

A message from the Vice President and Chief External Affairs Officer

Dear Reader,

On the eve of the 2024 United States presidential election, we find ourselves raising the alarming question of whether democracy in the United States as we know it will survive. This edition of *Responsive Philanthropy (RP)* confronts some of the ways philanthropy contributed to getting us to this challenging place and what is needed as we march forward, regardless of the outcome of the election.

In these tumultuous times, the fragility of our democratic institutions and the forces undermining them have become glaringly apparent. As we confront these challenges, these 5 incisive *RP* articles shed light on the threats to democracy and propose vital solutions to fortify our collective future.

My NCRP colleague Katherine Ponce provides a sobering analysis of how right-wing nonprofits have channeled significant resources to dismantle democratic norms. Highlighting the explosive growth of anti-democratic funding, her piece serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need to counteract these forces with strategic, values-driven philanthropy.

This issue of *RP* offers a robust critique and thoughtful analysis of the current philanthropic and political climate. Authors and co-authors include Annissa G. McCaskill and Jia Lian Yang; Sulma Arias, KD Chavez, Denise Collazo, Lauren Jacobs, and Peggy Shepard; Rana Elmir; and Rye Young. These authors challenge us to reimagine our approaches to funding, activism and solidarity by urging us to shift from reactionary stances to proactive and principled engagement. As we grapple with these issues, let us heed their call to action with urgency and resolve.

Funders should be supporting year-round civic engagement and democracy efforts – not just in election cycles – and move more money faster and earlier like the All by April campaign did earlier this year. It’s impossible to hold on to progress if funding delays require organizations to completely restart their work every other year.

This issue of *Responsive Philanthropy* underscores a crucial message: Our democracy’s resilience depends on addressing both the overt and subtle threats it faces. By embracing thoughtful, proactive strategies and shifting our philanthropic focus, we can better uphold the principles of equity and justice. As we engage with these insights, let us commit to fostering a more robust and inclusive democracy for all.



Unidos en la lucha,

Russell Roybal

VICE PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICER