

LAW DAY  
2020



YOUR VOTE • YOUR VOICE  
OUR DEMOCRACY

THE 18TH AMENDMENT AT 100

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# Celebrating Law Day


by Jodi Pushkin, President Florida Press Educational Services

Law Day is May 1. The 2020 Law Day theme is Your Vote • Your Voice • Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100. The American Bar Association notes, “The women’s suffrage movement forever changed America, expanding representative democracy and inspiring other popular movements for constitutional change and reform. Yet, honest reflection on the suffrage movement reveals complexity and tensions over race and class that remain part of the ongoing story of the Nineteenth Amendment and its legacies.

Florida Press Educational Services (FPES) and its member newspapers are proud to celebrate Law Day and encourage teachers, parents and students to read the newspaper daily in school and at home to enrich their lives. FPES and its member Newspaper in Education programs join the New York News Publishers Association’s News Media Literacy/Newspaper In Education Program with support from the New York Newspapers Foundation and The New York Bar Foundation in providing this teaching resource to celebrate the United States Constitution.

This Law Day 2020 Teacher Tool Kit including a 6-part series of features, teaching guide with graphic organizers, and audio podcasts.

To learn more about Florida’s NIE programs, visit the Florida Press Educational Services (FPES) Web site at [fpesnie.org](http://fpesnie.org).



**Jodi Pushkin** is the President of Florida Press Educational Services. She is the manager for the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program. Jodi holds an M.A. in English Education and a B.A. in writing and literature. Jodi has worked in NIE since 2000. Jodi is a former high school teacher. In addition to her work with NIE, Jodi is an adjunct instructor at Saint Leo University, Hillsborough Community College and Pasco Hernando State College. Contact Jodi via e-mail at [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com).

# Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: <http://www.cpalms.org>. The activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards for grades five through twelve.

**Language Arts:** LAFS.512.RI.1.1; LAFS.512.RI.1.2; LAFS.512.RI.1.3; LAFS.512.RI.2.4; LAFS.512.RI.2.5; LAFS.512.RI.2.6; LAFS.512.RI.3.7; LAFS.512.L.1.1; LAFS.512.L.1.2; LAFS.512.L.2.3; LAFS.512.L.3.4; LAFS.512.L.3.5; LAFS.512.L.3.6; LAFS.512.R.1.1; LAFS.512.R.1.2; LAFS.512.R.1.3; LAFS.512.R.2.4; LAFS.512.R.2.5; LAFS.512.R.2.6; LAFS.512.R.3.7; LAFS.512.R.3.8; LAFS.512.R.3.9; LAFS.512.R.4.10; LAFS.512.SL.1.1; LAFS.512.SL.1.2; LAFS.512.SL.1.3; LAFS.512.SL.2.4; LAFS.512.SL.2.5; LAFS.512.SL.2.6; LAFS.512.W.1.1; LAFS.512.W.1.2; LAFS.512.W.1.3; LAFS.512.W.2.4; LAFS.512.W.2.5; LAFS.512.W.2.6; LAFS.512.W.3.7; LAFS.512.W.3.8; LAFS.512.W.3.9; LAFS.512.W.4.10

**Social Studies:** SS.5.A.1.1; SS.5.A.5.3; SS.5.C.2.4; SS.5.C.1.3; SS.5.C.2.4; SS.5.C.3.6; SS.7.C.2.13; SS.7.C.3.7; SS.8.A.1.1; SS.8.A.1.2; SS.8.A.1.3; SS.8.A.1.5; SS.8.A.1.6; SS.8.A.1.7; SS.8.A.4.14; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.3; SS.912.A.1.4; SS.912.A.1.5; SS.912.A.1.6; SS.912.A.5.7; SS.912.A.7.3; SS.912.C.2.8

## Newspaper in Education

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and local newspapers to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Florida NIE programs provide schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and original curriculum. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

Florida Press Educational Services, Inc. (FPES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of newspaper professionals that promotes literacy, particularly for young people. FPES members consist of daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state of Florida. Through its member newspapers, FPES serves educators, students and families in all 67 Florida counties. For more information about FPES, visit [fpesnie.org](http://fpesnie.org), or email [ktower@flpress.com](mailto:ktower@flpress.com) or [jpushkin@tampabay.com](mailto:jpushkin@tampabay.com). Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/nie\\_fpes](https://twitter.com/nie_fpes).

LAW DAY  
2020



YOUR VOTE • YOUR VOICE  
OUR DEMOCRACY  
THE 19TH AMENDMENT AT 100

# Law Day Teachers' Guide

Created to prompt discussion about the importance of voting  
and the ongoing fight to ensure voting rights through  
people's voice and action

Mary Miller, Education Services Director  
New York News Publishers Association  
252 Hudson Avenue,  
Albany, NY 12210-1802

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# About this guide

This guide was created to accompany and complement the New York News Publishers Association’s Law Day 2020 News Media Literacy/Newspaper In Education series of features. The features highlight public figures from the 1800s through today and their quotes about the importance of voting. The guide includes supplementary content and graphic organizers to make the materials easier to incorporate into the classroom. The 15 features are available in English and Spanish. Audio podcasts in English are also available online at [nynpa.com/nie/lawday.html](http://nynpa.com/nie/lawday.html).

The materials were funded by a grant from the New York Bar Foundation and the continued support of the New York Newspapers Foundation.

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# Background Resource Links:

## Frederick Douglass

(1818-1895) He was born into slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He escaped from slavery and declared his freedom in 1838. He became a leading spokesperson for the abolition of slavery and for racial equality and was an early supporter of women's suffrage. For more about Douglass, go to

<https://www.nps.gov/frdo/learn/historyculture/frederickdouglass.htm>. To read the full text of

the 1848 Rights of Women editorial, go to <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abwm03dt.html>.

## Sojourner Truth

(Circa 1797-1883) She was an African-American abolitionist, women's rights activist and advocate for universal suffrage. Truth was born into slavery in Ulster County, New York with the name Isabella Baumfree. The quote in this feature comes from a speech given on May 10, 1867. The entire speech can be found at

<https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/slavery/experience/gender/docs3.html>

## Susan B. Anthony

(1820-1906) She was born into a Quaker family committed to social equality. Anthony fought for causes including, anti-slavery, temperance and women's rights. This quote is part of a speech given after her arrest for casting an illegal vote in the presidential election of 1872. She was tried and then fined \$100 but refused to pay. To read the complete address, go to

[http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3604](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtid=3&psid=3604)

## Cady Elizabeth Stanton

(1815-1902) Elizabeth Cady Stanton was an early leader of the woman's rights movement, writing the Declaration of Sentiments as a call to arms for female equality. The quote is an excerpt from a statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Women's Suffrage. To read the complete address, go to <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/2019/08/15/statement-before-the-u-s-senate-committee-on-woman-suffrage-april-2-1888-2/>

## Louis D. Brandeis

(1856-1941) Louis Dembitz Brandeis was born in Louisville, Kentucky to Jewish immigrant parents. He was an attorney and served as an associate justice on the U.S. Supreme court from 1916-1939. To read the full text of the speech on suffrage given by Brandeis at the Tremont Temple, go to <https://louisville.edu/law/library/special-collections/the-louis-d.-brandeis-collection/speech-on-suffrage-by-louis-d.-brandeis>

## Alice Paul

(1885-1977) Born in 1885 to Quaker parents in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, Alice Paul dedicated her life to the single cause of securing equal rights for all women. This quote is taken from a protest banner accompanied by Alice Paul and others during a demonstration at in Washington in 1917. It is referenced in the book, "Gibson Girls and Suffragists: Perceptions of Women from 1900 to 1918" by Catherine Gourley. To view the portion of the book where this quote is referenced go online to <http://bit.ly/1qiT39x>. Additionally, here is a link to a slide show of quotes by famous women throughout U.S. History created by the League of Women Voters [http://www.lwvaa.org/images/meetings/lwvaa\\_mtg\\_2012-03-17/WIJ%20slide%20show%20corrected.ppsx](http://www.lwvaa.org/images/meetings/lwvaa_mtg_2012-03-17/WIJ%20slide%20show%20corrected.ppsx)

## Jeannette Rankin

(1880-1973) Rankin was the oldest of six children, born near [Missoula, Montana](#) to a schoolteacher mother and rancher father. She was an American politician and women's rights advocate. Rankin was the first female elected to the U.S. Congress. She served in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican from Montana in 1917-1919, and again in 1941-1943. She helped pass the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, and was a committed pacifist. For more information about Jeannette Rankin and her work, go to [https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/RANKIN,-Jeannette-\(R000055\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/RANKIN,-Jeannette-(R000055)/). To read the text of her address go to <https://tinyurl.com/jrankin1918>.

