



BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA
presents

Civics 101

Learn the basics they no longer teach in school.



Welcome

Tonight's Hosts:

Terry Mumford and Caz Margenau

Leadership Development, Building Bridges for America

WHERE WE STAND

Democrats believe that the economy should work for everyone, health care is a right, our diversity is our strength, and democracy is worth defending.

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA ACTION FUND

Our Mission

Building Bridges mobilizes and empowers networks of relational grassroots organizers to create an equitable and informed electorate.

Our Values

We recognize that the effort adds value, regardless of the result.

We are committed to the development of a broad and inclusive coalition.

We conduct our actions and are informed by the legacy of Pete Buttigieg's 2020 Campaign's Rules of the Road.

Our Vision

A just and equitable democracy, safeguarded by an informed and engaged electorate, where everyone is valued and belongs.

Respect Belonging Truth Teamwork Boldness Responsibility Substance Discipline Excellence Joy





buildingbridgesforamerica.com

Live Online on Thursdays

BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA



Political Organizing Classes

8 free and accessible courses and workbooks for volunteers.



- *Civics 101*
- *Civics for Change*



- *Say This, Not That...*
- *Grassroots Organizing for Change*
- *Local Leaders and Precinct Chairs*



- *How to Be Politically Active*
- *Conversations that Break Through*
- *Pop the Disinformation Bubble*



Maximize your volunteer effort.

2024 Session II
Every Thursday
3/21 - 5/19

2024 Session III
Every Thursday
5/30 - 7/25 (skip 7/4)

More to come!

Friendly Norms

- Introduce yourself in the chat – Where are you from? Are you working with any campaigns and organizations?
- Post questions and info in the chat
- There will be a Q & A at the end. Please keep yourself muted unless you are speaking.
- Meeting will be 1-hour
- Thank you for joining us!



Terry Mumford

Partner, Law Firm – Lobbyist and Governmental
Benefits

Associate University Counsel

Dep. Director, Legislative Services Agency

Legislative Director, Governor's Office

Chief Legal Counsel, House of Representatives



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BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Civics 101:
The basics they
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Civics 101

Learn the basics they no longer teach in school.



Let's talk Civics!

Workshop Goals

- What's At Stake When We Vote?
- What Should We Know?

- US Constitution
- Federal Legislation
- Elections
- State and Local Government



Workshop Goals

- Knowledge that leads to Action!
 - Our vision – safeguard democracy by an informed and engaged electorate

“I said ‘Somebody should do something about that.’
Then I realized I am somebody.”

— Lily Tomlin



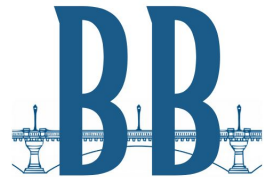


Why are we presenting this training on Civics?

- By knowing the system we will know where to focus our efforts
- Knowledge is power
 - But we need to understand the basics first!

How can you use this information?

- Be a “super-volunteer”
- Be a trusted voice
- Be an engaged citizen



That's Unconstitutional!!



That's Unconstitutional!!

- What can be unconstitutional?
 - A law itself, its interpretation, or its implementation.
- Why would the law be unconstitutional?
 - If it violates express or implied powers & protections granted by the constitution.
- Who determines constitutionality?
 - The courts



What is in the US Constitution?



- 7 Articles–structure and operation
- 27 Amendments



The U.S. Constitution

The Articles (1789)

1, 2, 3 The Structure of the Government

- **Article I Legislative: Lawmaking**
 - The Congress – House of Representatives & Senate
- **Article II Executive: Execute the Laws**
 - President, Vice-President
- **Article III Judicial: Interpret the Laws**
 - US Supreme Court and other federal Courts



The U.S. Constitution

The Articles (1789), cont.

4,5,6,7 The Federal Government and the States

- **Article IV: Full Faith and Credit**
 - States honor other states laws
 - Extradition
 - Creation of a new state
- **Article V Amendments to the Constitution**
- **Article VI “Supremacy Clause”**
 - The Constitution and federal laws take priority over state laws
- **Article VII Approval of the Constitution**



3 branches of government: A system of “checks and balances” and our vote affects each branch. Where do we want to have our impact?

Legislative Authority is checked and balanced by:

Executive branch - veto power and tie-breaker in the Senate.

