



CITIZENS FOR A STRONG DEMOCRACY

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Since the Second World War, the United States has led the world's nations to unprecedented levels of prosperity, security, and respect for human dignity. Those achievements have all reinforced one another, and they have required a continuous commitment. While still imperfect, they reflect the best overall social endeavors and outcomes that the world has ever seen. The imperfections do not merit, and they must not impel us to, a radical break from our continuing post-war vision.

Citizens for a Strong Democracy (CSD) is a group of voters dedicated to preserving America's constitutional democracy, fighting hatred and bigotry, and maintaining a secure and just international order. Our mission is to urge members of Congress to remain united in advancing those goals.

CSD is comprised of Republicans, Democrats and Independents – conservatives, centrists and progressives. It was conceived and formed directly after the presidential election in November 2016 by a small group of Americans in Southeastern Pennsylvania who for many years had devoted themselves to advancing human rights overseas, and who now saw a new need to safeguard human rights at home.

CSD seeks principally to monitor, and to address with members of Congress, the following actual and potential activities of high-level federal government officials – activities that CSD believes are abhorrent to and perilous for our nation's democracy, well-being, stability and global leadership:

Threatening Civil Liberties

1. Intimidating, restricting or categorically **denigrating the mainstream press**.
2. Influencing, disparaging or restricting our **independent judiciary**.
3. Restricting or discrediting the right of **peaceable assembly and protest**.
4. Denying the legitimacy of **free and fair elections**.
5. Inspiring or inciting **civil violence**.
6. Inspiring or inciting religious, racial, or gender-based **bigotry**.

Disdaining Empirical Truth

7. Routinely making **false statements**, exaggerations, or innuendos.
8. Disregarding the value of scientific endeavor, or selectively rejecting **established scientific data** for political purposes.

Behaving in an Authoritarian, Erratic, and Unsound Manner

9. **Demagogic manipulation, power seizure**. Playing to voters' fear and anger rather than a positive view of America and humanity; diverting attention from controversial activities by creating distractions elsewhere; gratuitously advancing grandiosity, nationalism, and a military and police culture; sowing paranoia and infighting within

- government staff; blaming scapegoats; planting supporters in crowds; quashing administrative dissent; avoiding personal transparency; or seizing extraordinary personal powers contrary to tradition or law.
10. **Capriciousness.** Ignoring the seriousness and complexities of presidential rhetoric and decision-making, thereby demeaning the office of the presidency, fomenting administrative chaos, jeopardizing international credibility and trust, and diminishing the reputation of America and democracy themselves.
 11. **Narcissism, delusion, paranoia.** Engaging in continuous self-praise; placing self-image and self-aggrandizement over rational governance and the interests of the nation; adhering to delusional beliefs; acting and communicating impulsively; placing relatives in positions of high authority regardless of qualifications, in part due to suspicions of others; threatening or punishing political enemies, or avenging perceived insults; engaging in sexual abuse or predation; refusing to acknowledge mistakes; engaging in extravagant personal spending with government funds; or otherwise identifying personal interests as national ones.

Jeopardizing National and International Security and Ideals

12. Inexplicably befriending, and tolerating the meddling in American governance by, **foreign authoritarian regimes.**
13. Endangering American diplomacy, alliances, national security or global stability **through rash or ill-considered behavior**, or by ignoring inputs from (or by attempting to influence the objective conclusions of) the diplomatic and national intelligence communities.
14. Withdrawing the United States from its international commitments to **military security and universal human rights**, or threatening to do so.

Engaging in or Facilitating Corruption

15. Compromising national interests for the benefit of, or failing to properly assert federal administrative authority over, the officials' business dealings, or otherwise abiding **business conflicts of interest.**
16. Engaging in **cronyism** by appointing supporters to high positions regardless of qualifications, or **crony capitalism** by assisting the businesses of political supporters.

Complicity

17. Failing to vocally condemn the **above activities as practiced by others.**

Those behaviors – which CSD has described in extensive detail in an accompanying document captioned "Specific Concerns" – are common hallmarks of dictatorial regimes overseas, both historically and currently. While America may not likely descend into dictatorship, we believe that special vigilance is required at this time to prevent a movement in that direction.

We thus urge our members of Congress not only to exercise their legislative votes in support of our country's democratic principles, and against any executive branch activities as enumerated above that contravene those principles, but to affirmatively lead their communities and their colleagues in Congress in calling out and opposing those activities.

We do not take positions on substantive policy issues on which mainstream voices may commonly disagree, such as governmental regulation, trade policies, tax policies, workers' rights, reproductive rights, gun owners' rights, health insurance, and the particulars of international diplomacy or national defense.