Applying the Pro-Democracy Narrative Pillars to discussion of HR1, affordability, and the importance of voting to create change

The messages in this guide are intended to inspire—not prescribe—how public health communicators can apply pro-democracy narrative values and pillars when talking about the implications of HR1 and the importance of voting to create change. Use them as starting points to develop content that fits your own voice, community, and communications goals. Thank you to Health & Democracy for providing additional messages that are woven in here.

You'll find the full list of values and pillars at the end of this tipsheet. For more information, please see the Pro-Democracy and Public Health Narrative Playbook.

Audience

People who are concerned about health, health care, and affordability, in order to:

- Help them see how their vote matters for both immediate change and long-term impact: Holding accountable those who voted for HR1 and tapping new leaders who prioritize health and affordability in the clinic, the hospital, and the community.
- Motivate them to vote in the midterms, including local, state, and federal elections.

Core narrative

True freedom and financial peace of mind depend on affordable health care and communities that help us stay healthy in our everyday lives. In a healthy democracy, our government works for us, passing policies that protect our health, lower our expenses, and keep our communities safe and healthy. That's not the reality right now. When Congress passed HR1, they cut off health coverage for many people. When we exercise our power at the ballot box, we hold them accountable for harm, and we can elect leaders who share our values and treat affordable health care, and good health for all people, as an essential public good for all. Vote for your health this fall.

Tips to bring a broad audience into conversation

- **Nonpartisan:** Shift from specific political accountability call-outs and focus on shared priorities, such as financial security and reliable health care that can engage any audience regardless of political affiliation.
- **Move beyond voting:** Aside from voting, encourage people to participate in other civic duties such as attending local health board meetings to share their views.

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Core messages that make up the narrative

Element	Sample message
Benefit	When we vote for leaders who prioritize health, we are speaking out for: 1. Predictable, reliable, and lower out-of-pocket costs at clinics and pharmacies, keeping family budgets secure 2. Dependable health coverage that removes the fear of being in medical debt so you can focus on your livelihood, raising a family, and thrive 3. Fully funded health systems that keep hospitals and clinics open and create the conditions in every community for all people to reach their best health and well-being
Challenge	Affordability is a top concern for people, including affordable health care. But instead of making care more affordable, HR1 creates red tape for everyday people. People who depend on Medicaid have to re-enroll and meet work reporting requirements frequently, a significant paperwork burden that will cause people to lose coverage due to bureaucracy, not eligibility. HR1 also increased out-of-pocket copays and cut funding for essential health coverage. In a healthy democracy, people deserve leaders who are directly accountable to the public and to the public's well-being, including lowering costs for everyday people and putting financial security within reach for millions.
Solution	We should have the freedom to care for our families. No one should be forced to choose between paying for medicine or paying rent. No one should be sidelined by untreated illness due to restrictions on Medicaid. Democracy gives us a tool to fix this: our vote. The people elected the leaders who passed HR1, and the people have the power to hold them accountable or to elect new leaders. By voting in the November midterm general elections, we can elect new leaders who prioritize health and affordability, and begin undoing the immediate harms of HR1. This will help build a more free, fair, honest, and sustainable health system for all.
Call to action	A healthy democracy needs to exist at all levels of government. The midterms are not just about federal votes; local elections matter, too, to create healthier communities that help us stay well. Local public health departments focus on the needs of everyone in a community. They keep local clinics open and work for policies that make it easier for all people to avoid getting sick or injured, and to have opportunities to live their safest and healthiest lives. 1. Confirm your voter status today and plan how, when, and where you will vote in the midterms. 2. Find out how your current representatives voted on HR1 and hold them accountable at the ballot box for their decisions.

	3. Learn how your local candidates will support health care affordability and better health in your community. 4. Talk to three friends or neighbors about how electing leaders who prioritize health care affordability can directly lower out-of-pocket costs at your local doctor's' offices and clinics.

Background: Advancing a pro-democracy and public health narrative

This messaging example follows the pro-democracy and public health narrative, incorporating the core values and narrative pillars below. (See the Pro-Democracy and Public Health Narrative Playbook for more detail.)

Core pro-democracy and public health values this message uses

PROSPERITY thriving	**FAIRNESS** equity and justice, dignity	**RESPONSIBILITY**
FAMILY / BELONGING interdependence, compassion, respect	FEARLESSNESS / STRENGTH courageousness	**SAFETY / SECURITY**
HONESTY authenticity	FREEDOM	REPRESENTATION

Pro-democracy and public health narrative pillars this message uses

1. Center evidence-based values that resonate across a broad audience—especially freedom, which is the top value seen as core to democracy across all major demographic groups.
2. Say what we're for: Prioritizing the public's health as a core element of an inclusive and participatory democracy—being clear that a democracy is about more than elections.
3. Amplify benefits that the public health sector best advances in a democracy.
4. Connect public health and democracy to people's everyday lives; use relatable language and keep the public's health centered (at equal or higher focus than systems, dollars, workforce).
5. Remind people that both democracy and public health are a shared responsibility—and we can improve them together.
    - Name the forces intentionally harming the public's health and why this is happening.
    - Show a role for sectors and individuals in strengthening the public's health and democracy.
    - Convey we can improve the public's health and democracy together.
6. Acknowledge that democracy and the public health system aren't perfect. Lead with humility and authenticity, and convey that we can improve both together.