

"We Choose Us" — Event Transcript

Speaker attribution is inferred from context. The recordings contain crowd noise and overlapping speech, so some names and phrases are approximate.

Part 1 — We-Chose-U-S-1-_01.mp3 (~16:31)

Opening: facilitator welcome, audience members sharing, coalition director's introduction, and the start of Attorney General Keith Ellison's remarks (tribute to Rep. Melissa Hortman).

Facilitator: can you hear her or something that you said? Lily, you can bring the mic over to you and we could share with the group. Not all of us. I think one of the things that interesting is that probably many of us were raised in one political party or persuasion and as we've been through life's experiences and changed our persuasions, that is a change in our life. It can change and it can be offered and not be.

Facilitator: And what was your name? Thank you, Tina. There's a hand in the bag. And Jake, if you could just talk straight into my response. I'm very familiar. We've got a lot of people

Audience Member (Jake): asking too. Hi, my name is Jake. Is this a good boy? My name is Jake. I come from the public company, especially Rose. There's a space and something you have to yourself to talk about is people converting into girls. I was raised in a deeply, deeply conservative proud Christian house. And only relatively recently, I learned that that is simply not true. That it's full of lies. It's not right. It is not humanistic to people. That is what we

Facilitator: must do. We must strive to give humanity to others and give humanity to others because if we don't give humanity to others, then we won't care about that. That's good. Anyone more? Yes. Jane, I'm hearing that you're giving the flyer yesterday in the chapter or else. Thanks, Jane. Jane, could you share? Sure. What do you think, Shawn?

Audience Member (Jane): Seagull. Seagull, because I know the power of that town, and we're sustainable. And we just need to know what to do. There are plenty of us who are wanting to act, you know, sort of quite at the middle of act. Family are from supporters, act or not. And we need to know the steps to take while we're all working with human beings. Thank you, Jane.

Facilitator: Great. Well, thank you, everyone, for sharing a little bit of all the way in the beginning. And there are just a couple of things about the day. There will be people on sediments. There's a lot of parties in St. Louis County, Olmstead County, and Secretary Sun, and so on. So as you already practice, we're going to be running the mic out to people so that they can hear us clearly. And anytime you need to, please take a break. And now, I'll have to drag over to Lily. Yeah, Monique. Begin the mic feedback. Okay.

Director (We Choose Us): The director, you choose us. The organization hosts, they are answering. Thank you. We started, we choose us in January of 2018. So we've been around for a while. We're a coalition of over 40 organizations in Minnesota who believe in building a thriving multi-faceted city. We don't have that right now. We don't have it, and frankly, we haven't. We are struggling to create something that we've never had before, amidst the rise of our justice in our country. We believe deeply in coming together and organizing and building people's power to achieve our for a multi-faceted, multi-faceted, multi-faceted, multi-faceted, multi-faceted city. That's a work of art. That's a work of art. But today, we're coming together to talk about what is happening. There's so much. You'll see in your package that we're going to shoot you put together what's happening to us. I've reached you. I can walk around, but today is not just about we're also talking about that. It's important that we are clear about the things that we don't want. We're clear about the authoritarianism that's happening right now to people even. We also have to have a vision of what's going on. That's enough. We can't move forward. We're stuck in defense all the time. So while this is called a dependent democracy, which it is, we have to defend what we have. We also get to dream up something different. That includes more and more people. So today, you're going to hear from some guest speakers who I'll be excited to introduce is just a little bit. Secretary of State Steve Simon is going to join us virtually. Representative Evergreen, that will be your person and attorney general, Alison is probably going to be the second one. But first, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about something that you're going to receive, which is the assassination of Steve. And I've got a long time to make space on it. It is immensely painful. It's here at, but it is also our support. And I was going to maybe have us hold a moment of silence, speak about what it was about, about being in action, about being in action, instead of talking to everybody because it was all about understanding the landscape of our state. I don't think she would want us to be quiet. In fact, at the beginning of the 2023 legislation, the legislative session, which I'm not going to say exactly what I'm going to say, but let's leave you go. Because she was right. We were, we took action. So instead, what I think I would do is I'm going to say, let's try to, one, two, ready to work, ready to fight back, but also to think of something different. To ensure that we have not yet achieved what we need together. So we're going to consider how to manage this. We're going to hear about her and write her destiny first to tell us what they have been doing, what they're working on, so that we can understand how we're going to talk about our future. We don't need to get completely decided. But what does a thriving multi-generational multi-generational box look like? We get to decide on it together. We have more people that are in this room than we used to be. And then we're actually going to have some of the things that I heard about to break up in county teams and come up with a plan of action. I'll talk about our county teams a little bit later, but that is what we're using to work on this. So when we get a direct action, we're going to come up with an action. Let's take action. That's why you're here. Let's see. Well, in that instance, I'm curious to hear a general answer.

Facilitator: See you guys. And really, that's the show of leadership. We're setting up a fitness course. And I'm sorry I didn't catch your name, but I want to thank you. I'm a speaker today. It's here for both of us. Money. Thank you, money. Great job.

