OHIO CENTER FOR LAW-RELATED EDUCATION

IDM created by:
Ohio Center for Law-Related Education

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™	
Compelling Question	Do citizens exercise meaningful influence over the government?
Standards and Practices	Government Standard 1: Opportunities for civic engagement with the structures of government are made possible through political and public policy processes. Government Standard 20: Individuals in Ohio have a responsibility to assist state and local governments as they address relevant and often controversial problems that directly affect their communities. Government Standard 22: Individuals and organizations play a role within federal, state and local governments in helping to determine public (domestic and foreign) policy
Staging the Question	Ask the class: Why is voting important? Record answers on the board. Have the students read the article "12 of the Weirdest Ballot Initiatives in American History", Jake Rossen, Mental Floss, Nov 3, 2015. Now ask them the following questions either individually or in groups: • Is it important that citizens vote on every issue? • Is it important that citizens can vote on issues the elected officials don't take up? • What, besides voting, is essential in a well-run democracy?

Supporting Question 1	**Supporting Question 2**	**Supporting Question 3**	**Supporting Question 4**
How can citizens use their power recognized in the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions to influence the structure of government?	How can citizens use their power recognized in the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions to influence the function of government?	What government processes limit the input of citizens?	What other factors limit or weaken citizens' ability to influence government?
Formative Performance Task	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**	**Formative Performance Task**
List each of the powers held by citizens to influence the structure of government. For each, identify the source in which the power is articulated.	List each of the powers held by citizens to influence the function of government. For each, identify the source in which the power is articulated.	Create a summary of each of the ways that government processes limit citizens' input and match to the corresponding power identified in questions 1 and 2 (e.g. Voter ID laws impact voter suffrage).	Create a summary of each of the ways that non-governmental factors limit citizens' input and match to the corresponding power identified in questions 1 and 2.
Featured Sources	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**	**Featured Sources**
U.S. Constitution: Article 4, Section 4; Article 5 Ohio Constitution: Article 16, Section 3	U.S. Constitution: Amendment 1, Amendment 9, Amendment 17 Ohio Constitution: Article 1, Section 2; Article 1, Section 20; Article 2, Section 1	Voter Identification Requirements: Voter ID Laws, National Conference of State Legislatures Putting an Issue on the Ballot, Ohio Secretary of State's Office	"What If You Had as Much Political Influence as a Billionaire?" Mark Schmitt, CNN Op Ed, Feb 16, 2015 "Do Social Media Threaten Democracy?", The Economist, Nov 4, 2017

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Supplemental Sources Ohio Constitutional Convention Question, Issue 1 (2012), Ballotpedia "A Republican Form of Government", Edward A Fallone, Marquette University Law School Faculty Blog, Sep 20, 2009	*Supplemental Sources* "Calling Your Congressperson", Civics 101 Podcast, New Hampshire Public Radio Influence & Lobbying, Center for Responsive Politics Voting in Ohio, The Ohio Legislature "How to Influence the Government", Moses Mercado and Drew Maloney, Forbes, Jan 19, 2009 60 Second Civics Podcast: Ballot Initiatives & Voting, Elections, and Representation, Part 43: Referendum and Recall Ballot Initiative and Referendum, Ohio Attorney General's Office	"Supreme Court Gives Ohio Right to Purge Thousands of Voters from its Rolls", Pete Williams, NBC News, Jun 11, 2018 "Ohio Supreme Court Kicks Kidney Dialysis Issue Off the November Ballot", Laura Bischoff and Kaitlin Schroeder, Dayton Daily News, Aug 13, 2018 Democracy: People Power, Video, National Geographic "Why Aren't Cameras Allowed at the Supreme Court Again?", Robert Kessler, The Atlantic, Mar 28, 2013 "After 50 Years, the Freedom of Information Act Needs Updating", Nikita Lalwani and Sam Winter-Levy, Los Angeles Times Op-Ed, Jul 8, 2016	"Here's Who Found that Russia Meddled in the 2016 Election", Abby Vesoulis and Abigale Simon, Time Magazine, Jul 16, 2018

Summative Performance Task	**Argument**	In a four-minute presentation, using supporting evidence, a panel of 3-5 students will answer as a group if citizens exercise meaningful influence of the government.
	Extension	Students answer direct questions from a panel in a Q&A interview format to showcase knowledge of the compelling question.
Taking Informed Action	Select a public policy issue about which you are passionate. Create an action plan for how you would express your concerns and advice to the government. Your response should include: 1) Your proposed solution or reforms, 2) the level and branches of government to whom you should/will communicate, and 3) the methods you will use to get your message to interested parties.	

2019 Ohio We the People State Competition
Ohio Constitution Scholars Question (Unit 6, Question 2)

Both the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions begin with the phrase "We the People." As government has expanded in both size and authority over time, has the role of the citizen diminished? In what ways, if any, do citizens exercise meaningful influence over the government?

