

COMMUNICATIONS AND VALUES-BASED MESSAGING



Using VPSA

Our country's current narrative around directly impacted people dehumanizes and creates stigma, stereotypes, and fear. To confront that, we use a "values-based messaging" frame that uplifts shared, common values, as a strategic way to tell our stories, spread our campaigns, and shift the narrative. To be effective communicators, these are strategies you should adopt.

We use a four-step communication format as a messaging strategy that's rooted in values, called **VPSA**, which stands for Value, Problem, Solution, Action.

Value: Audiences are more receptive to our messages when we frame them by shared values, such as dignity, fairness, respect, equal rights, and humanity. It is vitally important that we connect ALL of our arguments to universal values that we all care about.

Problem: What are the systemic, institutional threats and barriers that stand in the way of achieving our values? It helps to use **two or three** short examples that highlight these systemic problems.

Solution: We need to give people a clear path forward, that solves the problems, and uplifts our common values. Audiences need positive solutions, or they will often ignore messages. **Make sure the audience knows that solutions to these problems exist.**

Action: *This is the strongest part of VPSA.* We need to leave people with a concrete, concise call-to-action: Attend a rally, vote, call your representative, send a letter, etc. These actions need to be something your audience can imagine themselves doing. The clearer the call, the more likely our audience will take action.

The strength of VPSA is it is versatile. It can be used in opinion-editorials, letters to editors, press interviews, during public and online rallies, and as consistent talking points. Using VPSA will help you strengthen your message, control your narrative, and move hearts, minds, and policy.

VP SA — SAMPLE SPEECH

Begin with shared **values**.

VALUE

Here in America we agree that we want a criminal justice system that upholds our constitutional promise of **equal justice and due process** while keeping us **safe** and giving everyone an **equitable opportunity at a second chance**.

Criminal Justice Values: Equal Justice - Basic Human Rights - Democratic Founding Ideals: Constitutional Freedoms - Due Process - Civic Engagement

Work toward identifying the **problem**.

PROBLEM

Yet the magnitude of collateral consequences within our current system stands in stark contrast to this vision.

Offer a proposed **solution**.

SOLUTION

It doesn't have to be this way. We know from experience and empirical data around the country that a combination of pre-release workforce training, wrap around transition support services and supportive supervision will keep us safe while simultaneously living up to the ideals and values we hold dear.

End with a **call to action or ask**.

ACTION

By sponsoring this Bill package, your voice and vote will help end the practices of collateral consequences in our criminal justice system and people like me and others similarly impacted will truly have an equitable chance and opportunity to return to work and acquire housing.

MORE VPSA EXAMPLES:

Begin with shared values.	Work toward identifying the problem.	Offer a proposed solution.	End with a call to action or ask.
<p>VALUE</p> <p>Here in America, we agree that we want a criminal justice system that upholds our constitutional promise of equal justice and due process while keeping us safe and giving everyone an equitable opportunity at a second chance.</p>	<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Yet the magnitude of wrongful convictions within our current justice system stands in stark contrast to this vision, where over 60% of exonerated cases involved eyewitness misidentification and 53% involved misapplied forensic science.</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>It doesn't have to be this way. We know from research around the country that by implementing pretrial integrity investigations, consistent training on the correct use of eyewitness testimony, along with accountability for systems and actors within the system will keep us safe and live up to the ideals and values we hold dear while preventing wrongful arrests, convictions, and incarceration.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>We ask that you support and help us implement the DOJ's Guiding Best Practices for Science-Based Eyewitness ID Practices for Law Enforcement and Prosecutors within our County criminal court system.</p>
<p>VALUE</p> <p>Every citizen has the right to provide for themselves and their family with basic needs, such as food, housing, education, and safety.</p>	<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Individuals living with a felony conviction face the denial of these fundamental rights, contrary to the core values of our nation. There are currently 48,000 legal barriers that hinder these basic rights for citizens with a felony.</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>Recognize that people who have been convicted of a crime are still human beings and citizens of our nation, reflecting the foundational principles of America.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>We must utilize our voices and voting power to advocate for changes in laws that unjustly deny individuals with felony convictions the right to secure housing, earn a living to support their families, and provide opportunities for quality education. It is crucial to challenge these barriers and work towards a more inclusive and just society.</p>
<p>VALUE</p> <p>Businesses thrive when people and communities thrive.</p>	<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>People with criminal convictions are statistically more likely to be rearrested if they are unemployed, which causes businesses to lack access to employees while driving recidivism higher increasing incarceration statistics.</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>People with past criminal histories deserve a fair chance to contribute to themselves, their families, and their community. We have drafted a proposed Bill that introduces legislation that bans the box on both State and federal applications; those for employment, education, health care, insurance, and other forms asking if the applicant has been convicted of a past crime.</p>	<p>ACTION</p> <p>We ask that you support this proposed legislation and sign on to our Campaign Call for Banning The Box.</p>