

# Across the Partisan Divide

## Brent Hill

Michigan State Legislature

December 7, 2020





# NATIONAL INSTITUTE *for* CIVIL DISCOURSE

**NEXT**  
generation



COMMONSENSE  
AMERICAN



**ENGAGING  
DIFFERENCES**  
Engage our Differences more Constructively

DIVIDED  
WE FALL





lating to

**civility** noun

**b** a polite r

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idiot

**civility**

**respect**

**professionalism**

**politeness**

**training**

**order**

**consideration**

**manners**

**attitude**

**attentiveness**

**education**

**service**

**courtesy**

**thoughtfulness**

**good**

**generosity**

**propriety**

**properness**

**compliance**

**orderliness**

**correctitude**

# Civitas NOUN / *ci-vi-tas* / Latin

1 a body of people constituting a politically organized community; state.

2 citizenship, especially as imparting shared responsibility, a common purpose, and sense of community.

**civic**

**citizenship**

**civilization**

**civility**



# Candidus ADJECTIVE / 'kan.di.dus / Latin

- 1 white, very white, innocent, pure, shine.
- 2 associated to the color white in Christian tradition; can also represent ideas such as purity, salvation, goodness, without guile.

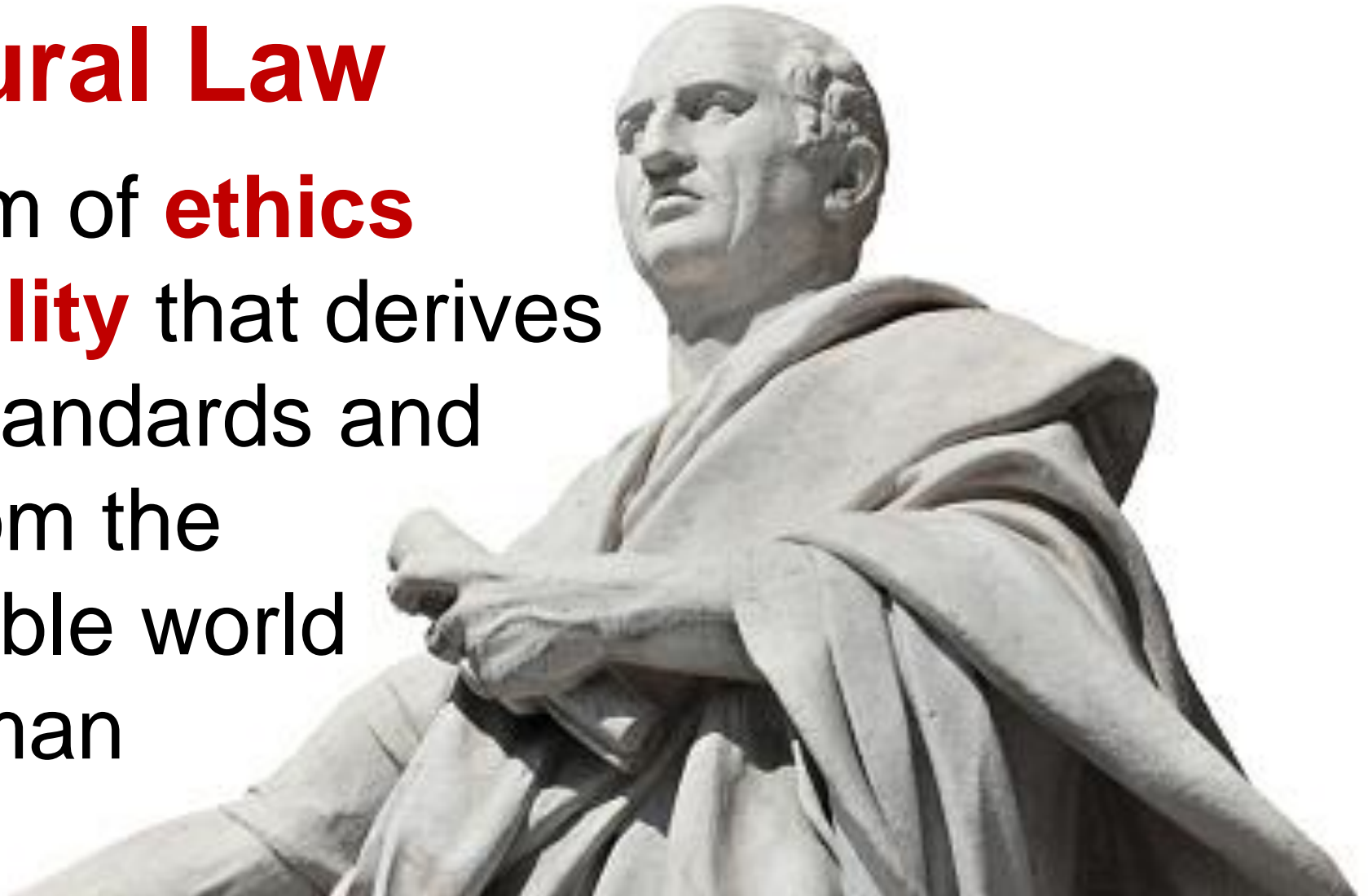
**candid**

**candidate**



# Natural Law

A system of **ethics** and **civility** that derives moral standards and rules from the observable world and human nature.

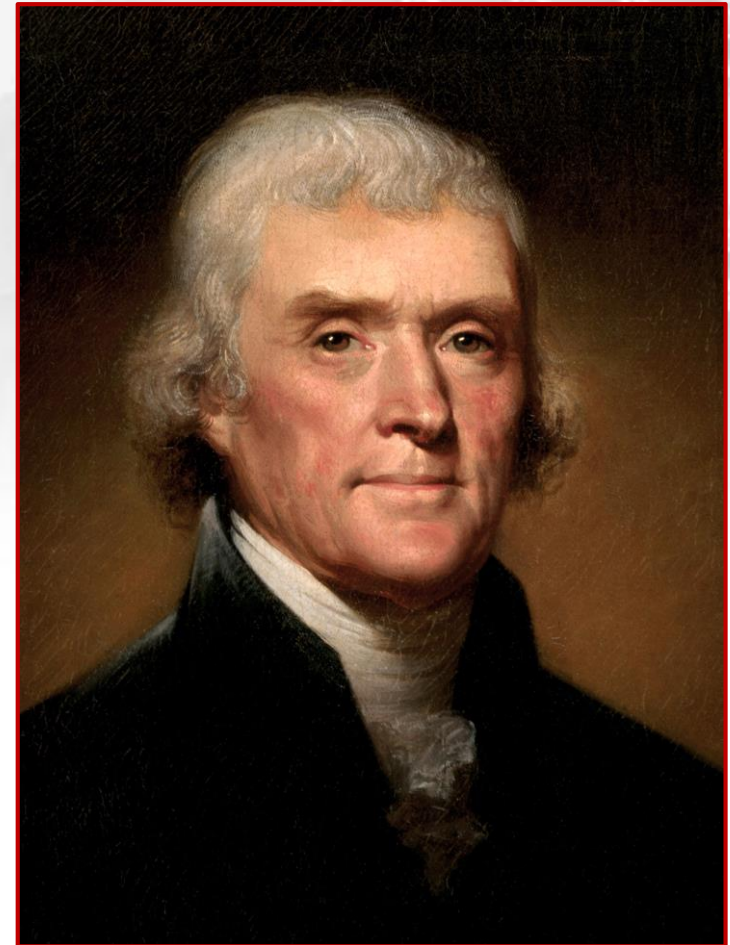






# Thomas Jefferson

"**Civility** is not a tactic or a sentiment. It is the determined choice of trust over cynicism, of community over chaos."



# John Adams to James Warren

(April 22, 1776)


“We may please ourselves with the prospect of free and popular Governments. But there is great Danger, that those Governments will not make us happy. God grant they may. But I fear, that in every assembly, Members will obtain an Influence, by Noise not sense. By Meanness, not Greatness. By Ignorance not Learning. By contracted Hearts not large souls.



# John Adams to James Warren

(April 22, 1776)

“There is one Thing, my dear sir, that must be attempted and most Sacredly observed or We are all undone. There must be a Decency, and Respect, and Veneration introduced for Persons...of every Rank, or We are undone. In a popular Government, this is our only Way.”