- What powers, if any, are recognized in the Constitutions for people to influence both the structure and function of government?
- In what ways, if any, can government authority be used to limit the power of the citizen?

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12 of the Weirdest Ballot Initiatives in American History

mentalfloss.com/history/government-politics/12-weirdest-ballot-initiatives-american-history

Jake Rossen November 3, 2015

It's Election Day, where democracy gets a workout and where non-felons can exercise their free will to decide who gets to sit in comfortable appointed chairs. It's also a time when voters are faced with occasionally ridiculous decisions courtesy of ballot initiatives, where private citizens who have collected enough signatures can offer up proposals for immediate resolution. Here are some of the strangest questions that have been put to voters.

1. SHOULD WE PROHIBIT TOXIC WASTE IN OUR DRINKING WATER?

"As usual, California voters are being presented with many citizen initiatives…Still another would forbid toxic-waste discharge into drinking water. It is being opposed by the industry, which claims the definition of 'toxic' is too broad."

-- *Park City Daily News*, October 23, 1986 (Approved)

2. SHOULD A POLICE OFFICER GET TO WALK HIS BEAT WITH A VENTRILOQUIST'S DUMMY?

"Along with school vouchers, sales taxes and city charter revisions, voters in San Francisco will decide next Tuesday whether to allow a veteran police officer to walk his beat with a ventriloquist's dummy….Brendan O'Smarty, he of the laughing Irish eyes, whom Officer Geary picked out of a ventriloquist's catalogue after he was selected to work in a community policing program that encouraged officers to use 'creative and ingenious methods' to break down barriers between citizens and police. The hand-carved dummy cost $1,750 because Officer Geary wouldn't hear of the $700 molded particle board version." (via @ClaraJeffery)

-- *The New York Times*, October 30, 1993 (Approved)

3. SHOULD WE GIVE $1 MILLION TO ONE RANDOM VOTER?

"A proposal to award $1 million in every general election to one lucky resident, chosen by lottery, simply for voting — no matter for whom — has qualified for the November ballot. Mark Osterloh, a political gadfly who is behind the initiative, the Arizona Voter Reward Act, is promoting it with the slogan, 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Vote!'"

-- *The New York Times*, July 17, 2006 (Defeated)

4. SHOULD WE TAKE OVER THE GRAND CANYON?

“When voters in Arizona go to the polls next month, they will be asked to decide a land ownership tug of war: Should the Grand Canyon belong to all Americans, or just the residents of Arizona?... A controversial ballot measure backed by Republicans in the state legislature is seeking sovereign control over millions of acres of federal land in the state, including the Grand Canyon.”

-- Reuters, October 23, 2012 (Defeated)

5. SHOULD DENVER SET UP A COMMISSION TO TRACK ALIENS?

“…an eccentric proposal was also rejected in the polls when voters in Denver opted against an initiative to track aliens from outer space. The proposal, known as initiative 300, would have involved setting up a commission to monitor aliens and a website to allow members of the public to report UFO sightings.”

-- *The Guardian*, November 3, 2010

6. SHOULD WE LET ROXIE THE MINIATURE PIG STAY?

“Roxie the potbellied pig will be moving to a new home now that Piqua voters have said she has worn out her welcome. Cynthia and Tim Gaston and their two children, who own the petite porker, said Wednesday they'll move rather than give Roxie up. On Tuesday, residents of the city of 20,600 people, about 30 miles northwest of Dayton in western Ohio, rejected a ballot proposal that would have allowed residents to keep miniature pigs as pets. The vote was 2,682 to 1,957.”

-- *Dayton Daily News*, November 4, 1993

7. SHOULD WE BAN SITTING ON THE SIDEWALK?

“Berkeley, among the most generous cities in the country in funding homeless services, is considering a daytime ban on sitting on the sidewalk in all commercial areas….The city currently prohibits lying on the sidewalk, but police and city officials said the law is ineffective because people sit up when officers walk by, then lie down again.”

-- *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 23, 2013 (Defeated)

8. SHOULD WE JUST START OUR OWN STATE?

“At Nan’s convenience store here in eastern Colorado, where the front door tells visitors that ‘Gun Control Is Hitting Your Target,’ the farmers, crop sprayers, mechanics and retirees who gather for morning coffee say they have had enough of the state and its Democratic leaders. They bristle at gun control laws and marijuana shops, green energy policies and steps to embrace gay marriage and illegal immigrants….So in November, this rural county and 10 others will hold a quixotic vote on whether to secede from Colorado and work to form their own state."

