. In other words, the key to getting someone to vote is to first get them to identify as a voter. Always ask people to “be a voter” rather than to vote.</p>
<p>Freedom to vote</p> <p>Cast our ballots freely, safely, and equally</p> <p>[The principle of] one person, one vote</p> <p>Right to vote</p>	<p>Voting rights</p>	<p>Freedom to vote is a very strong frame for us, garnering greater support and intensity. Safety — especially in our present pandemic context — is also deeply resonant; as is situating voting within the frame of equality either by simply calling for it or evoking it. While the individualized idea of voting as “my right” also rates highly, “voting rights” renders the issue abstract and process-oriented — not tangible and personal.</p>

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS	INSTEAD OF	BECAUSE
<p>Deliberate barriers to voting</p> <p>Denying our freedom to vote</p> <p>Anti-voter bills</p> <p>Protect our freedom to vote</p>	<p>Voter suppression</p> <p>Obstacles to voting</p> <p>Fight voter suppression</p>	<p>“Voter suppression” is a phrase that is unfortunately not understood by many. Further, for conflicted voters, they are susceptible to the notion that there are votes we ought to suppress: those purportedly cast illegally. We can make this issue more concrete for our audiences by naming how certain politicians erect “deliberate barriers to voting.” And we can render it more broadly off-putting by making the attendant harms seem widely felt.</p>
<p>Families’ economic well-being</p> <p>Our financial well-being</p> <p>Jobs</p> <p>Ability to put food on the table and support our families</p>	<p>The economy</p>	<p>There is no independent being named The Economy – it is merely a way we measure human activity. When we personify ‘the economy’ as capable of acting or being acted upon, feeling pain or being revived, we fuel opposition framing that positions the well-being of ‘the economy’ as separate from and more important than the well-being of actual human beings. Instead, we should specify what we mean, whether that’s jobs, families being able to put food on the table, or people’s broader economic well-being.</p>

WORDS TO EMBRACE AND REPLACE

SAY THIS

Fund our communities/lives

INSTEAD OF

Invest in our communities/kids/lives

BECAUSE

“Invest” primes expectations of a financial return. By talking about investing in schools, investing in kids, investing in people, or investing in communities, we make the argument about financial gain, ceding the moral high ground. Simply talking about “funding” our schools instead of “investing” in them makes it clear that educating and supporting kids is the point — as opposed to the point being a financial return down the line.

MESSAGING ON SPECIFIC ISSUES

The basic structure of these messages can be adapted for any number of progressive issues, as demonstrated in the following pages.

Note: the messages below are a template, to which you should add your relevant call to action – the next step you want your audience, inspired by your message, to take. We also use general language here to describe the “villain” – the person or people who are responsible for the problem; where possible and appropriate, these general descriptors should be replaced with specific actors and decision-makers relevant to your campaign.



PANDEMIC

MESSAGE 1: No matter what we look like, where we live, or what's in our wallets, getting sick reminds us that at our core, we're all human.

But for too long, we've let a powerful few divide us to pad their own profits by making life and health a product for sale and blocking our efforts to ensure paid time to recover from illness and care for our loved ones.

We make the future by ensuring everyone can access the care that we need without fearing we'll go bankrupt to do it.

We must stand with and for each other across our differences and against anything and anyone who seeks to divide us.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: We pull through by pulling together, like we have done in the past. This means going all in for all of us to demand the care and paid time to recover everyone needs.

We stand united against a handful of politicians and corporate insurance and pharma industries who have used this crisis to generate profits while making it harder for us to get and stay well.

We make the future, and we can see through those who feed us lies. They want to keep us divided because they know if we come together, we will demand proven solutions like healthcare for all, paid time to recover and care for our loved ones, and protections that keep us in our homes and ensure we make ends meet.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



PANDEMIC AND INCARCERATION

We all want quality healthcare for ourselves and our loved ones, no matter what we look like or where we call home. This is true every day, especially during a global pandemic.

But today, some of the most medically compromised people in our society are incarcerated in close quarters, unable to protect themselves or access the care they need. Certain politicians try to stoke fear against our loved ones in jails and prisons, while putting their health and safety at risk.

