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## **Braver Angels of Arkansas Focuses on 'Race in Education' in Upcoming Workshop**

**Little Rock, AR (July 1, 2021)** – Braver Angels of Arkansas is seeking participants for a new workshop coming to Arkansas. Known as “Common Ground Workshop,” this event will bring together liberals and conservatives to seek common ground on a specific issue. The focus of the Arkansas workshop is: “Teaching about Race in our Public Schools.” It will take place from 9 am-noon, July 17, via Zoom.

Launched in 2016, Braver Angels is an organization that brings “red” (conservative or Republican-leaning) and “blue” (liberal or Democratic-leaning) Americans together in a working alliance. Recent polls show that a majority of Americans feel the country is more divided than ever. Through programs and workshops, Braver Angels creates opportunities for meaningful discussion among members of opposing political parties.

### **What is the Common Ground Workshop?**

The purpose of the Braver Angels Common Ground Workshop is to bring together conservatives and liberals for a deep dive into a chosen issue and identify points of agreement. The issue of teaching critical race theory, the 1619 project, and the history of race in our country is a controversial one across our nation. The tensions are nuanced and complex, but Braver Angels of Arkansas intends to work through these tensions through civil dialogue. During the July 17 Common Ground Workshop, participants from both sides of the political spectrum will explore what they have in common when approaching the topic of “teaching about race in our public schools.”

### **What is the role of workshop attendees?**

During the workshop, participants will share their personal connection to, and concern for, this issue. Participants will also offer ideas on remedies and solutions. Together, attendees will work to identify their shared values and concerns on addressing race in education in our public schools. There are two ways to join the Workshop:

- **Participant:** Participants engage in small- and large-group discussions with individuals of both the same and different political persuasions.

- Observer: Observers have the opportunity to watch and listen but do not participate in the discussions directly.

### **What is the time commitment?**

The Arkansas Common Ground Workshop will be a 3-hour event on Saturday, July 17. Due to Covid, the event will be held virtually via Zoom. The link to register is

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/common-ground-workshop-teaching-about-race-in-our-public-schools-registration-153875023337>.

### **What are the goals of the Common Ground Workshop?**

Goals of the Common Ground Workshop are:

- To delve into a single issue where citizens differ and learn how each side sees the problem.
- To delineate areas of common ground and points of agreement.
- To learn something that might be helpful to others in our community and the nation.

Glen White, blue co-coordinator of the Arkansas Braver Angels Alliance, says the organization never tries to push an agenda or change participants' minds, but rather, encourages respectful discussions among those who value the United States and its people over a political party.

White, a local psychologist, helped start Braver Angels in Arkansas four years ago after watching a news special with a co-founder of Braver Angels, known at that time as Better Angels.

"I had become increasingly distressed over the political climate in our country," White says. "I wanted to do something to help, and Braver Angels seemed to be a good fit with my interests and my professional skill-set."

White continues to serve as state co-coordinator for Braver Angels in Arkansas, along with April Chatham-Carpenter, chair of the Department of Applied Communication at UA Little Rock. White serves as the blue co-coordinator and Chatham-Carpenter serves as the red co-coordinator. They, along with a seven-member executive committee, volunteer their time organizing local Braver Angels events every other month. They also speak to a variety of civic groups, churches, school groups and other organizations about the Braver Angels mission and strategies for decreasing polarization.

To register for the July 17 event, visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/common-ground-workshop-teaching-about-race-in-our-public-schools-registration-153875023337>. If you would like a Braver Angels volunteer to speak to a group, or if you are interested in learning more about the organization, email Glen White at [gwhite@braverangels.org](mailto:gwhite@braverangels.org) or April Chatham-Carpenter at [achatham-carpenter@braverangels.org](mailto:achatham-carpenter@braverangels.org).

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