-- *The New York Times*, October 7, 2013 (Defeated)

9. SHOULD WE STOP SELLING THE EUROPEANS OUR HORSE MEAT?

“There’s also Proposition 6, prohibiting the sale of horse meat for human consumption. Each year, an estimated 10,000 California horses end up as gourmet steaks on the tables of France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Japan.”

-- *Lodi News-Sentinel*, November 3, 1998 (Approved)

10. SHOULD WE BAN AIRBOATS AT NIGHT (OR IS THAT A HATE LAW)?

“For more than a decade, a dispute has simmered over airboat noise on Orange Lake, Newnan’s Lake and other water bodies in Alachua County. The battle revved up in 2009 and will go full throttle on Election Day as voters decide on a proposed nighttime airboat curfew banning the boats on all water bodies in the county from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m…The current advertising campaign includes a recent television spot comparing the curfew ordinance to a 'hate' law promoting discrimination."

-- *The Gainesville Sun*, October 18, 2010 (Approved)

11. SHOULD WE BUILD A NEW HOUSE FOR THE PREGNANT ELEPHANT?

“In Cincinnati, zoo officials have threatened to ship off its four Asian elephants, one of them pregnant, if voters reject a $52 million tax levy for a new Elephant House and parking lot.”

-- *The Associated Press*, November 1, 1997 (Defeated)

12. SHOULD WE EXIST?

“Voters in tiny Castlewood, Virginia, meanwhile, will decide whether to vote the town – and the attendant town taxes – out of existence.”

-- *The Associated Press*, November 1, 1997 (Approved—the town effectively abolished itself and was absorbed into Russell County.)

U.S. Constitution: Article 4, Section 4

https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm#a4_sec4

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

U.S. Constitution: Article 5

https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm#a5

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that *no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article*; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

Ohio Constitution: Article 16, Section 3

https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-constitution/section-16.3

Question of constitutional convention to be submitted periodically

At the general election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred and thirty-two, and in each twentieth year thereafter, the question: "Shall there be a convention to revise, alter, or amend the constitution[,]" shall be submitted to the electors of the state; and in case a majority of the electors, voting for and against the calling of a convention, shall decide in favor of a convention, the General Assembly, at its next session, shall provide, by law, for the election of delegates, and the assembling of such convention, as is provided in the preceding section; but no amendment of this constitution, agreed upon by any convention assembled in pursuance of this article, shall take effect, until the same shall have been submitted to the electors of the state, and adopted by a majority of those voting thereon.

Ohio Issue 1, Constitutional Convention Question (2012)

BP ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Issue_1,_Constitutional_Convention_Question_(2012)

Issue 1	
Type	Automatic ballot referral
Topic	Constitutional conventions
Status	

The **Ohio Constitutional Convention Question**, also known as **Issue 1**, was on the November 6, 2012 ballot in the state of Ohio as an automatic ballot referral, where it was **defeated**.

The measure would have created a convention to revise, alter or amend the state constitution. The last time a constitutional convention question was on the ballot in the state was in 1992. That measure was defeated. Of the four constitutional convention questions on the ballot in Ohio, none have ever been approved.[1]

Election results

See also: 2012 ballot measure election results

The following are **official** election results:

Ohio Issue 1		
Result	Votes	Percentage
No	**3,248,142**	**68.08%**
Yes	1,523,239	31.92%

These results are from the Ohio Secretary of State

Text of measure

Ballot language

The ballot language of the measure read as follows:[2]

> “ *At the general election to be held in the year one thousand nine hundred and thirty-two, and in each twentieth year thereafter, the question: ‘Shall there be a convention to revise, alter, or amend the constitution[,]" shall be submitted to the electors of the state; and in case a majority of the electors, voting for and against the calling of a convention, shall decide in favor of a convention, the General Assembly, at its next session, shall provide, by law, for the election of delegates, and the assembling of such convention, as is provided in the preceding section; but no amendment of this constitution, agreed upon by any convention assembled in pursuance of this article, shall take effect, until the same shall have been submitted to the electors of the state, and adopted by a majority of those voting thereon.*
> *A majority yes vote is necessary for passage.*
>
> *Shall there be a convention to revise, alter, or amend the constitution?*[3] ”

Support

No support for the measure has been identified yet

Opposition

The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber stated, "Oppose Ohio Issue 1, Ohio Constitutional Convention: Issue 1 asks Ohio voters if there should be a convention to revise, alter or amend the Ohio Constitution. This is a ballot referral that automatically appears before voters every 20 years. The Chamber opposes Issue 1 and urges a “no” vote because it believes a constitutional convention is not the most efficient or effective process for constitutional review."[4]

Media endorsements

See also: Endorsements of Ohio ballot measures, 2012

Opposition

- The *Akron Beacon Journal* stated: "The Ohio Constitution, adopted in 1912, calls for a statewide vote, every 20 years, on the question of holding a full-fledged constitutional convention, with elected delegates. Ohio voters have never approved such a move, but the question must be posed once again this year. We recommend a “no” vote on state Issue 1 on the Nov. 6 ballot."[5]
- The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* stated opposition to the measure.[6]

Path to the ballot

Section 3 of Article XVI calls for a question about whether to have a convention to appear on the ballot in 1932 and every twenty years thereafter.

