



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

President and CEO
Common Cause

Washington, DC

Common Cause is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to upholding the core values of American democracy. We work to create open, honest, and accountable government that serves the public interest; promotes equal rights, opportunity, and representation for all; and empowers all people to make their voices heard in the political process.

Common Cause mission

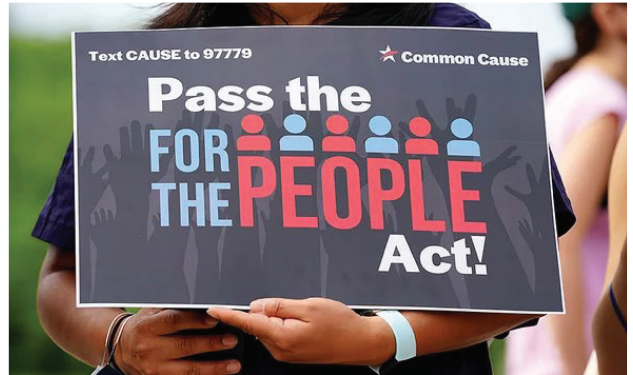
A Unique Opportunity

As American democracy faces unprecedented challenges, the work of Common Cause has never mattered more. Common Cause is a nonpartisan, independent advocacy organization that advances pro-democracy solutions that empower all Americans to participate in the political process. The organization is known for mobilizing citizens and coalitions at the state, local and national levels to achieve breakthrough reforms on voting rights, election protection, campaign finance reform, ending gerrymandering, and government transparency, ethics, and accountability.

Common Cause works to support and enhance American democracy. The organization's unique inside/outside strategy combines engagement with decision-makers across the political spectrum, through lobbying, litigation, policy research, and passage of legislation, with public engagement through grassroots organizing, advocacy and outreach. It has offices in over 25 states and Washington, DC.

Common Cause has led numerous breakthrough reforms throughout its 53-year history. Recent victories include the *Moore v. Harper* Supreme Court ruling against state legislatures seizing power (NC); the rescission of calls for an Article V Convention (OR); and passage of the most comprehensive voting rights package in the country (CT).

Common Cause President and CEO Karen Hobert Flynn passed away in March 2023. The National Governing Board has opened the search for the organization's tenth President and CEO. The new President will lead at this consequential moment in the history of the country and the organization, through the 2024 election, amidst fundamentally new challenges to democracy. The President will be a forward-looking, galvanizing



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leader of people, mission, impact, and long-term success.

Common Cause is growing in size, influence and impact and has an annual budget of \$25 million.

A rigorous strategic planning exercise is underway, in which the Board and staff have committed to greater state-level focus while maintaining strong national presence. The combination of influencing at the legislative level and grassroots organizing is a Common Cause differentiator, more critical than ever as states become laboratories for democratic as well as autocratic movements.

The President will be a source of bold leadership and ideas on opportunities such as:

- Articulating a vision for 21st century democracy that resonates with a broad and expanding majority of Americans
- Finalizing and bringing to life the new strategic plan
- Continuing the organization's internal improvements around processes, systems, equity and inclusion; and advancing the Justice and Democracy agenda
- Enhancing state infrastructure, capacities and coverage, including expansion where threats to democracy are greatest and communities are most vulnerable
- Driving new levels of visibility and funding for key issues and the organization
- Activating more racially diverse, younger, and new audiences across the political spectrum.

Mandate for the President and CEO

The President and CEO will be a magnetic, visionary leader aligned with the Common Cause mission, values, and strategic direction.

The President will have passion for democracy and nonpartisan, intersectional work at the federal, state, legislative and grassroots levels. The President will have proven commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and unions.

The President will have led, partnered, and worked on issues and coalition building inside and outside of government at state and national levels. The President will have political acumen, judgment, and a robust understanding of current threats to democracy. The President will have experience that spans policy, campaigns and organizing, fundraising, organizational leadership, and public representation.

The President will:

1. Harness the animating passion, potential and purpose of Common Cause.

The President will be a visionary, catalytic leader who engages with the Board, staff, members, and new audiences to work toward an aspirational 21st century democracy. The President will be a thought leader and a source of innovation, ideas, and deep commitment to equity and justice. The President will partner effectively with a strong National Governing Board to propel the organization forward strategically and operationally.