## Carrie Chapman Catt

(1859-1947) Catt was born Carrie Clinton Lane, in Wisconsin but spent most of her childhood in Iowa. She was president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and founder of the League of Women Voters. To read the text of Carrie Chapman Catt's speech at the Astor Hotel in New York City following the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment go to, <https://books.google.com/books?id=wuSPApv5V0wC&pg> (see Document 4, beginning on page 25). To watch a short video clip of Catt speaking about the passage of the 19th Amendment, go to <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/89133>. For more information about the League of Women Voters, visit their website at, <https://www.lwv.org>.

## Franklin Delano Roosevelt

(1882-1945) Often referred to as FDR, Roosevelt was born in Hyde Park, New York and held many political positions on the state and national level including serving as Governor of New York from 1929-1933 and as the 32<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States from 1933 to 1945. He is cousin to President Theodore Roosevelt. He is the only president to be elected to office four times. The quote from this feature was taken from a radio address by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States and Democratic Nominee for Reelection. Broadcast from White House, October 5, 1944

Here's a link to a transcript of the complete speech - <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1944/1944-10-05a.html>

## Dwight D. Eisenhower

(1890-1969) He was born and raised as part of a large family in Abilene, Kansas. Eisenhower rose the rank of five star general in the U.S. Army and served as the 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States from 1953-1961. For more information about Eisenhower, go to <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/>.

## Robert Kennedy

(1925-1968) He was an American politician and lawyer who served as the 64th United States Attorney General (1961-1964) and also served as a U.S. Senator from New York. He was assassinated in June 1968. This quote is from his report on civil rights in January 1963. For more about the report including a link to the full transcript, go to <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-now/spotlight-primary-source/robert-kennedy-civil-rights-1963>

## Septima Poinette Clark

(1898-1897) Clark was born in Charleston, South Carolina at a time was strictly segregated and harshly divided by class. The daughter of a laundrywoman and a former slave she become a school teacher who was fired because she refused to discontinue her work with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Clark developed the literacy and citizenship workshops that played an important role in the drive for voting rights and civil rights for African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement. For more details about Septima Poinette Clark go to, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/clark-septima-poinette>

## Hillary Rodham Clinton

(1947- ) Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton grew up in a middle class home in a suburb of Chicago and served as First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001, as a U.S. senator from New York from 2001 to 2009, and as the 67th U.S. Secretary of State from 2009 until 2013. This quote was included in U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer's press release on February 18, 2005 in reference to the Count Every Vote Act election reform bill. To listen to a short audio clip from North Country Public Radio about the act go to, <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/5312/20050218/clinton-introduces-count-every-vote-act>. To read the text of the Senate bill introduced go to, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/senate-bill/450/text?format=txt>

## Benjamin Todd Jealous

(1973- ) Benjamin Todd Jealous was born in California and served as president and CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from 2008 to 2013. For more about the NAACP go to their website at <https://www.naacp.org/>. Here's a link to an article in the *Los Angeles Times* reporting on Jealous' address at the 2011 NAACP National Convention, <https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2011-jul-26-la-me-naacp-20110726-story.html> and this link to an article in Politico published in December 2011 - <https://www.politico.com/story/2011/12/naacp-dont-block-the-vote-069794>

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# Constitutional Amendments

(that relate to voting rights)

United States Constitution –

- **Amendment XV** - Passed by Congress Feb. 26, 1869. Ratified Feb. 3, 1870.  
Section. 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.
- **Amendment XIX** - Passed by Congress June 4, 1919. Ratified August 18, 1920. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
- **Amendment XXIV** - Passed by Congress Aug. 27, 1962. Ratified Jan. 23, 1964. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay poll tax or other tax.
- **Amendment XXVI** - Passed by Congress March 23, 1971. Ratified July 1, 1971.  
The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

# Who Said It?

## OVERVIEW:

Before the class begins reading/studying the series, this lesson will determine how much your students already know or can predict using contextual clues.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to read a nonfiction passage or text
- Understand and articulate what the text directly as well as indirectly states in order to make an assumption about the text

## STANDARDS:

NYS Social Studies - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework](https://nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework) and ELA Standards - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards](https://nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards)

Outside NYS: Common Core Standards for ELA - [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/](https://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/)  
National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies - [socialstudies.org/standards/strands](https://socialstudies.org/standards/strands)

## MATERIALS:

- Graphic organizer – Who Said It?

## PROCEDURES:

- Identify the individuals pictured on the left side of the graphic organizer.
- Read the quotes on the right hand side of the graphic organizer.
- Match the quotes with the individual who said it.
- Students should be prepared to defend why they paired an individual to a particular quote.

## Closure:

As a class, briefly discuss the Who Said It? activity

## Evaluation:

Students will be informally assessed on their ability to obtain the facts from the newspaper and inferences about future actions based on those facts and by the completion of the student assessment:

- **What one new thing did you learn from this activity?**

## Adaptations:

- Working in pairs or small groups will help ELL students and those with special learning needs to complete the desired tasks.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Who Said It?

First, identify the individuals on the left hand side of the page. Then pair each person up with a quote from the right hand side of the page. Consider the time, purpose and possible audience of each quote to help determine who might have said it.

Individuals pictured are: **Hillary Clinton, Septima Poinsette Clark, Alice Paul, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt and Franklin Roosevelt.**



"Our American heritage is threatened as much by our own indifference as it is by the most unscrupulous office or by the most powerful foreign threat. The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter." (1949)



"We women of America tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million women are denied the right to vote." (1917)



"The full and free exercise of our sacred right and duty to vote is more important in the long run than the personal hopes or ambitions of any candidate for any office in the land." (1944)



"Women have suffered agony of soul which you can never comprehend, that you and your daughters might inherit political freedom. That vote has been costly. Prize it!" (1920)



"Voting is the most precious right of every citizen, and we have a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of our voting process." (2005)



"I just thought that you couldn't get people to register and vote until you teach them to read and write." (1986)



"It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men." (1872)

**Assessment:** What one thing did you learn from this activity?

# Reading Between the Lines

## OVERVIEW:

Using the same historic quotes in the “Who Said It?” lesson, students will specify the inferences (reading between the lines) they used to help identify who was associated with each quote. Students will also practice this skill using current articles from the newspaper (print or electronic). This lesson can be done before or while reading/using the series.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to read a nonfiction passage or text
- Draw inferences from nonfiction text
- Identify, extract, and cite text to thoroughly support their responses

## STANDARDS:

NYS Social Studies - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework) and ELA Standards - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards)

**Outside NYS:** Common Core Standards for ELA - [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/](https://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/) National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies - [socialstudies.org/standards/strands](https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands)

## MATERIALS:

- Newspapers (in print or electronic)
- Internet access (for electronic editions of the newspaper or additional resources)
- Graphic organizers – Who Said It? and Reading Between the Lines

## PROCEDURES:

- Read the historic quotes individually or as a class
- Individually or in small groups, have students infer information not explicitly stated in both the historic quotes and current news article
- Record inferences on graphic organizer – Reading Between the Lines

## Closure:

Lead a discussion about inference and how past knowledge affects our understanding of new information and current events.