Footnotes

1. ↑ *The News Leader*, "Capital News: Petition circulators unleashed, hoping for November ballot," February 29, 2012 *(dead link)*
2. ↑ *Ohio Secretary of State*, "Issue 1," accessed September 14, 2012
3. ↑ *Note: This text is quoted verbatim from the original source. Any inconsistencies are attributable to the original source.*
4. ↑ *Community Press*, "Chamber announces ballot positions," September 12, 2012
5. ↑ *Akron Beacon Journal*, "No on Issue 1," October 9, 2012
6. ↑ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, "Plain Dealer endorsements for the general election," October 8, 2012

Only the first few references on this page are shown above. Click to show more.

A Republican Form of Government

law.marquette.edu/facultyblog/2009/09/a-republican-form-of-government

Edward A. Fallone March 24, 2010

On September 17, I participated in the Constitution Day program at the Law School. All of the presenters were asked to discuss one part of the United States Constitution that is often overlooked. My choice was the "republican form of government" clause, Article IV Section 4, which reads as follows: "The United States shall guarantee to every state in this Union a Republican Form of Government . . . ."

To call this clause of the Constitution "overlooked" is an understatement. The authors of the *Federalist Papers* spent little or no time discussing the meaning of this clause. The Supreme Court, when asked to interpret this clause, has generally admitted that it doesn't have the slightest idea what it means—with the consequence that the Court has rendered the clause irrelevant and left it devoid of meaning. This is a shame because, properly understood, I believe that this clause is one of the most important in the Constitution.

The federal government guarantees every state a Republican form of government. What does the word "republican" mean? It certainly does not refer to a specific political party. Political parties did not even exist in 1789.

Today's school children are generally taught that the clause is intended to guarantee that state governments use the mechanics of *representative* democracy over the mechanics of *direct* democracy. This interpretation is incorrect. While the Framers often wrote of the benefits of a political system whereby voters elected representatives who would make important decisions on their behalf, especially in instances where the geographic territory to be governed was large, the Framers never expressed the opinion that the direct exercise of democracy by the people should be prohibited.

Indeed, this incorrect interpretation of the clause is dangerous because it has led some observers to question the constitutionality of state-wide voter initiatives altogether, such as the ones that regularly go before the voters in California. These types of initiatives may be *unwise* as a means of using direct democracy to determine the policies of state government. But the use of state-wide initiatives of this type is certainly constitutional.

So if the "Republican form of government" clause does not prohibit the use of direct democracy as a means of state government, what *is* its purpose? Simply stated, the clause prohibits the people of any state in the Union from amending their state constitution in order to adopt a monarchy or an aristocracy.

Recall that, prior to 1789, national sovereignty had always– with few exceptions– been lodged in either a monarchy or an aristocracy. It was a novel idea to declare in 1776 that sovereignty belonged in the hands of the people. Never before in human history had a nation of the size of the United States declared its intention to recognize its entire people as the ultimate sovereigns. However, after the Articles of Confederation were adopted following the Declaration of Independence, the national economy was reduced to a shambles and our young country's national security was questionable. By 1789 it was natural to fear that the population in some states might eventually backslide and seek a return to a monarchy as a way of restoring public confidence and preserving order.

What Article IV does, then, is to deny to the people of the states the sovereign power to choose monarchy as a form of government. This clause forever circumscribes the freedom of the people of a state to choose the way in which they govern themselves. The denial of state power in this regard is necessary, because leaving the residents of a particular state with the absolute freedom to choose *any* form of state government would be an infringement upon the sovereignty of the people of the nation *as a whole*.

In fact, by stating that the federal government will "guarantee" a republican form of government, the Constitution makes it clear that the federal government is granted the power to enforce the prohibition on monarchy by force of arms if necessary. Article IV makes it clear, *even more* explicitly than the Supremacy Clause in Article VI does, that the sovereign power of the people as a whole, as expressed through the federal government, is supreme over the sovereignty of individual states.

If one state were to institute a monarchy, it would destabilize the entire Union of states. In 1789, monarchies were viewed as inherently militaristic. Monarchies place the decision of whether to resort to force within the hands of one single individual, where it is not subject to any checks or balances. For a king, an increase in personal power and an expanded border provide mutually reinforcing temptations for invading your neighbors.

