



Annual Report

For God.
For Country.
For Community.

2023



Summary of 2023



“

Russell Vought.. has quietly emerged as an intellectual leader of the GOP’s conservative flank.”

– THE WASHINGTON POST,
Feb. 19, 2023

The Center for Renewing America (CRA) launched on Inauguration Day 2021, to boldly advance an America First agenda. An agenda that puts **God, country, and community** at the center of the political debate in Washington.

In just three short years since our founding, the Center has become the tip of the America First spear in some of the biggest fights in Washington. We confront weaponized federal bureaucracies working against the interests of the American people head-on and advancing paradigm-shifting policies that have put the D.C. cartel on defense.

At the center of our work in 2023, was exposing how the federal bureaucracy has become woke and weaponized against the interests of the American people, and producing a budget to get America’s fiscal house in order and end these programs. Our 2023 budget will serve as a **blueprint for years to come**

on how conservatives can end the woke and weaponized bureaucracy through the power of the purse in Congress.

Additionally, CRA created a host of policy “battle plans” providing the strategy and intellectual ammo for America First policies on issues including: Ukraine funding, weaponization at the FBI and DOJ, cutting woke spending programs, exposing woke military nominations, holding Big Tech accountable, securing our border, and protecting children from online pornography. Our policy work is read by members of Congress, routinely covered by major media outlets, and used for model legislation on the state and federal level.

In 2023, CRA President Russ Vought was an indispensable part of Project 2025, focusing on building an America First policy agenda for the next conservative Administration.

Citizens for Renewing America

Similar to the Center, Citizens for Renewing America (Citizens) was launched in the wake of Joe Biden's inauguration in 2021, but with different goals in mind.

While the Center would formulate and advance policies, Citizens was established to do grassroots lobbying and citizen mobilization. We pick the right fights, bring our research and intellectual heft to the front lines, and equip the movement to fight for America First legislation and policy goals.

In 2023, Citizens for Renewing America engaged in key political battles on Capitol Hill, including efforts to oust Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the House, change how Congress funds aid packages to Ukraine, and mobilize conservatives in the debt limit fight.