## Evaluation:

Students will be informally assessed on their ability to obtain the facts of the selected case from the newspaper and other sources and by the completion of the student assessment:

- **Complete this statement: I still have a question about...**

## Adaptations:

- By working in small groups, ELL students and those with special learning needs should be able to complete the graphic organizer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Between the Lines

An inference is a reasonable guess based on available information. Making an inference is sometimes called “reading between the lines,” because the inference is not stated directly in the information you have. The information leads you to an inference. After reading the historic quotes about voting from the series or the “Who Said It?” sheet and a current newspaper article about voting issues, use the chart below to record inferences you made while reading.

**What I Know From Quote + What I Know From My Brain = My Inference**


**What I Know From News Article + What I Know From My Brain = My Inference**

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**Assessment:** Complete this statement: I still have a question about...

# Voting: Point of View

## OVERVIEW:

This lesson will give students a basic understanding of how to identify an author or speaker's point of view, including the details of evidence (facts, examples, reasoning) he/she uses to support their opinions.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to read a nonfiction passage or text
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the historic importance of voting
- Distinguish the difference between facts and opinions

## STANDARDS:

NYS Social Studies - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework)  
and ELA Standards - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards)

**Outside NYS:** Common Core Standards for ELA - [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/](https://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/)  
National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies - [socialstudies.org/standards/strands](https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands)

## MATERIALS:

- Copies of the NIE features for Law Day 2020 with historic quotes
- Newspapers (in print or electronic)
- Internet access (for electronic editions of the newspaper or additional resources)
- Graphic organizer – Voting: Point of View

## PROCEDURES:

- Read the historic quotes individually or as a class
- Individually or in small groups, have students look for current examples of issues that affect voter rights today using newspapers (print or electronic) and other resources
- Each student or small group will select one current example and any three historical quotes from the features and complete the graphic organizer – Voting: Point of View

## Closure:

Lead a discussion about facts versus opinions and how historic context shapes opinions.

## Evaluation:

Students will be informally assessed on their ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, by participation in class discussion and by the completion of the student assessment:

- **Do you feel differently about voting now that you've learned more? Explain why or why not.**

## Adaptations:

- Working in pairs or small groups will help ELL students and those with special learning needs to complete the desired tasks.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Voting: Point of View

Look through the newspaper (print or online) for examples of current voting rights issues. Select one and any three historic quotes and fill in the graph below.

Who: Author/Speaker:	Who: Author/Speaker:
What: Audience	What: Audience
When and Where: Time and Place	When and Where: Time and Place
Why: Reason or Purpose	Why: Reason or Purpose
Tone or Mood:	Tone or Mood:
<b>IMPORTANCE OF VOTING</b>	
Who: Author/Speaker:	Who: Author/Speaker:
What: Audience	What: Audience
When and Where: Time and Place	When and Where: Time and Place
Why: Reason or Purpose	Why: Reason or Purpose
Tone or Mood:	Tone or Mood:

**Assessment:** Do you feel differently about voting now that you've learned more? Explain why or why not.

# Voting: Then & Now

## OVERVIEW:

These historic quotes all reflect the importance of a citizen's right to vote. This lesson will have students compare and contrast these historic references with voting rights issues that still exist in America today.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to read a nonfiction passage or text
- Identify current and historic U.S. challenges to the voting rights
- Identify, extract, and cite text to thoroughly support their responses

## STANDARDS:

NYS Social Studies - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework) and ELA Standards - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards](https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards)

Outside NYS: Common Core Standards for ELA - [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/](https://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/)

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies - [socialstudies.org/standards/strands](https://socialstudies.org/standards/strands)

## MATERIALS:

- Copies of the NIE features for Law Day 2020 with historic quotes
- Newspapers (in print or electronic)
- Internet access (for electronic editions of the newspaper or additional resources)
- Graphic organizer – Voting: Then & Now

## PROCEDURES:

- Read the historic quotes individually or as a class
- In small groups, have students look for current examples of issues that affect voter rights today using newspapers (print or electronic) and other resources and complete the graphic organizer – Voting: Then & Now

## Closure:

Each group take turns sharing with the class what they found for one of the quotes.

## Evaluation:

Students will be informally assessed on their ability to obtain the facts of the selected case from the newspaper and other sources and by the completion of the student assessment:

- **Complete this statement: I was surprised to learn...**

## Adaptations:

- By working in small groups, ELL students and those with special learning needs should be able to complete the graphic organizer.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Voting: Then & Now

After reading the historic quotes about voting, look through the newspaper and other resources for news about voting rights today. Use the chart below to organize what you find.

Voting Issues/Concerns of the Past	Current Voting Issues/Concerns
Susan B. Anthony	
Alice Paul	
Franklin D. Roosevelt	
Frederick Douglass	
Elizabeth Cady Stanton	
Robert Kennedy	
Septima Clark	

Based on the available evidence, write a brief summary of current voting issues facing the United States public. Be sure to back up your opinion with facts.

**Assessment:** Complete this statement: I was surprised to learn...

# Voting: An Acrostic Poem

## OVERVIEW:

Students will apply what they have learned about the importance of voting by creating an acrostic poem.

## OBJECTIVES:

Students will:

- Understand and explain what an acrostic poem is
- Students will be able to use knowledge of antonyms and synonyms to determine meanings of words
- Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of voting through the acrostic poem each creates

## STANDARDS:

NYS Social Studies - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework](https://nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/k-12-social-studies-framework) and ELA Standards - [nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards](https://nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/new-york-state-next-generation-english-language-arts-learning-standards)

Outside NYS: Common Core Standards for ELA - [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/](https://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/)

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies - [socialstudies.org/standards/strands](https://socialstudies.org/standards/strands)

## MATERIALS:

- Copies of the NIE features for Law Day 2020 with historic quotes
- Newspapers (in print or electronic)
- Internet access (for electronic editions of the newspaper or additional resources)
- Graphic organizer – Voting Champions

## PROCEDURES:

- Review or introduce Acrostic Poems depending on the background knowledge of your students including modeling an example of creating an acrostic poem.
- Independently, or in small groups, have students use the newspaper (print or electronic) to help find and brainstorm vocabulary words appropriate to the task.
- Write, share with a partner and revise if necessary based on feedback

## Closure:

Re-cap different aspects of the importance of voting. Display the final acrostic poems on a class bulletin board or via an electronic slide presentation.

## Evaluation:

Students will be informally assessed on their ability to obtain the facts of the selected case from the newspaper and other sources and by the completion of the student assessment:

- **What new vocabulary words did you learn doing this activity?**

## Adaptations:

- Teacher may need to model more than one example or use a word wall to assist students in identifying appropriate words for the task.
- By working in small groups, ELL students and those with special learning needs should be able to complete the graphic organizer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Voting: An Acrostic Poem

Now that you know more importance of voting, why not write a poem about it? Acrostics are a fun poetic form that anyone can write. To complete the acrostic, from newspapers, select words that describe a leader and include the letters in the word, "VOTING." Note that the letters in the words you choose may appear at the beginning, middle or end of the words.

V  
O  
T  
I  
N  
G

Follow-up: Explain your choice of words to another student. Respond to any questions. Then, in your own words, write a paragraph or two about the importance of voting and why every eligible voter should have equal access to the polls.

