

Introduction: Alarm

Alarms have been ringing in my mind.

I didn't set out to build a movement—but that is what this has become. *Our movement.*

We're not here to seek the spotlight. What's calling us is alarm.

In September 2024, I—like many—watched as our country edged closer to something I once believed could never take root here: authoritarianism. With a background in history, the signs were unmistakable. I began to speak, to write, to warn. But it wasn't enough.

Now we gather—not in fear, but in resolve. *This Is Us* was born from the refusal to stay silent. It is more than a campaign or a platform—it's a vow. A vow to defend integrity in leadership, dignity in governance, and the fundamental freedoms that define a democracy.

This Manifesto is not mine. It is ours. A living document. A declaration of who we are, what unites us, and what we are building together.

We are not here to divide—we are here to heal.

We are not here to dominate—we are here to serve.

We are not here to follow blindly—we are here to think, question, and rebuild what's been broken.

Let this be our line in the sand—and our light moving forward.

I. Preamble: A Line in the Sand

September 2024 and the Rise of Authoritarianism

It started with unease. Familiar rights began to feel fragile. Rhetoric that once lived on the political fringe moved to center stage. Promises of strength were used to justify suppression. September 2024 was not a single moment, but a cascade of signals—legal maneuvers, propaganda loops, loyalty tests, and the slow erosion of independent institutions.

We were told not to worry. We were told to look away.

But remembered history warns. And we refuse to forget the cost of silence.

From Individual Warning to Collective Awakening

One voice became two. Two can become dozens. Dozens will grow into the thousands of us who ask: *Is this still democracy?* Online, in coffee shops, around dinner tables and on front porches, a quiet movement is taking shape. It can't wait for permission. It doesn't need a party, only conscience and courage.

This Is Us wasn't created—it emerged.

The Failure of Power When Unchecked

Unchecked power doesn't start with violence. It begins with apathy. With leaders who bend rules and citizens too exhausted to notice. Power consolidated is freedom diluted. And when laws are rewritten in the dark, it is our responsibility—not someone else's—to light the way.

We are witnessing what happens when our institutions **fail**. Fail to check power. We vow never to make this mistake again.

The Birth of *This Is Us*

This is not branding. This is not theater. This is *us*—everyday Americans, standing shoulder to shoulder, united by conviction and driven by purpose.

This Is Us began as a whisper. Today, it is a call.

A call to protect our future by defending our truth.

A call to lead by example, not by edict.

A call to reclaim a government of, by, and for the people—before it is no longer ours to reclaim.

II. Our Core Commitments

We cannot rebuild trust in government without rebuilding the moral foundations beneath it. These are not slogans. These are our bedrock. Every decision, every action, every leader we support must be measured against these four commitments:

Integrity

A nation cannot survive on lies. We demand leaders whose words align with their deeds—whose promises hold weight beyond the campaign trail. Integrity is not perfection; it is the willingness to be honest, to take responsibility, and to serve without deception. A society that prizes honesty over theatrics is one that can heal.

Transparency

Power thrives in darkness—but democracy dies there. We believe in open books, open records, and open forums. Decisions made in our name must be visible to all, not hidden behind bureaucracy or backroom deals. Sunlight is not optional. It is the source of accountability, and the cure for corruption.

Accountability

No title, no office, no fortune should place anyone above the law. The failure to hold the powerful accountable erodes faith in the system itself. We support term limits, ethical oversight, and citizen review—not as punishments, but as safeguards. If trust is to mean anything, it must be earned and re-earned through service.

Compassion

We are not statistics. We are not red and blue. We are people. A government without compassion becomes a machine—efficient perhaps, but inhuman. We believe in policies that reflect the dignity of every person, from the most vulnerable to the most forgotten. If it does not care, it does not lead.

These are the values that form the compass of *This Is Us*.

Not abstract ideals—but daily tests.

Not lofty words—but living commitments.

III. Foundational Issues: The First Pillars

Every movement begins with focus. These are not the only issues we care about, but they are the first stones in the foundation we are laying together—because they strike at the heart of how power is held, how people are treated, and how democracy is preserved.

1. Term Limits for Leadership

Government was never meant to be a lifelong profession. It was meant to be a trust, temporarily held and faithfully exercised. When leadership becomes a career, service becomes a strategy for survival, and public interest becomes secondary to political self-preservation.

We support term limits—not out of bitterness, but out of belief in renewal. Power must rotate. Voices must be refreshed. No one is indispensable. In a healthy democracy, new leaders rise—not because they are wealthy or connected, but because the system makes room for

them.