Judicial branch - interpretation of laws and overturning unconstitutional acts

+

Executive authority is checked and balanced by:

Legislative branch - oversight, approval of appointments and treaties, veto overrides, and impeachment.

Judicial branch - interpretation of actions and stopping implementation

+

Judicial authority is checked and balanced by:

Executive branch - the appointment of judges

Legislative branch - the approval of appointments and the power of impeachment of judges.



Ketanji Brown Jackson, Associate Justice

“Presidents are not kings” (2019)

- Our Constitutional scheme – the design of our government – is erected to prevent tyranny
- Split powers vertically – federalism – federal and state government
- Split powers horizontally – legislative, executive, judicial –

Separation of powers is crucial to keep government from becoming too powerful and encroaching on our liberty



The Amendments to the Constitution

Bill of Rights - Amendments 1-10 (1791) - Limits on the federal government

- 1st Freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly; the right to petition the government.
- 2nd Right to bear arms
- 3rd Troops may not be quartered in homes in peacetime
- 4th No unreasonable searches or seizures
- 5th Procedures for criminal prosecutions:
 - Grand Jury indictment required for felony charges in federal court
 - Double jeopardy clause prevents a person from being tried twice for the same crime
 - A defendant cannot be forced to testify. “Plead the fifth”

The Amendments to the Constitution

Bill of Rights - Amendments 1-10 (1791) - Limits on the federal government

- 6th Right to speedy, public, impartial trial by jury with defense counsel and right to cross-examine witnesses.
- 7th Civil jury trials in federal cases
- 8th No excessive bail or fines, no cruel and unusual punishment
- 9th Unlisted rights are not necessarily denied
- 10th Powers not delegated to the United States or denied to the states are reserved to the states

More Amendments to Know

- 12th (1804) Electoral College
 - Electoral College officially elects President and Vice President
 - Each state's electors equals the number of Senators and Representatives
- 13th (1865) Abolition of slavery
- 14th (1868) **Citizenship and protection of rights**
 - Section 1: Citizenship Clause, Privileges and Immunities Clause, Due Process Clause, and Equal Protection Clause – **Supreme Court has used the 14th Amendment to extend various amendments in the Bill of Rights to protect individuals from state action**
 - Section 3: Disqualification from office for insurrection
 - Section 4: Validity of the public debt
- 15th (1870) Voting rights
- 25th (1967) Presidential inability to perform duties

Isn't there a 28th Amendment? Equal Rights Amendment

- Article V – Constitution may be amended with ratification of $\frac{3}{4}$ states – currently 38
- ERA adopted in 1972 with 7-year timeline.
 - Only 35 states adopted within the timeline.
 - 3 states have recently adopted (Nevada 2017, Illinois 2018, Virginia 2020) – Does that count?
- Federal Archivist has not accepted the ERA
 - 2/28/2023 – US DCCCA ruled – Archivist not req'd to accept ERA and Congress could impose time limit
 - S.J. Res. 4 – Cardin + 52 cosponsors – remove deadline
 - H.J.Res. 25 – Pressley + 169 cosponsors – remove deadline
- Resource – <https://www.equalrightsamendment.org/>



14th Amd, Sec. 1: A limit on the states

- All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.
- No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without **due process of law**; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the **equal protection of the laws**.

Importance of the 14th Amd: Marriage Equality

- **Loving v. Virginia (1967)** – The Supreme Court found that Virginia’s laws banning interracial marriage violated the 14th amendment’s guarantee of due process and equal protection. As a result, **all race-based marriage laws in all states** were struck down.
- **Obergefell v. Hodges (2015)** – The Supreme Court found that state same-sex marriage bans are a violation of the 14th Amendment's Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. **The ruling required all fifty states to perform and recognize the marriages of same-sex couples on the same terms and conditions as the marriages of opposite-sex couples**, with all the accompanying rights and responsibilities.

NOTE: Although the right to marry is not specifically stated in the Constitution, it is a “fundamental right” protected by the Constitution.

Importance of the 14th Amendment: Contraception and Reproductive Rights

- **Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)** – The Supreme Court struck down a **ban on the use or sale of contraceptives** to married couples because it violated the constitutional right to privacy.
- **Eisenstadt v. Baird (1972)** – The Court extended this **right to contraception to unmarried people** – “the right of the individual, married or single, to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child.”

NOTE: The right to privacy is a fundamental right under these cases.

The Constitution and Reproductive Rights, cont.