**Assessment:** What new vocabulary words did you learn doing this activity?

# Sample News Articles about Voting:

**Older people account for large shares of poll workers and voters in U.S. general elections** – Pew Research Center, April 6, 2020 - <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/06/older-people-account-for-large-shares-of-poll-workers-and-voters-in-u-s-general-elections/>

**Get-out-the-vote effort goes digital for COVID-19 pandemic** – Southern Poverty Law Center, April 11, 2020 - <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2020/04/11/get-out-vote-effort-goes-digital-covid-19-pandemic>

**How a Supreme Court Decision Curtailed the Right to Vote in Wisconsin** – The New York Times, April 13, 2020 - <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/13/us/wisconsin-election-voting-rights.html>

**Michelle Obama calls for expanded voting rights as the coronavirus forces people to stay home, says vote-by-mail is 'long overdue'** – Business Insider – April 13, 2020 - <https://www.businessinsider.com/expand-voting-rights-vote-by-mail-long-overdue-michelle-obama-2020-4>

**Vote and Die: Covering Voter Suppression during the Coronavirus Pandemic**  
Journalists must cut through rampant disinformation around the pandemic to robustly report on efforts to suppress voting and delegitimize election results – Nieman Reports, April 14, 2020 - <https://niemanreports.org/articles/vote-and-die-covering-voter-suppression-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

**'Do-or-die moment' to boost vote-by-mail for November election. But the politics is getting harder** – USA Today, April 14, 2020 - <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/04/10/coronavirus-do-die-moment-boost-vote-mail-before-november/5102651002/>

**The 'Voter Suppression' Strategy** - Democrats win big in Wisconsin by promoting false ballot fears. Opinion piece published in The Wall Street Journal, April 14, 2020 - <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-voter-suppression-strategy-11586907137>

**What is Ballot Harvesting? Trump claims voting method is 'Rampant with fraud'** - Newsweek, April 14, 2020 – <https://www.newsweek.com/what-ballot-harvesting-trump-claims-voting-method-rampant-fraud-1497822>

**Record numbers of Nebraskans voting, thanks to vote by mail option** – NTV ABC News, April 15, 2020 - <https://nebraska.tv/news/2020-elections/record-numbers-of-nebraskans-voting-thanks-to-vote-by-mail-option>

**The Pandemic Primary: How Will We Vote In The Age Of Coronavirus?** – NPR, April 16, 2020 - <https://www.wvik.org/post/pandemic-primary-how-will-we-vote-age-coronavirus#stream/>

# Web resources in alphabetical order:

**Bill of Rights Institute** – has lesson plans specific to voting called “Voting Rights in America.” The mission of the Bill of Rights Institute is to educate young people about the words and ideas of America’s Founders, the liberties guaranteed in our Founding documents, and how our Founding principles continue to affect and shape a free society. It is the goal of the Institute to help the next generation understand the freedom and opportunity the Constitution offers.

<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/educate/educator-resources/lessons-plans/current-events/voting-rights-in-america/>

**Civics 101: A Podcast** – audio, activities, resources, and civic lessons to help engage students. These two links specifically address the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

<https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/19thamendment>

<https://www.civics101podcast.org/civics-101-episodes/episodename-b7jbd>

**iCivics** – Explore the evolution of voting rights in the United States through an interactive PowerPoint presentation highlighting landmark changes. <https://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/voting-rights>

**League of Women Voters** – Voting is a fundamental right and all eligible voters should have the equal opportunity to exercise that right. We are dedicated to ensuring that our elections remain free, fair and accessible. <https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights>

**Library of Congress** – a teaching guide and graphic organizers with links to primary documents associated with the Women’s Suffrage Movement.

<https://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/womens-suffrage/>

**Writing and Speaking about the Importance of Voting: Why Vote?** – A complete Common Core ELA module from EngageNY.org - This unit connects students’ study of the Women’s Suffrage Movement, voting in the present day, specifically the issue of low voter turnout among young adults.

<https://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/4m4.3.pdf>

**National Constitutional Center** – A map with dates illustrating women’s suffrage by state/territory leading up to passage and ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

[https://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08\\_12159.html](https://constitutioncenter.org/timeline/html/cw08_12159.html)

**National Archives** – Using facsimiles of historical records from the files of the U.S. House of Representative Judiciary Committee, students will evaluate evidence and consider the constitutional issues that the committee encountered as it deliberated the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Students will examine the concept of federalism and weigh the proper balance of powers between Federal and state governments when protecting the right to vote.

<https://www.archives.gov/legislative/resources/education/voting-rights>

**National Park Service – Teaching the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment** – Explore educational resources associated with the 19th Amendment and women’s suffrage. These free, online lesson plans feature American women and the places where they made history.

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/womenshistory/teach-19th-amendment.htm>

**ReadWriteThink – Voting What’s It All About?** – This set of lessons explores what students already know or think they know about voting, has students researching current elections and determining facts from opinions. <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/voting-what-about-396.html>

**Scholastic – Voting and the Constitution** – Students will learn about the Constitution’s many provisions for voting. Students will participate in an informal discussion of the election process, including the Electoral College, the evolution of voting rights, and how the Constitution has been amended to keep up with the times. <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=1124>

**Teaching Tolerance – Expanding Voting Rights** – For several decades, voting in most states was limited to white male landowners, called freeholders. Gradually, the franchise, or right to vote, expanded to include non-landowners, then African-American men, then women, and eventually people as young as 18. The process had its twists and turns; it was far from a straight line of ever-expanding voting rights. And it involved the federal government taking a larger role in defining the people who could vote. This series of five lessons traces that complicated process. The fourth lesson in this series specifically addresses Women’s Suffrage. <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/expanding-voting-rights>

**Votes for Women: Celebrating New York’s Suffrage Centennial** aligns with the New York State Next Generation English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards for K–12 education and the Social Studies Framework, addressing Grades 4 and 8 curricula directly. Educators using this guide will know that students depart with a basic understanding of how suffragists and advocates fought for women’s rights in New York, and how these efforts and techniques impacted national women’s rights movements. [http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/common/nysm/files/votes-for-women-educator-guide\\_0.pdf](http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/common/nysm/files/votes-for-women-educator-guide_0.pdf)



Law Day is May 1. The 2020 Law Day theme—*Your Vote, Your Voice, Our Democracy: The 19th Amendment at 100*—commemorates the centennial of the transformative constitutional amendment that guaranteed the right of citizens to vote would not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex. American women fought for, and won, the vote through their voice and action.

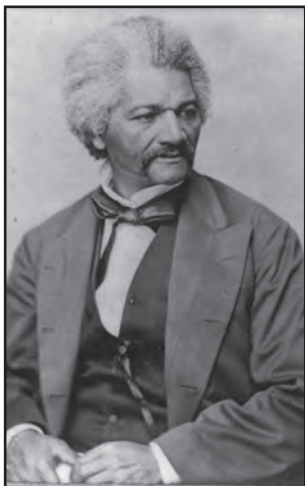
Every day for the next two weeks we will highlight historic quotes from key individuals related to the right to vote and power of voting.

As you think about these quotes also reflect on the importance of a citizen's right to vote and the challenges we still face in ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to participate in our democracy. The right to vote is the very foundation of government by the people and arguably the basis for all other rights.

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“... there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise, or a hand in making and administering the laws of the land.”

**Frederick Douglass**, African American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman, quote from an editorial in *The North Star*, July 1848

From colonial times women’s legal rights were extremely limited. Most states based their laws on those of English common law which stipulated that a woman did not have a separate legal existence. Women were legally tied to their fathers or husbands. A woman could not file a law suit or sign a contract on her own. In most cases, a woman could not own property in her own name or control her own earnings. In fact, when a husband died, his widow could not be the guardian to their under-age children.

By the time the Woman’s Rights Convention met in Seneca Falls in July 1848, few of these legal practices had changed. During that two day meeting, nearly 300 attendees - women and men - discussed and passed 11 resolutions addressing women’s rights, among them, the right to vote.

Frederick Douglass wrote editorials and spoke up about women’s suffrage.

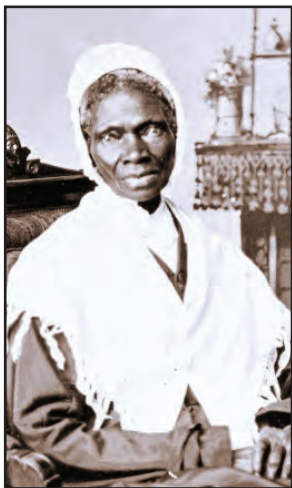
Look through the news for modern examples of people speaking up for the rights, justice and dignity of others. Are any in the form of a news editorial or political cartoon?

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“We are now trying for liberty that requires no blood—that women shall have their rights—not rights from you. Give them what belongs to them; they ask it kindly too.”



**Sojourner Truth,**  
African American suffragist and abolitionist,  
quote from a national convention of the American  
Equal Rights Association, May 1867

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The American Equal Rights Association existed from 1866 to 1869 and worked to “secure Equal Rights to all American citizens, especially the right of suffrage, irrespective of race, color, or sex.”

