

Resources for Representation, Our Federal Government and the Constitution

Attitudes Toward Democracy

72% of Americans say the U.S. used to be a good example of democracy, but isn't anymore

Fetterolf. Pew Center. July 10, 2024

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/10/72-of-americans-say-the-us-used-to-be-a-good-example-of-democracy-but-isnt-anymore/>

Representative Democracy Remains a Popular Ideal, but People Around the World Are Critical of How It's Working Pew Center. Feb 28, 2024.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/02/28/representative-democracy-remains-a-popular-ideal-but-people-around-the-world-are-critical-of-how-its-working/>

Most Americans want to limit campaign spending, say big donors have greater political influence

Jones. Pew Research. May 8, 2018

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2018/05/08/most-americans-want-to-limit-campaign-spending-say-big-donors-have-greater-political-influence/>

The Public, the Political System and American Democracy

Pew Center. April 26, 2018.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/04/26/the-public-the-political-system-and-american-democracy/>

Voters seek overhaul of Congress for a stronger democracy

Press Release from UMass Lowell Center for Public Opinion. 1/16/2025.

<https://www.amacad.org/news/poll-voters-congress-democracy>

National Poll: National Survey on Election Reform

Center for Public Opinion Polls. UMass-Lowell. Sept-Oct, 2024.

Highlights: https://www.uml.edu/docs/2025-Jan-AAAS-Highlights_tcm18-394399.pdf

Full survey: https://www.uml.edu/docs/2025-Jan-AAAS-Topline_tcm18-394397.pdf

Most say democracy is important for the U.S. identity, but few think it is functioning well

AP/NORC. April 2024

<https://apnorc.org/projects/most-say-democracy-is-important-for-the-u-s-identity-but-few-think-it-is-functioning-well/>

Democracy Maybe: Attitudes on Authoritarianism in America. Drutman et al. Democracy Fund. Voter Study Group. 6/2020. <https://www.voterstudygroup.org/publication/democracy-maybe>

Civic Literacy

A Majority of Americans Can't Recall Most First Amendment Rights

Annenberg Public Policy Center. September 12, 2024

<https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/most-americans-cant-recall-most-first-amendment-rights/>

Many Don't Know Key Facts About U.S. Constitution, Annenberg Civics Study Finds

Annenberg Civic Knowledge Survey. Annenberg Public Policy Center. September 14, 2023

https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/many-dont-know-key-facts-about-u-s-constitution-annenberg-civics-study-finds/?fbclid=IwY2xjawJ94mJleHRuA2FlbQlXMAbicmlkETFnYVpwNWx4QnVvMnFoWVdhAR4dk3ZMcIGHHu0fgDiJO_ci7Qefn8n2TNhVLrd9O0tcde3SYZKIWJ4F-cdo6A_aem_CjSU-Wk2GJNpJAoQeumBdw

ABA 2025 Survey of Civic Literacy

https://www.americanbar.org/news/reporter_resources/civic-knowledge-survey/

How does Gen Z really feel about democracy? Protect Democracy. April 6, 2025

https://protectdemocracy.org/work/how-does-gen-z-really-feel-about-democracy/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Report: **Young People and the 2024 Election: Struggling, Disconnected, and Dissatisfied**

Medina et al. Center on Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. Tufts U. January 15, 2025.

PDF: <https://protectdemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/How-Does-GenZ-Really-Feel-About-Democracy-1.pdf>

Democracy Rankings

Democracy Index 2024: What's wrong with representative democracy? Economist Intelligence Unit.

The full report is available via the page below.

The global democracy index: how did countries perform in 2024? Economist. Feb 27th 2025.

<https://www.economist.com/interactive/democracy-index-2024>

Freedom in the World. Freedom House.

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world>

Freedom in the World 2025 Report

https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/FITW_World2025digitalN.pdf

The Global State of Democracy 2024 Strengthening the Legitimacy of Elections in a Time of Radical Uncertainty.

Full Report: Pages 37 starts United States

<https://cdn.sanity.io/files/2e5hi812/production-2024/0134f4cc56156db21ee23cf1072ab6d71704cd51.pdf>

IDEA Global State of Democracy 2024: Top Findings <https://www.idea.int/gsod/2024/>

Democracy Report 2025: 25 Years of Autocratization - Democracy Trumped? V-Dem Report.

<https://www.v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/>

[Note V-Dem is NOT a Democratic Party organization. V-Dem stands for "Varieties of Democracy" and the V-Dem Institute is based in Sweden. See more here: <https://www.v-dem.net/about/v-dem-project/>]

Human Freedom Index 2024. Cato Institute.