2. Be a powerful communicator and unifier.

The President will be a charismatic, in-demand communicator who engages, brings together and motivates diverse audiences. Through credibility, political and media savvy, fresh narratives and public speaking



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acumen, the President will leverage strategic communications to position and differentiate Common Cause, and to make important issues relevant across political leanings, younger audiences, and racially diverse communities.

- 3. Grow resources and membership.** The President will be an exceptional fundraiser and relationship builder able to diversify, inspire and mobilize current and new donors, partners, and members. The President will foster a culture of inclusion and growth, broadening and diversifying funding and membership, in order to increase impact at national and state levels.
- 4. Manage people and the organization.** The President will be an energizing leader who values and listens to staff across all levels and areas of expertise, nationally and in the state organizations. The President will prioritize building, developing, and retaining diverse, exceptional talent and teams. The President will have proven commitment to transparency, equity, inclusion, and unions. The President will have business acumen, change-management expertise, and good mentoring and delegating skills. The President will be skillful at balancing conflict resolution, consensus building, and decision making. The President will advance operating excellence including effective infrastructure and processes, professional development, and accountability.
- 5. Advance a bold, aspirational future.** The President will be astute and innovative at anticipating and leaning into emerging issues and opportunities. The President will inspire Common Cause to take on the most significant issues of the day and to set big, ambitious goals, informed by an equity lens and commitment to a democracy that works for everyone. The President will ensure that Common Cause is vibrant, visible, and sustainable over the long haul.

Personal Characteristics

The ideal candidate sees the issues of democracy and Common Cause as their life's work. The President will understand and embrace the organization's unique history, role, capacities, people and potential. The President will be aligned with Common Cause values, mission, work, strategies, people and culture. Commitment to equity and inclusion and significant relevant experience are essential.

The President will have personal qualities that include:

- Charisma, high energy, and passion for this work
- Relationship, listening, team, and trust-building skills
- Kindness, compassion, and empathy
- Openness, accessibility, and appreciation for staff
- Proven commitment to equity, inclusion, accessibility, and justice
- High emotional intelligence and intellectual capacity
- Confidence, plus a sense of humility—all about the mission
- Creativity, courage, and tenacity
- A sense of humor

The President will have skills and abilities that include:

- Vision and strategic acumen
- Breadth and depth of relevant knowledge and experience
- Experience at both state and national levels, including in places with significant threats to democracy
- Experience working in and/or supporting a unionized environment



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Common Cause supports national, state, and local efforts to strengthen and uphold the values of American democracy, and to empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.

- A spirit that inspires others to achieve at high levels
- Powerful communication skills across media, diverse audiences and content; and understanding of the value of strategic communications
- Fundraising acumen and results
- Business, change management, and organizational management skills
- Ability to build consensus, make tough decisions, and hold people accountable

The Organization

Common Cause fights for accountability in government, and for equal rights, opportunities and representation. Common Cause is a single, federated 501(c)(4) nonprofit with a 501(c)(3) Education Fund, national office and 25+ state offices. The organization supports national, state, and local efforts to strengthen and uphold the values of American democracy, and to empower all people to make their voices heard in the political process.

John Gardner founded Common Cause in August 1970 as “the people’s lobby.” He envisioned “a nationwide, independent, non-partisan organization for those Americans who want to help in the rebuilding of the nation.” Gardner, a Republican, came to Washington, DC in 1965 to serve as the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat. Gardner observed that Washington, DC was teeming with special interest groups, and “everybody’s organized but the people.” Common Cause attracted 100,000 members in its first six months.

Today, Common Cause has over a million members, countless volunteers, and an annual budget of \$25 million. Common Cause wins

numerous concrete, pro-democracy victories as it works to eliminate barriers to political participation, ensure each citizen has an equal voice and vote, and rebuild trust in government. The organization embeds equity in all its work. A core belief is that the ultimate power in a democracy is the people, and that democracy is how a free society resolves its differences.

In its current strategic planning process, Common Cause Board and staff committed to a Vision for Democracy:

“Common Cause works to build a shared vision for democracy in the United States – an American democracy that lives up to its promise at every level of government.

“The shared vision means:

- An inclusive and accessible democracy with reflective, responsive, and accountable political institutions and processes (e.g., elections, elected officials, governing bodies, etc.) that produce equitable outcomes for everyday people (e.g., justice, equality, human dignity, etc.)
- A democracy that empowers and represents all people to address inequalities and to achieve those equitable outcomes
- A broad critical mass of people who are informed, activated, and engaged in civic life to participate in the process of determining their own futures
- Democratic norms embraced by that critical mass of people, which is essential for effective, high-integrity governance and that inspire trust and participation.”