The people should not serve the institution. The institution must serve the people.

2. Women's Rights & Reproductive Autonomy

Freedom is not real if it does not include control over one's own body. Reproductive rights are not a side issue—they are a test of whether we truly believe in equality, in privacy, and in personal liberty.

We affirm the full dignity and autonomy of every woman in this nation. The right to make medical decisions without government interference is not radical—it is foundational.

To deny these rights is not to defend life. It is to deny personhood.

3. Ethical Governance

A nation that rewards graft and punishes truth is not a free nation. Ethics cannot be optional—they must be enforceable.

We support independent ethics commissions with real teeth. We call for public disclosure of political donations, conflicts of interest, and influence-peddling across all levels of government. We stand for restoring the firewall between public service and private gain.

Democracy cannot function when corruption is treated as a strategy. We must demand character, not just competence.

4. Rule of Law and Equal Justice

The rule of law is the cornerstone of a free society—but only when it is applied equally and upheld without exception. Injustice begins when law becomes a tool for power rather than a shield for the people.

We are witnessing an erosion of this principle: when laws are selectively enforced, when courts are manipulated, when loyalty to individuals eclipses fidelity to the Constitution.

We demand a return to impartial justice—where no one is above the law, and no one is beneath its protection.

Laws must be written clearly, applied fairly, and enforced consistently. Anything less is not order. It is control.

These are our starting points—not because they are easy, but because they are essential.

They reflect a deeper truth: *this government is ours to shape, or ours to lose.*

IV. The Why – We Choose Unity Over Control

We live in an age of manipulation. Division has become a strategy. Fear is marketed like a product. We are told to pick a side, stay in our lane, and view our neighbors as threats instead of fellow citizens. But that is not who we are. And that is not who we are becoming.

We reject the politics of control—the politics that sees disagreement as disloyalty, protest as threat, and diversity as danger.

We choose unity—not uniformity, but solidarity.

We are not afraid of difference. We are afraid of losing the ability to speak across it.

Because Democracy Is Fragile by Design

The strength of a republic is not in its steel but in its people. It only works when we show up, speak up, and hold each other accountable. Democracy was never self-executing—it requires intention. Without care, it collapses. Without renewal, it corrodes.

Unity is the antidote to decay.

Because Division Is a Tool of the Powerful

When we fight each other, we forget to hold power to account. When we cling to labels, we lose sight of outcomes. Political theater is a distraction—while corruption writes the laws, and inequality deepens in the shadows.

We must refuse to be pawns in someone else's game.

Because Facts Still Matter—and So Do Values

We believe truth is not negotiable. But we also believe facts alone are not enough. Values must guide how facts are used. Critical thinking must replace blind allegiance. Dialogue must replace propaganda.

We can disagree—sharply, passionately, honestly—and still hold a shared stake in this nation.

We choose unity because it honors our shared values, safeguards our liberties, and fuels our progress. Together, we hold the line against control—and forge a democracy that truly belongs to all of us. Anything less leads us further into the darkness we are trying to escape.

V. A Call to Action – This Is Us, Now and Forward

This is not just a document. It is a starting point.

We've named the problem. We've reclaimed our values. We've chosen our path. Now we must act—not tomorrow, not next election, but now.

Because democracy is not defended by institutions alone. It is defended by people. People like us.

Show Up

Be present where power meets the people. Attend town halls. Organize community forums. Step into the spaces where decisions are made, and make your voice impossible to ignore.

Silence is not neutrality—it is surrender. We will not be silent.

Speak Up

Online and offline, truth must be louder than propaganda. Share ideas grounded in fact and values. Refuse to echo fear. Defend each other's right to question and to be heard.

Speak up—not just for ourselves, but for those whose voices have been pushed to the margins.

Lift Up

Support leaders who serve, not rule. Uplift those who show integrity, humility, and courage. And when they fail to live up to the promise—we hold them accountable.

This is not hero worship. This is civic partnership.

Build Together This Is Us, Now and Forward

We are not spectators. We are the authors of our democracy's next chapter. Together, we will heal what's broken, defend what's precious, and build a future defined by shared purpose and collective strength.

This Is Us is more than a campaign. It is a movement of builders—of neighbors reclaiming the tools of democracy, one conversation, one action, one bond of trust at a time.

We are not waiting for rescue.
We are becoming the rescue.

Rise with us. Act with us. Let our actions today light the way for generations yet to come.

This is our moment. This is our vow.
We choose courage. We choose each other.
This Is Us.