WADE MILLER
CFRA Executive Director



**CITIZENS FOR
RENEWING
AMERICA**



The Center for Renewing America's Unique Approach to Winning Political Battles

OUR STRATEGY



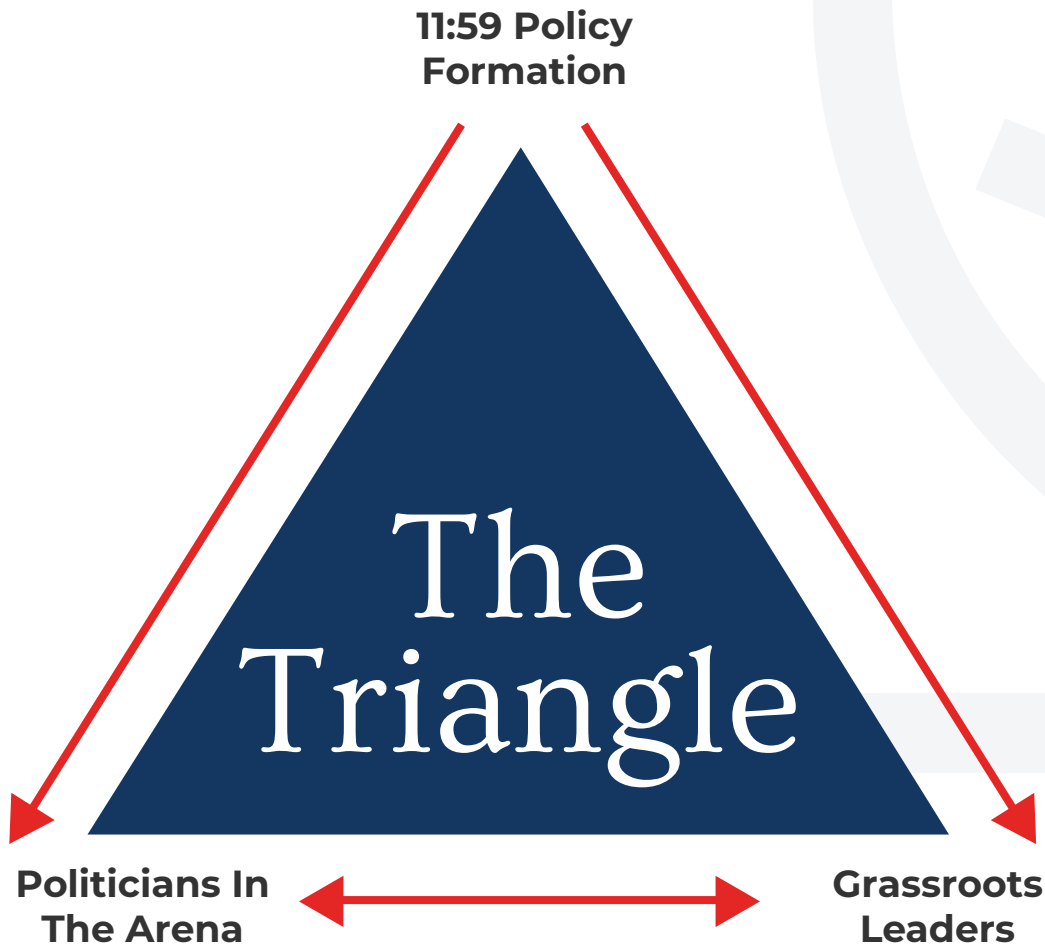
Pick big national fights



Leverage media, policy research, and grassroots to win the debate



Let the momentum flow to all levels of government



A Commitment to End Woke and Weaponized Government

2023 Budget Proposal

In December of 2022, the Center for Renewing America, under the leadership of former Office of Management and Budget Director, Russ Vought, rolled out our paradigm-shifting budget proposal for Congress in FY2023 entitled, “*A Commitment to End Woke and Weaponized Government*.” CRA’s widely-read budget proposal offered Congress a roadmap for getting America’s fiscal house in order and ignited a nationwide debate on woke and weaponized government programs that are costing taxpayers billions of dollars.

GETTING AMERICA’S FISCAL HOUSE IN ORDER

CRA’s budget gave conservatives in Congress a plan for getting America’s fiscal house in order through a comprehensive effort to revitalize the economy while cutting spending. The proposal offered practical steps for balancing the budget in ten years, reducing debt as a percentage of the economy from 100 to 71 percent, and achieving nearly \$9 trillion in savings over ten years, including nearly \$3

trillion to annual discretionary spending and \$6 trillion in mandatory reforms—all without cutting the benefits of Medicare or Social Security. Our budget will serve as a blueprint for conservative budgetary proposals for years to come.

EXPOSING THE WOKE AND WEAPONIZED BUREAUCRACY

No other organization in Washington has done more to combat and expose the woke and weaponized federal bureaucracy than the Center for Renewing America. A big part of our efforts culminated in releasing our budget proposal where we detail billions of dollars in proposed cuts to the woke and weaponized federal bureaucracy. These include cutting funding to the weaponized FBI by \$2.7 billion, or 23.7 percent from FY23 enacted levels, and cutting numerous federal programs, such as \$6.2 million for abortion services in Pennsylvania and \$41 million for a Soros Group (Acacia Center) that helps illegal immigrants avoid deportation.

CRA’s FY2023 budget proposal serves as a blueprint for conservatives to get

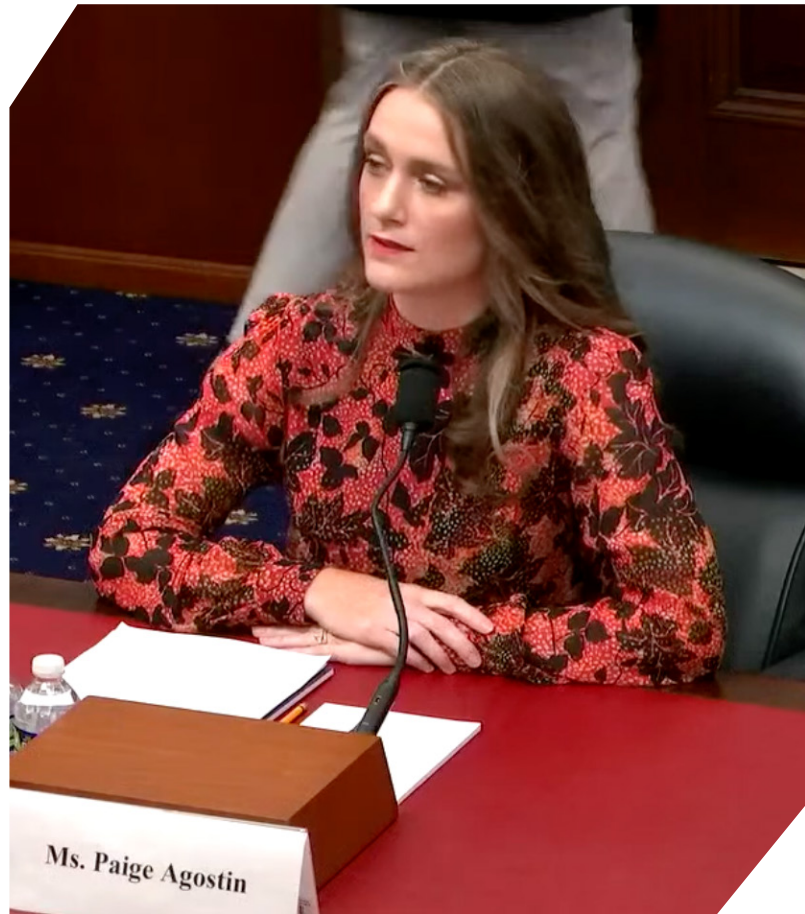
A Commitment to End Woke... *(continued)*