- **Roe v. Wade (1973)** – The Supreme Court ruled that the 14th Amendment's Due Process Clause provides a right to privacy that protects a pregnant woman's right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. But it also ruled that this right is not absolute after viability. Established different standards for each trimester.
- **Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992)** – Moved away from the trimester standards and focussed on viability. States have leeway to regulate abortions so long as no undue burden on women.

NOTE: The right to privacy is a fundamental right under these cases.

- **AND NOW – Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2022)** – Mississippi law banned abortion after 15 weeks with narrow exceptions for medical emergencies.

The Dobbs Opinion:

The 14th Amd does not provide a right to abortion

A majority of the Supreme Court upheld the Mississippi law and overruled Roe and Casey. Alito wrote the opinion. The majority included Coney Barrett, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, and Thomas.

- **The Originalism History Test** - Reference to precedent, traditions and conscience have been used to broaden the meaning of the Constitution (esp 14th Amendment). 40+ years ago Conservatives began promoting a limited History Test - “Originalism” to determine how to interpret the Constitution.

The Dobbs Opinion, cont'd

The 14th Amd does not provide a right to abortion

Alito - “The Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and no such right is implicitly protected by any constitutional provision, including ... the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. That provision has been held to guarantee some rights that are not mentioned in the Constitution, but such rights must be ‘deeply rooted in this Nation’s history and tradition’ and ‘implicit in the concept of ordered liberty.’”



Alito's "Solution" – Our vote matters!

“Our decision **returns the issue of abortion to those legislative bodies**, and it allows women on both sides of the abortion issue to seek to affect the legislative process by influencing public opinion, lobbying legislators, voting, and running for office. **Women are not without electoral or political power**. It is noteworthy that the percentage of women who register to vote and cast ballots is consistently higher than the percentage of men who do so. In the last election in November 2020, women, who make up around 51.5 percent of the population of Mississippi, constituted 55.5 percent of the voters who cast ballots.”

Our votes at the federal, state, and local level matter to protect our freedoms!

- Alito's decision opens the door for federal legislation banning abortion.
- More than 1/2 the states have taken action or are poised to ban or severely limit abortions.
- The Originalism History Test would clearly put the rights of historically disenfranchised people at risk.
- The most important election is always the next one.

Abortion is back at the SCOTUS

FDA v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine – an appeal from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals that ruled that FDA actions in approving expanded use and availability of medical abortion drugs were improper. SCOTUS discussion focussed on whether the doctors challenging the FDA action had “standing” to bring the suit – did they suffer damage? A decision is expected in the summer.

The Second Amendment - Another Example of 14th Amd Interpretation

- **District of Columbia v. Heller (2008)**: SCOTUS (5-4) - 2nd Amd guarantees an individual right to possess firearms independent of service in a state militia and to use firearms for traditionally lawful purposes, including self-defense in the home.
 - The court: Because the framers understood the right of self-defense to be “the central component” of the right to keep and bear arms, the 2nd Amd implicitly protects the right “to use arms in defense of hearth and home.”
- **McDonald v. City of Chicago (2010)** : SCOTUS (5-4) - 2nd Amd applies to state and local governments through the 14th Amd.

The Second Amendment, cont.

- **New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen (2022):** SCOTUS (6-3) - New York's proper-cause requirement for obtaining an unrestricted license to carry a concealed firearm violates the 2nd Amd in that it prevents law-abiding citizens with ordinary self-defense needs from exercising their 2nd Amd right to keep and bear arms.
- NY State Legislature immediately passed the Concealed Carry Improvement Act (CCIA) - key provisions = (1) applicant for a concealed-carry license must show "good moral character," and provide the names and contact information for family members, (2) guns are banned in "sensitive places" such as churches and parks, and on private property unless the property owner specifically agrees to allow guns.
- The 2nd Circuit Ct of Appeals upheld major provisions of the law
12/8/2023

Section 3 of the 14th Amendment

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may, by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Question – How does this apply to candidates in the presidential election?

Section 3 of the 14th Amd, cont.

Trump v. Anderson (2024) - The Colorado Supreme Court ruled that Trump should be excluded from the Republican primary because he had been determined to have engaged in insurrection against the Constitution. Trump challenged that decision. The US Supreme Court unanimously reversed the Colorado decision. There was agreement that the States have no power to enforce Section 3 with respect to federal offices, especially the Presidency. 5 justices took the decision a step further - stating that only Congress could implement Section 3 and that a court could not make the determination of disqualification unless Congress had authorized that. 4 justices disagreed with the breadth of the conclusion.