Attorney General Keith Ellison: Okay, give me that. So, friends, I do have to start by just talking about my friend Melissa. She was my friend of more than two decades. She wasn't just somebody who I knew. She was a very good friend of mine. And I had that talk. She was just at the DLL table the night. I just want you to know that I met her in 1970 before. She was a legal aid lawyer. And I was in the police department in the right seat, Joe Amino left place. And she was at the legal aid site. She was a young lawyer. She had a client. And I met my lawyer, Ty and Sting, but I was just taking her through the storm. And the storm was an extraordinary moment for me. I lived in a very distressed house. I was being treated very badly by my landlord, not only in terms of the conditions that she's never met with her children, but in terms of just the treatment that the landlord would deliver. And imagine the words that you can, because that was pretty much about me. And Melissa took Stormy's case, who could give her a sense of what to do and file that lawsuit, and got \$100,000 first for me and my family. Because it's just how bad those damages work. And so I said everything to those. You're going to hear a lot about her as a speaker. And she did remarkable things. I mean, what about her? A lot of the previous things we did in the drug factory and in the agreements here, she talked about all those wonderful things that Melissa is a part of. But in my view, Melissa, she was targeted because she feels that she felt about children. The first time when they go to school, she was targeted because she thinks people do deserve this kind of chances. She was targeted because she does. She didn't try to kill them and they didn't do it with the job tax penalty. For the most noble ideas of all income, she's taken away the most. And look, Melissa, the last person to try to glorify her, she's a very worthy, funny person. She really knows us. But now that she is in eternity, I think it does make sense to really emphasize the true union and sacrifice she made. So I just share that because I think that if we are a country that isn't in some spot, we will prevail. We absolutely will. We must. And if everything you feel like about an arguing one, just think about this courageous young lady, you know, this girl, yes, she's a spark. Any of those in here today? She went forward and she helped people in a meaningful way. She reminds me of a lady named Biola, the user. Anybody ever heard of her? Yeah. If you've ever heard of Biola, let me tell you about Biola. Biola, the user was the right woman for the Detroit mission. She did have a husband and kids. Martin Luther King said, I need to march across the enemy's bridge to get voting rights for all Americans. And would Americans come to Montgomery, Alabama to help team in that? Because Sheriff Clark doesn't want to see a new Alabama governor. And so did Biola and the user. Biola and the user was driving poll workers back and forth to the polls and was helping them get around. And she had a car and the two flexing in Kiltshire. And if you drive from Selma to Montgomery, you can see the Montgomery. And I just think that a lot of us know, we think of ourselves as ordinary people, but we're doing extraordinary things. And so we just want to value each other, love each other, tell each other thank you, and it was small fires.

Part 2 — We-Chose-U-S-1-_02.mp3 (~17:09)

Continuation of Attorney General Keith Ellison's remarks (joy/self-care message; overview of AG litigation — birthright citizenship, impoundment, DEI, libraries/museums, National Guard) into a legal-concepts explainer (TRO, preliminary injunction, amicus, standing) and Q&A.

Attorney General Keith Ellison: Just what you're doing is extraordinary. She did, but we're listening to this extraordinary. Really, and I don't think you can stop and you tell each other that. I kind of wish I would have told her one more time. I love you through our boss. Just go ahead. Yeah. You're going to be in the police. Yeah, you want to come to me? I don't know if anybody can hear me or anything. Wait, I meant he probably doesn't remember because I have a loud and constant, but this is something I've been thinking about a lot when Melissa was killed, is of all the politicians in the state of Minnesota, other than maybe Wells, to whom that I personally know, she was willing to work across the aisle, and every single politician on the other side that talked about her after she was murdered, they said, no matter what, she always reached across the aisle, and not just in an artificial way, but, hey, let's go out to dinner and let's have a conversation. She kept it very real. I don't think that the, I see this, I don't want to criticize other people, but the people who are really of that, can I say, the people who are really behind Trump and are blind to everything else they're doing, they don't want that. They want this division because it serves their purposes, and I think that's why it's so important that Pete and Steve Simon are here today, because, and the reason I came here today is because I am tired of listening to my neighbors, P&M, y'all know what that means, P&M. This is normal. There are P&M-ing about everything, and I'm lucky I wanted everything I said, so what are you going to do about it? And she goes, what do you mean? And I said, what are you going to do? Are you going to donate money? Are you going to mark? Are you going to, what are you going to do? She goes, well, if somebody else starts something, then I'll join in. And I said, I'm sorry, that's good enough. And she was really mad at me, but I figured out something, and if I may just throw this out there, you may think I'm crazy, but there's two things we need to do to save democracy, ourselves, and the planet. And hear me out before you go, whoa, number one, we have to take care of ourselves. Yeah. But I mean by that, you've got to attend to your physical care, your mental care, your spiritual care, and you can't let anyone get in the way of that. It's really important that we all keep ourselves healthy. And the second thing is against this on nuts, we have to be willing to give, take, and spread joy. And the reason I say that is I have discovered the only time in this last virus response that I had felt a power to do things is when I'm in a state of joy. Now, happiness, you can't hang on that all the time, but joy you can. In any given moment, you can feel joy. And when I feel joyful, I am powerful. I can do anything. And by the way, I'm 71 years old each 20 year old, because I determined to have the energy to fight the things I believe in. And if you are in that place, even in this tragedy, we have to stay in that place, keep resisting for what we believe in. I don't like the word fight, but I think resist is really important. And sorry, I didn't want to speak here, but joy and taking care of ourselves. We have to do it.

Attorney General Keith Ellison: Anyway, let me just talk about my part of the statement. I did my mission, and let's see if that's how we're really well. Let's see. We're really well.

