

Civil Dialogues With Kinder Institute and HCC Find Common Ground

"Finding Common Ground: Strategies for Civil Dialogue and Healing the Divide"

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, April 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hundreds of Americans, eager to find common ground, recently gathered in Texas and Missouri to attend town halls hosted by the democracy project, [Civil Dialogues](#). The April 9th event, in partnership with the [Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy](#), was hosted in St. Louis, MO by the St. Louis County Library. Panelists included SLCL Director, Kristen Sorth; Jay Sexton, Director of the Kinder Institute; Bella Gomez, a senior at Washington University; and Bennett Bachert, a freshman at the University of Missouri-Columbia.



Audience listens to panel discussion at St. Louis County Library April 9, 2026

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They have built a set of programs that bring people together to create common foundations of insight, experience and healthy constructive dialogue.”

Stacey Morse

“...The panel discussion brought additional thought and points of reference for deeper context -- truly inspired by our Next Gen Leaders!” said Stacey Morse who attended the St. Louis event. “The 2-hour event flew by as several hundred people from diverse backgrounds worked in table groupings to explore perspectives, lived experiences and shared values -- all with mutual respect. Just what we need.” The round table discussions were facilitated by Civil Dialogues partner, [Living Room Conversations](#).

The Center for Civic Engagement at Houston City College hosted the April 2nd Civil Dialogues town hall. Panelists included Dr. Frank Ashley, former Interim Dean, Bush School of Government and Public Service; Becca Kearl, Executive Director, Living Room Conversations; Sookyum Kim, President, Bridge USA, Texas A&M University; and John Lebanan, Vice President, Bridge USA, Texas A&M University.

"It was an exceptional event, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive," said Center Director, Rosalyn Crain. "Students and community members alike have shared how meaningful the experience was and how much they're hoping for more conversations like this. The selection of panelists was perfect; and the discussion was engaging, thoughtful, and exactly the kind of dialogue we want to inspire in our classrooms and communities. You really set the bar high."

Civil Dialogues has become a trusted forum where Americans can voice concerns without judgment and seek understanding across political divides. In partnership with the George & Barbara Bush Foundation, the Clinton Presidential Center, the LBJ Foundation, the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy, and the Baker Institute for Public Policy and Research, Civil Dialogues seeks to create a safe space for community conversation on some of the most important and contentious topics of the day. The democracy project was co-founded by Jean Becker, author and chief of staff to President George H.W. Bush during his post-presidency, and Linda Lorelle, Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist and entrepreneur.

For more information about two June events in Washington, DC., or to inquire about partnering with us, please visit the Civil Dialogues website.

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SLCL panelist Bella Gomez joins facilitated conversation following panel discussion



Participants engage in facilitated conversation at Houston City College April 2, 2026

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