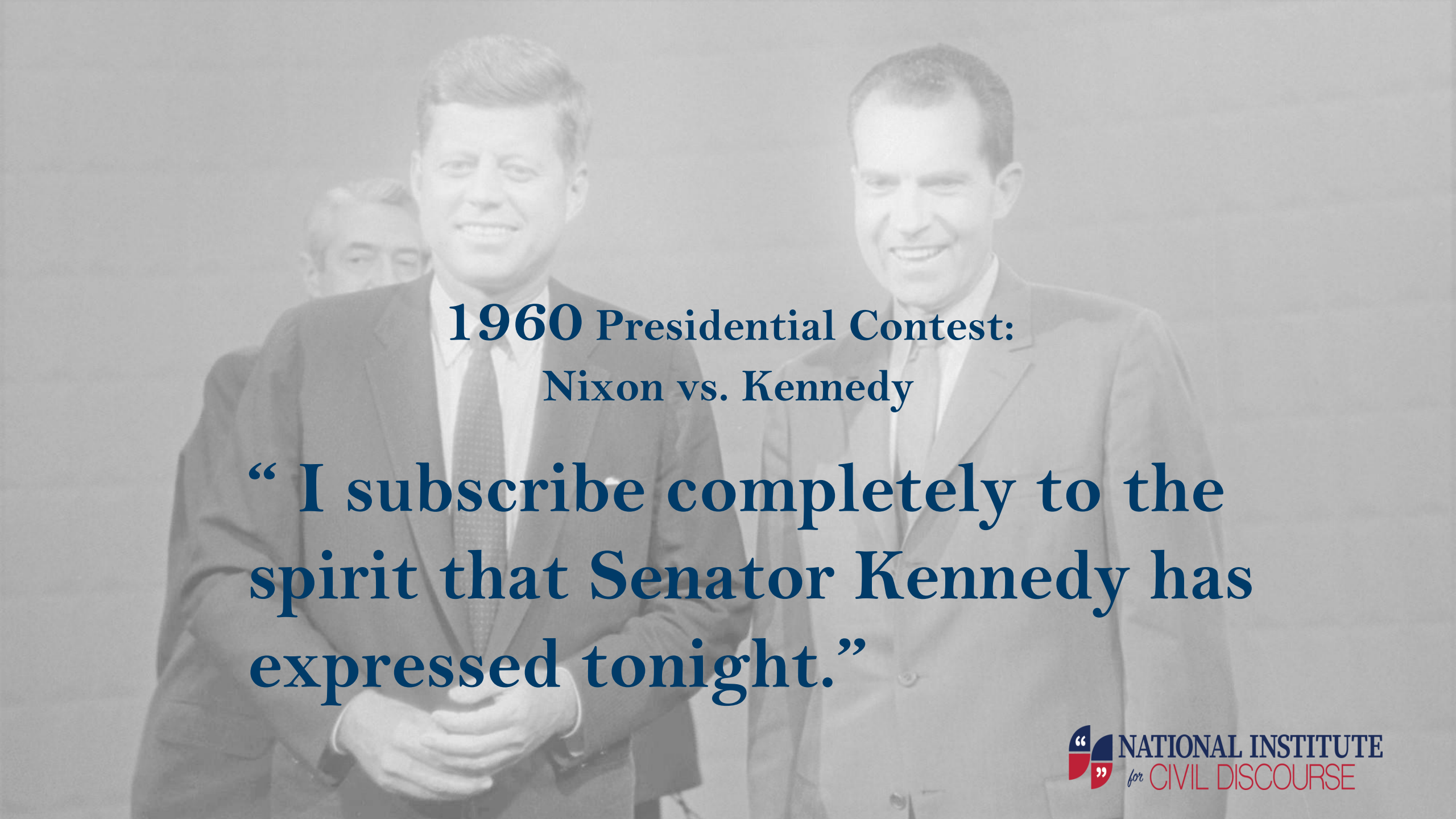


**1 in 6 Americans  
stopped talking to a  
family member or  
close friend because  
of the 2016 election.**

*Reuters/Ipsos poll (Jan 2017)*







**1960 Presidential Contest:  
Nixon vs. Kennedy**

**“I subscribe completely to the  
spirit that Senator Kennedy has  
expressed tonight.”**



# Power & Politics

The top half of the image features a background of the American flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Coercive Power

The bottom half of the image features a background of the United States Capitol building, tinted in a deep blue color. The text is overlaid on this background.

Fear, threats, punishment,  
intimidation, bullying

# Incivility

will make you unhappy,  
unhealthy and unattractive even  
to those who agree with you.