In her speech to this group in New York City in 1867, Sojourner Truth acknowledges the success of the anti-slavery cause but regrets that freedom was won through a bloody civil war.

Look for news, in print or online, about a person or group of modern people fighting for a cause they strongly believe in. Prepare a summary report about this situation and be sure to include the who, what, when, where, why and how.

Has this struggle resulted in violence?

As a group (in person or virtually), discuss ways this modern group might work to achieve their goals in a peaceful way.

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“It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union. And we formed it, not



to give the blessings of liberty, but to secure them; not to the half of ourselves and the half of our posterity, but to the whole people - women as well as men.”

**Susan B. Anthony**, anti-slavery social reformer, women’s rights activist and co-author of “History of Women’s Suffrage,” quote from a speech given in 1872

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The 15th Amendment was ratified in 1870. Susan B. Anthony noticed that, even with this amendment, the U.S. Constitution didn’t specifically exclude women from voting. As a leader of the National Women’s Suffrage Association she decided to test her rights. With fifteen other Rochester women, she registered and voted in the 1872 presidential election. She was arrested and fined \$100. This quote is from a speech given following her arrest. Anthony never paid the fine.

Can you find modern examples of people willing to risk arrest and imprisonment to either bring awareness of an injustice or to fight for their rights or the rights of others? Compare and contrast this group with the suffragists in the late 1800s.

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“The right of women to personal representation through the ballot seems to me unassailable wherever the right of man is conceded and exercised. I can conceive of no

possible abstract justification for the exclusion of the one and the inclusion of the other.”

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, suffragist, social reformer and co-author of “History of Women’s Suffrage,” quote from her statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Woman Suffrage on April 2, 1888

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In the 1875 case of *Minor v Happersett*, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that despite the privileges and immunities clause, a state can prohibit a woman from voting. It’s no coincidence that Elizabeth Cady Stanton, continuing to fight for women’s suffrage, chose to parrot these words in her 1888 address to the U.S. Senate stating, “... the national Constitution should be so interpreted or amended as to secure to the women of the nation all the rights, privileges, and immunities of citizens.”

Look for modern examples of individuals addressing members of Congress to bring awareness about their cause to our legislators. What topics are they concerned about? Select one. Research that topic and track how long people have been working to fight for changes in the law.

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“That women should enjoy this right (suffrage) and perform this duty is essential to the success of democracy.”

**Louis D. Brandeis**,  
Supreme Court Justice,  
from a speech given  
at the Tremont Temple  
(1915)

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What formally started in 1848, specifically the fight for women’s suffrage, slowly gained momentum throughout the country. By 1915, 11 states and territories had given their female citizens the right to vote.

Before his nomination and confirmation to the United States Supreme Court, Louis Brandeis was convinced that the role of women in our society had changed and argued that, “Can anyone find ... finer work of organization or more public spirited devotion than that exhibited by the women in the present campaign?”

Louis Brandeis, along with many other men and women of his time, initially thought women did not know enough about government or the ways of the world to vote. He was convinced otherwise.

Look through the news for a story of someone who, faced with new evidence, changes his or her mind about a given topic.

Was it an individual or group’s words or actions (or both) that brought about the change in thought?

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“We women of America tell you that America is not a democracy. Twenty million women are denied the right to vote.”

**Alice Paul**,  
feminist, suffragist  
and political  
strategist, quote from  
a banner paraded  
outside of the White  
House in 1917



While women in the suffrage movement were united in their desire to secure women the right to vote, they disagreed with how to accomplish that. Alice Paul was more aggressive in her approach. She and others broke away from the National American Woman Suffrage Association and formed a new group that came to be known as the National Woman's Party (NWP). It was the NWP that organized the first picketing of the White House in January 1917. The women continued to protest throughout the year, even as the United States entered World War I. Many thought their actions were unpatriotic.

Alice Paul and her fellow suffragists exercised their First Amendment rights by peacefully assembling and speaking freely about obtaining the right to vote for women.

Can you find modern examples of people protesting government leaders on the local, state or national level? What issue(s) are they concerned about? Do any involve voting?

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“How can people in other countries who are trying to grasp our plan of democracy avoid stumbling over our logic when we deny the first steps in democracy to our women?”

**Jeannette Rankin**, the first woman elected to Congress, from her address to the House of Representatives on January 10, 1918 urging passage of the 19th Amendment

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On April 2, 1917, Jeannette Rankin’s first day in the House of Representatives, she took part in a Joint Session of Congress to hear President Woodrow Wilson ask to “make the world safe for democracy” by declaring war on Germany. Following debates on the war resolution, Rankin voted no in keeping with her personal anti-war beliefs. Fellow suffragists felt this hurt their own cause.

Less than a year later, after helping to organize the 1918 House vote for a suffrage amendment, Rankin was among those to address her colleagues before they narrowly passed the measure by the necessary two-thirds majority, 274-136. Despite acceptance in the House, the bill failed to pass in the Senate.

Jeannette Rankin believed in women’s suffrage and opposed war as a way to solve a global conflict.

Look through the news, in print or online, for articles about women serving their communities in political positions at the local, state and national level. What causes do these women support or oppose?

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“The vote is the emblem of your equality, women of America, the guarantee of your liberty. That vote of yours has cost millions of dollars and the lives of thousands of women. Money



to carry on this work has been given usually as a sacrifice, and thousands of women have gone without things they wanted and could have had in order that they might help get the vote for you. Women have suffered agony of soul which you can never comprehend, that you and your daughters might inherit political freedom. That vote has been costly. Prize it!”

**Carrie Chapman Catt**, suffragist and founder of the League of Women Voters, quote from a speech given in August 1920, celebrating the ratification of the 19th Amendment

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Carrie Chapman Catt was the power behind the National American Woman Suffrage Association’s (NAWSA) “Winning Plan” which coordinated state suffrage campaigns while urging for a constitutional amendment.

She was so confident of the eventual acceptance of the women’s right to vote that Catt helped form the League of Women Voters six months prior to the 19th Amendment’s ratification. It was a nonpartisan organization, designed to help women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

Look for news and information about the League of Women Voters at the local, state or national level. In what ways does this group currently support all American voters?

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“The full and free exercise of our sacred right and duty to vote is more important in the long run than the personal hopes or ambitions of any candidate for any office in the land.”

**President Franklin Delano Roosevelt**, from a radio address broadcast from the White House on October 5, 1944

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Serving as President of the United States in the midst of World War II, Roosevelt decided the country would best be served with consistency in the executive branch. Unlike in his third term election when the Democrats pressed him into service at the convention, F.D.R. openly campaigned for a fourth term in office with Harry Truman as his running mate.

In the same speech, President Roosevelt also addressed his concern for ‘the defects in voting laws’ by stating, “The right to vote must be open to our citizens irrespective of race, color or creed, without tax or artificial restriction of any kind. The sooner we get to that basis of political equality, the better it will be for the country as a whole.”

Look for modern examples of individuals running for office at the local, state and national level. Have these candidates expressed any views about the voting rights of the people?

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“Our American heritage is threatened as much by our own indifference as it is by the most unscrupulous office or by the most powerful



foreign threat. The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.”

**Dwight D. Eisenhower**, President, U.S. Army General, quote from an address he gave as President of Columbia University for the 18th Annual New York Herald Tribune Forum, October 24, 1949

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Almost from the passage of the 15th Amendment, various discriminatory practices were used to prevent African Americans, particularly those in the South, from exercising their right to vote. During his re-election campaign, Eisenhower proposed a civil rights bill designed to provide federal protection for African American voting rights.

Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 which established the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. The act had little impact on African American voting.

Eisenhower’s quote cautions us not to take our rights and privileges of voting for granted.

Look through the news, in print or online, for articles about the voting process, rights and privileges granted to people in other countries. Select one and compare and contrast it with the United States.

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“The most significant civil rights problem is voting. Each citizen’s right to vote is fundamental to all the other rights of citizenship and the Civil Rights Acts of 1957 and 1960 make it the responsibility of the Department of Justice to protect that right.”



