

# Pat Schroeder

INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

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Dear Friend:

Over *Donna* → 9202 232 3335

Like most Americans, I am disgusted with the shenanigans in Washington, D.C.

The gulf between the American people and their so-called leaders is widening. Some people roll into the nation's capital, claim it is Sodom and Gomorrah, wag their fingers and rage. Combine that with a do-nothing Congress and a stalled presidency and it's a wonder that anything gets done.

Meanwhile, the American people are going gang-busters at the local level solving problems Washington ignores. I'm old enough to remember when government LED in problem solving but now more than ever I'm convinced that the best place to make change happen is outside the U.S. Congress. It's time for Washington politicians to follow the leadership of the people and reconnect to the vibrant tradition of American civil society.

If we want things to be different, you and I together must create change so that our government starts dealing with the real issues. In short, I'm asking you to join with me in building a more perfect union!

After 24 years in Congress I am now spearheading a new think tank to shake things up. The Institute for Civil Society is my new home. We identify innovative, community based solutions to the problems that are plaguing our cities and towns, then we roll up our shirtsleeves and go out and help other communities replicate them.

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We're more than a think tank — we're a think-and-do tank. We look for ways government and business can adapt to and adopt community based innovations, so that government is less bureaucratic and businesses more socially responsible.

The Institute is continuing the work you and I care about — the work that we can not depend on our government to do. I'm writing you today to ask for your support for our efforts.

People ask me all the time what is civil society? No, it's not about manners (although we could use some of that). Civil society is all those community institutions that glue us together as a people — the magic ingredient that has made our country great. It's that great American ability to pull together to master challenges and solve problems. A nation of immigrants knew that the only way forward was to work together.

Now that fabric, in spite of the debacle in Washington, is stronger than ever. But it needs support and nurturing.

For over five decades of Cold War we defined ourselves as a nation in large part by finding a common enemy — something we were against. We justified domestic spending choices and policies because national resources were focused on an external threat. The goal of the civil society movement is to define America by what we are for and the roles and responsibilities business, government and communities must assume to make our country work.

Now, you and I, who cherish the principles of democracy and equality, need to speak up and renew American civil society.

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American people haven't lost their values. On the contrary. In the face of tumultuous change, both good and bad, Americans have stubbornly held tight to strong values and have fought to keep them as guiding forces in our families and communities. The Institute for Civil Society translates those community values into action. And I am asking you to take action and join me in a campaign to strengthen civil society, our communities, and our nation.

We are working on many issues that are near and dear to my heart, but two in particular — giving kids a good start in learning and giving families quality and affordable health care — are especially urgent. I feel strongly about these two campaigns because they build on my work for kids and families during my days in Congress that you helped support. Only today, instead of tackling the challenge from inside the beltway, we're going straight to the source.

The first issue is early childhood development and literacy. What if we trained childcare workers in developmentally appropriate ways to use books to help kids learn and then flooded their childcare centers with books? What would happen?

That's a question that the Philadelphia Urban Library asked. The library, working with a local foundation in 330 childcare centers that served low income kids, created Books Aloud, a program that trained childcare workers to read aloud to children as a cognitive activity and coupled that with an abundant supply of quality books. The results? Interactions between teachers and children increased and the skill levels of the children improved significantly.

The results were remarkable and make a strong case for creating libraries in preschool settings and training

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caregivers to use their community libraries as tools for learning. In all my days in Congress, I had never come across an early childhood literacy program that was research-based or had these kinds of concrete results. I'm excited that the Institute for Civil Society will replicate this successful program by building a national campaign so that every community in the country can help kids in low income childcare centers get a strong start in learning.

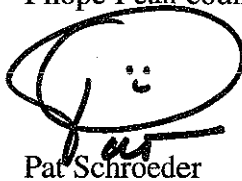
The second issue is health care. Many of you undoubtedly find yourselves in the crunch of how to get affordable health insurance. Indeed many of you have already found that the only route available to you is to sign on with an HMO. But how to get quality care from your HMO, how to insure that your personal physician and not an accountant makes medical decisions?

I am proud to be a part of the ICS campaign for HMO reform. Every day we are keeping this issue alive in the media with the goal that an educated American public will press for overdue and much needed reform.

I'm asking you to help us put into place strategies that will build stronger communities. Your contribution of \$15, \$20, \$25, or more can help us reach out and strengthen civil society.

Maybe then Washington will snap out of it and start collaborating with people to form a more perfect union. Please join with me.

I hope I can count on you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Schroeder". The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval. Above the signature, there is a small, simple smiley face drawn with two dots for eyes and a curved line for a mouth.

Pat Schroeder

# INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

## *Reply Form*

Yes Pat, I agree! Those of us who cherish the principles of democracy and equality, need to speak up and renew American civil society. **You can count on me** to join with you in a campaign to strengthen our communities and our nation by identifying innovative, community based solutions to the problems that plague our cities and towns.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution of:

\$20       \$35       \$50       Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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