

Resources for Representation, Our Federal Government and the Constitution

Sections: Attitudes Toward Democracy - Civic Literacy - Democracy Rankings - How Democracy is Doing / Overall Democracy Reform - Democracy-History – The Constitution – Constitutional Concepts – Books - Issue of Representation in the House – The Senate – Bill of Rights - More on Your Constitutional Rights – Rights at Threat - Congress – Demographics – Supreme Court – Supreme Court Reform – The Filibuster - Research demonstrating that Congress focuses on interests of the wealthy over those of average Americans – Wealth and Labor – Miscellaneous - Major dates in the founding era:

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=IwY2xjawJ94mJleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFnYVpwNWx4QnVvMnFoVWVdhAR4dk3ZMcjGHHu0fgDiJO_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

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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

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<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>

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=EAlaIqObChMlibq7hNy42glVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAAYASAAEgKAHfD_BwE)

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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

Due Process. Legal Information Institute. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/due_process

What Does “Due Process” Mean for Immigrants and Why Is It Important? Vera Institute of Justice

<https://www.vera.org/news/what-does-due-process-mean-for-immigrants-and-why-is-it-important#:~:text=Due%20process%20of%20law%2C%20enshrined,arbitrary%20exercise%20of%20government%20power.>

Habeas Corpus <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/habeas-corpus-explained>

<https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/overview-rule-law>

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.

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.]

Fault Lines in the Constitution: The Framers, Their Fights and the Flaws That Affect Us Today. Levinson. 2019. [Another young adult book totally appropriate for adults.]

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.]

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

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

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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/>

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Skelley. Five-Thirty-Eight. Aug 12, 2021.

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March 15, 2018. Fair Vote

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Protect Democracy. Nov 21, 2024.

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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/>

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

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

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

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Bill of Rights

Rights in the Modern Era: Applying the Bill of Rights to the States Wermiel. 1992.

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<http://scholarship.law.wm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1554&context=wmborj>

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

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Billy Binion. Reason Magazine. July 2025.

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Due Process in Third Country Removals

Matthew Boaz. Lawfare. Monday, December 1, 2025

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/due-process-in-third-country-removals>

Know Your Rights: If ICE Stops You in Public

American Immigration Lawyers Association. PDF.

<https://internationalservices.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs6431/files/2025-04/KYR.pdf>

Protests & Public Safety: A Guide for Cities & Citizens

Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection. Georgetown Law School.

<https://constitutionalprotestguide.org/> View section by section or download the whole 126-page guide.

What ICE agents can and can't do — and what legal rights the public has during encounters

Our FAQ on warrants, masks and what legal observers can document.

Rachel Hutton and Alex Chhith. The Minnesota Star Tribune. January 10, 2026

<https://www.startribune.com/what-ice-agents-can-and-cant-do-and-what-legal-rights-the-public-has-during-encounters/601560316>

What to do if you encounter law enforcement: Your rights explained

A Martínez. NPR. January 15, 2026. 3-min segment plus transcript.

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Judge limits ICE's crowd control tactics following Minneapolis shooting

Kyle Cheney et al. Politico. 1/16/2026.

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Ruling: https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.mnd.229758/gov.uscourts.mnd.229758.85.0_1.pdf

CASE 0:25-cv-04669-KMM-DTS Doc. 85 Filed 01/16/26

You're asked to prove you're a U.S. citizen. Is that legal?

From a co-director of UCLA School of Law's Center for Immigration Law and Policy.

Noreen O'Donnell and Miguel Estrada Machado. NBC. January 16, 2026

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/national-international/prove-citizenship-legal/3832660/>

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ACLU. 2018.

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Know Your Rights: If ICE Stops You in Public. ACLU. PDF.

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Klippenstein. Sept 25, 2025.

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FBI Making List of American “Extremists,” Leaked Memo Reveals

Ken Klippenstein Dec 06, 2025 <https://www.kenklippenstein.com/p/leak-fbi-list-of-extremists-is-coming>

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AGENCIES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANT-MAKING COMPONENTS Dec 4, 2025

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

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Fix Our House About proportional representation

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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