# Persuasive Power



Enticements, promises, rewards

# Influential Power



Trust, commitment, buy-in, civility







The top half of the image features a background of the United States flag, with the stars and stripes visible. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Key Principles

for

The bottom half of the image features a background of the United States Capitol building, shown in a blue-tinted, semi-transparent style. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Successful Legislators

# CIVILITY

**Civility  
is the  
Foundation  
to Success**

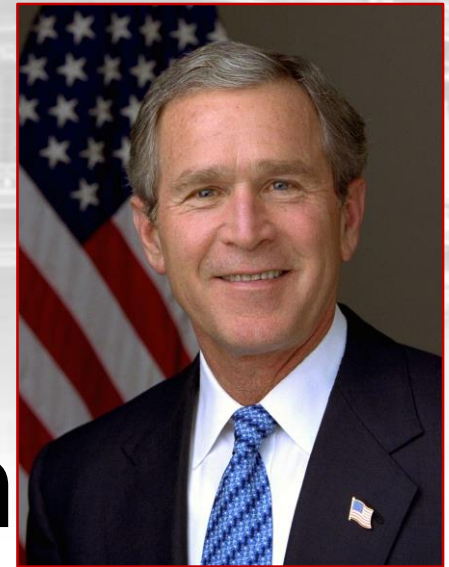


- Civility forges better human connections and leads to better concrete outcomes.
- Civility fulfills the best of what it is to be human.
- Incivility can be enormously costly and painful to us as individuals and as a nation.

**Civility**

# President George W. Bush

“America, at its best, matches a commitment to principle with a concern for **civility**.  
A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness.”

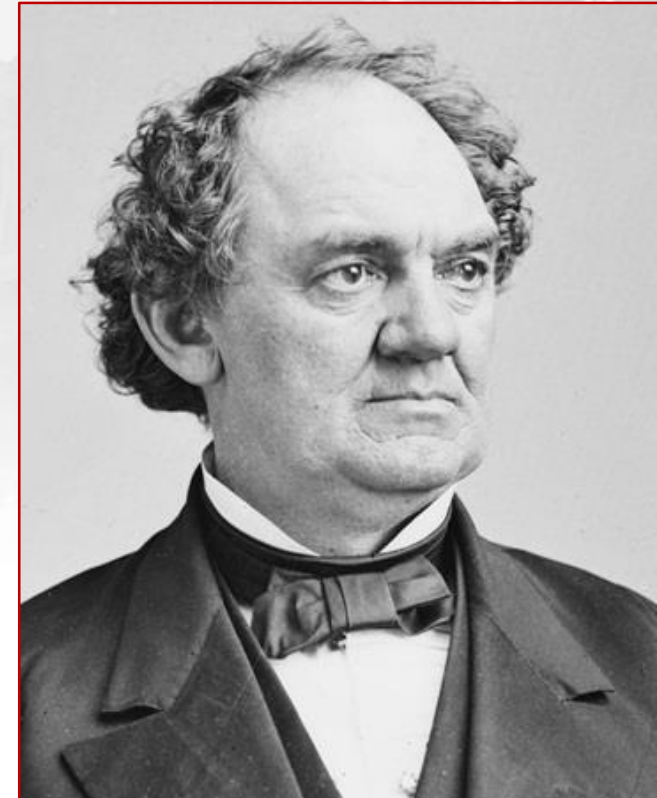




# P.T. Barnum

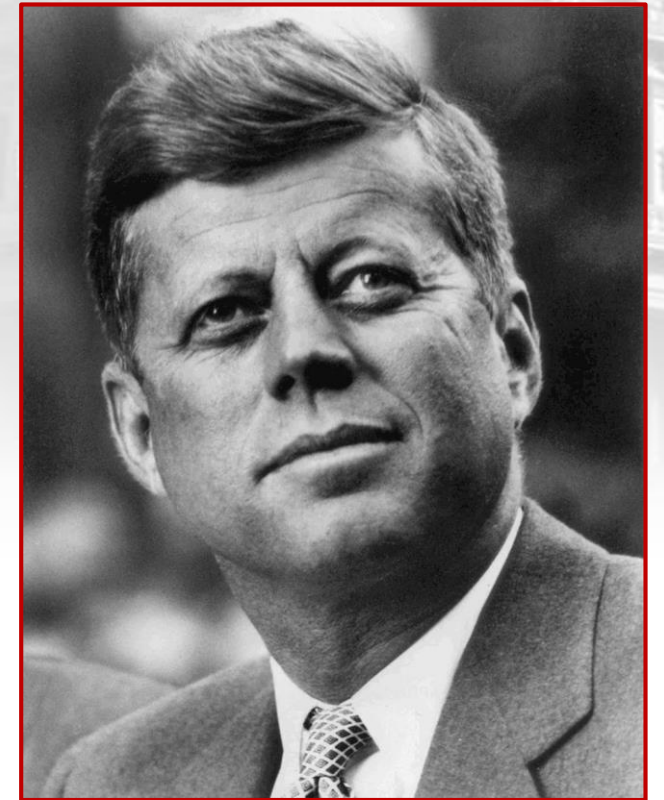
Businessman, Politician and Founder of Barnum & Bailey Circus

“Politeness and civility are the best capital ever invested in business.”