<https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/2024-12/2024-human-freedom-index.pdf>

Three Ways to Frame and Measure Democracy. U. Penn.

<https://www.impact.upenn.edu/democracy/three-ways-to-frame-and-measure-democracy/>

How Democracy is Doing / Overall Democracy Reform

Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century. American Academy of Arts and Sciences' Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship. 2020

<https://www.amacad.org/ourcommonpurpose/report>

Report: https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/2020-Democratic-Citizenship_Our-Common-Purpose_0.pdf

YouTube video Intro: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1NeGhaY5-4>

Democracy – History

History of Democracy. Dahl.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/democracy>

The Constitution

The Flawed Genius of the Constitution. Allen. Atlantic. October, 2020.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/10/danielle-allen-constitution/615481/Bottom>

A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation. Library of Congress. Collection of primary source materials from the first 100 years. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>

This site may be easier to use: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/federalist.html>

National Archives – America's Founding Documents

<http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters.html>

Benjamin Franklin's Closing Speech at the Constitutional Convention

https://archive.csac.history.wisc.edu/assessments_64.pdf

Primary source materials on Colonial and Revolutionary Era America

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook12.asp>

Federalist Papers Written by John Jay, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, these were a series of essays in support of ratifying the newly created Constitution. The Constitution would go into effect when 9 states ratified.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1404/1404-h/1404-h.htm>

Copyright Donna L Cohen Free to use with attribution

You will find this list at www.civictinker.info 6/2025

Anti-Federalist Papers https://history.nycourts.gov/about_period/antifederalist-papers/

Annenberg Classroom Video “Key Constitutional Concepts”. First part [20 min.] is about creation of Constitution.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=CKy2ri4q1So&feature=emb_logo

Key Constitutional Concepts. All Resources. Annenberg Classroom.

<https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/resource/key-constitutional-concepts/>

Teaching the Constitution. Annenberg Classroom. “...videos, lesson plans and games that connect to the articles and amendments in the Constitution.” <https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/teaching-the-constitution/>

Articles of Confederation. History Channel. 9/2019. Good background. Includes video.

<https://www.history.com/topics/early-us/articles-of-confederation>

American Indian Constitutions and Their Influence on the United States Constitution. Miller. Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society. [via SSRN] 3/2016.

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2739936

Interactive Constitution Interesting approach; discusses different aspects of Amendments and then has two views of each from legal experts.

[https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-](https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlIbq7hNy42gIVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_BwE)

[constitution?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlIbq7hNy42gIVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_BwE](https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlIbq7hNy42gIVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_BwE)

Constitutions of the World

<https://www.constituteproject.org/>

Let’s End the Damaging Cult of the Constitution. Lofgren. 2/24/2021.

<https://billmoyers.com/story/lets-end-the-damaging-cult-of-the-constitution/?fbclid=IwAR191OkFDLfQ-zU5UoZFyl-E7wgp7Un1BTHNAKXpp8UriBC3IA23AGSRieM>

Constitutional Concepts

Habeas Corpus. Legal Information Institute.

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/habeas_corpus#:~:text=HABEAS%20CORPUS%20IN%20THE%20U.S.,court%20lacked%20the%20proper%20jurisdiction.

Books

The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution. Joseph Ellis. 2015. Great book tracing the country’s birth from the Revolution to the Bill of Rights.

Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights and the Flaws That Affect Us Today. Levinson. 2019.

Fighting over the Founders: How we remember the American Revolution. Andrew M. Schocket. 2015.

The Crisis of the Middle-Class Constitution. Sitaraman. 2017.

Becoming a Democracy: How We Can Fix the Electoral College, Gerrymandering and Our Elections. Eberhard. 2020

How Democratic is the American Constitution? By Robert Dahl. 2001.

The Jefferson Rule: How the Founding Fathers Became Infallible and Our Politics Inflexible. David Sehat 2015

American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America. Colin Woodard. 2011. [Also, many articles about this book.]

You Call THIS Democracy?: How to fix our government and deliver power to the people.

Elizabeth Rusch. 2020. [Young adult book totally appropriate for adults.]

A User’s Guide to Democracy: How America Works. Capodice and McCarthy. 2020.

Moral Minority: Our Skeptical Founding Fathers. [About the religious ideas of several of the Founders]
Brooke Allen. 2006.

Tyranny of the Minority: Why American Democracy Reached the Breaking Point. Livitsky and Ziblatt. 2023.

