

White Paper Q&A Guide

Prepared Responses for Media, Partners, and Funders

Democracy Unyielding

December 2025

How to Use This Document

This guide provides suggested answers to questions likely to arise in interviews, partner conversations, funder meetings, or panel discussions about Democracy Unyielding and the Resolution Wall. The first five questions address core concepts; the final three address potential criticisms and risks.

Answers are written in your voice—measured, precise, and philosophically grounded. Adapt as needed for context and audience.

Part I: Core Concept Questions

Question 1

“With \$6.9 billion already invested in pro-democracy work and over 12,500 organizations in the ecosystem, why do you believe there’s still a gap?”

Suggested Answer:

The investment is real, and the organizations doing this work are essential. Legal groups defend voting rights in court. Reform organizations push for structural change. Civic educators teach the next generation. Bridge-builders reduce partisan hostility. All of this matters.

But here's what I've observed: nearly all of this work is done *on behalf of* citizens. Organizations ask people to donate, vote, attend, subscribe, or support. What they don't provide is a way for individuals to name their own civic responsibility—in their own words—and make that commitment visible.

That's the gap. Not a gap in institutional capacity. A gap in personal civic infrastructure.

Democracy ultimately depends on citizens who see themselves as active participants, not just beneficiaries. The Resolution Wall exists to make that participation visible.

Question 2

“You describe the Resolution Wall as ‘symbolic but meaningful.’ How do you respond to critics who might dismiss symbolic participation as superficial?”

Suggested Answer:

The dismissal of symbolic participation as superficial is historically inaccurate.

Public commitments normalize civic behavior. They reinforce shared norms. They lower psychological barriers to engagement. They create social signals without coercion. Research from Dominican University shows that people who write down their goals and share them publicly achieve at substantially higher rates than those who keep intentions private.

Symbolic acts don't replace institutional action—but they reinforce the culture that institutions depend on. A court can defend voting rights, but it cannot make citizens value voting. A reform organization can change election rules, but it cannot make people show up.

Democracy requires both structural defense and cultural reinforcement. The Resolution Wall addresses the cultural layer.

Question 3

“How is the Democracy Resolution Wall different from a petition, a pledge, or a political movement?”

Suggested Answer:

The differences are deliberate.

A petition asks for a specific policy outcome. The Resolution Wall doesn't advocate for any policy.

A pledge typically involves a specific commitment defined by an organization. The Resolution Wall lets individuals define their own commitment in their own words.

A political movement usually has an ideology, a platform, and a mobilization goal. The Resolution Wall has none of these. It's non-partisan by design—open to Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and anyone else committed to constitutional democracy.

Most importantly: the Resolution Wall doesn't track compliance, outcomes, or behavior. There's no monitoring, no enforcement, no consequences for failure. Its purpose is cultural, not disciplinary.

It's a civic reference point—not a loyalty oath.

Question 4

“You say Democracy Unyielding ‘complements’ rather than ‘competes with’ existing organizations. Can you give a specific example of how that works in practice?”

Suggested Answer:

Let me give you three examples.

First, voter engagement organizations like the League of Women Voters do essential work registering people to vote. But registration is a capability—it says “I can vote.” The Resolution Wall adds a commitment layer: “I am committed to vote, and here's why.” That's a different psychological relationship to participation.

Second, bridge-building organizations like Braver Angels work to reduce partisan hostility through structured dialogue. The Resolution Wall offers something they can point to as common ground: a shared commitment to democracy itself, regardless of party. It's a starting point for conversation, not a replacement for it.

Third, funders investing in democracy work need to see grassroots demand. The Resolution Wall provides visible evidence that citizens care about democratic governance—not just organizations. That helps justify continued investment.

In each case, we're strengthening the civic foundation that existing organizations depend on.

Question 5

“Democratic erosion rarely begins with institutional collapse—it begins earlier. What does ‘earlier’ look like, and how does the Resolution Wall address it?”

Suggested Answer:

Earlier looks like this: civic responsibility becomes abstract. Participation becomes passive. Democratic norms are assumed rather than practiced.

People stop thinking of themselves as active participants in democratic life. They delegate responsibility to institutions—courts, legislatures, elections—and assume those institutions will hold. They vote occasionally, or not at all. They consume news about democracy but don't see themselves as having a role in sustaining it.

This is the soil in which democratic erosion takes root. Not dramatic institutional collapse, but gradual civic disengagement.