“Chevron Deference”

- In 1984, SCOTUS established the “Chevron Doctrine” or “Chevron Deference” – Courts must defer to an administrative agency’s permissible and reasonable regulations
- The decision was originally favored by business groups and conservative organizations as a way to put limits on “liberal” judges. But more recently, these groups have opposed Chevron deference.
- In 2020, National Marine Fisheries Service adopted the requirement that certain commercial fishing boats must pay the cost of at-sea monitoring (\$700/day). Two cases challenging the fee have made their way to SCOTUS.
- The conservative majority seems poised to “overrule” Chevron doctrine – impact all federal agencies – environmental, healthcare, securities law

Can we “fix” SCOTUS?

- Number of Justices set by Congress – 1789 (9) Justices (1 is chief justice),
- Justices nominated by President and approved by Senate,
- Biden established Presidential Commission – Final Report 12/2021–
 - Congress can enlarge the court.
 - Term limits (18 yrs) require Constitutional Amendment.
 - Endorsed an advisory code of ethics.
 - Suggest changes to management of court’s “shadow” or emergency docket – where unsigned opinions block lower court orders
- For legislative changes – let’s go to the next topic!

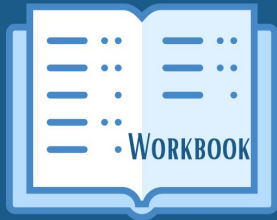


What can we do?

- Voters elect (via the Electoral College) the President who –
 - Nominates the Supreme Court Justices and other federal judges.
 - Can take executive action to respond to Court decisions.
- Voters elect the Senators who approve the nominations
 - Voters determine the Senate Majority that can set the rules for considering nominations.
 - Constituents express their views to their Senators.
- Voters elect US Representatives and Senators who pass legislation to respond to Court decisions.
- Voters elect state and local officials who pass legislation to respond to Court decisions.
- Donors support the organizations that litigate important issues.

There Ought to be a Law!!!





CONGRESS: THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW!

How a bill becomes a law in five "easy" steps.

Bill to a Law

STEP 1

The bill is drafted and introduced to either the House or Senate



STEP 2

The bill goes to committee

Step 2a: Subcommittee review

Step 2b: Committee mark up of the bill

Step 2c: Committee "votes bill out" to the full "chamber"



STEP 3

Voting by the full chamber on the bill

Step 3a: Bill may be amended

Step 3b: Floor debate, unlimited debate unless Senate votes for "cloture" to vote or filibuster, minimum of 60 votes needed.



STEP 4

Referral of bill to the other chamber,

Repeat steps 2 & 3



STEP 5

Bill is passed

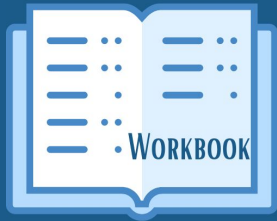
The identical bill is passed by each chamber, then sent to President for their approval.



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RULES TO KNOW



WHAT IS A FILIBUSTER?

Senate rules allow a "filibuster"- a delay of action on legislation. Traditionally a filibuster was intended to open debate on the legislation, Use of the filibuster has evolved to allow Senators to call a filibuster without opening the issue to debate, and the legislation is not considered. A filibuster can be stopped by a "cloture" vote. The filibuster does not apply to reconciliation, appointment of judges and the cabinet. The filibuster rule can be changed or amended by the Senate.

WHAT IS CLOTURE?

Cloture ends debate on a bill and submits it for a vote - requires 60 votes

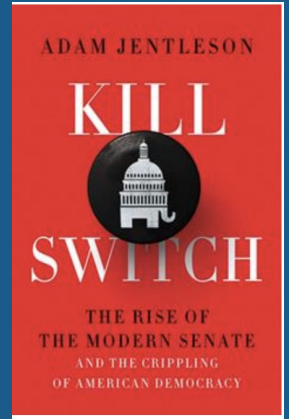
WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

Reconciliation is any measure (bill, resolution) pertaining to revenue, taxes, and debt limit and can be approved by a simple majority (51 votes in Senate).

WHAT KIND OF GOVERNMENT ARE WE?