Holding millions of people in life-threatening conditions is a choice we don't have to keep making. We urge our leaders to immediately address the dangers of these facilities – and release people with health vulnerabilities, people over the age of 60, people with six months or less remaining on their sentence, and people serving for technical, drug, and non-violent offenses.

We make the future by ensuring justice, safety, and liberty prevail for all of our loved ones.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



PANDEMIC AND RACIAL JUSTICE

When any one of us is barred from being able to prevent, detect, treat and recover from this illness, all of us are at risk.

Today, a handful of our elected leaders are picking and choosing who will live and who will die from this virus based on age-old color-coded barriers to getting necessary care and relief. Allowing COVID-19 to destroy Black, brown, and Indigenous communities is a choice we don't need to keep making.

We must come together to ensure every one of us, regardless of where we live or what we look like, gets the vaccines and financial support that our families and communities need to pull through this pandemic.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

For more guidance on talking about COVID-19 and racial justice, check out Race Class Narrative Action's [Justice in Healing Guide](#).



HOUSING

MESSAGE 1: In America, we define ourselves by who we are and how we treat others, not by what we look like or what's in our wallets.

But today, certain politicians and greedy lobbyists are trying to make us fear those turning to cars and tents for shelter, dividing us while they make it impossible for many of us to afford any place to live. Meanwhile, a handful of corporate developers rig the rules to jack up our rents, build only for the wealthiest few, and hoard even more profits for themselves.

When we go all in for every one of us, we can win commonsense solutions that ensure we all make rent while having enough to care for our families, no exceptions. Joining together, we make the future, and we will ensure all of us have a home to raise our kids, pursue our dreams, and make our memories.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: Home. The place where we lay our heads, hug our loved ones and make our memories.

But today, this most basic of human needs — shelter — is put out of our reach to turn a quick profit for the wealthiest 1%. A handful of lawmakers and the real estate speculators, corporate developers and landlords that fund their campaigns try to make us fear our neighbors, spreading lies based on what we look like or where we come from, while they jack up rents, peddle faulty mortgages and destroy affordable options.

We must come together to rewrite the rules, regulate rents, and build options people can actually afford. We make the future and we can ensure all of us have a place to call home.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

EDUCATION

MESSAGE 1: School is a place where childhood happens. Most of us believe that every child, whatever their color, background or zip code, has the right to learn in a supportive environment that respects their humanity, upholds their dignity, and responds fairly to mistakes and mis-steps.

But today, certain politicians fuel divisions so they can take resources away from our schools while they let the wealthiest few get away with not paying their fair share. They then blame parents, teachers and students to distract from these failures. They send police into schools to harm students who are Black, brown, LGBT or disabled for making mistakes that — for wealthy white kids — are deemed part of growing up and learning.

Our schools must treat every child as equal, especially in situations of conflict.

We make the future, and by joining together — parents and teachers, Black, white, and brown — we can make every neighborhood public school a place where all children can learn, grow, and thrive.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: No matter what we look like, where we live, or what's in our wallets, most of us want our neighborhood public schools to inspire imagination, cultivate critical thinking, and ensure our children can live fulfilling lives.

But certain politicians try to divide us, ensuring well-resourced schools with mostly white students have money for computers, teacher training, and parent engagement, while sending police to monitor and punish Black and brown students in schools that have already been deprived for too long. Then they turn around and point the finger at families of color for the challenges at our neighborhood public schools, while letting the wealthiest few refuse to pay their fair share.

We make the future, and by joining together across race and zip code, we can rewrite the rules to ensure every school has the materials, up-to-date strategies, healthy meals, after-school programs, and emotional support to set kids up to be all that they dream.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

For more guidance on talking about education, check out our [Messaging Guidance for Safe and Equitable Schools for All](#) and [Messaging Guidance for Restorative Justice and Rethinking Discipline](#).



TAX REFORM

MESSAGE 1: No matter what we look like, where we come from, or how we make a living, most of us work hard for our families.

