



Writers for Democratic Action

Writers for Democratic Action Impact Statement

In 2020, a small but fierce group of writers founded Writers Against Trump (WAT), which has grown to a robust international cohort of almost 3,000 members and 60 partner organizations. After the 2020 victory, WAT became Writers for Democratic Action (WDA), and over the past two years, has brought together the literary community to protect democracy, demand racial and economic justice, champion suffrage, and resist white supremacist and fascist movements. The organization has made meaningful progress mobilizing writers globally, supporting voting rights efforts, contributing to positive outcomes in swing state elections, and hosting conversations that clarify and illuminate threats to democracy and strategies for artists and citizens organizing for democratic action.

WDA's US-based members include writers from Maryland, Virginia, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and Washington DC; international members hail from Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nigeria, Israel, France, Germany, Austria, Czechia/Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Japan, India, Philippines, Turkey, Australia, and New Zealand. WDA's 60 partner organizations represent more than ten US states, and eight countries outside of the US. This reach suggests not both an intense need to protect democracy in the US, and also the complexity of the struggle for democracy worldwide.

In addition to a constant presence across social media platforms, WDA organizes an on-going, high-powered event series, hosting writers, scholars, journalists, activists, and artists in conversation about democratic action. In the lead up to the 2020 election, WDA collected and broadcast 160 video statements from writers, published Op-Eds, conducted interviews, gained attention in the international press, and launched #VotePlanPledge, in partnership with Writers Resist. Days after the election, WDA held ten post-election discussions across America, taking up the questions: What Just Happened and What Has to Happen Now? These featured writers including Mitchell Jackson, Thomas Bradshaw, Ozge Samanchi, Russell Banks, Edwidge Danticat, Richard Blanco, Fernand R. Amandi, Belle Boggs, Wiley Cash, Elijah Nicholas, Vincent Fort, and others, and concluded with a national event featuring Paul Auster, Salman Rushdie, Rebecca Solnit, and Natasha Trethewey.

In the months that followed, WDA hosted panel discussions on swing state elections in Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Texas, and on the 20th anniversary of 9/11, WDA hosted the panel, "9/11 & its Aftermath," with Paul Auster, Todd Gitlin, Elias Khoury, Jacki Lyden, Heather Cox Richardson, and Caroline Randall Williams, as the inaugural event of its 2021-22 series of state and international conversations. WDA's events have been attended by combined audiences of over a thousand people from Vancouver to Oslo to Dubai, with many hundreds of additional downloads and views after the events streamed live.

Most recently, WDA has launched its BOOK THE VOTE voting rights and registration initiative, led by its national steering committee and supported by bookstores across the country and state committees in North Carolina, Michigan, Texas, Florida, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania.

May, 2022

Steering Committee

Paul Auster
Sophie Auster
Peter Balakian
Jericho Brown
James Carroll
Robin Davidson
Rachel DeWoskin
Carolyn Forché
Todd Gitlin, *Emeritus*
Siri Hustvedt
Mitchell Kaplan
Jill McCorkle
Askold Melnyczuk
Jo-Ann Mort
Gerard Robertson
Tara Skurtu
Natasha Trethewey