If the residents of one state were to adopt a monarchy as their form of government, neighboring states would feel threatened. Monarchies require standing armies to maintain the king's authority, and in order to redress an imbalance in power neighboring states would be forced to follow suit. An alliance between two state monarchies would inspire neighboring republican states to enter into mutual defense pacts. Imagine a United States with fences and checkpoints at the borders between the states.

The best interests of the nation as a whole require the residents of each state to cede away a portion of their political sovereignty to the nation: the ability to choose any form of state government that they desire.

This has important implications. It implies that Lincoln was correct when he declared that the southern states had no right to secede from the Union. While the text of the Constitution is silent on the right of secession, Article IV is an example of an overall constitutional structure that denies state residents the power to exercise political sovereignty within their own borders in a way that threatens national unity as a whole. The denial of an absolute state power to secede is no greater a restriction on state sovereignty than the denial of an absolute state power to adopt a monarchy.

Some scholars have argued that Lincoln had to reinterpret the Constitution in order to impose a federal government of *all the people* that was supreme over the states. In actuality, Lincoln was merely being faithful to the Constitution's original design.

This understanding of Article IV Section 4 also implies that the Supreme Court was correct, in *U.S. Term Limits v. Thornton*, when it ruled that it was unconstitutional for states to amend their constitutions in order to impose term limits on their residents elected to federal office. The Supreme Court's majority opinion in that case relies upon a tortured interpretation of the various qualifications clauses of the Constitution, and the majority opinion raises Article IV Section 4 just long enough to dismiss the clause as irrelevant. However, in the end the Court gets the basic point right by holding that state constitutions cannot impose term limits for federal office.

In his dissent in that case, Justice Thomas asserts that the Constitution's authority depends on "the consent of the people of each individual State, not the consent of the undifferentiated people of the Nation as a whole." Had the majority not overlooked Article IV Section 4, the majority opinion would have had a greater textual basis to rebuke Justice Thomas. Contrary to Justice Thomas' assertion, the Constitution *does* take away from state residents the absolute power to control their *own* form of state government in cases where the *national* political structure is implicated. The sovereign power to make decisions affecting the political structure of the nation as a whole rests with the people of the nation as a whole, not with the people of one state.

The text of the U.S. Constitution contains several clear statements that prohibit the states from frustrating the *economic* unity of the nation. Economic protectionism is clearly precluded by the commerce clause, the privileges and immunities clause, and the full faith and credit clause (*note that the latter two are also located within Article IV*). The fact that the text of the Constitution is far less clear about the predominance of federal interests when it comes to *political* unity has been the source of great debate and conflict during our nation's history.

The debate between centralized power (sovereignty with a *federal* locus) and decentralized power (sovereignty with a *state* locus) goes back to the Federalist debate with the Anti-

Federalists. Even Madison and Hamilton themselves possessed contrary views on the matter (Madison generally favored decentralization while Hamilton strongly favored centralized government). Commenting on the internal inconsistencies within the *Federalist Papers* on this topic, and the text's sudden lurches between advocating a strong federal government at one point and then arguing in favor of state power moments later, some scholars have accused the *Federalist Papers* of reading as if its author was a paranoid schizophrenic.

Is it any wonder, then, that our nation's history reflects this unresolved attitude toward who holds ultimate sovereignty? The primacy of the federal political power over state sovereignty has been advanced by the jurisprudence of Justice John Marshall, the Civil War policies of Abraham Lincoln, and the New Deal legislation of Franklin Roosevelt. The absolute sovereign power of the states to make political choices within their borders has been advanced by Jefferson and Madison in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, by the secessionists during the Civil War, and by the leaders of the States Rights movement in the Twentieth Century.

Article IV Section 4 should remind us that under our Constitution the sovereignty of the people is a *national* sovereignty. No state government, and no individual state population, has the power to take actions that threaten the political unity of the United States. The federal government is superior to the states because it is only through a *federal* government that a *national* people can exercise their sovereignty.

No one denies that the Constitution forces the states into an *economic* union, even when they might prefer state protectionism. Nonetheless, to this very day, many people still argue in favor of an absolute state sovereignty to decide *political* matters within their own borders. By consistently overlooking the "Republican form of government" clause, we obscure the fact that the constitutional text imposes a political union on the states in a way that necessarily places a limit on individual state sovereignty. By rescuing Article IV Section 4 from obscurity, we can resolve the debate over federal supremacy once and for all.

U.S. Constitution: Amendment 1

https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm#amdt_1_(1791)

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

U.S. Constitution: Amendment 9

https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm#amdt_9_(1791)

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

U.S. Constitution: Amendment 17

https://www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/senate-and-constitution/constitution.htm#amdt_17_(1913)

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, That the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

Ohio Constitution: Article 1, Section 2

https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-constitution/section-1.2

Right to alter, reform, or abolish government, and repeal special privileges

All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter, reform, or abolish the same, whenever they may deem it necessary; and no special privileges or immunities shall ever be granted, that may not be altered, revoked, or repealed by the general assembly.

