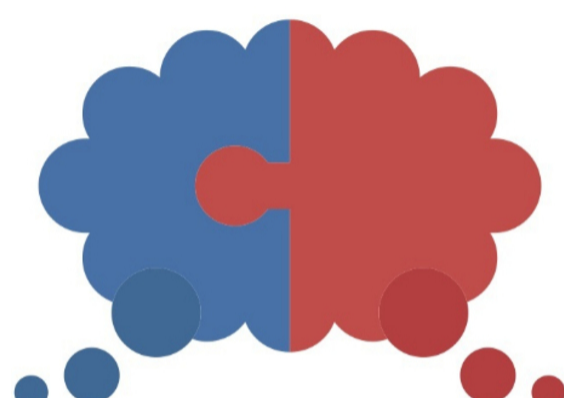
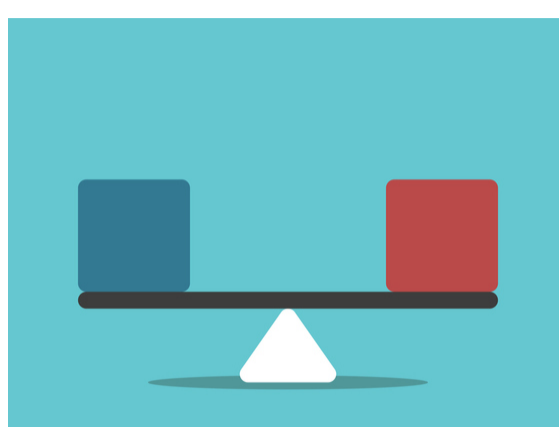




## WELL GROUNDED

### Change the Tone, Change the Outcome

When Common Ground Solutions and Voice of the People organized a recent policymaking simulation, we weren't just interested in facts. We wanted to show that when you change the tone of a political debate, you [change the outcome](#).



## BOTH SIDES NOW

### Too Much Democracy, or Too Little?

Is the U.S. beholden to a few entrenched elites or being ruled by an angry mob? It depends who you ask. This week, we [examine these narratives](#) through articles by two thought leaders with differing opinions.

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Food Insecurity

Funding for anti-hunger programs has historically escaped politics, but it took on a partisan tone this year when the House farm bill proposed work requirements for many recipients of food assistance. How much do you know about food insecurity? [Take the quiz](#) to find out.



## WORTH READING

### News and Opinion Pieces We Found Interesting

*Our disclaimer: We don't endorse every idea and opinion in the articles below, but that's the point. Finding common ground begins with listening to other points of view.*

- **Health Care:** Americans are spending more on health care than ever before. Expenditures by individuals with employer-sponsored insurance have increased by 44% from 2007-2016 -- via [Business Insider](#).
- **Health Care:** Health care protections for people with preexisting conditions is becoming a potent November election issue -- via [The Hill](#).
- **Debt and Deficits:** Last year's tax cuts and interest rate hikes have raised the cost of borrowing so much that the federal government may soon pay more in interest on its debt than it spends on the military, children's programs, or Medicaid. With the deficit soon expected to total nearly \$1 trillion, that will mean less money for other needs, like infrastructure or a response to future recessions -- via [The New York Times](#).
- **Education:** About 66% of college students who graduated last year left with debt. The average amount owed was \$28,650, a slight increase over the previous year -- via [CNBC](#).
- **Education:** Students who have applied for public service loan forgiveness have been denied 99% of the time. Student loan debt now sits at \$1.5 trillion -- via [Forbes](#).
- **Poverty and Income Inequality:** Unequal distribution of wealth increased in every part of the world from 2007-2016. In the U.S., the average income of the poorest fifth of all households rose 12.1% while the income for the top 5 percent saw a 30.6% increase -- via [The Washington Post](#).
- **Poverty and Income Inequality:** In the U.S., the number of poor people has barely declined and income inequality is rising. The Census Bureau has indicated that SNAP and rental subsidies have lifted roughly six million out of poverty, but the administration is proposing cuts to these programs -- via [The Associated Press](#).
- **Immigration:** The president has proposed to make it harder for legal immigrants who use public assistance to remain in the U.S. permanently. Legal immigrants could possibly be denied a green card if they have received government assistance that they were legally allowed to access -- via [USA Today](#).
- **Competitive Markets:** Many farmers say that \$5 billion in subsidies to offset damage caused by new trade tariffs is not enough. U.S. farm income is expected to drop 13% to \$66 billion, according to the Department of Agriculture -- via [The Wall Street Journal](#).



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