**Robert Kennedy, U.S. Attorney General (1963)**

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The Civil Rights Act of 1960 established federal inspection of local voter registration polls and introduced penalties for anyone who obstructed someone’s attempt to register to vote. Serving as the U.S. Attorney General during his brother, John F. Kennedy’s, presidency, Robert Kennedy was responsible for those inspections and enforcement of the law.

State and local governments have the responsibility for administering elections in the United States. The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Justice Department enforces the federal voting rights laws that protect the constitutional rights of all citizens to access the ballot. This group, led by the U.S. Attorney General, is also responsible for investigating and prosecuting instances of voter fraud.

Look for news about how the U.S. Attorney General and the Justice Department are defending the constitutional rights of American citizens. Are any related to voting and elections?

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“I just thought that you couldn’t get people to register and vote until you teach them to read and write.”



**Septima Poinsette Clark**, educator and civil rights activist, from her 1986 book, “Ready from Within”

Photo credit: Avery Institute

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Septima Clark graduated from high school in 1916 and worked as a teacher while making her way through college. She ultimately earned her bachelor’s degree in 1942 and master’s degree in 1946. A longtime member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), she was fired from her teaching job in 1956 for refusing to end her affiliation with the civil rights group.

Clark then went to work for the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee and developed “citizen education” workshops to teach African Americans necessary skills to not only help them register, but to prepare them to pass the literacy tests used to keep African Americans from exercising their right to vote.

Septima Clark used her knowledge and skills as a teacher to assist others in voting.

Look for news and information about individuals or groups of people using their expertise to help others. Did you find any who are helping others to register or to better understand the voting process?

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“Voting is the most precious right of every citizen, and we have a moral obligation to ensure the integrity of our voting process.”

**Hillary Rodham Clinton**, first lady, Senator and U.S. Secretary of State, in reference to the Count Every Vote Act (2005)

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The purpose of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 was to help states improve the administration of elections including improved accessibility of polling places for disabled voters and the replacement of older punch card or lever voting machines to ensure more accurate results.

Concerns were raised as voting shifted to the use of modern technology. The fear was that a fair and accurate recount might be impossible. The Count Every Vote Act, first introduced in 2005, was drafted to insure every voting machine would leave a paper trail. It would also make Election Day a national holiday allowing all eligible voters ample time to vote. A similar bill was introduced in 2007 but neither version of the act was passed into law.

Hillary Clinton and others attempted to pass legislation they believed would improve voting access and accuracy. Look for news and information about current voter reform legislation. If there isn't any, research the most recent measures law makers have taken to ensure every vote counts.

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“The right to vote is the right upon which all of our rights are leveraged—and without which none can be protected.”

**Benjamin Todd Jealous,** civic leader and politician, president and CEO of the NAACP 2008-2013, from a keynote address given in July 2011

Photo credit: Gage Skidmore

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Barack Obama was the first African American elected as President in 2008. He served two terms in the White House. Many felt the injustices of disenfranchisement were now a part of our past.

But even before President Obama’s reelection, Benjamin Jealous and others started speaking out against voting measures, including voter ID regulations, designed to limit voter fraud. These new laws may have, in fact, imposed voting restrictions, especially among poor and minority populations.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed.” Who could and should vote has been debated and fought over ever since. African Americans, women, Native Americans, non-English speakers, and citizens between the ages of 18 and 21 each in turn, fought for their right to vote.

Ensuring we protect and defend the voting rights of all citizens has proven to be an ongoing and unending challenge.

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El Día de la Ley es el primero de mayo. El tema para el año 2020 es *Tu Voto, Tu Voz, Nuestra Democracia: Los 100 años de la Decimonovena Enmienda*, el cual conmemora el centenario de la reforma constitucional transformativa la cual garantizó que el derecho al voto de los ciudadanos no podría ser negado ni reducido por los Estados Unidos o cualquier estado basado en el género de la persona. Las mujeres estadounidenses lucharon y ganaron el derecho al voto a través de su voz y acción.

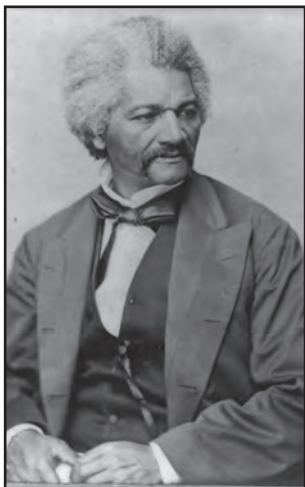
Todos los días durante las próximas dos semanas destacaremos citas históricas de individuos claves relacionadas con el derecho al voto y el poder del mismo.

Mientras reflexionas sobre estas citas piensa también en la importancia del derecho al voto de los ciudadanos y los retos a los que todavía nos enfrentamos para asegurarnos de que todos los americanos tengamos la oportunidad de participar en nuestra democracia. El derecho al voto es la base fundamental del sistema de gobierno del pueblo y para el pueblo y presumiblemente la base de los demás derechos.

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“...no existe ninguna razón en el mundo para negarle a la mujer el derecho al sufragio, o una mano en la creación y administración de las leyes del país.”

**Frederick Douglass**, reformista, abolicionista, escritor y estadista afro-americano en el periódico *The North Star*, en julio de 1848

Desde tiempos de la colonia los derechos de la mujer estaban extremadamente limitados. La mayoría de los estados basaban sus leyes en esas del derecho consuetudinario inglés, el cual estipulaba que una mujer no tenía una existencia legal independiente. Las mujeres estaban legalmente sujetas a sus padres o esposos. Una mujer no podía iniciar una demanda legal ni firmar un contrato por su cuenta. En la mayoría de los casos, una mujer no podía poseer propiedad bajo su nombre ni controlar sus propios ingresos. De hecho, cuando el marido moría, la mujer no podía ser tutora legal de sus hijos menores de edad.

Para cuando se reunió la Convención por los Derechos de la Mujer en Seneca Falls en julio de 1848, pocas de estas prácticas habían cambiado. Durante este encuentro de dos días, casi 300 asistentes (hombres y mujeres) discutieron y aprobaron 11 resoluciones relacionadas a los derechos de la mujer, entre ellos el derecho al voto.

Frederick Douglass escribió editoriales y habló sin reservas sobre el sufragio femenino.

Busca en las noticias ejemplos modernos de personas defendiendo los derechos, la dignidad y la justicia de otros. ¿Están en formato de opinión o caricaturas políticas?

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“Luchamos por una libertad que no requiere derramamientos de sangre: que las mujeres tengan sus propios derechos y no los que ustedes le otorgan. Denle aquello que les pertenece; ellas lo



piden amablemente, además.”

**Sojourner Truth,**  
sufragista y abolicionista afro-americana  
en una convención nacional de la Asociación para  
la Igualdad de Derechos, mayo de 1867

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La “Asociación Americana para la Igualdad de Derechos” existió entre 1866 y 1869 y trabajó para “asegurar Igualdad de Derechos a todos los ciudadanos estadounidenses, particularmente el derecho al sufragio, sin importar su raza, color o sexo”.

En su discurso a este grupo en la Ciudad de Nueva York en 1867, Sojourner Truth reconoció el éxito de la lucha contra la esclavitud, pero lamentó que la libertad hubiera sido ganada a través de una sangrienta guerra civil.

Busca noticias (impresas o en línea) sobre una persona o grupo actual que esté luchando por una causa en la que creen firmemente. Prepara un resumen escrito sobre esta situación y asegúrate de incluir el quién, qué, cuándo, cómo, dónde y por qué.

¿Ha resultado la lucha de este grupo en violencia?

Como grupo (en persona o virtual), discutan las maneras en que esta organización moderna puede trabajar para lograr sus metas en una forma pacífica.

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“Era nosotros,  
el pueblo; no  
nosotros, los  
ciudadanos blancos  
de sexo masculino;  
tampoco, los  
ciudadanos de  
sexo masculino;  
sino nosotros,  
todo el pueblo que  
formamos esta



Unión. Y la formamos, no para entregar  
los beneficios de la libertad sino para  
protegerlos; no para la mitad de nosotros  
y para la mitad de nuestra posteridad  
sino para todas las personas -tanto  
mujeres como hombres.”