"Federal" (3 levels of government), "representative, democratic" (people have means to control government), "republic "(people choose elected delegates)-

Our American Government 2003



WHO'S WHO IN THE HOUSE AND THE SENATE?



Who are the Senators?

100 Senators

- 2 per state, regardless of population,
- Serve 6 year terms

Senate Leadership

- The Vice-President of the United States serves as the President of the Senate and gets a vote in the case of a tie.
- President Pro Tempore - Majority Leader
- Minority Leader - Leader of the Minority Party
- Each party leadership includes
 - Whip
 - Conference Chair

Who are the House of Representatives

435 Representatives or Congresspersons

- Will hear them referred to as "congresspersons" because they represent congressional districts in their respective states.
- Total number is set by federal statute
- Each state has at least 1
- The total per state (greater than 1) is based on population or "apportionment"
- 2-year terms
- State legislatures determine the "districts" represented

House Leadership

- Speaker of the House
- Majority Leader
- Minority Leader
- Each party's leadership includes
 - Whip
 - Conference Chair



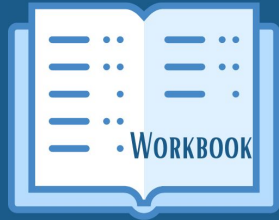
The Speaker of the House
is third in line for the
Presidency

In Congress – Who’s Up for Election in 2024?

- **Every** U.S. Congressperson is up for election November 5, 2024
- **33** of the U.S. Senators are up for election in 2024
- Have you checked on your Senators’ and Representatives’ (and/or candidates’) views on issues that are important to you? As they say, “Vote Accordingly!”
- Sign up for our course in 4 weeks on “Civics for Change” to get tips on writing your elected officials

Throw the bums out! – Let's Focus on
Elections in 2024





"THROW THE BUMS OUT!" TYPES OF ELECTIONS



Elections

General Election

An election to fill a public office-for federal offices elections happen in even number years.

Primary Election

An election to place a candidate on the ballot for the general election on a political party's "ticket".

Open Primary

Voter selects a party on election day in order to pick which candidates they wish to voter for.

Closed Primary

Only voters who are registered with a party may vote in that party's primary

Top Two Open Primary Systems

All candidates for all parties are listed by office, the top two with the most votes compete in the general election.

Run-Off Primary/Election

A follow-up primary or election when no candidate wins the majority - typically at least 50%.

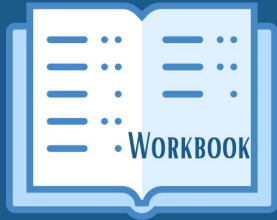
Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

Voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. If a candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, they are declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. The second choice votes are added to the vote totals until a candidate meets the minimum threshold (i.e. 50%)

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Election Jargon - A Baker's dozen



Absentee Ballot

A ballot completed and typically mailed in advance of an election by a voter who is unable to be present at the polls.

Ballot Initiative

A procedure allowed in a number of states under which citizens are able to vote to change a law.

Battleground States

A large state with an electorate split relatively evenly between Democrats and Republicans - so named because candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time and money campaigning there.

Blue State

A state where people tend to vote for the Democratic Party.

Candidate Committee

A committee formed by a candidate to accept contributions and make expenditures under the candidate's authority to support a bid for election.

Congressional District

A territorial division of a state from which a member of the U.S. House of Representatives is elected.

FEC (Federal Election Commission)

The Federal Election Commission enforces federal campaign finance laws, including monitoring donation prohibitions and limits, and oversees public funding for presidential campaigns.

Gerrymandering

The practice of drawing political constituency maps to increase a particular candidate's or party's advantage in a subsequent election.

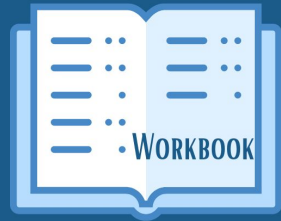
(PAC) Political Action Committee

An organization formed to promote its members' views on selected issues, usually by raising money that is used to fund candidates who support the group's position.

Popular Vote

The votes made directly for a candidate.





ELECTION JARGON - A BAKER'S DOZEN CONT'D

Precinct

A voting district-the smallest unit into which electoral districts are divided. Precinct chairs often elect party officials.

Red State

A state where people tend to vote for the Republican Party.

Registered Voter

A citizen who has registered with election officials in order to become eligible

ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

While the Federal Government has jurisdiction over federal elections, most elections are decided at the state level.

