

# Democracy Initiative Backed by Clinton, Bush, LBJ Library Foundations Gains Momentum

*Civil Dialogues Town Hall Creates Safe Space for Americans to Talk With Each Other*

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2024

[/Einpresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- On Monday June 3rd, nearly 100 participants weathered a storm in Little Rock, Arkansas to gather for a Civil Dialogues town hall at the [Clinton Presidential Center](https://www.clintonpresidentialcenter.org/). It's a fitting and hopeful sign that an increasing number of Americans, weary from partisanship and disagreement, are committed to pushing through the dark clouds to find the sunshine on the other side.

The Civil Dialogues event, "Why Partnerships Matter," began with historical perspective, examining how President Bill Clinton and President George H.W. Bush went from bitter enemies to good friends. The stories shared by Jean Becker and Stephanie S. Streett resonated deeply with the audience. "It humanized through story from those closest to our former presidents," said one audience member who learned a lot from "their modeling as moderators of civil dialogue, and how it can work toward forming a more perfect union."

Streett worked in the Clinton White House during his eight years in office and currently serves as Executive Director of the Clinton Foundation. Becker is former Chief of Staff to President Bush during his post-presidency and NY Times best-selling author of "The Man I Knew", and her latest book, "Character Matters...and Other Life Lessons from George Herbert Walker Bush."

More Civil Dialogues town halls are in the works, including one on Climate during the inaugural Houston Energy & Climate Week in September, and another at the George and Barbara Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas on October 15th, topic forthcoming.

Those in the room on June 3rd were joined by dozens more across the country who took part in



Stephanie S. Streett and Jean Becker share stories about former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush as Linda Lorelle moderates the conversation

the livestream. When surveyed after the event and asked what they liked most about the program, one participant said, "I liked how this program was structured to teach civility in addressing issues when talking. It provided a safe space for practicing and learning." Another said, "Pretty much everything. The program was brilliant and very interesting. Thank you very much."

This is exactly the type of response Civil Dialogues co-founders, Jean Becker and Linda Lorelle, were hoping for when they launched the democracy initiative in early 2024. In partnership with the Clinton Presidential Center, the George and Barbara Bush Presidential Library Foundation and the LBJ Foundation, the series of nationwide town halls seeks to create a safe space for community conversation on some of the most important and contentious topics of the day. The goal is to educate Americans about all sides of difficult issues facing our nation, ensure that participants walk away with a better understanding of the topic's nuances, and that they feel empowered to continue having civil, constructive conversations.

Following the conversation moderated by Linda Lorelle, it was time for participants, in the room and online, to roll up their sleeves and practice engaging in civil dialogue. Under the guidance of [Living Room Conversations](#), a new partner of Civil Dialogues, and Clinton School of Public Service students, audience members gathered in small groups for a facilitated conversation about Trust. Once again, the feedback indicated that the democracy initiative is hitting the right tone. Audience members most enjoyed, "learning more about the shared experiences of the participants," "the information and tips shared during group interaction" and "insights about holiday dinners and reaching across the aisle to remain in a relationship, even though you disagree politically."

"The response to the Clinton Center town hall builds upon our momentum and validates our original vision," says Linda Lorelle, Emmy award-winning journalist and co-founder of Civil Dialogues. "The historical perspective, audience engagement, and the opportunity to literally practice having difficult conversations are each critical components to getting us out of this cycle of demonization and division. Jean and I are energized and excited to tackle more topics and



Audience members practice a civil dialogue about Trust facilitated by Living Room Conversations and Clinton School of Public Service students

expand our efforts across the nation with additional partners, including the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy, the Baker Institute for Public Affairs at Rice University and AllSides.

To view previous events, partner with Civil Dialogues, or learn more about hosting a town hall in your city, [click here](#).

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