Ohio Constitution: Article 1, Section 20

https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-constitution/section-1.20

Powers reserved to the people

This enumeration of rights shall not be construed to impair or deny others retained by the people; and all powers, not herein delegated, remain with the people.

Ohio Constitution: Article 2, Section 1

https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-constitution/section-2.1

In whom power vested

The legislative power of the state shall be vested in a general assembly consisting of a senate and house of representatives but the people reserve to themselves the power to propose to the general assembly laws and amendments to the constitution, and to adopt or reject the same at the polls on a referendum vote as hereinafter provided. They also reserve the power to adopt or reject any law, section of any law or any item in any law appropriating money passed by the general assembly, except as hereinafter provided; and independent of the general assembly to propose amendments to the constitution and to adopt or reject the same at the polls. The limitations expressed in the constitution, on the power of the general assembly to enact laws, shall be deemed limitations on the power of the people to enact laws.

Civics 101
Episode 5: Calling Congress

Virginia Prescott: [00:00:24] I'm Virginia Prescott and this is Civics 101 a podcast refresher course on some basics that you may have forgotten incense or slept through in school today. It's direct democracy in action. We've received questions about how our democracy works from a number of you and we're going to try and answer one that came to us on Hearken. That's a platform for citizens to ask questions of journalists.

[00:00:51] Hi my name is Arielle. I'm calling from Derry. I want to know why it is that people suggest telling your congressional representatives how you feel about the issues. Are they really required to listen? Does it make a difference? If it does, please tell me how. So I can best direct my energies. Thank you.

Virginia Prescott: [00:01:08] What does happen when you contact your elected legislators. And what's the best way to do it. We produced this podcast in New Hampshire. So we picked up the phone to call our own congressional representative's office to get to the bottom of it. We reached Nick Brown, he's communications director for Annie Kuster, Congresswoman for New Hampshire's 2nd Congressional District. Nick thanks for taking my call.

Nick Brown: [00:01:30] Absolutely. Thanks for having me on today.

Virginia Prescott: [00:01:32] When somebody makes that call to their congressional representatives office who picks up the phone?

Nick Brown: [00:01:37] You know it really depends. Staff assistants definitely take the lead on the phones and training interns to make sure that they're well versed in the positions of Congresswoman Kuster and or whoever their member of Congress is and also the news of the day. And the local news but you know really anyone who is near a phone when the phones are busy is going to be be available to pick up and take those calls.

Virginia Prescott: [00:02:01] Really I imagine somebody coming in to work with the congressperson and you say first job, the phones.

Nick Brown: [00:02:07] Well it's one of the most valuable things that you know young people for an intern answering the phones. It's such a important position because you are the front lines of the office and you're going to be the main contact for a lot of people who are calling in and it's so important that you know the positions know what's happening. Know, you know what's going on in Congress and what's going on in Concord. And it also gives you really valuable experience speaking to people with lots of different perspectives and ideas and teaches you to learn and listen to folks who are calling who disagree and you know often also are calling to support something but you really get to speak to a wide variety of people and that's one of the most valuable things that I think an intern in our office can learn is how to

communicate with lots of different different folks on different issues in any given day.

Virginia Prescott: [00:02:58] So what happens when that constituents opinion or protest or whatever the case may be. How was it recorded there at your office?

Nick Brown: [00:03:08] Yeah absolutely. So the staff assistant or the person who answers the call is going to you know listen patiently and intently to the caller take detailed notes on what their concerns are or their interests are and then that will be put into a system for everyone on the staff and the congresswoman to see.

Virginia Prescott: [00:03:26] How many calls a day does the office field.

Nick Brown: [00:03:29] Oh wow that that varies quite a bit depending on what's happening at the national or local level in the news or in Congress or in the state house. It can go from just a few calls on a slow day when there's not a lot happening to 100 calls in a day. So it really depends on what's what's happening in the news and what people are focused on at any given time.

Virginia Prescott: [00:03:50] So do you think New Hampshire, you must have colleagues there right, in other congressional offices, does New Hampshire deal with fewer calls because the population of the state?

Nick Brown: [00:03:59] I don't think so. You know New Hampshire is a really engaged citizenry and folks who are paying attention and really interested in what's happening at the local level and in Washington. So we hear from a lot of folks. I couldn't tell you the difference between our office and an office from California for instance. But I know that people in New Hampshire care about what their elected officials are working on and wanted to have that dialogue with folks so I think we have a really engaged and active constituency.

Virginia Prescott: [00:04:27] Is it better to call your congressional representative than to e-mail or to post opinions on a social media page. Do all of those opinions or thoughts count the same?

