

Dialogues for Democracy kicks off spring with talk about midterm elections

Bipartisan series out of ASU Institute of Politics — whose speaker lineup includes former Vice President Pence — aims to spark conversations on public service, politics and civic engagement

By Penny Walker, ASU News
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Editor's note: *This story has been updated with the latest schedule of speakers, as of Feb. 6.*

Dialogues for Democracy, a nonpartisan speaker series featuring experts shaping U.S. politics, media and policymaking, is launching its spring 2026 lineup on Wednesday with a look at how the White House is approaching midterm elections.

'The President's Strategists: How the White House Sees the Midterms' event

What: Conversation between Republican strategists Tony Fabrizio and Chris LaCivita. CNN senior political commentator David Axelrod will moderate.

When: 4:30–5:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 21.

Chris LaCivita, veteran Republican political strategist and co-manager of the Donald Trump 2024 campaign, and Tony Fabrizio, the campaign's chief pollster, will discuss Republican strategy and views on the upcoming elections in a chat moderated by David Axelrod, CNN senior political commentator and senior strategist for President Barack Obama's campaigns.

Where: Heritage Room, University Club, Tempe campus.

Register:

<https://specialevents.asu.edu/ereg/newreg.php?eventid=869017>
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The speaker series, a signature event of the [Institute of Politics](#) and co-sponsored by the ASU Center for Free Speech, aims to be a civil, ongoing discussion about politics and democracy. These events are designed to spark critical conversations and offer students insights into the intersection of politics, public policy and civic engagement.

“At a pivotal moment in our nation’s political evolution, the ASU Institute of Politics serves as a bridge between world-class scholarship and real-world public service,” said Jeff Flake, the institute's founding director and a former member of Congress and U.S. ambassador to Turkey.

“The Dialogues for Democracy speaker series invites our community to join in on thoughtful, expert-led conversations that tackle complex issues challenging our democracy. This initiative helps educate our next generation of leaders on how to navigate and strengthen it.”

In addition to focusing on their specific topics, each event includes an element of career exploration for students: Speakers will share insights into how they got started in their field, as a behind-the-scenes look for any students who might be interested in pursuing that career.

Wednesday's speakers

The discussion on Wednesday, titled “The President's Strategists: How the White House Sees the Midterms,” will feature a conversation between Fabrizio and LaCivita, moderated by Axelrod.

Fabrizio is a Republican pollster and strategist who has advised numerous campaigns. Over the course of his 40-year career, he has helped elect presidents and numerous other lawmakers, from U.S. senators to governors. He was awarded “Pollster of the Year” by the American Association of Political Consultants in 2017 and 2025 for his work on Trump’s campaigns. This is Fabrizio's second time appearing at an Institute of Politics event.

A seasoned political consultant and strategist, LaCivita has a career spanning more than three decades in Republican Party politics, advising candidates at every political level, including presidential, gubernatorial and congressional races. In addition to acting as senior advisor and co-campaign manager to Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign, LaCivita was also the chief of staff for the Republican National Committee.

Also featured this spring

The spring Dialogues for Democracy lineup features voices from both sides of the aisle, including a former vice president of the United States.

Feb. 20: CNN anchor Kaitlan Collins.

March 5: Politico politics bureau chief and senior political columnist Jonathan Martin.

March 17: Conservative political strategist and commentator Scott Jennings.

March 19: Libertarian-conservative writer and political commentator George Will, who will deliver a fireside chat to an ASU class.

March 24: Former Vice President Mike Pence.

April 6: Democratic politician Emanuel's career includes service as a former U.S. ambassador to Japan, House Representative, White House chief of staff and mayor of Chicago. Rahm Emanuel and Republican consultant, entertainment industry writer and producer Mike Murphy.

Earlier this fall, the series featured former Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey in a discussion about leadership, public service and the challenges of governing in a rapidly changing political landscape. Watch that conversation [on YouTube](#).

Dialogue for Democracy series

For more information about upcoming events, visit the [ASU Institute of Politics website](#).

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

¹ Emanuel's career includes service as a former U.S. ambassador to Japan, House Representative, White House chief of staff and mayor of Chicago.

Main image



The U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News

Text image(s)



Tony Fabrizio,
Republican
pollster & strategist



Chris LaCivita,
Republican
political strategist



Moderated by
David Axelrod,
CNN senior political
commentator

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