The Common Cause National Governing Board has unanimously adopted a decision to invest more in state capacity as Common Cause’s organizational strategy. Through its state offices

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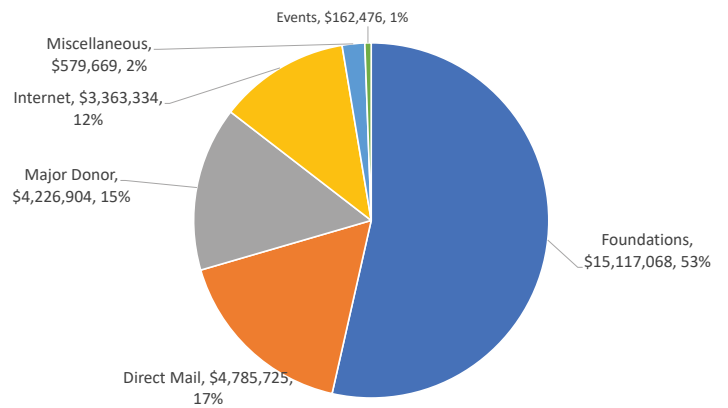
The citizen can bring our political and governmental institutions back to life...
No one else can.

-John Gardner, founder of Common Cause, 1970

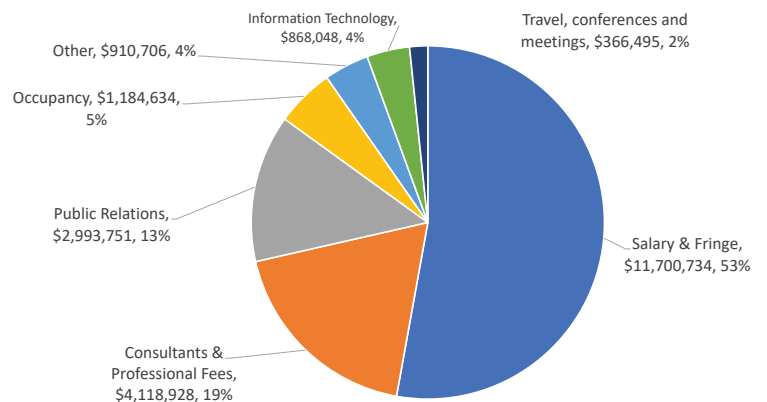
and grassroots presence, Common Cause monitors and engages issues, wins legislative victories, and develops volunteers and members. At a time when states are increasing their agency as laboratories for both democratic and autocratic initiatives, Common Cause is differentiated by its capacity for grassroots vigilance, mobilization and action; its deep federal engagement; and the tenacity to engage and win long-haul fights.

Common Cause raises support through individual donors and foundations. In FY22, the organization raised over \$25 million.

FY22 Revenue



FY22 Expenses by Functional Area





The Relationships

The President and CEO reports to the National Governing Board of Directors and manages a team of 130 staff, spanning headquarters and 25+ state offices. The President directly leads the Management Team and organizational structure. Currently, the President's direct reports are:

- VP, Programs
- VP, Programs and Strategy
- VP, People Equity and Inclusion
- VP, Development
- VP, Campaigns
- VP, Policy & External Affairs
- VP, State Operations
- Chief Financial Officer

After the passing of Karen Hobert Flynn, the Board appointed Co-Interim Presidents to serve while the organization conducts the search for the new President and CEO. The Co-Interim Presidents are Jordan Davis for internal and administrative issues and Marilyn Carpinteyro for program, fundraising, and external matters. Jordan's ongoing role is VP, People Equity and Inclusion, and Marilyn's is VP, Programs and Strategy.

The Location

Common Cause is headquartered in Washington, DC, with offices in over 25 states and dispersed staff across the country. The organization currently has a hybrid work policy.

The President will reside full-time, or at minimum part-time, in Washington, DC. The President will have significant travel within the U.S.

Common Cause values diversity of all kinds and is seeking a diverse pool of candidates.

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospective candidate for the President and CEO position, please email CommonCause@BoardWalkConsulting.com or call **Kathy Bremer** or **Lysondra Somerville** at 404-262-7392.

For the status of this and other searches, please visit www.BoardWalkConsulting.com