America's fiscal house in order and defund federal agencies and programs working against the interest of the American people.

The Center for Renewing America rolled out its budget in early 2023 and saw significant attention in the mainstream media and traction in Congress. As a blueprint for cutting programs, CRA's budget influenced legislation passed in the House and debt limit negotiations.

In April of 2023, the House passed the *Limit, Save, Grow Act* which would have cut more \$5 trillion from the woke and weaponized bureaucracy and was influenced by CRA's model budget. Passage of this bill with the slimmest of margins shocked the political establishment.

While Speaker McCarthy would eventually disregard conservative policy recommendations and cut a terrible deal with Biden on the debt limit, CRA's budget proposal would shape future debt limit discussions into 2024.



CRA Policy Director Paige Hauser testifies before the House Budget Committee

“

A cadre of hard-line conservatives in the House and Senate believed that they finally had the leverage to shape the Conference debate on a budget proposal. *Vought helped them draft it.*

”

– THE NEW YORKER, June 1, 2023

Speaker Fight

The year 2023 will go down in American history as the year 20 America First patriots in Congress stood up to the D.C. Cartel and held a Republican Speaker of the House accountable for broken promises.

CRA was proud to have played a pivotal role in the Speakership fight—offering strategy and support to the 20 Patriots and a strategic vision for how a broader coalition of conservatives should approach spending fights with Democrats and President Biden in the future.



In late 2022, CRA President Russ Vought was one of the first conservative leaders to sound the alarm bells at the prospect of Kevin McCarthy for Speaker. Shortly thereafter, Vought began working with a small band of House Freedom Caucus members to challenge his Speakership unless a power-sharing agreement with conservatives could be brokered.

After a historic 15 rounds of voting, 20 Patriots secured a paradigm-shifting coalition government in exchange for a

McCarthy Speakership. The agreement included powerful committee positions for conservatives, a bold conservative agenda, and an insurance policy in the form of a motion to vacate rule if McCarthy failed to uphold terms of the agreement.

It was a true coalition government and yielded early legislative wins with passage of the *Limit, Save, Grow Act* in the House in April which would have cut more than \$5 trillion from the woke and weaponized bureaucracy and which was influenced by CRA's budget proposal.

But as the year progressed, Kevin McCarthy began to renege on central tenets of the deal. In June, McCarthy broke his first major promise, striking a deal with Biden to raise the debt limit. By late September, the betrayal was complete. Speaker McCarthy cut a back door deal with Democrats on a stop gap bill to fund the government, which included a \$69 billion "side car" deal.

Vought advised members of the House Freedom Caucus to call for a motion to vacate Speaker McCarthy. The rest is history. On October 2, 2023, Rep. Matt Gaetz filed the motion and the final measure passed by 216 to 210 on October 3, ousting Kevin McCarthy from the speakership.

SPEAKER FIGHT TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 10, 2022
CRA President Russ Vought raises alarm bells on McCarthy Speakership, advises House Freedom Caucus members to oppose without major concessions.

NOVEMBER 9, 2022
Kevin McCarthy announces his bid for the Speakership.

JANUARY 4, 2023
Russ Vought works with the 20 patriots behind closed doors on the parameters of a historic power-sharing agreement. Kevin McCarthy loses a 5th ballot to become Speaker.

JANUARY 3, 2023
McCarthy fails to win Speakership in 1st vote, 20 patriots emerge as holdouts.

JANUARY 7, 2023
The brave 20 patriots hold out to an incredible 15th ballot, secure committee positions, historic coalitional government, and “motion to vacate” rule if McCarthy fails to keep promises. Kevin McCarthy elected Speaker of the House.

