

Statement of Purpose And General Approach to Governance

January 2017

The Jeffco Political Action Taskforce is a working group of the Jefferson Humanists (JH), a chapter of the American Humanists Association located in Jefferson County (west Denver metro area) of Colorado.

We provide an easy onramp to political activism as a service to the members of JH and to the secular community of the Denver metro area. The service we provide can be summarized as “find, inform, collaborate, and devise,” with the following details:

- **Find** the politically alienated and disaffected residents in the Denver metro area, and help them find each other
- **Inform** them about a) political actions they can take right away and in the future, and b) the techniques of non-violence
- **Collaborate** with other, like-minded groups, supporting their initiatives and activities rather than “reinventing the wheel”
- **Devise** creative opportunities to “fill the gaps” of issues not yet addressed by the groups we collaborate with

We emphasize effective action and aim for a balance between “fast and loud” versus “strategic and well informed.” The proper mix of those two styles will allow us to attract a wider spectrum of participants from the community and provide a more meaningful political experience for them. The fast and loud aspect of our activities will include actions such as street protests, street theatre, phone campaigns, and office visits with our members of Congress. The strategic and well informed aspect will include events such as democracy schools, Cambridge-style issue debates for the public, and opinion editorials for the printed press. Activities from both styles will undoubtedly result in many videos posted to social media in order to amplify our impact and to make our influence more durable.

Our group is not a collection of extremists, and we borrow concepts from several foundational texts in order to instill rationality and nonviolence into our practices. These texts include:

- 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action (Albert Einstein Institutions, www.aeinstein.org/nonviolentaction)
- Indivisible: Former congressional staffers reveal best practices for making Congress listen (www.indivisibleguide.com)
- Humanist Manifesto III (American Humanists Association (AHA), <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/manifesto3>)
- Ten Commitments: Guiding Principles For Teaching Values In America's Public Schools (AHA, <http://www.hfsd.info/ten-commitments>)

As to governance of the Taskforce, we will maintain a small group of “organizers.” These organizers will be the more active and veteran members of the Taskforce. They will meet regularly as a steering committee outside the events hosted by the Taskforce and will consider whether the events and participants have remained true to the foundational texts.

Offering a service to the public on topics as heated as politics does present some risk of inappropriate language and behavior among the participants. We will mitigate that risk with not only the presence of the organizers, but also by emphasizing positivity with the participants. We focus upon positivity in particular because it:

- makes our events and interactions more enjoyable to the widest possible audience
- generates a more persuasive message for the general public
- denies provocateurs attending our events opportunities to derail our work
- avoids giving the press opportunities to discredit the Taskforce or its supporters

During the events, we will encourage participants to self-organize, so they can focus upon the issues most important to them and pursue them in the manner they prefer. However, we will communicate at the onset that the organizers do “own” each event and will steer it when necessary to stay aligned with the values and principles found in the foundational texts. The Taskforce will seek training for these organizers, so that with time they will be sufficiently skilled in group facilitation and nonviolence.

The Taskforce will also inform all participants that if they desire to go beyond the bounds set by the event organizers, they must do so as private citizens, unassociated with the Taskforce, Jefferson Humanists, and any organization co-sponsoring the event.