**Susan B. Anthony**, reformista social contra la  
esclavitud, activista de los Derechos de la Mujer y  
co-autora de “La Historia del Sufragio Femenino”  
en un discurso dado en 1872

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La Decimoquinta Enmienda de la Constitución Nacional fue ratificada en 1870. Susan B. Anthony se dio cuenta de que, aún con esta enmienda, la Constitución de los Estados Unidos no excluía específicamente a la mujer del voto. Como líder de la “Asociación Nacional para el Voto Femenino” (NAWSA, por sus siglas en inglés) ella decidió probar sus derechos. Con otras 15 mujeres de Rochester (Nueva York), se inscribió y votó en las elecciones presidenciales de 1872. Fue detenida y multada \$100. Esta cita es de un discurso que pronunció después de su arresto. Anthony nunca pagó la multa.

¿Puedes encontrar ejemplos modernos de personas dispuestas a arriesgarse a ser detenidas y encarceladas para concienciar al público de una injusticia o luchar por sus derechos o los derechos de otros? Compara y contrasta a este grupo con las sufragistas del final del siglo XIX.

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“El derecho de la mujer a la representación personal a través del sufragio me parece incuestionable cuandoquiera que el derecho del hombre es concedido y ejecutado. No

puedo concebir ninguna posible justificación para la exclusión de una y la inclusión del otro.”

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, sufragista, reformista social y coautora de “La historia del sufragio femenino” en una declaración ante el Comité para el Sufragio Femenino del Senado Estadounidense el 2 de abril de 1888

En el caso de *Minor vs. Happersett* de 1875, la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos declaró que, a pesar de la cláusula de los privilegios e inmunidades, un estado podía prohibirle el voto a una mujer. No es casualidad que Elizabeth Cady Stanton haya decidido repetir estas palabras en su lucha por el sufragio femenino durante su alocución al Senado estadounidense en la cual dijo “...la Constitución Nacional debe ser interpretada o reformada en manera tal que les asegure a las mujeres de la nación todos los derechos, privilegios e inmunidades de los ciudadanos.”

Busca ejemplos modernos de individuos dirigiéndose a los miembros del Congreso para concienciar a los legisladores sobre su causa. ¿Qué temas les preocupan? Selecciona uno. Investiga el tema y busca cuánto tiempo la gente ha estado luchando para cambiar la ley.

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“Que las mujeres puedan disfrutar de este derecho (el sufragio) y realizar este deber es imprescindible para el éxito de nuestra democracia.”

**Louis D. Brandeis**, Juez de la Corte Suprema de Justicia, en la iglesia Tremont Temple (1915)

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Lo que comenzó formalmente en 1848, específicamente la lucha por el sufragio femenino, fue poco a poco ganando ímpetu por todo el país. Ya para 1915, once estados y territorios habían concedido el derecho al voto a sus ciudadanas.

Antes de su nominación y confirmación a la Corte Suprema de Justicia, Louis Brandeis estaba convencido que el papel de la mujer en la Sociedad había cambiado y argumentó “¿Puede alguien ... encontrar mayor trabajo de organización o más animada devoción que la demostrada por las mujeres en esta campaña?”

Louis Brandeis, junto con muchos otros hombres y mujeres de su época, pensaron al principio que las mujeres no sabían lo suficiente sobre el gobierno y el mundo para votar. Fue convencido de lo contrario.

Busca una nota de prensa sobre alguien que, tras encontrar nueva evidencia, cambió de opinión sobre un tema.

¿Fueron las acciones de un individuo o grupo (o ambos) lo que trajo el cambio en su manera de pensar?

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“Nosotras las mujeres de los Estados Unidos les decimos que Estados Unidos no es una democracia. El derecho al voto es negado a 20 millones de mujeres.”



**Alice Paul,** feminista, sufragista y estratega política, en una pancarta colocada frente a la Casa Blanca en 1917

Aunque las mujeres en el movimiento sufragista estaban unidas en su deseo de asegurar el derecho al voto de la mujer, no se ponían de acuerdo en la manera de lograrlo. Alice Paul tenía un método más agresivo. Ella junto a otras, se separaron de la “Asociación Nacional para el Voto Femenino” y formaron un grupo que llegó a ser conocido como el “Partido Nacional de la Mujer” (NWP por sus siglas en inglés). Fue la NWP la que organizó la primera manifestación frente a la Casa Blanca en enero de 1917. Las mujeres continuaron sus protestas todo el año, inclusive mientras el país entraba a participar en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Hubo muchos que pensaron que sus acciones eran antipatrióticas.

Alice Paul y sus compañeras sufragistas ejercieron sus derechos de la Primera Enmienda Constitucional convocándose y hablando pacífica y libremente sobre el derecho al voto de la mujer.

¿Puedes encontrar ejemplos modernos de gente protestando contra los líderes del gobierno a nivel, local, estatal o nacional? ¿Cuáles asuntos les preocupan? ¿Alguno de ellos involucra el voto?

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“¿Cómo pueden las personas en otros países que están tratando de entender nuestro plan de democracia evitar tambalearse con nuestra lógica cuando primero le negamos los primeros pasos de la democracia a nuestras mujeres?”

**Jeannette Rankin**, primera mujer electa para el Congreso, en su discurso a la Cámara de Diputados el 10 de enero de 1918, exhortando la aprobación de la Decimonovena enmienda

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El 2 de abril de 1917, en su primer día en la Cámara de Representantes, Jeannette Rankin tomó parte en una Sesión Conjunta del Congreso para escuchar al presidente Woodrow Wilson solicitar que “se hiciera al mundo seguro para la democracia”, declarándole la guerra a Alemania. Tras los debates sobre la resolución de Guerra, Rankin votó en contra manteniendo así sus creencias anti-bélicas. Muchas de sus compañeras sufragistas sintieron que esto afectaba su propia causa.

Poco menos de un año después, luego de ayudar a organizar el voto de la Cámara de 1918 para una enmienda sobre el sufragio, Rankin estuvo entre quienes se dirigieron a sus colegas antes de aprobarla con la mayoría necesaria de dos tercios 274-136. A pesar de su aceptación en la Cámara de Representantes, la ley no logró ser aprobada en el Senado.

Jeannette Rankin creía en el sufragio femenino y se oponía a la guerra como manera de solucionar conflictos globales.

Busca en las noticias, impresas o en línea, artículos sobre mujeres que sirven a sus comunidades en el ámbito político con posiciones locales, estatales y nacionales. ¿A cuáles causas se oponen o apoyan?

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“El voto es el estandarte de su igualdad, mujeres de Estados Unidos, la garantía de su libertad. Ese voto suyo ha costado millones de dólares y las vidas de miles de mujeres. El dinero para llevar a cabo esta labor ha sido



entregado generalmente como un sacrificio, y miles de mujeres han vivido careciendo cosas que deseaban o habrían podido tener para ayudarlas a obtener el voto. Mujeres han sufrido agonías del alma las cuales muchas no podrán entender, para que ustedes y sus hijas puedan heredar la libertad política. El voto ha sido costoso. ¡Valórenlo!”

**Carrie Chapman Catt**, sufragista y fundadora de la Liga de Mujeres Electorales, en un discurso dado en agosto de 1920, celebrando la ratificación de la Decimonovena Enmienda

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Carrie Chapman Catt era el poder detrás del “Plan Ganador” de la “Asociación Nacional para el Voto Femenino,” (NAWSA por sus siglas en inglés) el cual coordinó campañas para el sufragio estatal e insistía en una enmienda constitucional.

Catt estaba tan segura de la aceptación eventual del voto femenino que ayudó a formar la Liga de Electoras seis meses antes de la ratificación de la Decimonovena Enmienda. Era una organización no partidista, dedicada a ayudar a las mujeres a llevar a cabo sus responsabilidades como votantes.