JANUARY 5, 2023
McCarthy loses 10th ballot to become House speaker.

APRIL 26, 2023
McCarthy works with conservatives to pass the *Limit, Save, Grow Act* which would have cut more \$5 trillion from the woke and weaponized bureaucracy and was influenced by CRA’s model budget.

JUNE 3, 2023
Kevin McCarthy reneges on promises made to conservatives in the House, makes a back door deal with Biden to raise the debt limit and add nearly \$4 trillion to national debt.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023
CRA President Russ Vought works with the House Freedom Caucus on letter to McCarthy demanding answers on proposed stopgap funding measure to fund the government.

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023
Speaker McCarthy cuts a deal with Democrats on a stop gap bill to fund the government, breaking promises he made with the 20 brave patriots to fund the government through individual appropriations bills.

OCTOBER 2, 2023
Rep. Matt Gaetz announces he will move to oust McCarthy as speaker by filing a “Motion to Vacate.”

OCTOBER 3, 2023
A final vote on the measure is taken, and the Motion to Vacate measure passes 216 to 210 removing Kevin McCarthy from Speaker of the House.

OCTOBER 25, 2023
Rep. Mike Johnson sworn in as Speaker of the House.

Stopping the Invasion at our Southern Border



More than 10 million illegal aliens from countries all over the world have poured into the United States through virtually open borders since Joe Biden took office in 2021. The illegal alien invasion happening at our southern border is among the greatest national security and economic threats facing the United States today.

Without a conservative leader in the White House, CRA spent the past three years on a multi-faceted strategy to define the debate and work in the states to force a confrontation with the Biden Administration. In 2023, we saw breakthroughs on several fronts.

First, CRA has been instrumental in changing the national narrative from “border crisis” to “invasion”. Since Biden took office, CRA fellows have written legal papers, op-eds, appeared on countless TV interviews, radio programs, and podcasts defining the invasion at our border as a national emergency and a violation of Article IV, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution. Now members of Congress, governors, and candidates

across America are all articulating the correct legal argument by using the term “invasion” and invoking the Article I, Section 10, Clause 3 power left to states

Second, CRA has been working with border states and counties to declare an invasion and provoke state and federal action. To date, more than 50 counties in Texas have formally declared an invasion. In 2023, Attorney General Ken Paxton promised a legal challenge, using CRA’s legal strategy citing Article 1 of the Constitution, to a federal ruling that Texas must remove water barriers in the Rio Grande.

Our invasion narrative has properly framed the debate and galvanized conservative lawmakers to use our legal arguments and confront the Biden Administration’s intentional inaction to the illegal alien invasion happening at our southern border. If the courts recognize the validity of our legal arguments, the border security conversation will be forever impacted, and states uncuffed in their efforts to secure their communities.

Combating Weaponization of the FBI

A primary goal of the Center for Renewing America in 2023 was combatting and exposing weaponization of America's national security apparatus, with an emphasis on the Federal Bureau of Investigation. CRA accomplished this by publishing more than a dozen primers that were circulated to Congressional staff, leveraging our policy experts to testify before Congress and appear in hundreds of media appearances on TV, radio, and podcasts, and proposing detailed cuts to the agency in our model budget.

On May 11, 2023, CRA Policy Director Paige Hauser testified before the House Budget Committee on exposing the woke, weaponized, and bloated federal bureaucracy. Hauser's testimony utilized CRA's budget proposal and primers to reveal how federal bureaucracy has become a significant funder of the woke cultural revolution.



On May 17, 2023, CRA Senior Fellow Steve Friend testified before the House Judiciary Committee on weaponization of the FBI against the American people. Before joining CRA, Steve Friend was the brave whistleblower who sacrificed his career to blow the whistle on the

FOX NEWS FLASH

Whistleblower says he's 'willing to be homeless at hands of FBI' to speak out on alleged weaponization

Garret O'Boyle and Steve Friend spoke out on 'Jesse Watters Primetime'
By **Charles Creitz** · Fox News

Published May 19, 2023 6:00am EDT

FBI whistleblower: 'We're just trying to do the right thing for this nation'

Two of three the FBI whistleblowers who testified before the House Judiciary Committee Thursday sound off with Chairman Jim Jordan on 'Jesse Watters Primetime.'

FBI's mishandling of cases related to January 6th. Friend also appeared in CRA's 10-part video series, "The Top Ten Systemic Issues Within the FBI" where he documents systemic issues that plague the FBI.