Issue of Representation in the House

Golden calls for bipartisan committee to rethink winner-take-all electoral system

Lauren McCauley. Maine Morning Star. January 7, 2025

<https://mainemorningstar.com/briefs/golden-calls-for-bipartisan-committee-to-rethink-winner-take-all-electoral-system/>

175 American Scholars Write Letter Supporting Select Committee on Electoral Reform

Protect Democracy. Nov 21, 2024.

<https://protectdemocracy.org/work/175-american-scholars-write-letter-supporting-select-committee-on-electoral-reform/>

CRS Report on the Size of the House. Congressional Research Service. Jan 8, 2025.

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IN11547?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22H.Res.1573%22%7D&s=4&r=1>

The House was supposed to grow with population. It didn't. Let's fix that. Allen. Washington Post. 2/28/2023

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/02/28/danielle-allen-democracy-reform-congress-house-expansion/>

The Case for Enlarging the House of Representatives

Drutman et al. Our Common Purpose Report. American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2021

<https://www.amacad.org/ourcommonpurpose/enlarging-the-house>

PDF: https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/publication/downloads/2021_Enlarging-the-House.pdf

More Members, More Voices: Policies and Implications for Changing the Size of the US House.

FairVote. 2018 https://fairvote.org/report/house_size_report/

Why the House of Representatives Must Be Expanded and How Today's Congress Can Make It Happen

Kane et al. Fordham University School of Law. Jan. 2020.

https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2100&context=faculty_scholarship

Stuck At 435 Representatives? Why The U.S. House Hasn't Grown With Census Counts. Wang. NPR. 4/20/2021.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/20/988865415/stuck-at-435-representatives-why-the-u-s-house-hasnt-grown-with-census-counts?fbclid=IwAR0sHe3jQKMYaQzHvjcuvt8-1h3hXyESCbofcp4hXY2gg26XGVaUfUgtVLk>

How to Fix the House of Representatives in One Easy, Radical Step. Wilson. 10/15/2018.

<https://time.com/5423623/house-representatives-number-seats/>

Should the House of Representatives be expanded? American Enterprise Institute. Dec 16, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpYPQtwXUCQ>

Thirty-Thousand.Org [Advocating for equal-sized Congressional districts. Facebook page.]

<https://www.facebook.com/ThirtyThousand.org/>

The Senate

Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533 (1964)

Primary Holding: Equal protection requires that state legislative districts should be comprised of roughly equal populations if possible. [This was only for state Senatorial districts.]

<https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/377/533/>

Four ways to remake the nation's map so power in the Senate is remade, too. Eberhard. The Fulcrum. 2/2021.

<https://thefulcrum.us/congress/redrawing-state-lines>

Fixing the Senate: Equitable and Full Representation for the 21st Century. Tucker. Roosevelt Institute. 3/2019.

<https://rooseveltinstitute.org/publications/fixing-the-senate-equitable-full-representation-21st-century/>

America's anti-democratic Senate, in one number. Millhiser. 1/6/2021.

Copyright Donna L Cohen Free to use with attribution

You will find this list at www.civictinker.info 6/2025

<https://www.vox.com/2021/1/6/22215728/senate-anti-democratic-one-number-raphael-warnock-jon-ossoff-georgia-runoffs>

The Tyranny of the Minority, from Iowa Caucus to Electoral College

Corey Robin. New York Review of Books. Feb 21, 2020

<https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/02/21/the-tyranny-of-the-minority-from-iowa-caucus-to-electoral-college/>

Pack the Union: A Proposal to Admit New States for the Purpose of Amending the Constitution to Ensure Equal Representation

Harvard Law Review Vol. 133 #3. Jan 10, 2020.

PDF: https://harvardlawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/1049-1070_Online.pdf

The Senate is a much bigger problem than the Electoral College.

Ladd. 4/9/2019
<https://www.vox.com/mischiefs-of-faction/2019/4/9/18300749/senate-problem-electoral-college>

Why States Still Matter.

J.J. McCullough. National Review. 9/11/2018

Perspective *against* changing representation in the Senate [but, imo, a weak argument]:

<https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/09/states-key-to-senate-legitimacy/>

Bill of Rights

Rights in the Modern Era: Applying the Bill of Rights to the States

Wermiel. 1992.

