

A book I'd like my elected officials to read

The *Century* asked professors, writers, and policy makers to tell us about a book they would want to hand to their elected officials to read.

Books in the [October 12, 2016](#) issue



When Presbyterian pastor Rich Jones had a chance to meet Hillary Clinton in July, he presented her with a copy of Søren Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. We asked professors, writers, and policy makers to tell us about a book they would want to hand to their elected officials to read. Surprisingly, and independently of one another, three of the seven respondents chose the same book. (Perhaps less surprisingly, it wasn't *Works of Love*.) All seven replies are linked below.

**[The political power of a local carrot, by Bill McKibben](#)**: By some estimates, three quarters of Americans don't really know their next-door neighbor. . . .

**[Tennessee: poster child for a broken system, by Emilie Townes](#)**: A justice system oriented mainly toward punishing offenders can have tragic consequences. .

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**At the same table, by John C. Danforth**: Strongly held differences of opinion in our nation's life require both legal protection and public respect. . . .

**Balance the scales, by Leah Gunning Francis**: We can no longer pretend that the scales of justice in America are fair and balanced. . . .

**The war we aren't winning, by David Cortright**: The United States has been engaged for decades in a seemingly endless series of wars and military operations. . . .

**When mercy and justice meet, by Kelly Brown Douglas**: As we make laws and try to adjudicate justice, we often lose sight of the human faces affected. . . .

**The feminine and the land, by Malinda Elizabeth Berry**: Theologies of entitlement, enslaving, and extinguishing indigenous communities have shaped policy since the 15th century. . . .