Busca noticias e información sobre la Liga de Electoras a nivel local, estatal, o nacional. ¿Cómo apoya este grupo a todos los electores estadounidenses en la actualidad?

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“La práctica completa y libre de nuestro sagrado derecho y deber al voto es más importante a largo plazo que las esperanzas y ambiciones personales de cualquier candidato para cualquier posición en la nación.”

**President Franklin Delano Roosevelt**, en una alocución por radio desde la Casa Blanca en el 5 de octubre de 1944

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Mientras ejerció de presidente durante la Segunda Guerra Mundial, Roosevelt decidió que el país estaría mejor gobernado con consistencia del poder ejecutivo. Contrariamente a su tercera campaña cuando los Demócratas le presionaron para que fuera candidato, FDR se postuló abiertamente una cuarta vez con Harry Truman como compañero para la presidencia.

En el mismo discurso, el presidente Roosevelt también expresó su preocupación por “los defectos de las leyes del voto” al decir que “el derecho al voto debe ser abierto a todos nuestros ciudadanos independientemente de su raza, color o credo, sin impuestos o restricciones artificiales de cualquier tipo. “Mientras antes lleguemos a esa base de igualdad política, mejor estará la totalidad del país.”

Busca ejemplos actuales de individuos haciendo campañas para posiciones a nivel local, estatal, y nacional. ¿Han expresado estos candidatos algunos puntos de vista sobre el derecho al voto de la gente?

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“Nuestro patrimonio americano está amenazado tanto por nuestra indiferencia como tal ante la más descarada oficina como por la amenaza extranjera más poderosa. El futuro de esta república esta en las manos del elector americano.”



**Dwight D. Eisenhower**, Presidente, general del ejército estadounidense, en un discurso que dio como presidente de la Universidad de Columbia para el Decimoctavo Foro del diario *New York Herald Tribune*, el 24 de octubre de 1949

Casi desde la aprobación de la Decimoquinta Enmienda, muchas prácticas discriminatorias fueron usadas para prevenir que los afroamericanos, especialmente los del Sur del país, ejercieran el derecho al voto. Durante su segunda campaña, Eisenhower propuso un proyecto de ley de los derechos civiles diseñado para proteger el derecho al voto de los afroamericanos a nivel federal.

El congreso aprobó la Ley de los Derechos Civiles de 1957 la cual establecía la Comisión de los Derechos Civiles y la División de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Justicia. La ley tuvo poco impacto en el voto afroamericano.

La frase de Eisenhower nos advierte no dar por hecho el derecho y privilegio de votar.

Busca en las noticias, impresas o en línea, artículos sobre el proceso de votar, así como los derechos y privilegios dados a la gente en otros países. Escoge uno y compara y contrástalo con los Estados Unidos.

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“El asunto más importante de los derechos civiles es el voto. El derecho al voto de cada ciudadano es fundamental para todos los otros derechos de los ciudadanos y las leyes de Derechos



Civiles de 1957 y 1960 le otorgan la responsabilidad al Departamento de Justicia para proteger ese derecho.”

**Robert Kennedy**, fiscal general de los Estados Unidos (1963)

La ley de Derechos Civiles de 1960 estableció inspecciones federales de los centros de votación e introdujo penalidades para quienquiera que obstruyera un intento de inscripción electoral. Mientras ejerció como fiscal general durante la presidencia de su hermano John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy fue responsable por esas inspecciones y la ejecución de la ley.

Los gobiernos locales y estatales tienen la responsabilidad de gestionar las elecciones en los Estados Unidos. La División de Derechos Civiles del Departamento de Justicia ejecuta las leyes federales del derecho al voto que protegen el derecho constitucional de cualquier ciudadano de acceder a una elección. Este grupo, encabezado por el fiscal general, también es responsable de investigar y procesar instancias de fraude de voto.

Busca noticias sobre como el fiscal general y el Departamento de Justicia están defendiendo los derechos constitucionales de ciudadanos americanos. ¿Hay alguno relacionado al voto y las elecciones?

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“Yo pensaba que la gente no podía inscribirse para votar hasta que le enseñaras a leer y escribir.”



**Septima Poinsette Clark**, educadora y activista de los derechos civiles, en su libro de 1986, “Lista desde adentro”

Photo credit: Avery Institute

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Septima Clark se graduó de la escuela secundaria en 1916 y trabajó como maestra mientras estudiaba en la universidad. Al final obtuvo su licenciatura en 1942 y su título de maestría en 1946. Fue miembro por mucho tiempo de la Asociación Nacional para el Progreso de las Personas de Color (NAACP por sus siglas en inglés), y en 1956 perdió su trabajo como maestra por rehusarse a terminar su afiliación con ese grupo de derechos civiles.

Clark empezó a trabajar enseguida para la Escuela “Highlander Folk” en Monteagle, Tennessee, y desarrolló talleres de “educación ciudadana” para enseñar a los afroamericanos no solamente cómo inscribirse, sino también cómo pasar las pruebas de lectura usadas para evitar que los afroamericanos votaran.

Septima Clark uso sus conocimientos y habilidades como maestra para ayudar a otros con el voto.

Busca noticias e información sobre individuos o grupos que usan sus experiencias para ayudar a los demás. ¿Encontraste alguno que ayudara a otros a inscribirse o a entender mejor el proceso de votar?

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“El sufragio es el derecho máspreciado de cada ciudadano, y tenemos la obligación moral de asegurarnos de la integridad del mismo.”

**Hillary Rodham Clinton,** primera dama, senadora y Secretaria de Estado, refiriéndose a la ley de Cada Voto Cuenta (2005)

El objetivo de la ley de Ayuda a los Estados Unidos a Votar de 2002 era asistir a los estados a mejorar la gestión de elecciones, incluyendo una mejor accesibilidad de los centros de votación para electores discapacitados, y el reemplazo de la antigua tarjeta perforada o máquinas de votación con palancas para así asegurar resultados más precisos.

Surgieron preocupaciones cuando se empezaron a usar tecnologías modernas para votar. Se temía que sería imposible tener un conteo justo y preciso. La ley de Cada Voto Cuenta, introducida primero en 2005, fue creada para asegurar que cada máquina de votación dejara claro los resultados en documentos físicos. La ley también habría establecido el día de elecciones como un día festivo para que todos los electores elegibles tuvieran tiempo para votar. Una ley similar fue presentada en 2007, pero ninguna versión de esta ley fue aprobada.

Hillary Clinton y otros trataron de aprobar leyes que creían que mejorarían el acceso y la precisión del voto. Busca noticias e información sobre leyes actuales para reformas electorales. Si no hay ninguna, investiga las medidas más recientes que han tomado los legisladores para asegurar que cada voto cuente.

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“El derecho al voto es el derecho en el cual todos nuestros demás derechos se apoyan, y sin el cual ninguno puede ser protegido.”

**Benjamin Todd Jealous**, líder cívico y político, presidente y director general del NAACP de 2008-2013, en un discurso en julio de 2011

Photo credit: Gage Skidmore

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Barack Obama fue el primer afroamericano elegido para la presidencia en 2008. Ejerció por dos mandatos en la Casa Blanca. Muchos sintieron que las injusticias de la falta de derechos ya eran parte del pasado.

Aún antes de la reelección del presidente Obama, Benjamin Jealous y otros empezaron a denunciar prácticas de voto, incluyendo regulaciones de identificación de electores, diseñadas para limitar el fraude de voto. En realidad, es posible que estas leyes hayan impuesto restricciones de voto, especialmente entre poblaciones pobres y minoritarias.

Thomas Jefferson afirmó en la Declaración de la Independencia, “Los gobiernos se instituyen entre los hombres, derivando sus poderes legítimos del consentimiento de los gobernados.” Quién puede y quién debe votar ha sido una lucha constante desde ese entonces. Los afroamericanos, las mujeres, los indígenas americanos, los no angloparlantes y los ciudadanos entre 18 y 21 años han luchado todos, a su tiempo, por el derecho al voto.

Asegurarnos de proteger y defender el derecho al voto de todos los ciudadanos ha resultado ser un reto persistente e interminable

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