

**GANNETT**

**USA TODAY**



**Gannett Invites USA Today Network Readers to Connect and Bridge America's Divide**

*Gannett partners with the [#ListenFirst Coalition](#) and the award-winning [My Country Talks](#) program to foster productive conversation across America*

May 18, 2021 (McLean, VA) – [Gannett Co., Inc.](#) (NYSE: GCI), announced today a partnership with the [#ListenFirst Coalition](#) and [My Country Talks](#) to foster connection and provide an opportunity for Americans to have honest, respectful and meaningful conversations. [America Talks](#) is a two-day virtual event taking place June 12 and 13, 2021. All Americans 18 and older are encouraged to [register](#) for the event, which enables open dialogue among individuals who have differing perspectives.

Gannett will play a central role in helping thousands of Americans with diverse backgrounds and beliefs participate in the national virtual discussion. To help Americans register for the event, Gannett will embed a special questionnaire in online news articles published in [USA TODAY](#) and in over [250 of Gannett's local news sites](#) in 46 states. Daily news readers will be invited to answer a few, simple survey questions and then be given the opportunity to sign up for a one-on-one, face-to-face video conversation with another participant who has differing views during the digital event in June.

"USA TODAY and the USA TODAY Network are delighted to bring America Talks to our readers across the country. Now more than ever, we need to engage in courageous conversations across our differences, and we hope our readers will answer the call," said Mizell Stewart III, Vice President of News Performance, Talent, and Partnerships for Gannett and the USA TODAY Network. "With deep roots in red and blue states across the country, we are uniquely positioned to help facilitate conversation between people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives who are open to finding common ground."

America Talks will serve as the headline event kicking off the annual [National Week of Conversation](#) (NWOC) showcasing additional opportunities for Americans to have conversations despite differences in bold and energizing ways. This year's NWOC will take place June 14 - June 20, 2021. Powered by the [#ListenFirst Coalition](#) of 300+ organizations, the National Week of Conversation invites Americans to listen and discover common interests by also using the official hashtag #ListenFirst.

"America needs to talk, and we need to listen to those unlike ourselves. The way we're demonizing each other across differences is a real threat to all Americans, our families, our communities, and our country. America Talks is a chance for us to take a courageous and necessary step toward healing America," said Pearce Godwin, Founder & CEO, [Listen First Project](#). "It's easy to sit back and point fingers, to lose hope. What if instead we stepped forward and got real with each other, extending curiosity, good will and grace? That's what America Talks and the subsequent National Week of Conversation are all about."

The America Talks initiative aligns with [Gannett's ongoing mission to bridge the country's divide](#) and coincides with USA TODAY and [Public Agenda's Hidden Common Ground Initiative](#). Public Agenda's [most recent study](#) finds a powerful consensus across political affiliations that the country needs to move beyond the destructive divisiveness that plagues our politics. The research also finds that 79% of Americans believe creating more opportunities for people to talk with those who have different values and views would be effective in reducing divisiveness. Hidden Common Ground challenges the narrative of a divided America by identifying and amplifying the areas where Americans agree on solutions to polarizing issues. Through a partnership with [National Issues Forums](#), the initiative also seeks to foster productive, civil conversation in communities across the country.

#### **ABOUT GANNETT**

Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI) is a subscription-led and digitally focused media and marketing solutions company committed to empowering communities to thrive. With an unmatched reach at the national and local level, Gannett touches the lives of millions with our Pulitzer Prize-winning content, consumer experiences and benefits, and advertiser products and services. Our current portfolio of media assets includes [USA TODAY](#), local media organizations in 46 states in the U.S., and Newsquest, a wholly owned subsidiary operating in the United Kingdom with more than 120 local news media brands. Gannett also owns the digital marketing services companies ReachLocal, Inc., UpCurve, Inc., and WordStream, Inc., which are marketed under the LOCALiQ brand, and runs the largest media-owned events business in the U.S., USA TODAY NETWORK Ventures. To connect with us, visit [www.gannett.com](http://www.gannett.com).

#### **ABOUT USA TODAY**

Founded in 1982, USA TODAY reflects the pulse of the nation, serving as host of the American conversation by delivering high-quality, engaging content through unique visual storytelling across all platforms. A media innovator, USA TODAY reaches more than 90M unique visitors each month across digital platforms, with more than 25 million downloads of our award-winning app. USA TODAY is owned by Gannett Co., Inc. (NYSE: GCI).

#### **ABOUT AMERICA TALKS**

America Talks is a powerful two-day event that invites Americans to connect one-on-one, face-to-face on video across our divides. Thousands of Americans will join these conversations simultaneously, and millions more will be inspired by their example. America Talks is [organized](#) by a coalition of nonpartisan, bridge-building organizations and promoted by Gannett and other media partners. America Talks is powered by the award-winning [My Country Talks](#), an international program for conversation across differences. America Talks is sponsored by Walmart, Microsoft and Twitter, hosted by [AllSides](#), and will be promoted by its [100+ partner organizations](#) who will host additional conversation opportunities during the subsequent [National Week of Conversation](#). For more information, visit: <https://americatalks.us>. #ListenFirst

#### **ABOUT PUBLIC AGENDA**

[Public Agenda](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to creating a stronger, more inclusive, more participatory democracy for everyone. Through research and public engagement programs with local and national impact, we focus on raising up the voices of the public, bridging divides to facilitate progress, and strengthening relationships between institutions and the people they serve. Founded in 1975 by the social scientist and public opinion expert Dan Yankelovich and former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Public Agenda works on diverse critical public issues, including health, education, environmental resilience, and civic engagement. Follow us on FB@publicagenda/Twitter@publicagenda/Instagram@publicagenda\_.

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