Discusses the “incorporation” of the Bill of Rights to apply to the states
<http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1554&context=wmborj>

Bill of Rights “Incorporation” [applying the federal Bill of Rights to the states]. Lists the key Supreme Court cases which led to the incorporation of specific Amendments.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incorporation_of_the_Bill_of_Rights

James Madison on having a Bill of Rights [and some other things]

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-11-02-0218>

The First Amendment, Censorship, and Private Companies: What Does “Free Speech” Really Mean?

Horowitz. Carnegie Library. 3/9/2021. Good info pertaining to 1st Amendment and social media!

<https://www.carnegielibrary.org/the-first-amendment-and-censorship/>

Congress – Demographics

The changing face of Congress in 7 charts

Jenn Hatfield. Pew Center. March 3, 2025.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/03/03/the-changing-face-of-congress-in-7-charts/#:~:text=The%20share%20of%20Christians%20in,source%20for%20the%20Center%27s%20analysis.>

Women Serving in the 119th Congress (2025-2027).

Center for American Women in Politics.
<https://cawp.rutgers.edu/facts/levels-office/congress/women-serving-119th-congress-2025-2027>

Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments.

IPU Parline – Global Data on National Parliaments.

Interparliamentary Union. 2024. [United States ranks 74th]
https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking/?date_month=11&date_year=2024

Supreme Court

Landmark Cases C-Span. Series of programs focused on the most important Supreme Court cases. Includes some discussed in the workshop. <https://landmarkcases.c-span.org/>

Gun Law History in the United States and Second Amendment Rights

Spitzer. Duke U. Law School. 2017
<https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4825&context=lcp>

Full issue on the Second Amendment <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol80/iss2/>

Understanding the Supreme Court's Gun Control Decision in NYSRPA v. Bruen League of Women Voters. 7/12/2022.

<https://www.lwv.org/blog/understanding-supreme-courts-gun-control-decision-nysrpa-v-bruen>

Supreme Court Reform

Establish 18-year terms for U.S. Supreme Court justices.

Our Common Purpose. American Academy of Arts and Sciences. 2023.

Copyright Donna L Cohen Free to use with attribution You will find this list at www.civictinker.info 6/2025

<https://www.amacad.org/ourcommonpurpose/initiative/supreme-court-terms>

The Filibuster

The Filibuster Explained. Brennan Center for Justice. 2021.

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/filibuster-explained>

The Senate Filibuster – Fix It or Nix It? Dan Cofran. The Constitution in Plain English. 2021.

<https://dancofranco.com/2021/10/07/repeal-or-reform-the-senate-filibuster/?s=09>

Research demonstrating that Congress focuses on interests of the wealthy over those of average Americans

Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens [article]

Gilens and Page. Cambridge University Press. Sept. 2014.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/testing-theories-of-american-politics-elites-interest-groups-and-average-citizens/62327F513959D0A304D4893B382B992B>

Hijacking the Agenda: Economic Power and Political Influence [book]

Witko et al. Russel Sage Foundation 2021.

Misc.

Among democracies, U.S. stands out in how it chooses its head of state. DeSilver. Pew. 11/22/2016.

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/22/among-democracies-u-s-stands-out-in-how-it-chooses-its-head-of-state/?utm_content=bufferd0584&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

1790 U.S. Census. <https://media.nationalgeographic.org/assets/photos/000/290/29073.jpg>

Fix Our House About proportional representation

<https://www.fixourhouse.org/>

Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom. Thomas Jefferson. The precursor to the 1st Amendment.

<https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/thomas-jefferson>

The Founding Contradiction: Thomas Jefferson's Stance On Slavery, NPR interview. 6/29/2020.

<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/884634146>

Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion John Stuart Mill 1869. The classic essay on freedom of speech.

<http://www.bartleby.com/130/2.html>

Wealth and Labor

Divided We Fall: The Founders knew that economic inequality would destroy America's democracy. So why can't the Constitution save us? Ganesh Sitaraman. New Republic. 4/10/17. Very good.

https://newrepublic.com/article/141644/divided-fall-trump-symptom-constitutional-crisis-inequality?fbclid=IwAR3CyyJJ97YO61QrLwAFjwCKa3xzYtXwCY0iUxEyODp_PqLmQcKxa4stTB4

Agrarian Justice. Thomas Paine. 1795.

<http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/files/Paine1795.pdf>

Major dates in the founding era:

Revolutionary War. 1775-1783.

1776 - Declaration of Independence.

1781-1789 - Articles of Confederation.

1787 - Constitutional Convention, ostensibly to revise the Articles of Confederation.

1789 - Constitution ratified.

1791 - Bill of Rights amended to Constitution during first Congress