We're ready to go. But I have to tell you this today, I think it's been a good moment of joy because we have two more chance attacks. And we have defeated them in court just about our time. Thank you. Now, when it comes to the rich, we have not had a success in it. And when the court made this decision about the National Guard and California down in this district, although in case it's not, but in many other cases, we have been able to succeed and prevail over this particular president. The courts are holding up. It is a good thing for you all to point that out to people because a lot of you want to go to everything absolutely is wrong. No, no it isn't. The courts are holding up pretty well also critical matters. Well, let me tell you this. As a general, about a year, maybe more than a year, actually March 2024, me and my fellow general recognize that this election to go in the direction that we we do not look forward to. And so what we did is we pulled ourselves into committees. We pulled apart and passed 2025. We realized that it was going to attack immigration, education, the administrative state, all the agencies that help people every day like the Department of Education and the UDA. We realized that he was going to go after transgender people and things like that. And so we pulled ourselves into committees. And so when January 20th came, it became very clear to us that it was going to be a busy time. And he got this morning's open. He had those regards, kind of mutual. We all saw it right. And so what we did is what he did is his first second term was to attack birthright cisgender. Within 24 hours of swimming over that, it would be the same thing. And within 24 hours of that, the court had enjoyed and won that in the middle of it. What he wanted to do was just stop issuing passports to people who were born in the U.S., but their parents were not, and didn't have, weren't cis. We said, no, that's not what the 14th Amendment says. And when we went to court for that, and we defeated them, it sure worked the next time. Well, when he tried to impound, which means restrict, about \$3 trillion dollars, if I'm not mistaken. So you all name and call. But before even February, \$3 trillion dollars. And if I was sitting down talking about everything, from multicultural grants to wheels on wheels money, all sorts of funny things. I said, are we going to sign an extension of the American people? And where are we going to sign them up? And so as soon as we come back, somebody might be here today to know that it is true that I hear stories all the time about, well, you know, the portal, which is state agencies get funding that they are due from the federal government. They'll see like, they'll see anything. But the portal for defense is now on sale. So the grant that we got from the program, that money's not coming. So we go back to court, and we will tell the court that she is defying the law. And then she will see the money. But after that press, we sued him on national institute of health grants and tried to restrict natural science information and tried to just break it. Then she tried to sue over, or she tried to issue executive order over diversity, that made an inclusion and said that any K-12 program that had a different diversity and inclusion program was not going to get their federal money. And let's say that they did not do that. And so we sued them over that, not an extension of that. And then we sued them on the libraries and museums. She didn't have any time to do this, tried to restrict money from libraries and museums and nobody like to do that. And so we sued about 27 cases. In fact, I just didn't want to buy them. I mean, this fell while I was sitting here. So we handled four extra lawyers that are on my office that we obtained to be able to do these disputes. So we're not overloaded. We're working with New York County

government and the NOAA, Colorado, Washington state, and it is all grants. But friends, I want you to know love to have an opportunity to join them in grants. I said, you know what, man? I told the Republican agency the other day we will eliminate payments. I said, why don't you join our cases and shut down your water in your state? And we're going to get our program to turn that in. You're not going to explain that to your constituents and you don't understand. We step out and shut them down. They're going to run us funny against us. And then we're running a Euro level with the other government guy, Nolan Swattson and Ida. And I'm saying the story of Nolan Swattson. I'm going to get Nolan Swattson and I'll just be serving him today. He's not going to remember. He's not going to breastfeed any of you. He wasn't going to serve, but he was a decent person. And the guy I don't think is a decent person. He can't even think about that. Name Ken Jackson from Texas. He tried to say in the last election that he was going to assume the state of Pennsylvania and the Supreme Court because he didn't like other elections. Now, how does Texas extend the challenge to Pennsylvania? When I'm trying to do it with the deaf audience that kind of case in the Supreme Court, everybody do it. It's far worse than the paper that was written on it. And yet they all sign the Nolan Swattson. I'm not sending that. You know that's not going to work. I know that's not going to work. It's not going to work. It's a sign of supporting the game that I'm not going to do. They say, oh yeah, he says yeah. And they ran somebody against him in a primary very much. So all the rest of them got this thing. They wrap up telling them, you know, I've been here to solve this much and it's long. It seems to be very different. I want you to know that I'm not tired of you. I don't know. You got money, you guys. You're taking me to small moments. I don't know how long it takes. If you try to nationalize our National Guard, it will be even worse. I'm not going to file a case that I know of. I'm not going to file a case where you're wrong. You're going to have to go to court sometimes to put it into court to decide whether they're going to file a justice scene.

Facilitator / Q&A: I don't know what a preliminary injunction is. What a separate, separate, separate, I'm going to tell you what it is. It is more intense. I don't know what I'm going to do. I'm going to be right over there. So let me just tell you, when somebody gets wrong, you can take them to court to trust. And the person who does the wrong is a defendant, the person who is wrong is a judge. I usually, if I go to court and I go to court, then the court will say, okay, here's the date where you have to exchange information by, here's the date when you have to bring in a motion and you need to replace. Or here's the date we're going to trust the case on and here's the date we're going to trust the case. We'll bring it all in here until the day we're going to get the case. Don't worry about the case. Well, let's put it in a little case. Sometimes, when the wrong that is taking is ongoing, you can get an emergency leave. And that is something called, not only are we going to sue, but we're going to file a motion in temporary restraining word on that back time. Saying, Judge, I'm not just suing them for pushing a back total across my back, because he's destroying my property. He's tearing out my house. I'm going to stop now. I can't let him tear down my house and sue him six months to a year in there. I'm going to stop now. And that is where we're going to get these things like temporary restraining order, preliminary injunction, and when they're going to drive the agents around, they're really going to drive, and it didn't invite anybody to teach. So this is some of the legal services we want on so far. We want a lot of temporary

injunctions and we want to call it terrible temporary restraining. These are emergency measures to stop all the wrong now. I've got so much to go on that there's a lot of things that have happened in this case to stop. There's a lot that has run back in this. But I will do, but I'm going to have to get it. Then I have to do the cost of the cost. Thank you. Now, for me, with the term standing, you've got to have a concrete banishment to the state. So I'll give you an example. It was a great, great leader earnings. She won a national labor relations board. It's the board that resolves the streets between labor and management. Well, you know, Trump does not like the word that's right. She wants just the management to do whatever they want. And not most people like labor union. So they get cheated from out of her job by turning off her parking car, turning off her, changing their computer access, and just sending her out to the post office. And so what happened is that she was fired like this because the state of Minnesota, for me, does stand into challenge. Even though it's wrong. So what are we doing? We did the next thing. We filed a motion on amicus. So if I know what amicus means, we're a friend of the corporate. So we filed a friend of the corporate to support when Wilcox's action to destroy her child. And we did the same thing with the FTC. And we did the same thing with the National Protection. So we've done a lot of these direct changes. But then we've done amicus breaches where we're in a virtual step. As you're standing, we've issued a lot of guidance. No less guidance. When you turn to them and send out guidance, we're going to know. That means that somebody on my staff, in my direction, evaluates what the state of the law is and then tells them what the law is. So for example, we told an issued guidance to say that she is just participating in extracurricular activities according to the gender identity that they have. I said, follow this up. So with the handbook, I felt that that's just the guidance. And we sent that to the Minnesota Act. Other guidance was on immigration. You must teach them. If they're sitting in front of you, you've got to teach them. You're not an accident. And it's hard to even decide who's going to get to do it. It's the fact that they should understand and teach you the front.