# John F. Kennedy

“Civility is not a  
sign of  
weakness.”



# LISTENING FOR UNDERSTANDING

## Listening for Understanding

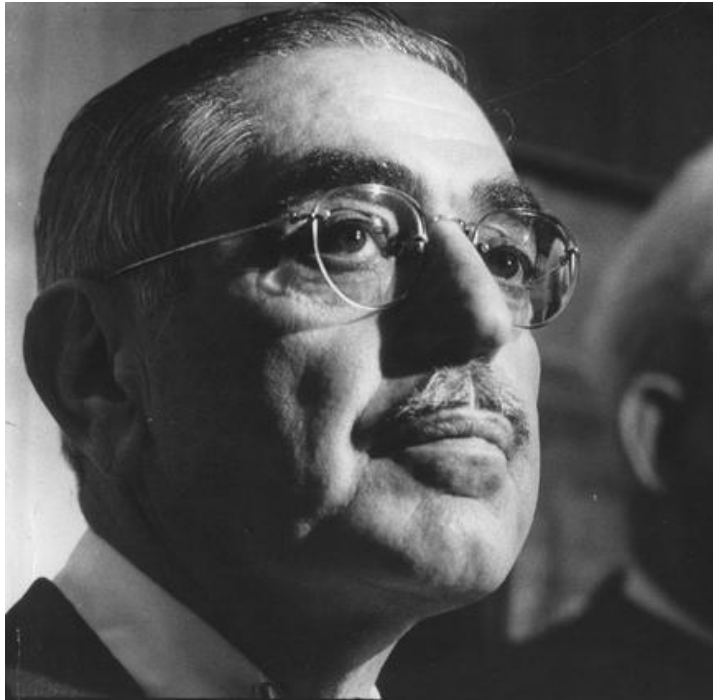


- Seek to understand another's perspective, whether you agree or not.
- Enter the conversation with curiosity and an open mind.
- Ask respectful, clarifying questions to learn rather than to undermine.



# U.S. Senate Commerce Committee

May 1, 1969



# EMPATHY

**Empathy**  
**viewing the**  
**other person**  
**as a fellow**  
**human**  
**being**



- Seek to see things from another person's point of view.
- See the other person not as a political label but as a fellow American who cares about our state and country.