Nick Brown: [00:04:40] Yeah I think that any way you can contact and connect with your representative is really important. Certainly e-mail mail is a big part of how people communicate with us as well as social media. I think calling is great because you get to have that you know one on one connection with the person on the other line and I think that's something that's really important for callers often is to you know speak their mind to someone and you know really know that they're being listened to. So I think from a caller's perspective that's probably one reason why someone would opt to pick up the phone as you get to have that conversation and engage directly with someone.

Virginia Prescott: [00:05:17] So when someone calls their congressional representative what

are the chances that the representatives themselves will actually hear a version of the comment or the question.

Nick Brown: [00:05:28] Sure. Well Congresswoman Kuster is very interested in what her constituents are saying and what they're thinking. And it really helps inform her work down in Washington. So if she checks in with the folks on the phones regularly throughout the day to see what people are calling about and they'll give her you know examples of calls that are coming in and talk about what the callers are saying and because there are such detailed notes and logs taken on every call she has the opportunity to look back and see what people are saying about specific issues.

Virginia Prescott: [00:06:00] I'm wondering if you have a real example of when those calls have made a difference in the congresswoman's opinion how she votes on something.

Nick Brown: [00:06:10] You're probably familiar with the Kinder Morgan pipeline issue that was in the southern tier of the state.

Virginia Prescott: [00:06:16] Could you just briefly summarize that?

Nick Brown: [00:06:18] Sure it was a proposed pipeline through the southern part of New Hampshire that impacted several communities throughout. Congresswoman Kuster's district. And when this was proposed she was doing her due diligence meeting with representatives of the company with advocates and folks involved. And you know really trying to get a sense of the pros and cons of that issue. But one thing that we found was there was she was very aware of was there was a very large number of people calling the office to express their opposition to it because of the impact they would were proceeding that it would have on their lives and in their communities and from those calls she reached the conclusion that the benefits that were being outlined for her did not outweigh the very many concerns she was hearing from constituents in her district and she ultimately voiced her opposition to the pipeline. So I think that's a great example of where local people really concerned about an issue are able to you know tip the scales and make sure that their voices were heard on this.

Virginia Prescott: [00:07:22] So Nick there have been a lot of reports of the hill being flooded with calls since the inauguration of the president. What is the most important metric that you use for measuring the impact would it be the number of calls the specificity of the comments. You know the volume on a given day.

Nick Brown: [00:07:39] Yeah I think the volume certainly weighs in on it. When you're talking about these very specific calls that we're receiving you know for instance if someone has an issue with a certain cabinet nominee we can look and say wow you know 80 people called to voice their opposition to this specific person or any number of people called to say they are concerned about this policy. So I think when you're talking on issues like died is certainly volume makes a big difference.

Virginia Prescott: [00:08:08] New Hampshire is a purple state. We do have mix of Republicans Democrats a lot of independents here. But the current delegation is all democratic. How can those who disagree make sure that they are represented as well.

Nick Brown: [00:08:22] One thing is that Congressman Kuster represents everyone in the 2nd district regardless of whether you're a Democrat Republican or independent and we don't ever ask if you're a Republican or a Democrat or an independent when you call in we gauge everyone's opinion equally and everyone you know goes through the same process. So I think that anyone in the 2nd district can be confident that when they call in their opinion is taken very seriously.

Virginia Prescott: [00:08:49] But I want to know, I guess what...to answer Ariel's question. Does it really make a difference so if you had 200 calls saying do not get rid of the assault weapons ban when you have 40 people saying get rid of the assault weapons ban and it is it is not what Annie Kuster ran on. How did those calls really weigh in?

Nick Brown: [00:09:12] To move to a more concrete example of something that's happened more recently. You look at an issue like that the TPP the Trans-Pacific Partnership where you head though White House and President Obama very much in support of that. And you know pushing Democrats in Congress to support the TPP and we were hearing from callers and constituents that were very concerned about the impact that that would have on their lives in New Hampshire. So ultimately Congresswoman Kuster came out against that because of the response that she heard from her constituents. I think that that's a great example of where the voices of people in New Hampshire coming together really were able to push her towards a decision that reflected what she was hearing from them. So I think you know minority voices have a tremendous amount of weight in how things happen and you'll find that when you have a Democratic president in power you probably more often are going to hear from Republicans who are concerned about some of their issues and when you have a Republican president in power as we do now we hear from a lot of Democrats who are concerned about what's happening at that level.

Virginia Prescott: [00:10:23] So Nick you talked about how important it is for New Hampshire voters and how engaged we are. But does that actually make a difference. I mean you're going to hear from the people who are most vocal. That doesn't necessarily mean that you've got a real sense of how people think in the state does it.