Part 3 — We-Chose-U-S-1-_03.mp3 (~16:56)

AG Keith Ellison finishes (immigration/gender-identity guidance, litigation strategy — TRO, injunction, standing, appellate courts, National Guard) and closes; facilitator transitions to Secretary of State Steve Simon, who joins virtually and begins his SAVE Act explanation.

Attorney General Keith Ellison: And you cannot, as a jail in Minnesota, they size, access, keep them in custody until they, until the ice cream comes out of them. Cannot do that. If they are free to go, then they're free to go, and you don't have an unusualistic, judicial warrant issued by the court, you can't open it. So this is me issuing guidance. Now, sometimes the guidance does have to be the beginning of a loss. So we issued guidance that you have kids who can participate in this court, and whether they're gender identity groups. So then they have on, it's running around time, but I'm just going to sue myself. So that's the nerve box. So, and then, since all the people constantly need to sue us over this issue, so we're sue them out of court, but at the end of the day, I want you to know that as long as I'm attorney general, we're not going to sell anybody. We're not going to try to go along to get along with anybody. We're going to stand up against this administration as long as it's operating against the law. It's the thickness that I just want to point out very quickly that the things that are on my mind and the things that I can really just talk about is our national guard. It's sort of optional, companies being the illegal sector. And tell them, give me a chance to go to court. And if I can't go to court because I don't understand anything, let me do what he likes. So I'm trying to set up institutions like Target, like University of Minnesota, like other institutions. John just said, John and I were drunk all of a sudden. He's probably doing something illegal but we can't buy anything voluntary just to do something that is not right. By the way, you can buy some students' rights for this, can you buy them some rights to go to court? So we're a Minnesota institution and you say no tricks, kids can go to the tax committee, the public tax committee, then you're going to get an institution that's not well, no, serious, you know? And I say that because we can't have a society where the president is willing to do what he does. And we're going to be glad to have rights. We're going to set up legal rights for students. So that brings up, I don't know what would be the human name, but if I didn't want to, anybody in the MTA. I'm going to hear your interaction with the committee. It's such a ridiculous thing. Those of you who are going to do this, first of all, me and the chair, I'll leave Susan first, my name is Andrew. It's an important part of the committee is to prioritize certain things, all the work that we're supposed to do, you have to see what we're doing here. We need to assess everything. Now sometimes it's in the, sometimes it's in the chair, sometimes it's in the director. Well, in the case of Susan, you're in the key. Can you repeat the question? Why does the tax take so straight to the Supreme Court? In other times, we have to go to all the court levels or district courts, district courts. Yet, which case are you thinking of? Mr. Reddick, I don't know. It's something that I do know that in favor of Dr. the Supreme Court takes something lighter in its phases. And sometimes, and then sometimes it's in the court of guidance, sometimes they fall over in order to do that. So I'm just thinking. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So there are very rare cases where those can go straight into the treaty, things like that. But also like the most, you have to go up to the bottom, and then you go across. The witness in part was said to be involved is on the terrorist case. And we're so shocked on the terrorist because his use of emergency law was

illegal, and we soon know that we've been in a different court. So then, what we soon know is something called the International Court, International Trade. So then that case is going to be revealed to the circuitry courts. You know, there's a lot, nine to four around the country, and how to get up in it. And so we will lend them those security courts. Anyway, one more. The issue is, they said, what happened is they meant to do it while they're in a set. What is a set? Judge, hold everything in status quo until you get to hearing it. So there's some people who are not willing to grab in in case you're in one of the merits. They're just in status quo until it gets to live. You understand? So that somehow, sometimes some people will end up in this. Somebody will take something that is already in the circuitry court and see some people to stay seated until they're gone. Which is in a way, back, because it's not some new private things until the, in the meantime. But there's really only been one circuitry court case so far, and that is the one which is worth our attention. And let me tell you, the other side, there's some chicken of losing that they didn't argue the issue of whether the president had an issue of a consecutive order in depriving of a marginalized citizenship. They didn't want to determine whether that big district court judge could do a nation-wide judge. So what I'm telling you is, sometimes it could be a little bit complicated but it's complicated for me because I have to be around some cases which might have to say which one is the TRO or which one has a, I got to get it, but she, really. But they're right, they're right. But I want you to know that if we are living in this, that the thing in California, when the National Congress said, I really don't think that the court is wrong and they're going to take it in kind of a point in your part. Because it is absolutely ridiculous for the United States president to save the Marines on the people of Los Angeles. This is one of the more necessary, you know what I'm saying? That way it's absolutely wrong. But let's put the next, oh, the lawyer here. I just want to say this, the lawyers are, the judges are not more important than you. This country will not be saved in a coral if we save it all. When literally millions of men stand up and demand it, we have, so I'm going to wrap it up, and we're going to wrap it up. So I would not expect that to be a question of, but thank you all very much.

Facilitator: Thanks to be in here. Thank you all so much, thank you all so much. God bless you all, God bless you all, God bless you all.