CRA's work drove national attention to the FBI's domestic intelligence collection of law-abiding Americans and its anti-conservative and anti-Christian biases. Our seminal primers, "Top Ten Systemic Issues Within the FBI," "Break the Iron Triangle of FBI Weaponization," and "Unauthorized Spending and a Weaponized Bureaucracy," made the case nationally that without significant reforms, the nation will continue to witness the national security apparatus unconstitutionally target citizens and trample our rights.

Protecting Children from the Porn Epidemic



The freedom we enjoy as Americans is predicated on just laws and healthy communities. That's why the Center for Renewing America is fighting the porn epidemic by ensuring age verification and online obscenity laws are enacted, enforced, and strengthened on the state and federal levels of government.

Over the past few decades the porn industry and Big Tech companies have colluded to ensure today's youth have 24/7 access to infinite pornographic content at their fingertips. They don't even have to go looking for it—social media is often the entry point to pornographic sites, and they themselves distribute, and even create, pornographic content.

But as CRA has documented, the science is clear: Pornography has been shown to affect the brain like a drug, leading to addiction, rewiring neural pathways, and impairing the prefrontal cortex that controls our executive function and impulse control, all of which are especially damaging for the brains of adolescents and children.

In 2023, CRA Senior Fellow Adam Candeub published a series of op-eds, primers, and pieces of model legislation for state and federal lawmakers to enact online verification laws, protect the privacy of children, strengthen parental consent laws, and hold big tech and porn companies liable for the transmission of obscene content to children. CRA's work was put in the hands of lawmakers and worked into legislation on the state-level. Seven states passed legislation based on his work, and one of the main companies has declared it won't operate in these states – exactly our goal.

For the past few decades, Big Porn and Big Tech have operated with impunity and created a porn epidemic; treating children as both the product and consumer. In 2023 and beyond we're going on offensive.

Standing by Jeffrey Clark

**JEFFREY CLARK
IS BEING PERSECUTED
FOR SERVING PRESIDENT
TRUMP AND FIGHTING FOR
THE INTEGRITY OF OUR
ELECTIONS IN 2020.**

STAND WITH JEFF



In August of 2023, as the whole world watched on, CRA's Jeffrey Clark was named as a "co-conspirator" and indicted alongside President Trump and 17 others in Georgia as part of a 2020 election case.

The Center for Renewing America and our supporters pledged to stand by Jeff as he faced persecution for his honorable service to President Trump.

Jeff, who served alongside Russ Vought in the Trump Administration, was one of the only patriots at the DOJ to stand by President Trump in 2020 and fight for the integrity of our elections. Since then, he has had his home raided by the DOJ and his good name slandered, maligned, and dragged through the mud by the J6 committee and the mainstream media.

The phony charges against Clark, President Trump, and the others were brought on by a radical prosecutor in the state of Georgia who targeted them as part of a witch hunt to climb the political ladder. On August 24, 2023,

Jeffrey Clark and his other "co-conspirators" had their mugshots taken at the Fulton County Jail in Georgia after the indictment was handed down. Thanks to our supporters, CRA stood by Jeff throughout 2023; providing support, refuge, and gainful employment.

Jeff's work and expertise as a Constitutional lawyer at the Center in 2023 was also indispensable to our mission. In September, Jeff's primer, "*Why The Fourteenth Amendment, Section 3 Does Not Bar Presidential Candidates from Running for the Presidency*," debunked cases made in Colorado, Maine, and numerous other states on eligibility to be on the presidential ballot. Additionally, his legal paradigm shifting paper, "*The U.S. Justice Department Is Not Independent*," has caught the attention of the Left and laid important groundwork for the next conservative administration.



Jeffrey Clark's mugshot
Fulton County Jail, GA

Exposing Woke Military Nominations

COL. BENJAMIN R. JONSSON (AIR FORCE)



- Nominated for promotion to **Brigadier General**

- Published an article entitled: "Dear white colonel ... we must address our blind spots around race"
- Quoted in the article saying "Defensiveness is a predictable response by white people to any discussion of racial injustice"
- Says white colonels are "largely blind to institutional racism"
- Recommends Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism" at the end of the article
- Helped lead diversity and inclusion panel in 2021
- Serves as the Vice Superintendent of the Air Force Academy which has come under fire recently over radical DEI indoctrination

In 2023, Senator Tommy Tuberville of Alabama made history by carrying out a 10-month blockade of high-ranking military nominations after the Department of Defense (DoD) announced a new policy granting leave and taxpayer-funded support for servicewomen to travel to states where they can obtain abortions.