But today, massive corporations like **[name examples, e.g. Amazon]** rake in record profits, while they refuse to contribute to the schools, roads and community services all of us rely on. Then they try to divide and distract us, pitting communities against each other so we won't come together to demand what all of our families need.

Joining together to rewrite the rules, we can make sure that corporations who have done well in **[name place, e.g. Michigan]** do right by **[name place, e.g. Michigan]**. We make the future, and we can ensure we have the resources to educate all of our kids and the services to support all of our families.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: Whether we're Black or white, Asian or Latino, Native or newcomer, most of us pitch in for each other and hope to leave things better off for those to come.

But today a handful of corporations undermine all of us. They divide us against each other based on what we look like or how we worship, hoping we'll look the other way so they can continue to reap the benefits of our contributions while refusing to put in their share.

When we go all in for all of us, we can make this a place we're proud to call home with the world-class schools, affordable healthcare and community services our families need.

When we join together across racial differences to rewrite the rules, we make the future.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

WAGES, WORK AND UNIONS

MESSAGE 1: No matter what we do for a living or what language we speak, most of us work hard for our families.

But today, certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists hurt everyone by handing kickbacks to the rich, defunding our schools, and threatening seniors with cuts to Medicare and Social Security. They try to divide us from each other at work and in our communities because they know we all do better when we're all in for all of us.

We need to join together in union to demand that people who work for a living can earn a good living, just like we won safer workplaces and civil rights in our past. By joining together, we make a future where we all get a fair return on our work.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: No matter the color of our skin or what we do for a living, here we value our freedom.

Working people deserve the same freedom CEOs have: the freedom to negotiate a fair return on our work. But today, certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists divide us from each other based on what we look like or where we come from, hoping we look the other way while they take away the freedoms people in unions have won for all of us.

Real freedom is about more than making a living; it's also about having time to take a loved one to the doctor, attend a parent-teacher conference or retire in dignity.

We must protect our freedom to join together in union. Standing together, we make the future and secure our freedom to prosper.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

Education
NOT a
business

ON STRIKE
FOR OUR
STUDENTS'
FUTURE

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CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

MESSAGE 1: Time and again, we've rallied together across different races, backgrounds and beliefs to solve big problems and build a better future for our children.

But for too long, fossil fuel CEOs and corrupt politicians have divided and distracted us with lies while they pollute our air, poison our water and dump toxins into Black and brown communities, hoping to hide the origins and impact of the crisis they created for all of us.

By joining together, we can rewrite the rules so that every family has what we need to get and stay well, every working person has a safe, good job and every community can protect our air and land for generations to come.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION <<<

MESSAGE 2: Whether we live among corn fields or bodegas, forests or freeways, we all want our families to grow up healthy and thrive for generations to come.

For too long, fossil fuel CEOs and corrupt politicians have divided and distracted us with lies while they pollute our air and poison our water. They exploit our differences to pick and choose where to dump toxins based on the contents of our wallets and the color of our skin.

By coming together across race and place to rewrite the rules, we will heal the damage done to our communities and power our future with locally made energy from the wind and sun, while creating millions of good jobs and healthy neighborhoods for all of our families.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION <<<





REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

MESSAGE 1: All people, regardless of where we live or what we look like, deserve to be able to make the best healthcare choices for ourselves and our families. The decision of when and if to become a parent is one of the most important many of us will make in life.

For decades, far-right groups and politicians have tried to demonize people who seek abortion care, eliminate access to healthcare providers, and restrict and outright ban reproductive care, even as they attack access to contraception, sex education, and policies that help parents and children.

We make the future, and together we can ensure that all of us, no matter who we are or where we come from, can decide if, when, and how to grow our families.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: No matter our race, gender, or zip code, most of us believe that we should decide for ourselves whether and when to have children.

But today, a handful of politicians pass laws that destroy our freedoms, undermine our rights, and endanger our futures. They make decisions that force us to struggle to simply make ends meet or to care for our families, and then shame and blame us for the hardships they create. And while we're busy fighting for our most basic rights, they hand the money they take from our healthcare, our schools and our kids' futures to their corporate donors.

By going all in to [*name desired reform*], we make the future and we can ensure that any of us can get the care that we need no matter how much money we have or which state we call home.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

MESSAGE 1: No matter where we come from, what our color, or how we worship, most of us work hard for our families.

But today, certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists hurt everyone by handing kickbacks to the rich, defunding our schools, and threatening seniors with cuts to Medicare and Social Security. They then turn around and point the finger for our hard times at new immigrants.

We need to join together with people across racial differences to demand fair and safe immigration processes for all families, just like we won civil rights in our past.

We make the future, and by joining together, we can make this a place that honors all families, no exceptions.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: People with the courage and tenacity to move for a better life help make our country the “land of the free, home of the brave.”

But today, certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists hurt all of our families by defunding schools, blocking healthcare, and denying us a fair return on our work — all while pocketing the profits. Then they turn around and point the finger for our hard times at new immigrants, even detaining children and tearing families apart.

We make the future, and together, we can create a fair immigration process that upholds our values to make this a place of liberty and justice for all.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



HEALTH CARE

Whether we're Black, white or brown, when it comes to our health, we all want to make sure we can prevent, treat or recover from illness or injury without fearing we'll go bankrupt.

But today certain politicians and their greedy lobbyists have sold off our health to the highest bidder, letting insurance corporations, hospital chains and pharma lobbyists rake in record profits, all while they deny us the quality affordable care people around the world take as given. They divide us against each other based on what we look like, where we come from or how much money we have so we don't join together to demand proven solutions through a public system that can ensure the care all of us need.

We make the future, and we have the power to pick politicians who will prioritize our health and the health of our loved ones.

By joining together, we can make this a place where all of our families can get the care we need at a price we can afford.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



DRUG POLICY, ADDICTION AND OVERDOSE

Many of us know all too well the pain of seeing a loved one struggle with addiction.

But today, a powerful few use the same old tactics to fuel fear among us based on what we look like, where we come from, or the struggles we face. And while we're working to make ends meet, afford healthcare, or recover from addiction, they rake in record profits pushing painkillers and putting treatment out of our reach.

By joining together, we can ensure our loved ones have access to healthcare and the chance to receive treatment, and safeguard against lethal overdose so our families can get and stay well. We make the future, and we can make this a place where we all have the support we need.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION <<<

PROTESTS AND POLICING

Whether we're Black, white or brown, living in a small town or a big city, we want our families to be whole and our communities to be vibrant.

But the people entrusted to serve and protect our communities instead target, detain and even kill Black people like George Floyd, Tony McDade and Breonna Taylor, among too many others. All the while, a handful of politicians throw out lies to divide us. They think that if we're made to fear each other, we'll ignore it when police officers meant to uphold the law harm our communities. And they hope we'll look the other way when politicians elected to govern in our name hand millions to corporations to militarize law enforcement and deny resources for the schools and healthcare we actually need.

Joining together — from cities to suburbs to towns — we make the future. And we can demand that our elected leaders fund our lives, creating the schools, services and care we all need, so that our communities are safe for every one of us.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

For more guidance on talking about protests and policing, check out Race Class Narrative Action's [1\) We Keep Us Safe digital toolkit](#) and messaging guide [2\) Messaging This Moment: Mobilizing our Base and Persuading the Middle on Policing, Protest, and Racial Injustice.](#)





JUSTICE FOR LGBT PEOPLE

MESSAGE 1: No matter who we are, what we look like, or who we love, we know our communities are stronger when we can be our authentic selves, work together, and show up for each other.

But certain politicians rig the rules for their corporate donors and watch as our communities suffer. Then they try to divide and distract us by pushing to remove trans and queer people from public life, force Black people, immigrants, and LGBT people out of our jobs and homes, and deny us the ability to start a family.

Having protections in place that say we cannot be harassed, fired or evicted because of who we are ensures that we can all be there for our families and each other.

Together, we make the future, and we will go all in for all of us so that our communities can thrive.