Secretary of State Steve Simon: We are, Secretary Simon is kind enough to join us today as it's kind of in strength that you can't be here in person. So I'm going to turn it over to Secretary Simon to give us- Hey everybody. Hi, can you hear me and see me okay? Yeah. Hi, can you hear me and see me okay? Yeah. Yeah. Yes, okay. Thank you so much. First of all, if he's still there, thank you, Keith. Thank you, Attorney General Ellison for your leadership. Really extraordinary. As I'm going to say in my piece here, he's done so much to move the ball on issues pertaining to democracy in particular. And so he's just been a trusted and valued and effective partner for sure. And I just want to let you know, I wish I could be there with you in person, but I'm on a quick family trip, just for the weekend. And so I couldn't be there with you in person. But I want to say this, many of you have heard me say before, but it bears repeating, that given my job as Secretary of State, I like to say that I'm in the democracy business. And in case you haven't noticed, it's been a very interesting past few years to be in the democracy business. We face a lot of challenges, I would say even threats

right now. And when I think in particular about the democracy business, I know this can seem sort of like a trite analogy, but I will say I do think in terms of offense and defense, sort of in sports terms, right? There's a time to go on offense, there's a time to be on defense. Two years ago in 2023 in the state of Minnesota, we were very much on offense, meaning we were getting things done, getting things passed, getting things across the finish line and that we thought were good for democracy in Minnesota. There's a lot of laws that added to the great long enduring list of reforms that we've had in Minnesota for over half a century. And I think that's right. Those new laws that we passed two years ago have already put us in an even better place than we already were to be leaders nationally when it comes to the strength of our election system and therefore of our democracy. But there's no question now, given the shifts in the state legislature and more importantly in Congress, that we are very much on defense at this point. And I wanna say just a few words about that landscape and what we face and what we're looking at right now. So I wanna start at the federal level and talk about something that some of you have heard about which is the SAVE Act. It passed the US House several weeks ago. It's now in the lap, so to speak, of the US Senate. And in particular, it is in the lap of Senator Mitch McConnell. You may remember him, the former Republican leader. Now he's no longer leader, John Thunez. So he stepped aside from that post, but he is the chair of the Senate Rules Committee. Now the Senate Rules Committee is where most election bills go first and foremost. And last term in the US Senate, the chair of the Senate Rules Committee was our very own Senator Amy Klobuchar. She's still on the committee, but she's not chair. Mitch McConnell, Republican is chair and the ranking member is no longer Senator Klobuchar. Since she's the ranking member now in agriculture, but the ranking member, the top Democrat is Senator Alex Padilla of California who you may note just a few days ago made news for all the wrong reasons, not his fault because he was thrown to the floor and handcuffed and let out of a press conference given by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. Alex and I go way back, he was Secretary of State of California before he was United States Senator. So about three weeks ago or so, Senator Padilla and Senator Klobuchar invited me to go to Washington to testify before a hearing of the Rules Committee or a hearing of the, they were calling them a spotlight hearing that they were putting on. And I said there what I will say to you, which is the SAVE Act in essence is an attempt to impose nationwide a documentary proof of citizenship requirement or a documentary proof of citizenship requirement for registering to vote. So before you even vote when you register to vote, you have to show documentary proof of citizenship. That's what they wanna do nationwide. Now, let me stop there and say that I would completely understand if anyone anywhere hearing nothing more than just that might on a surface level think that was a good idea. And I think it's important for all of us here today to show that kind of empathy and to demonstrate that kind of understanding, knowing nothing more, just that someone has to show proof that they are a US citizen before they register to vote. I can understand the surface appeal of that. After all, there are only a few criteria for voter eligibility in the Constitution. Age, residence and citizenship are really the big three, the core three. So knowing nothing else, I can well understand why this might pull well. I can well understand why someone on the street might say, well, that seems to make sense. But this is one of those examples and we see many of them in this

space where the more you look, the less you like. The more you look, the less you like. And this is one of those instances. And let me tell you why I say that. So I'll give you some examples. We have 69 million women in the United States who have a different last name now than the one they were born with. Obviously the vast majority of those are due to a change due to marriage. They've chosen to take another last name. Of those, over 20 million do not have a passport, meaning for those 20 million American women in order to show documentary proof of citizenship. So not just something you fill out in a form but you got to show some documents. It would take at least two sets of documents. The person in that category would have to produce a birth certificate and a marriage record, both, not one or the other, but both. And that's only if they've been married one time. If they've been married more than one time and they've changed the name again, they would have to show a birth certificate and they would have to show two marriage records. Now, someone might say, well, it's easier than ever to get documents right now. Maybe that's not a real hardship for that many people. Well, we actually have experience with this because in 2011, the state of Kansas passed its own version of what we now call the SAVE Act. In other words, on the state level, the state of Kansas said in order to vote in non-federal elections in Kansas, they said in 2011, we're gonna impose a proof of, a documentary proof of citizenship requirement. You know what happened in the state of Kansas? Well, a court struck that law down, ultimately, on federal constitutional grounds. But before that happened, there was an election in the state of Kansas. And in the state of Kansas, when they had that one election, that general election, 30,000 eligible voters in Kansas, eligible voters. Just as eligible as you and I and anyone else who's in this audience, who's an American citizen and can vote, over 30,000 eligible Kansas, eligible were shut out of the voting process. Now, you can do the math. Minnesota is about two and a half times larger than in the state of Kansas. That's several tens of thousands of Minnesotans who are eligible to vote. They are 18, they are citizens. They are residents of where they say they're residents. And they, if the math is the same as Kansas, would be barred. They would be driven out and shut out of the election process. So that's a big problem, right? A really, really big problem. The second impact that this would have is on rural voters. On rural voters of all kinds. Doesn't matter what their political affiliation, their life history, anything else, rural voters. Why do I say that? Because now when you have a documentary proof of citizenship, it means you can't just fill out a form online anymore to register to vote. It means you're gonna have to go somewhere, typically a county courthouse or some sort of county office. And depending on where you live, particularly in the state of Minnesota, that's a long, long way. Take St. Louis County, where Duluth is located. That's the largest county

Part 4 — We-Chose-U-S-1-_04.mp3 (~16:24)

Secretary Simon continues (SAVE Act impact on rural voters and the Kansas precedent; the non-citizen-voting study — 3 instances in 13.3M ballots; Trump's executive order on elections and the multistate lawsuit; free-speech concerns) and closes. Facilitator introduces Representative Emma Greenman, who speaks on political terrorism, the No Kings rally, and courage.

