

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 – 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=IwY2YjJ94mJleHRuA2FibQlxMABicmlkETFnYVpwNWx4QnVvMnFoVWVdhAR4dk3ZMcjGHHu0fgDiJO_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=EAlaIqObChMlibq7hNy42glVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_BwE)

[constitution?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlibq7hNy42glVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_BwE](https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution?gclid=EAlaIqObChMlibq7hNy42glVLrvtCh0qsgMnEAAyASAAEgKAHfD_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

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.]

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

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/>

How The House Got Stuck At 435 Seats

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

<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-the-house-got-stuck-at-435-seats/>

How to Fix the House of Representatives in One Easy, Radical Step

Wilson. Time Mag. Oct 15, 2018

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

More Members, More Voices: A Report on House Size

March 15, 2018. Fair Vote

https://fairvote.org/report/house_size_report/ **How The House Got Stuck At 435 Seats**

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https://fairvote.org/report/house_size_report/ **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.

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

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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>

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

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

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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/>

More on Your Constitutional Rights

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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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“Am I free to go?” MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION TO ASK.

Judge limits ICE's crowd control tactics following Minneapolis shooting

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

<https://www.politico.com/news/2026/01/16/ice-minneapolis-arrests-judge-protests-00735416>

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/>

WE HAVE RIGHTS: In Our Communities, In Our Streets (English and available in other languages)

ACLU. 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrK8aaGxRJE&t=3s>

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

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

Protestors' Rights. ACLU. <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/protesters-rights>

DOJ Memorandum - Updated Use of Force Policy May 20, 2022

https://www.justice.gov/d9/pages/attachments/2022/05/23/departments_updated_use-of-force_policy.pdf]

Rights At Threat

Trump's NSPM-7 Labels Common Beliefs As Terrorism “Indicators”

Klippenstein. Sept 25, 2025.

<https://www.kenklippenstein.com/p/trumps-nspm-7-labels-common-beliefs>

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Presidential Memorandum. Sept 25, 2025.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/countering-domestic-terrorism-and-organized-political-violence/>

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>

In which he talks about: Bondi] MEMORANDUM FOR ALL FEDERAL PROSECUTORS LAW ENFORCEMENT

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

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/26371599-bondi-memo-on-countering-domestic-terrorism-and-organized-political-violence-1/>

Definition of Domestic Terrorism

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2331#5>

The Government Unconstitutionally Labels ICE Observers as Domestic Terrorists

David J. Bier. CATO Institute [Libertarian think tank which does some excellent research on immigration and [lack of] criminality among immigrants]. December 15, 2025

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The changing face of Congress in 7 charts Jenn Hatfield. Pew Center. March 3, 2025.

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Interparliamentary Union. 2024. [United States ranks 74th]

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Supreme Court

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<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>

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

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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.

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Hijacking the Agenda: Economic Power and Political Influence [book]
Witko et al. Russel Sage Foundation 2021.

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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

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

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

Virginia Statute on Religious Freedom. Thomas Jefferson. The precursor to the 1st Amendment.
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<https://www.npr.org/transcripts/884634146>

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