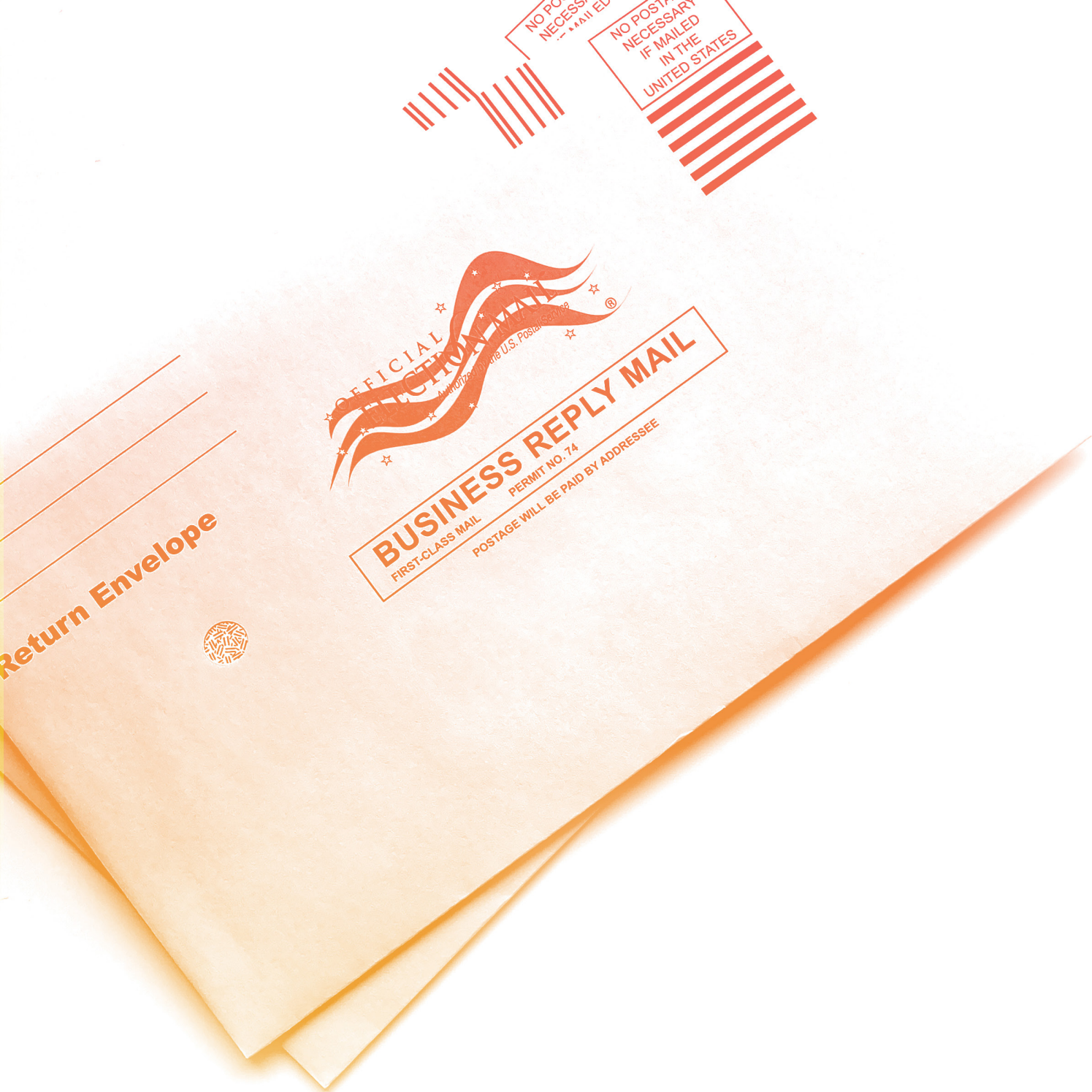
INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: No matter who you are, what you look like, or who you love, deep down we all know it's wrong for a boss, a landlord, or any politician to tell someone 'you don't belong' just because of who you are. That's why we have laws and Constitutional protections against discrimination.

Yet too often certain politicians refuse to enforce these laws, stoking fear against transgender people to divide and distract us from their failures to ensure all of us have what we need to get and stay well. They spout slurs as Black trans women are murdered, they lock up Black and brown trans migrants who move here for a better life, and they instruct emergency shelters to turn away transgender people needing a roof overhead.