Secretary of State Steve Simon: the state of Minnesota by land area. You're talking about someone depending on where they live in St. Louis County to get to Duluth, they're gonna have to take half or more of a day of work off to go to register to vote. You can't just do it online anymore. It won't be that simple. So these are the things that we really, really have to think about. And by the way, here's another thing that I mentioned when I was privileged to go to Washington to talk about this is, let's look at the scope of the known problem. Here in Minnesota, I can't speak for any other state, but the SAVE Act is premised on the false idea, the provably false idea that millions and millions of ineligible people are voting. And in particular that millions and millions of people who are ineligible by virtue of not being U.S. citizens are voting. In other words, a ton of U.S. citizens are voting in our election. Okay, I can't say much about any other state because I'm not an expert on other states, but I do know Minnesota. And here's something that you can use in your communities and in your circles when you encounter this idea implicitly or explicitly that there's just all this non-citizen voting. Last summer, this is fresh data, fresh information. Just last summer, 2024, July. In July of 2024, a professor of law at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis published an article where he did a study. He did an analysis. He did a review of this in Minnesota. And he looked at 10 years worth of voting in Minnesota from 2015 through 2024, 10 years. In that 10 years span, 13.3 million voters voted. So there were 13.3 million ballots cast over 10 years. Do you know how many instances he found of non-citizens voting out of 13.3 million over a 10 years period? He found three, three, exactly three. Now that's three to too many. Every one of us now, you know, together, we would all prefer that that number be zero. Of course we would, but come up. Let's use our common sense here. And the question that we have to ask ourselves with something like the SAVE Act is, do we wanna shoot it a mosquito with a machine gun? Right? This is a tiny microscopic issue, tiny. Three out of 13.3 million. You can look up this guy's study. He wrote an op-ed in the Star Tribune about it as well. Summarizing his findings. Three out of 13.3 million over 10 years. Are we really going to risk turning away and shutting out probably over 50, maybe 75,000 eligible Minnesotans because of three people? By the way, all three of them were green card holders. That's worth noting. Not a single one of them, not a single one of the three was an undocumented immigrant to this country. All three were like my late mother, a green card holder. So I just think we have to keep that all in perspective. So that's one thing we're facing nationally. The second thing, Lily, if I have just a little time is to talk about the president's executive order on elections and voting. And I think Attorney General Ellison may have covered this. I came in in the middle of his remarks, but I take it that he did or touched on it. So President Trump several weeks ago, I'd say about eight weeks ago now, issued an executive order purporting to do several things. One was to threaten states like ours with a cutoff of certain federal funding if we didn't do election things that he likes. And in particular, he targeted things like, absentee voting deadlines and the like and things that

we've been doing in Minnesota for a long time. So we banded together with 18 other states. Keith and the Attorney General's office are leading the charge in court, in the district court in Massachusetts, basically saying above everything else, you don't get to do this, President Trump, because you don't have authority to do this. Even if we thought these things were a good idea, this isn't something that you can do constitutionally. Article one, section four of the constitution, you can look it up as pretty clear. It says states are in the driver's seat. States have primary authority when it comes to the time, place and manner of elections. The one exception is that Congress, may step in from time to time and regulate in the space of federal elections, just like the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and other enactments since then. But it says nothing in the constitution about the president, this one or any other president, simply waving a magic wand in the Oval Office by executive order and proposing to overturn or undo or remake state election systems. He just doesn't have the authority. So so far, we just in the last week, week and a half got a preliminary injunction in the district court in Massachusetts. There are a couple of different tracks of litigation. There's ours in Massachusetts, there's another one in another district court, but we now have a temporary injunction or temporary restraining order and joining or stopping or halting the president from doing this. I'm quite confident we're gonna win ultimately both in the district court and even if it goes all the way up to the Supreme Court but it's an example of what we're seeing right now. It's an example of the defense and the defensive posture that we find ourselves in right now when it comes to these democracy issues. So my advice to all of us is to keep up the pressure. How likely is this in the U.S. Senate? Well, Senator Klobuchar, Senator Smith and others feel very, very good about being able to bottle it up. This almost certainly is a vote that would require breaking a filibuster in order to pass. In other words, you need 60 votes and there just are not seven Democrats, a quarter of them and others who have looked at this who would vote for this. So it seems pretty likely at this point that it will be contained and bottled up and halted in the U.S. Senate, but we don't know that for sure. And all of you know where you wouldn't be here today, we can't just rest on our laurels and hope that things are gonna go well. Hope is not a strategy. So keep up the pressure, even if it's on our own U.S. senators, even if it's on people who you strongly suspect are on the right side of this, I think it's important for us to push back, it's important for us to make our voices heard and the like. Finally, I'll just say this, Lily, if you'll indulge me for a second. Democracy is about more than just voting. And if we had a lot more time, which we don't, I would talk about some of the challenges we face on democracy issues as simple as free speech, right? What we're seeing right now is a really dangerous assault I think on free speech, which is very much core to democracy. We were promised, weren't we? When this administration came in, that we would have a golden era of free speech, that all the cancel culture and the liberal censorship would go by the wayside and we'd have a glorious public square again where everyone can speak without fear of anything really. And we've really seen very much the opposite in all too many areas. We've seen universities badgered and bullied because of the makeup of their faculty or the courses in their course catalog or what kind of nonviolent protests might be going on at a given time. We've seen the President of the United States take over the Kennedy Center in Washington DC because he doesn't like the plays and concerts that they put on. We've seen the Associated Press

kicked out of the Pentagon press room because they refused to use the phrase Gulf of America instead of Gulf of Mexico. Sure seems like censorship to me. We don't have time to go into all that but I'm just saying this is a time when unfortunately many of us find ourselves in more of a defensive posture than an offensive posture but we just gotta stay strong. We gotta stay committed. We gotta stay focused. We've gotta work at these problems, yes, through litigation but also through other advocacy. But I'm an optimist. I'm an optimist about democracy in America and an optimist about democracy in Minnesota despite recent threats and challenges, we can overcome this stuff if we all work together. So I'll stop there, Lily. And I just wanna thank you all for your time and attention. Again, apologies that I couldn't be there with you in person, but next time I will.