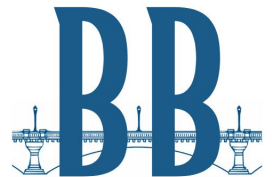
STATE ROLE

- State law generally governs elections that occur in that state.
- State and local officials are primarily responsible for conducting elections.
- The Secretary of State's Office and/or County Clerks are often good resources.

FEDERAL ROLE

- Remember the 13th Amendment-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.
- The FEC (Federal Election Committee) is responsible for disclosing campaign finance information, enforcing limits, prohibitions on contributions, and overseeing the public funding of presidential elections.

For instance the States responded to the pandemic with changes in election procedures (i.e. vote by mail qualifications, drop boxes, extended voting hours and days).



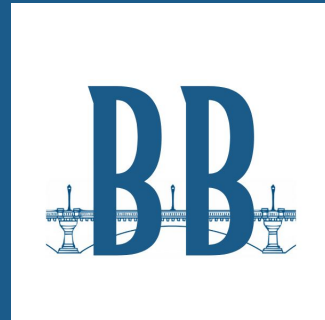
More on Gerrymandering - “My Vote Doesn’t Matter”

- Only “relevant” where there are “districts” - Congressional, state legislators, local bodies (county council)
- Voting still matters - avoid a “mandate”
- Statewide races are not subject to gerrymandering
- County-wide, city-wide, etc., races are not subject to gerrymandering



More on Gerrymandering – SCOTUS is Helping

Allen v. Milligan (2023) – SCOTUS (5-4) upheld a lower court ruling that Alabama’s congressional map likely violates Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act by diluting the votes of Black residents. VRA SEC. 2. No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.





What can we learn from MAGA election strategy?

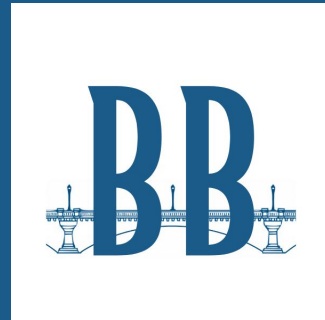
- Don't just focus on federal elections, swing states/districts, during the federal election years.
- Pay attention to state elections, state houses, all states, all levels.

David Pepper, Saving Democracy:
A User's Manual For Every American



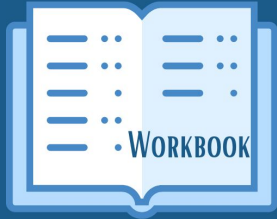


- Become an “expert” on upcoming elections in your state.
 - Who’s on the ballot?
 - Last day to register to vote?
 - Last day to request mail-in ballot?
 - First day of early voting?
 - When do polls open & close?
- How can you GOTV?



State Government: It is the same but different





"IT'S THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT"

Each State Has a Constitution

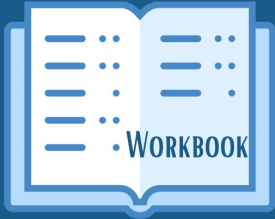
- State constitutions follow federal governmental structure
- 3 branches of government
 - Legislative
 - Executive
 - Judicial
- A state constitution may include areas not covered by the federal constitution and may offer greater protections, but a state constitution cannot conflict with the federal constitution.

Branches of Government (example Indiana)

- Legislative Branch
 - The General Assembly
 - Part-time, Citizen Legislature
 - 100 House Members, elected to two-year terms, each representing a district.
 - 71 Republicans, 29 Democrats
 - Speaker of the House - Todd Huston
 - Minority Leader - Phil GiaQinta
 - 50 Senators, elected for four-year terms, each representing a district.
 - 39 Republicans, 11 Democrats
 - Lieutenant Governor - President of the Senate
 - Pro-tem- Rodric Bray
 - Minority Leader - Greg Taylor
 - Republicans have a supermajority (more than 2/3) in each house. All actions can be taken without Democrat involvement.
 - Session dates
 - Long Sessions- in odd numbered years (must adopt budget)

State Government





"IT'S THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT"

Branches of Government (Indiana cont'd)

- Short Sessions in even numbered years
- Special Sessions- at the call of the Governor
- Redistricting - Legislature "draws" congressional districts and districts for state senators and state representatives
 - Districts are drawn after the decennial (10 year) census by the legislature
 - Finding my legislator www.in.iga.gov

What is Gerrymandering? Drawing districts to achieve an unfair advantage for one party. Check out Common Cause of Indiana about non-partisan proposals for fair redistricting.