We make the future, and by joining together across race, gender, and sexuality, we can ensure this is a place where liberty and justice is for all — no exceptions.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



VOTER REGISTRATION, VOTE BY MAIL AND GOTV

MESSAGE 1: Most of us believe that, no matter what we look like or where we live, we should all have an equal say in our democracy.

But today, a powerful few try to divide us by race and by place so we won't join together to demand what all of our families need.

We are long overdue to rewrite the rules and take back our democracy. It is only by showing that the many are willing to stand up to the money that we have the power to get the care and respect every one of us deserves.

Together, we make the future. Join us by being a voter to ensure we elect leaders who govern for all of us.

MESSAGE 2: Millions of us, young and old, from cities to suburbs, across race and place of origin, have just signed up to vote by mail – joining millions of others in states like Colorado, Oregon and Utah who have been voting by mail for years.

While a powerful few make false claims about mail-in voting to try keep us from making our voices heard so they can stay in power, we know better.

We make the future by joining together as voters. Request your mail-in ballot, delivered right to your door, here by **[deadline]: [link]**

FREEDOM TO VOTE

Whatever our color, background or zip code, most of us believe that voters pick our leaders — our leaders do not get to pick their voters. When it comes to our elections, we want a transparent process we can trust, where Americans have equal freedom to vote, whether we live in a small town or big city, the south or the north.

But today, a handful of politicians put up barriers to silence our voices based on what we look like or where we live.

We make the future, and it's time to enact national standards for voting to ensure all of us have a say in key decisions like pandemic relief, health care, and bolstering our economic well-being.

Together, we can ensure Americans can safely and freely cast our ballots so that every voice is heard and our elections reflect the will of the people.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

For more guidance on talking about our freedom to vote, check out our [Freedom to Vote Messaging Guide](#).





FAIR REPRESENTATION

MESSAGE 1: No matter what we look like or who we vote for, most of us believe that our elected leaders should reflect the very best of every kind of American and govern for all of us, no exceptions.

But today, certain politicians and the greedy few have rigged the rules to silence our voices and hold onto power. They fuel divisions hoping we'll blame new immigrants, Black people, or people struggling to make ends meet for the damage their policies have caused us all. We can defeat their attempts to undo the will of the people.

By joining together as voters to **[name desired reform]**, we will make the future and build a democracy that works for all of us.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀

MESSAGE 2: **[People in state, e.g. Georgians]** know that the only way for democracy to work for all of us is if democracy includes us all. The principle of one person one vote extends to all voters — Black, brown, or white, from **[state city/town/county]** to **[name state city/town/county]** to **[state city/town/county]** and everywhere in between.

Right now, our outdated voter registration system blocks millions of us from having our voices heard on election day. Lobbyists and powerful interests prop up the outdated system to divide and exclude us from casting our ballots.

Together in November, we can pass **[name desired reform]** so that everyone in our state can make our voices heard on Election Day. We make the future, and when we are all in for **[state]** voters, we can make the best choices for our families and our state.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



FAIR REPRESENTATION

MESSAGE 3: No matter our race, party or zip code, most of us believe that our elected leaders should reflect our values and govern for all of us, no exceptions.

But today, too many of the people elected to represent us govern only for the wealthy and well-connected while they divide us based on what we look like or where we live. Leaders who come from and work for our communities almost never break through our political system because it takes having or hustling a fortune to run for office today.

Only with *[name desired reform, e.g. ranked choice voting, public financing, etc.]* can we have elected officials that have walked in our shoes and govern in our name.

We make the future, and by joining together to *[repeat desired call to action]*, we can make this a place where our leaders work for “we the people,” not just the wealthiest few.

INSERT CALL TO ACTION ◀◀◀



KEEP SPREADING THE MESSAGE

We believe that if our words don't spread, they don't work. We are honored to have you use this language verbatim.

To aid you in copying and pasting this language, we are sharing [a Google Doc version of this guide](#).



WE
MAKE
THE
FUTURE

aso
COMMUNICATIONS