Facilitator: Thank you so much for joining us. We've had a vacation. We're not going to do a question at the end of the rest of the time because we are running short. Welcome, Representative Emma Greenend, voting red lawyer and advocacy expert responsible for all the amazing and funny, funny, greedy around voting red voter extension in our state. Please give it up for Representative Emma Greenend.

Representative Emma Greenman: Let's be here with her on view. The last thing that would be in this church that's seven, eight weeks ago, we've been set up with CID workers in a round table with a better conversation. Some friends organized it was both to talk about what they were going through to talk about what federal workers were facing and specifically USAID workers who have given their lives and their careers in many cases to this idea of government as being a force for good, not just the United States, but in the world. And it was also a conversation about the windows on the front lines of one of those like to try to dismantle representative monks. And that was a conversation we're having at the Games in April. And I, as I was on over here, it's been an unimaginably painful week. And from Minnesota, for the country, for my caucus, I was new and loved. Elizabeth Park, John and his wife, for the matters of my caucus school, by the grace of the law and circumstance are secure. And so I wasn't sure I was going to look at this, but I didn't really, really need to be here with all of them. And it was clear to me and people, Keith and Steve are talking and I think the important thing for us, the important thing is I have been thinking about this is this political assassination and active political terrorism. As we think about the plan and the strategy and the ideology, happened in a week. Just didn't happen in any week. In a week where many of us been very, very, very concerned about whether we crossed the line sort of from descending into authoritarianism into something that potentially we're going to run back watching what happened in LA and the use of the Marines to over the so wishes of the foreign governor of the mayor and over everybody in the county. This is peaceful protest and the extent isn't we have an individual. Marines on the U.S. was terrorizing so much and what it was about, which was not just quelling violence, it was about innocent dissent. And then we saw many of us were preparing for the hearings that were all and the governor of New York and Illinois. So we're calling for the Congress in an congressional hearing that was basically had a trip that was exoxnused and was, I've never seen anything like this. To be honest with you, I have congressional hearings but it was allegations, it was accusations and at least two members of Congress called on the Department of Justice to investigate and

arrest our newly elected governors from Illinois, Minnesota and New York. So that was really, really tough. And then at the same time in that moment, and as Steve said, we watched Senator Padilla try to ask a question and be thrown out of the ground and detained and arrested because he was not free to vote. So that's where we all work. And I was really looking forward to and really, really felt of support as we thought about the New Kings Day rally protest. That, I think was a space where for those of us who are thinking about this is not just one thing it is a collective set of things. It is compounding, worry, anxiety, trauma and also just fear, which can be overwhelming, scary. And staff are really excited about that, and fear are the don't-based march. And as I was speaking about it, two months ago I was there giving a speech and I put the back of my speech because there was, for all this happened, I'm just gonna reprise some of that here as we often tend to. But it was a speech that I sort of informally titled the System of Democracy Slave that I didn't tell you when you were there or any of the marches and rallies around the state including the ones of libraries, not roads and at local rec centers and not just that day but over the last months. That is, it is empowering, it is beautiful and it is very, very powerful. And I talked about that today, I talked about treating our interns and they talk about how fear is contagious but so is courage. And so here we are in the middle of this politically motivated attack, this vaccination. Political terrorism and that in his terrorized, or see, it is terrorized, it's overwhelming, it is terrorized for a country I think and was sitting there on the Saturday and we didn't know what was going on, so we were hearing in my basement, in my bedroom being told but a lot more sort of shut down the place but my written strength, waiting for information and for correction or safety even though I got this text from a woman and a friend that was a candidate in 2024 and it's amazing. And I had been thinking like, what does this mean from Kingston? And we were telling them, I mean, don't go. The result of this action by assassination is to well be a power that we have collected. That is an injury that is far greater than just losing a listener. And that's where I think me and many of my colleagues were. And then we got this title from a girl shot and she sent me this picture at the No King ceremony that says, we honor our commonness. And it was a moment where I was like, I can't do this. Lucie, you are a competitive candidate on what I'm a speaker, checking your numbers, you're fundraising and just making sure you're good. But I think it is, as I've been thinking about it the last month, for the last.

Part 5 — We-Chose-U-S-1-_05.mp3 (~14:48)

A state legislator speaks on extremism vs. democracy and the Democracy Caucus, followed by the facilitator transitioning the group toward planning and county-team action.

Legislator / Representative: 8 days, 7 days, you know, I have a thing about the spirit of contagious, but so is courage. And courage is something you do along. And it took, I think, that that sort of way of what we can hear with the all of you today is really important. It's important that we're together, it's important that there's the caucus, we have been training together in the first part of 48 hours we couldn't. Because for our safety, we couldn't be together. But we are not powerless. We are courageous. We are courageous, yeah. And we have to be courageous for the people around us, for the person who has something to do.