The Resolution Wall addresses this by making the choice to participate visible. When you write a resolution and post it publicly, you're no longer a passive observer. You've named your responsibility. You've made it visible. You've joined a community of others doing the same.

That's not everything democracy needs. But it's something democracy needs—and something that's been missing.

Part II: Challenging Questions (Risks & Criticisms)

Question 6

“What’s to stop bad actors from flooding the Resolution Wall with fake, inflammatory, or insincere submissions? How do you prevent the platform from being weaponized?”

Suggested Answer:

This is a legitimate concern, and we’ve thought carefully about it.

First, every resolution goes through moderation before appearing on the Wall. We use a combination of AI screening and human review to filter out spam, hate speech, profanity, and content that violates our community guidelines. Resolutions that are clearly insincere or inflammatory don’t make it through.

Second, the Wall is designed for visibility, not virality. We’re not optimizing for engagement metrics or algorithmic amplification. Bad actors typically seek platforms where inflammatory content spreads quickly. A wall of civic commitments doesn’t offer that reward structure.

Third, we’re building gradually and organically. We’re not chasing scale for its own sake. That gives us time to refine moderation and respond to emerging patterns before they become systemic problems.

Could someone still try to game the system? Yes. But the design choices we’ve made—moderation, deliberate pacing, cultural rather than viral framing—significantly reduce that risk.

Question 7

“Isn’t there a risk that the Resolution Wall becomes performative—a way for people to feel good about ‘doing something’ without actually changing their behavior? Could it actually reduce civic engagement by providing a substitute for real action?”

Suggested Answer:

This is the “slacktivism” critique, and it deserves a serious answer.

The research on this is more nuanced than the critique suggests. Studies show that symbolic commitments can serve as either a substitute for action or a gateway to action—depending on how they’re framed. When symbolic participation is presented as sufficient (“you’ve done your part”), it can reduce further engagement. When it’s framed as a first step (“you’ve made a commitment—now here’s how to act on it”), it increases engagement.

We’ve designed the Resolution Wall with this research in mind. After making a resolution, users are directed to our Civic Action Plan—a structured guide for translating commitment into behavior. We emphasize that the resolution is a starting point, not an endpoint. We track progress over time, not just initial submission.

More fundamentally: the alternative to symbolic commitment isn’t necessarily substantive action. For many people, the alternative is nothing. If the Resolution Wall moves someone from disengagement to visible commitment—and that commitment leads even some of them to deeper participation—that’s a net gain for civic culture.

Question 8

“In a polarized environment, how do you prevent the Resolution Wall from being perceived as partisan—even if it’s designed to be non-partisan? What happens if one political side claims it as ‘theirs’?”

Suggested Answer:

This is perhaps our most significant long-term challenge.

We’ve made several design choices to mitigate this risk. First, the language of the Resolution Wall focuses on democratic governance and constitutional principles—not policies, parties, or candidates. Second, we explicitly welcome participants across the political spectrum: Republicans, Democrats, Independents, and others. Third, our moderation guidelines prohibit partisan attacks or policy advocacy in resolutions.

But design choices alone can’t guarantee perception. If the Resolution Wall becomes associated with one political side—either because that side embraces it more enthusiastically or because the other side rejects it—we have a problem.

Our response is twofold. First, we actively seek participation from across the political spectrum. We’re not waiting for organic balance; we’re working to build it. Second,

we're transparent about our non-partisan positioning in every communication—not as a defensive disclaimer, but as a core value.

Ultimately, commitment to democratic governance shouldn't be partisan. The fact that it might be perceived that way says something troubling about our current political environment. But we'd rather try to hold that non-partisan space than cede it.

Summary Table

#	Question Type	Core Theme
1	Core Concept	Why a gap exists despite massive investment
2	Core Concept	Defending symbolic participation
3	Core Concept	Differentiating from petitions/pledges/movements
4	Core Concept	Complementing existing organizations
5	Core Concept	What “early erosion” looks like
6	Challenging	Bad actors and platform weaponization
7	Challenging	Slacktivism and performative participation
8	Challenging	Partisan perception risk

Closing Notes

These answers are designed to be adapted, not memorized. The key principles to maintain across all responses:

1. **Acknowledge legitimate concerns** rather than dismissing them
2. **Ground claims in research and observation** rather than assertion
3. **Emphasize complementarity** rather than competition with existing organizations
4. **Maintain measured confidence** without overclaiming impact

5. **Return to the core insight:** democracy needs both institutional defense and cultural reinforcement

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Contact: info@democracyunyielding.org