# HUMILITY

## **Humility learning from others**

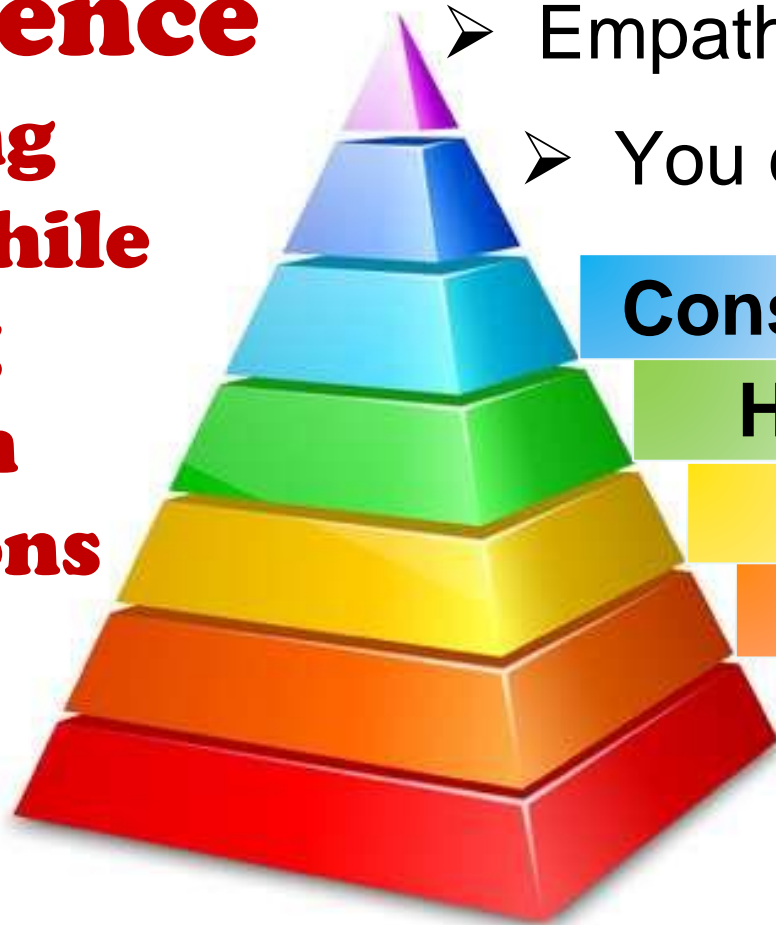


- Recognize that other reasonable, moral people can reach different conclusions.
- Recognize that we don't know everything and we can benefit from hearing different insights from others.



# CONSCIENCE

**Conscience  
respecting  
others while  
honoring  
your own  
convictions**



- Empathy and Humility do not mean you agree.
- You can understand and respect others' perspectives while still honoring the dictates of your own conscience.



“That’s just not right....Although we are Trump supporters, we love our neighbors and want them to be able to exercise their freedom of speech just like everybody else.”

# PRINCIPLED ADVOCACY

**Principled  
Advocacy  
debating the  
issue, not  
the person**



- Make your case on the merits rather than attacking the character, intelligence or judgement of others.



“The attitude that some deserve our contempt is both wrong and dangerously radical.”

Arthur C.  
Brooks



Arthur C. Brooks

“And if [some] people have views that are truly worthy of contempt? Remember that their *views* might be, but that no *person* is.”

# COMMON GROUND

**Common  
Ground  
shared  
values and  
objectives**

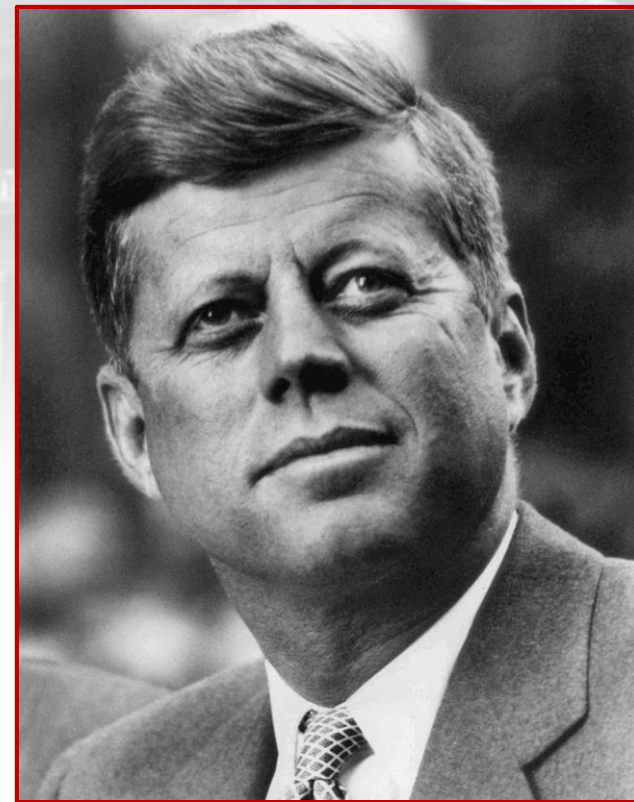


- Because it's easy to fixate on differences, it helps to acknowledge shared values, aspirations, experience and note points of agreement.
- Remember we share a commitment to perfecting the promise of American self-government.



# John F. Kennedy

**“Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.”**



# PUBLIC Relations

- ❖ **Respond to Constituents**
- ❖ **Accommodate Visits**
  - Make it a “Good Experience”**
- ❖ **Pay Attention**
- ❖ **Remember: You are a Public Servant**

# MEDIA Relations

- ❖ Don't shun reporters
- ❖ Return calls
- ❖ Show courtesy "Don't fight, make it right"
- ❖ Prepare short quotes & talking points in advance
- ❖ If you don't know, say you will find out & get back
- ❖ Know what is "off the record"
- ❖ Live or recorded?



# Legislative Social Events

- ❖ Social Calendar
- ❖ RSVP
- ❖ Guests/partners invited?
- ❖ Mixing with association members
- ❖ Building relationships with other legislators
- ❖ Thank host and association members
- ❖ Freeloading

REMEMBER

56

20

1



We have before us the  
**glorious opportunity**

to inject a **new**  
**dimension** of

**Love**

into the veins  
of our civilization.

- Martin Luther King Jr.



# QUESTIONS / COMMENTS



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