For the people who are in trauma, for the people who can't be with us, people we have lost. And as I think about, you know, Steve Tucker at the SAVAC and Keith Tucker, all the work that he's been doing to protect us. And that both of them have been amazing partners with us and we have spent a lot of time asking how do we lose the power on Steve. And whether it's power by collaborating with Steve, or with governor, with local jurisdictions, with local organizations, whatever it is. How do we accept people, particularly the people in our communities who are being targeted and marginalized as a strategy for trans neighbors or immigrant neighbors, folks with disabilities. And at some point, we start to think about that. Longest is on the list. You know, it's about vision as a strategy. And I think that I just want to focus not on the problem, but on a few thoughts on... This moment in front of this variety of materialism is an extremism because I don't think that there's such things. They look different. They have different, you know, characteristics, but they feed each other. And it's important to understand that at the end of the day, what we're talking about is taking control of our communities, taking control of our families, our bodies, our collective decision. And that's what some of the extremism that we have seen that gives oxygen to the violence. That is also, when we talk of authoritarianism and the using of state and power to attack or tally as we saw it could be, actually use physical force against the elected representatives of people on the stage or in our case. It's about silencing the voices of some people in our community in order to divide us and to exert control. And I'm not going to write on extremism, although I feel like y'all need to become experts. But I do know that people who are have been somebody a month or a long, long time about what normalizing extremism does and how it does the oxygen to the violence and how it does create an ideology that fuels this idea of permission. And whether it is force, violence, whether it is fear or ideas, this idea that people are using threats, that they're using either violent or nonviolent force to take control is what we're talking about. And it's really, really clear that they are insistent with the U.S. Constitution and the fundamental principles for extremism. That you cannot believe in Christian dominionism and the idea that a certain set of people should rule and govern, everybody else without their control. You cannot believe in this technical authoritarianism that we should have a CEO king. You cannot believe in, frankly, the idea that corporations should control everything and everyone and all the decisions. So they look different again, but they are all ideas that are fundamentally anathema to democracy. The idea that not that we all have to agree, but that everybody gets a set. And so I think the response for extremism, the response for extremism has to be democracy. And not a democracy that is, you know, the great everybody votes. But a much more muscular, democratic representation and collective decision making. It's an idea that we actually believe in people. We believe in the top people. We believe in people, not just when we agree with the spectrum, and then we don't. And we believe that together, we can solve our problems and we can rest them. We can make a difference. We are not supposed to be happy. And I would say it's a legislative rarity then, but that we can do everybody has to say in our respective future. But that does mean this is not super clear because I feel like there's a shallow, but it is not just being white and tolerated by people. It is about recognizing people's humanity. It is about recognizing that everybody has a great enough race to decide our collective future, even if you don't agree with them, even if you are very, very different.

And that's what I try to practice. And it is what I try to practice with my colleagues. I talked to them, but so the most conservative people who viewed that I really against and I watched. But I believe in the project of democracy. It means that we would not be better off if we just had a liberal activism that implemented all of you. Democracy is met. It is hard. It is also beautiful and joyful, weird. And you get to believe in people. You get to see all sorts of different people. And that I think is what we need to be committed to. And I wanted to tell you something that's going to help me in that. I believe in people's humanity. It is so first time. And we've all been wrestling with that. We've been together as a group. We had the vigil from Melissa and Mark. And I got a email from a seventh grader just that said, thank you for making school lunches free. Thank you for standing up for democracy. Thank you for working to protect people with diverse backgrounds. I was born in Korea. Seven, seven just patients. And, um, So, And, I said, I thought that succeeded in my sense, the work for us. And then, I wrote his principle text that said, thank you for raising our kids. To see humanity. To be good humans. So let me say it again because I think we all, we are not, and we are courageous together. And I got an affiliate, it was a reminder that I got from a, we did a statement, there's a system called the democracy caucus, which we started in 2023, in order to really both fight some of the stuff we're seeing so to realize a stronger democracy to pass the amazing things that we did to give people more power in our democracy with my colleague, I was in a Frasier, my colleague Senator, pulled in from Rochester. And the day before we issued a statement, we wanted to move it for Daniel King's Day condemning Trump's deployment of the military in San Francisco's dissent, the second paragraph, which I think felt important, but not as urgent. I read back to him as Instagram, as she did not give you all your stuff, whether you need it or not. And that should admit that the second paragraph said, Selected officials who will not be bullied out of standing up for the democratic freedoms we promise in the United States Constitution, and protected by generations of activists, service members, leaders, and of citizens, will continue joining our fellow Americans to send their personal rights to lawfully protest the Trump administration. We will not back down from the work to defend and strengthen inclusive representative of democracy in our state and in our country. And if I would change it here to read that out, tell you that I will not and I know you will not back down. I think there's a lot of people in this counting on that and are ready to be invited into the conversation. So thank you for letting me be here with all of you circling for me. Thank you for what you're going to do in the next couple of hours, particularly in the next couple of weeks and months, because it really does matter. And thank you for believing in us. It's ultimately a good time. Thank you for representing an agreement or reminding us about what democracy can be

Facilitator: and be about us. It can be about people. We can have a fully-eathed, aggravated, multiracial, multiple-traumatic state. And I didn't say this at the top, but most not. It's not private, but there are some real things that are happening in our country. We have to name them and be clear about them. So in your packet, pages two through, I don't exactly remember what you were thinking about being five or six. There's a long list of signs. You heard from Chief Ellison, you heard from Secretary Simon, you heard from Representative Freeman, what their office focused on, what their work was. There's more in there. It's heavy. How are people feeling about what's going on? Raise your hand if you can shout it

out. It's in our country right now. Okay, scary. What else? Matt? Sam? James Austin? Too many. Hold on. What? Loose hands? Many ideas. Where's the region all to get? A desire to bring it together. A lot of ideas, a lot of recruits. It's a playbook. It's a playbook. We've seen this before in other countries in Latin America. It's not new. It's on the rise here. Rich, how do you feel? One more. We're ready. So there are good feelings in this room. Some sad, some scared, some overwhelmed, some desire to figure out how we can work organized. I will share where I'm going to have the answers to that today, if we might not, for many years. But we're going to keep trying. We're going to trust us because we can't afford to not take action to not be ready, right? Do folks agree with that? There's some part of us that is ready to succeed early. So we're going to get ready. There's heavy stuff. I don't want to spend too much time there. We heard what our elected officials are doing about it, what their disabilities are. We have a role to play too. We actually are probably one of the more important. Because you can, like you said, despite not having the courtroom, it doesn't happen in a capital alone. It's us. It's recognizing the humanity of other people. It's putting belonging before belief. It's building a broad-based no. Say no to authoritarianism. Yes, to democracy. Not one that everyone agrees to necessarily vote. But one where we can debate. We can exercise our right to vote if the state act decides who we want to represent. It's possible. So instead of talking more about all the heavy stuff, I also