

How to tackle political polarization — the researchers trying to bridge divides | Nature

By Saima May Sidik

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On 20 October 2020, in the middle of a bitterly contested US election season, there was an unexpected détente in Utah. Two opposing candidates for governor, Spencer Cox (a Republican) and Chris Peterson (a Democrat), shunned the verbal attacks that dominate most political campaigns. Instead, they released a joint political advertisement in which they made a commitment to remain civil, accept the outcome of the election and eschew the divisive hatred that infests politics today.

“I’m not sure this has ever been done before,” Cox tweeted along with the video ad.

The message went viral. And, according to researchers who later studied its effects, viewing it helped to shore up support for democracy among potential voters (see go.nature.com/3kjgpct).

The video was one of around two dozen interventions tested last year in an initiative called the [Strengthening Democracy Challenge](#), run by social psychologists at Stanford University in California. The team is part of a community of researchers who are trying to find ways to stem the flow of hatred into politics.

Source: [How to tackle political polarization — the researchers trying to bridge divides | Nature](#)