How does a bill become a law

- Drafted by Legislative Services Agency for Representative or Senator
- Introduced by Representative or Senator
- First Reading - assigned to committee
- Heard in Committees - amendment and passed to the Floor-or dies in committee
- Second Reading - Action on the Floor-amendments allowed
- Third Reading -Yes or no by majority vote
- Transmittal to the other chamber for a repeat of the process
- If the identical bill is passed by both chambers, it goes to the Governor for action - signature, veto, or approval without signature after 7 days

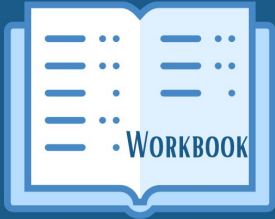
The House & Senate are each referred to as "chambers"
A bill is on the "Floor" of the chamber if it is being considered by all members.

State Government



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"IT'S THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT"

The Executive Branch

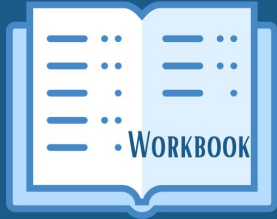
- Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Attorney General, and Agencies
- Indiana has a "weak Governor" system, which means that a simple majority vote of both chambers can override a veto.
- Implements legislative directives enacted by the legislature

The Judicial Branch

- Supreme Court - highest court in Indiana
- Court of Appeals
- Circuit Courts
- Superior Courts

State Government





WHO IS IN CHARGE? THE STATES OR FEDS?



The States

Don't forget about the 10th Amendment! Any power not specifically given to the federal government by the Constitution belongs to the States and the people.

- Ownership of property
- Education of inhabitants
- Implementation of welfare and other benefits programs
- Protecting people from local threats
- Maintaining a justice system
- Setting up local governments -- counties and municipalities
- Maintaining state highways and administering local roads
- Regulation of Industry
- Raising funds to support their activities
- Elections - Secretary of State
- Insurance

The Feds

But don't forget the Supremacy Clause and the Interstate Commerce Clause

- The federal constitution prohibits states from interfering with federal government's exercise of its constitutional powers, and from assuming any functions that are exclusively entrusted to the federal government.
- The federal constitution gives Congress and not the states the power to regulate interstate commerce.

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Homework

- Prepare a chart of the structure and office holders of your state government.
- Who is YOUR state representative? YOUR state senator? YOUR councillor?
- What are their positions on issues that are important to you?

Your Jurisdiction

Step 1

Preparing your cheat sheet.

This sheet will help you identify the specifics about your area (jurisdiction) and will vary depending on the issue(s) you are addressing. Get started by filling in what you know and fill in the blanks later.

State	-----
County	-----
City, Town, Village or Unincorporated area	-----
School District	-----
Special Service District (sewer)	-----



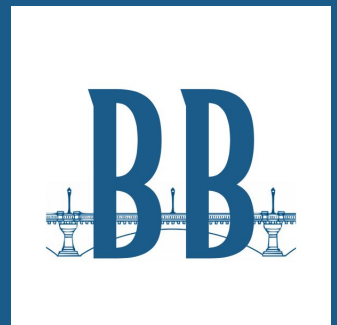
Your Policymakers

Step



You can search online and find this information.

U.S. Senator (1)	name, party, contact info.
U.S. Senator (2)	name, party, contact info.
U.S. Representative	name, party, district, contact info.
Governor	name, party, contact info.
State Senator	name, party, district, contact info.
State Representative	name, party, district, contact info.
Mayor	contact information
County Commissioners	contact information
City/Town Council	contact information
School Board Member	contact information



Where Can You Use this Knowledge?

- **Canvassing/Phone Bank?**
 - Share your knowledge as you GOTV
- **Poll worker?**
 - Get firsthand knowledge to share
- **Network resource?**
 - Help friends/family understand the issues and know how to vote
- **Your ideas – in the chat**

Resources

What's Happening at the Supreme Court?

- SCOTUS Blog - <https://www.scotusblog.com/>

Who and What are on the Ballot?

- League of Women Voters - <https://www.vote411.org/>

Tracking Legislation

- LegiScan - <https://legiscan.com/>

Join us next Thursday!



