

KPCC and LAist are shifting the focus of their politics coverage from politicians to voters. Here's why. | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Tony Marcano

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In the year since the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, there's been a renewed focus on how news coverage has contributed to the overall political divide in the nation. And, yes, that includes the media's culpability in the erosion of democracy.

I say renewed because this is not a new debate. Every time there's a particularly noticeable decline in civic discourse — prompted, to cite just a few examples, by the social upheavals of the 60s, the cynicism of the Watergate era, post-9/11 jingoism, and now the tilt away from democratic principles — there's a new round of navel-gazing over what we in the media could have done better.

The problem is, it rarely results in productive reform. After a cycle of finger-pointing and self-flagellation, political coverage always bounces back to being centered in polls, rallies, [sound bites](#), and hot takes.

[...]

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