The Center for Renewing America made it a priority to be one of the earliest and most vocal organizations supporting Tuberville's blockade, which forced single confirmation votes on military nominations instead of "group promotions" by the Senate.

Thankfully, Tuberville's blockade provided CRA with the time necessary to investigate the backgrounds and practices of dozens of woke generals and high-ranking military officials; exposing widespread support for critical race theory, gender equity, and DEI throughout the military.

Our research was covered by major conservative media outlets, and our primer, "*President Biden's Radical Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Nominee Undermines America's Security*," exposed Biden's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Charles "CQ" Brown's history of woke progressive activism, and was used by Senate staff in his confirmation hearing. Above all, CRA put a spotlight on woke military personnel pushing DEI, CRT, and gender equity at the highest levels of the Department of Defense, while defending a **renewed** Constitutional check the framers intended to provide for an accountable military.



Brief: President Biden's Radical Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Nominee Undermines America's Security

Background

On May 25, 2023, President Biden nominated General C.Q. Brown to serve as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—the nation's highest-ranking military officer. The nomination comes as the current chairman, General Mark A. Milley, prepares for the end of his tenure as chairman has been disastrous in its own right, accelerating the decline of the United States Armed Forces, the worst recruiting crisis in decades.

America First Policy Agenda: Laying the Groundwork for a Future Administration



The Left has spent their lives studying and engineering the power of the Deep State to serve their ends, and as a result, when conservatives enter government, they are often only a small raft amidst an ocean of complex processes.

That's why, when the presidential election was more than a few years away, CRA began laying the groundwork in 2023 for a future conservative Administration. Our goal was to use our unique experiences of serving in high level government positions to ready governing plans and policies for Day One of a future conservative president taking office.

Over the course of 2023, major media outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post* all published "exposés" about

our supposedly sinister work of building the framework of an America First policy agenda.

We have to prepare the next administration to be ready on Day One to seize control on behalf of the American people. But what the mainstream media views as insidious, like gutting the woke and weaponized federal bureaucracy, stopping the invasion at our southern border, and implementing a foreign policy that puts American interests first, we see as necessary to saving our nation.



“

That’s the message from Russell Vought – a hard-right policy wonk and once a senior official in Donald Trump’s administration— who has been leading a behind-the-scenes charge among congressional Republicans. ”

– **ROLLING STONE**, January 23, 2023

CRA by the Numbers in 2023



490+
MEDIA HITS



11,000,000+
IMPRESSIONS ON X/TWITTER



232,000+
WEBSITE VISITS



\$225,000
IN ONLINE DONATIONS



59%
INCREASE IN DONATIONS
YEAR OVER YEAR

\$4.75M
TOTAL RAISED

ATTACKS FROM THE WASHINGTON CARTEL
AND LIBERAL MEDIA:

TOO MANY TO COUNT

CRA Staff



Russ Vought
President



Adam Candeub
Senior Fellow



Rachel Cauley
Communications Director
and Fellow



Jeff Clark
Senior Fellow and Director
of Litigation



Heather Cordasco
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Steve Friend
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Paige Hauser
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Sumantra Maitra
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Micah Meadowcroft
Research Director



Wade Miller
Fellow & Executive Director
of Citizens for Renewing
America



Mark Paoletta
Senior Fellow



Molly Sikes
Press Secretary



Kingsley Wilson
Digital Media Manager



Michael Young
Visiting Fellow

Letter from Russ Vought



As I reflect back on 2023 and all that we've accomplished together, I am immensely grateful for the unwavering support of partners like you that make our mission possible. Three years ago we set out to put on America First agenda on center stage in public life by disrupting the uni-party, D.C. cartel ruling Washington.

We've won major battles and taken arrows along the way, but our impact together is undeniable and we're just getting started.

At the Center for Renewing America, we don't take the generosity of supporters like you for granted; in fact, it doubles our resolve to fight because the future of our families and country is at stake. Thank you for your support this year and for joining this fight alongside us for freedom in America. I can't think of a better investment or better partners to be working with.

Russ Vought
President, Center for Renewing America

Donate

Center for Renewing America is a national, nonprofit organization whose mission is to renew an American consensus of a nation under God with unique interests worthy of defending that flow from its people, institutions, and history, where individuals' enjoyment of freedom is predicated on just laws and healthy communities.

Visit **AmericaRenewing.com** to give online.

You may send tax-deductible contributions via mail to:
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