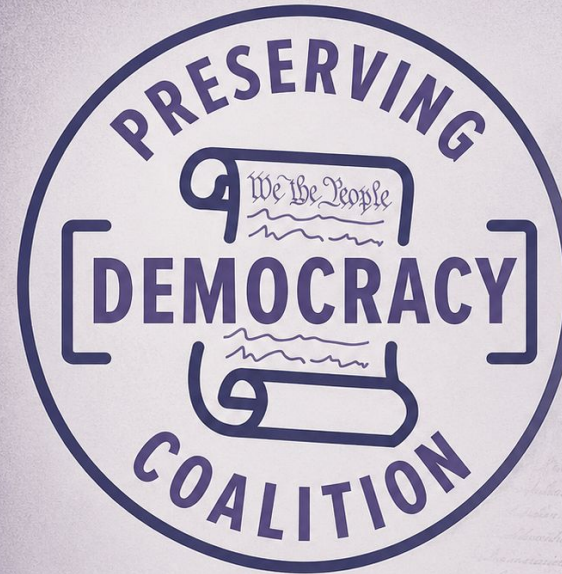




All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of *Authority*...

– W. H. AUDEN



“All (we) Have is a Voice to Undo the Folded Lie”

Preserving Democracy Coalition General Meeting

Monday, June 22nd, 2026 6:30 pm

Cowan Creek Community Center - Florence Room

An Election-Driven Inflection (or crossroads)





To **pivot** means to shift direction, change focus, or adapt strategy. While its original literal meaning involves turning on a fixed point or hinge, it is now widely used across business, sports, and daily conversation to describe an agile transition without completely abandoning your core foundation.

For our purposes, a pivot involves altering our primary focus (If only temporarily) and activities in response to changing conditions and feedback. Rather than abandoning its core principles, or risking ineffectiveness by failing to adapt, nimble organizations pivot in order to accomplish short-term and/or long-term objectives.

Why now?



The midterms.

By sharpening our focus on critical issues with defined and meaningful outcomes, we have a better chance of accomplishing our goals. We are going to “seize the moment.”

Here’s the “BIG 3”-

1. Get Out the Vote
2. Poll Watch
3. Be Ready for the Aftermath

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



That powerful line is from W.H. Auden's famous poem, "September 1, 1939." The poem was written at the outbreak of World War II, as Auden sat in a New York City bar reflecting on *the rise of fascism and a "low dishonest decade."*

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



By “low dishonest decade,” Auden was referring to the moral failures of the era, specifically:

The Rise of Fascism: The unchecked rise of totalitarian dictators like Adolf Hitler.

Failed Diplomacy: The policy of appeasement, where democratic nations repeatedly backed down and made concessions to aggressive regimes.

Widespread Deception: The era's heavy reliance on propaganda, broken treaties, and widespread denial of the impending global disaster.

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



The stanza containing the two lines above:

*"Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?
All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority"*

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



In these lines, the speaker laments the indifference, self-absorption, and **lies of authority** that allowed global catastrophe to happen. Feeling small and powerless, the speaker realizes that while he cannot physically stop a war, he has a voice—and that singular voice is a powerful tool to challenge propaganda, "undo the folded lie," and speak truth to power.

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



The “Folded Lie” -

Challenging the "folded" or established lies is about confronting misinformation that has been neatly packaged, accepted by the mainstream, or institutionalized.

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



Other resonating themes of fear and interconnectedness:

The Shift from Safety to Vulnerability: The poem's opening line, *"I sit in one of the dives... Uncertain and afraid,"* perfectly matches the psychological state of a nation suddenly stripped of its sense of domestic norms.

The Illusion of Normalcy: Auden's observation that *"The lights must never go out / The music must always play / All the conventions conspire to make this fort / Assume the furniture of home"* captured the eerie sensation of trying to resume everyday American life while a global crisis loomed.

An Antidote to Jingoism: Unlike the highly political, angry, or vengeful rhetoric dominating the airwaves, Auden's poem offered a plea for empathy. Its most famous line—*"We must love one another or die"*—served as a sobering, humanist mantra for those looking for hope amidst destruction.

ALSO...INSPIRATION!

"All I have is a voice / To undo the folded lie,"



Some Takeaways –

- Previous generations have confronted very similar obstacles and have had very similar feelings
- Look around, you are not alone
- Raise your voice when able (share your insights respectfully and factually. Whether through writing, community discussions, or public forums, transparency is the ultimate antidote to deception)
- Together we can undo the folded lie, and with great effort and luck, be actors in starting/strengthening that momentum.
- **An avalanche starts with one pebble.**