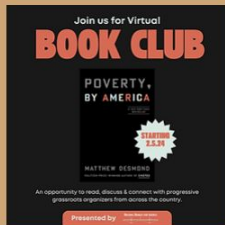
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presents

Pop the Disinformation Bubble

Take control and counter the lies.

buildingbridgesforamerica.com/courses

[Back](#)



Dive into the action as we meet online to read and discuss great books about political organizing. Join us weekly for inspiring talks with the authors and other leaders.

Our next book is "Poverty, By America" by Matthew Desmond.

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

[GET THE BOOK HERE](#)

We got your progressive political book recommendations covered!

Check out our previous Book Club books and videos.

- Run for Something, Amanda Litman
- Don't Think of an Elephant, George Lakoff
- UnTrumping America, Dan Pfeiffer
- Politics is for Power, Eitan Hersh
- Trust, Pete Buttigieg
- Our Time is Now, Stacey Abrams
- Kill Switch, Adam Jentleson
- Harvest the Vote, Jane Kleeb
- Merge Left, Ian Janey López
- The Sum of Us, Heather McGhee
- The Purpose of Power- Alicia Garza
- How We Win the Civil War, Steve Phillips
- A People's Future of the United States

Text to register voters NOW!

Build the Vote in 2024

**TEXT FOR DEMOCRACY
VOTER REGISTRATION IN KEY STATES**

Reach critical voters in Virginia, North Carolina, Texas and Georgia through Field Team 6's BYOP (Bring Your Own Phone) Text-Banking Program.

Field Team 6
BUILDING BRIDGES FOR AMERICA

Join Building Bridges for America Action Fund and our partners Field Team 6 to text unregistered voters in key states.

Reach critical voters in Virginia, North Carolina, Texas and Georgia through Field Team 6's BYOP (Bring Your Own Phone) Text-Banking Program.

You use your own phone and go at your own speed. Sign up once and text all you like in 2024.

[GET STARTED HERE](#)

www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

We're just getting started in 2024!

This is an important year for Democracy. Want to know what you can do? Here are some opportunities to get started.



Text for Democracy!

Millions of US citizens are not registered to vote. Building Bridges for America is partnering with Field Team 6 to Text for Democracy in some of the most under-registered areas of Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas.

Join us! Sign up once and text whenever you like in 2024. [Use this link to learn more and get started.](#)



Free Online Trainings on Thursdays

We believe democracy is participation. And we believe participating in politics must be accessible. Trainings are free — join online from wherever you are!



Use the links below to sign up. Or you can browse the [Training page on our website](#). All trainings are 8:00 to 9:00 PM EST

[How to Be Politically Active](#)
Beginning January 11

[Civics 101 - The Basics They No Longer Teach in School](#)
Beginning January 18

[Pop the Disinformation Bubble](#)
Beginning January 25

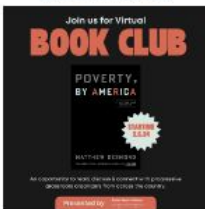
[Grassroots Organizing for Change](#)
Beginning February 1

Book Club - Mondays, Beginning February 5

Join us for a virtual book club journey that "gives us new ways of thinking about a morally urgent problem...helps us imagine solutions...calls on us all to become poverty abolitionists, engaged in a politics of collective belonging to usher in a new age of shared prosperity and, at last, true freedom."

We are reading *Poverty, By America* by Matthew Desmond
Mondays, beginning February 5
8:00 to 9:30 PM EST

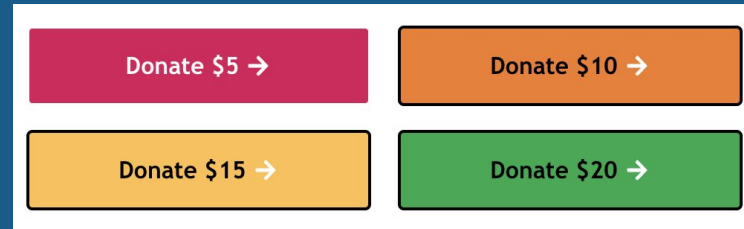
[Sign up on Mobilize Here](#)
Support a Local Book Store:
[Purchase the Book Here](#)



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Help us cover our annual operating costs so we can continue to offer our programs for free.

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bbfa>



Discussion Time



If you liked this presentation,
Please take a moment before signing off to
share it with others.



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www.buildingbridgesforamerica.com

Thank you for joining us.