

WE ARE YOUR NEIGHBORS: Georgians Share Their Stories in Changing Times

On 8/27, veterans, elders, immigrants and others will gather to speak about how recent political developments and government actions have reshaped their lives

MARIETTA, GA, UNITED STATES, August 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Third Act Georgia and Indivisible Cobb will host a public forum with a wide range of Georgians telling personal stories about how recent political developments and government actions have shaped their lives. At a moment of sharp partisan disagreement and angry claims and counter-claims, this event is being held with the conviction that Americans are not as divided as it appears instead identifying as humans and neighbors before Republicans, Democrats or Independents. This forum will explore the power of personal stories—stories of struggle and resilience—to move beyond political rhetoric and offer a clearer, more grounded perspective on some of the most pressing questions facing our country.

“ Tired of attack ads and focus-group-tested talking points? Consider this a new form of voter ed.—a chance to hear what your neighbors say about how decisions made in Washington have impacted them.”

James Lardner, journalist, activist and co-founder of We Are Your Neighbors

Co-emceed by Al Wiseman, the host and voice of The Moth’s Atlanta StorySlam, and Sophia Qureshi, editor of the 285 South newsletter covering Georgia’s immigrant and refugee communities.

Featured speakers include:

- Rodney Taylor, Loganville barber and double amputee who spent more than a year in ICE detention.
- Mildred Danis Taylor. His wife, who fought for his release nonstop, transforming herself into a political organizer along the way.
- Ted Pestorius. Forced into retirement after a 35-year career at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention working on vaccines and infectious diseases.
- Ed Anderson. Air Force veteran who credits the Department of Veterans Affairs with saving his life. He wants younger vets to be as fortunate as he was.
- Molly Edlein. Growing up nonbinary (a good-luck story).
- Basmat Ahmed. She came to the U.S. from Sudan. Twenty years later, she works with refugees charting their journeys in pursuit of the American dream.

-Matthew Woodruff. Immunologist and Emory professor who thought politics stopped at the laboratory door.

-Ron Kelley. Iraq and Afghanistan vet and former MAGA zealot whose political views shifted dramatically after he landed a job as a housing inspector.

*Additional speakers to be announced.

[We Are Your Neighbors](#) and Third Act are working together to host similar events in other states.

WHO: We Are Your Neighbors, Third Act Georgia, Indivisible Cobb and STAND

WHEN: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026 - 5:30 PM -8:00 PM

WHERE: The Showroom at Dave & Buster's, 2215 D&B Drive, Marietta, GA

REGISTRATION: Free, https://actionnetwork.org/events/we-are-your-neighbors?source=direct_link&

INTERVIEWS AVAILABLE ON-SITE OR IN-ADVANCE WITH SPEAKERS OR WITH JAMES LARDNER, ONE OF THE ORGANIZERS:

James Lardner is a journalist, activist and co-founder of We Are Your Neighbors. A longtime contributor to The New Yorker, he has also written for The American Prospect and The Nation and has appeared on C-SPAN and DemLabs as well as local radio and TV stations. His books include NYPD: A City and Its Police (co-author) and Inequality Matters: The Growing Economic Divide in America and Its Poisonous Consequences (contributor and co-editor).

The mission of the We Are Your Neighbors project is to tell the stories of a broad selection of Americans – veterans, farmers, small-business owners, civil servants, Medicaid beneficiaries, immigrants and others – whose lives have been impacted by recent federal government policies.

Third Act is a national organization of older Americans working for a genuine democracy and a livable planet.

Indivisible Cobb is part of a grassroots, non-partisan movement devoted to protecting democracy and defeating authoritarianism.

STAND is a grassroots organizing group, based in Decatur, Georgia, which supports marginalized communities through direct aid, community-based action, and civic engagement.

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