

# MESSAGE GUIDE: OVERCOMING THE CONSERVATIVE FRAME



IOWA  
VOICES

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We know proven messaging does more than assist advocacy efforts. It advances truth and transparency, too. To hold legislators accountable and spread an honest agenda for Iowa, we took a conservative message we've been hearing and tested it against our progressive messages.

What did we learn? When Iowans see the conservative message followed by one of our progressive messages, our value based honesty is more persuasive than the other side. Some of these messages work better than others, like "American Workers" and "People, Police and Politics," but each of these messages did a good job winning folks back after seeing the conservative message.

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# MESSAGE GUIDANCE

Start with a shared values statement.

Name the problem and define the opposition to our shared value. **Don't repeat the opposition, even to negate. Speak proactively to reframe the issue.**

Frame the opposition as a "hurdle" we can overcome, rather than a "barrier" that stops us.

Make voters the protagonists and focus on values.

Provide tangible outcomes, and end with a call to action.

**Emotion** and **repetition** are powerful tools to use for every message. They help our allies remember the talking points and stay on message, allowing us to speak as a united front and frame the discussion.

## SAMPLE MESSAGE: AMERICAN WORKERS

<p>No matter our income, Iowans work hard. We should be able to afford a good life.</p> <p>But Republican Governor Kim Reynolds steals from us. Our workers, farmers and small businesses drive the economy. But instead of funding schools, roads and bridges, Reynolds cuts resources to give rich people and corporations huge tax cuts. Now, the meat companies raising prices make even more money off of us. Democrats provide for the middle class. They protect workers and Social Security, fully fund schools, and they lower Medicare drug costs.</p> <p>Leaders should help working families afford what they need and retire with dignity.</p>	<p><b>Shared Value</b></p> <p><b>Define the opposition, Tie to current events</b></p> <p><b>Call to action, outcomes we can achieve</b></p>
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# SAMPLE MESSAGE: PEOPLE, POLICE + POLITICS

<p>No matter our zip code, Iowans value safe communities. We look out for each other.</p> <p>But politicians like Republican Governor Kim Reynolds try to divide us based on what we look like. She wants us to fear each other. Iowans are better than this. Iowa Democrats support the police by fully funding training and protective gear to keep officers safe. And, ensuring small-town and rural police have the tools they need. Democrats are focused on community safety and cracking down on sex offenders.</p> <p>We need leaders who fairly fund every aspect of our communities and keep us safe.</p>	<p><b>Shared Value</b></p> <p><b>Define the opposition, Tie to current events</b></p> <p><b>Call to action, outcomes we can achieve</b></p>
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# SAMPLE MESSAGE: BETTER OFF TOGETHER

<p>In Iowa, no matter what we look like, we work together and help each other.</p> <p>So when Republican Governor Reynolds tries to divide us and make us afraid, we know it's because she has nothing else to offer. She called workers lazy, put Tyson's execs above hardworking Iowans, and used racist imagery in her ads. She tries to divide us based on our looks and income to distract us from what we know we need. Democrats know there are lots of ways to be Iowan and put people over politics.</p>	<p><b>Shared Value</b></p> <p><b>Define the opposition, Tie to current events</b></p>
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<p>We need leaders who know we're better off together.</p>	<p><b>Call to action, outcomes we can achieve</b></p>
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## SAMPLE MESSAGE: FREEDOM

<p>In Iowa, we believe in the freedom to make our own decisions.</p> <p>But Republican Governor Kim Reynolds keeps butting in to take our freedoms away. She wants a total ban on abortion with no exceptions for victims - even third graders - or the life or health of mothers. She blocks gun safety improvements and supports a constitutional amendment for anyone to carry guns everywhere. Even felons. Democrats want to keep guns out of our schools, protect children and preserve the right to decide if and when to have children.</p> <p>We need leaders who protect our freedoms, not endanger children.</p>	<p><b>Shared Value</b></p> <p><b>Define the opposition, Tie to current events</b></p> <p><b>Call to action, outcomes we can achieve</b></p>
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## SAMPLE LTE

*Please use our guidance to frame your personal story and unique passion on this issue.*

My family loves Iowa. We live here because for generations we've been able to afford a good life. I want the same thing for my kids.

But I'm scared a future in Iowa is being stolen from them. They work hard for their employers, but they aren't seeing the benefits. I read about companies doing stock buy-backs every day, but still our Governor puts corporations first. They're doing just fine. We need to be investing in our communities. But instead of funding schools, roads and bridges, Reynolds cuts resources to give rich people and corporations huge tax cuts. Now, the meat companies raising prices make even more money off of us. Congresswoman Axne and Democrats have been fighting for the middle class - they passed the American Rescue Plan and Inflation Reduction Act, both of which

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sent funds back to Iowa to help families and small businesses. Democrats want to protect workers and Social Security, fully fund schools, and they lowered Medicare drug costs.

We need more leaders who know American workers drive our economy and will put us first over greedy corporations. My kids deserve to be able to live a good life right here in Iowa, and after raising them and working hard my entire life, I deserve to be able to retire with dignity.

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## KEY RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS

In this test we set up several progressive messages to be tested against a placebo and an oppositional message. This way, we know how well our messages do against a control group, and we get to see how they do against the oppositional message. All four messages were persuasive up against the opposition message.

Our best messages are “American Worker” and “People, Police & Politics.” When asked which party does a better job prioritizing and addressing their needs, Iowans found these messages to be more persuasive than the opposition by 14 and 13 points, respectively.

When making decisions at the ballot box, Iowans found the “People, Police & Politics” message most convincing. It was 15 points more persuasive than the opposition message.

In terms of showing folks the difference between progressives and Corporate Kim Reynolds, “American Workers,” “People, Police and Politics,” and “Freedom” were all equally persuasive and lowered Reynolds’ favorability.