Nick Brown: [00:10:42] You know I think that you do get a sense because of how engaged people in New Hampshire are. You know we hear from callers who are very politically engaged and also folks who heard something on the radio on their way in and wanted to voice their opinion. So I think you do get a large variety of people contacting to share what their thoughts are on an issue their concerns their ideas. And you know young old and in-between it's it's really great to hear how broad the variety of people who call in are foreclosing closing.

Virginia Prescott: [00:11:18] Is there something you want people to know both as a citizen and as someone who works for a member of Congress about what your call does?

Nick Brown: [00:11:28] Yeah I think my take away message is that contacting your member of Congress is critically important whether it's through e-mail phone mail social media the more engaged folks are the better it is for Congresswoman Kuster because she can really rely on what she's hearing from folks as well as everyone to know how people are feeling about the issues that are happening here in Washington and in New Hampshire. And you know we have staff in New Hampshire and in Washington answering these calls so we really rely on hearing from people to know what is happening on the ground and what people really care about and that's critically important to informing the work of Congressman Kuster and any member of Congress.

Virginia Prescott: [00:12:08] Nick thank you for speaking with us.

Nick Brown: [00:12:10] Absolutely. Thank you.

Virginia Prescott: [00:12:11] Nick Brown communications director for and Annie McClean Kuster, congresswoman from New Hampshire's 2nd District. We also get in touch with Daniel Victor. He's a reporter for The New York Times who wrote about the merits of calling rather than emailing your legislators. Daniel welcome to Civics 101.

Daniel Victor: [00:12:34] Thank you.

Virginia Prescott: [00:12:34] So you spoke to several former staffers and current legislators. Is it really that much better to call than to e-mail.?

Daniel Victor: [00:12:42] Well emailing can be effective. I think what people said over and over again is that the e-mail tends to come in big batches and it tends to come from out of town. You don't really know who the people are. Whereas when you're calling a legislator it tends to be more likely it's going to be someone who actually lives in the district that these representatives are supposed to be representing. So they do find that it tends to be a little more personal. It does demand more of the attention of the staff members. They say that an inbox that's overflowing with thousands of e-mails doesn't really bother them that much. But if the phone is ringing off the hook everyday they really can't do much else other than answer the phones.

Virginia Prescott: [00:13:14] We can find scripts if you're to call for a particular issue online. So do staffers regard or give the same weight to those kind of scripted calls as those that are clearly not scripted.

Daniel Victor: [00:13:27] From what they told me a script is better than nothing. But they definitely do take personal stories much more seriously when you are speaking to someone on

the phone. It tends to be a younger staffer if they're hearing personal stories for six to eight hours. Very emotional stuff. It's going to be hard for it's not affect them whereas when you're reading a script and you've heard that before it's going to be a little bit easier to ignore. So again it's better than nothing because you should make your voice heard. But they would prefer to hear, hear something more personal.

Virginia Prescott: [00:13:55] If you're having trouble reaching someone at a national legislative office Senator or Congressperson is it worth it to call on the local level as well?

Daniel Victor: [00:14:06] You tend to get a little bit more attention on the local level and what we've seen recently is that because there has been such intense interest in the beginning of the Trump administration a lot of the legislators voicemails are completely full. You may not be able to get through at all. So if that's happening definitely helps to contact them at the district level at the local level and maybe even if you must write them an e-mail. But more and more Rudd's leaders we're finding are making an effort to expand their voicemail systems to add staff whatever they can do to respond as much as they can.

Virginia Prescott: [00:14:36] How about if your own congressional contingency is for an issue. But you know that somebody from another state is not. Is it worth calling another state senator or congressman. Even if you are not one of their constituents?

Daniel Victor: [00:14:54] That would likely depend on the individual congressman or congresswoman. Some of them I know do give much more attention to people who do live in their district because that is of course their first priority. But I do know for example that Paul Ryan the speaker of the house is constantly getting calls from across the country so if it is somebody in a position of power it probably doesn't hurt to make your voice heard.

Virginia Prescott: [00:15:14] Daniel thank you for speaking with us. You're welcome. Thank you for having me.

Virginia Prescott: [00:15:18] Ok class dismissed and this is one class that encourages you to share your notes with others. You can subscribe on iTunes or visit us at Civic's 101 podcast dot org.

Influence & Lobbying

opensecrets.org/influence

The primary goal of much of the money that flows through U.S. politics is this: Influence. Corporations and industry groups, labor unions, single-issue organizations - together, they spend billions of dollars each year to gain access to decision-makers in government, all in an attempt to influence their thinking.

Use these resources in OpenSecrets.org's Influence & Lobbying section, which are also found at the left, to learn more about Washington's influence industry and its most powerful players.

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Professional advocates make big bucks to lobby members of Congress and government officials on the issues their clients care about. But the money that industries, companies, unions and issue groups spend on lobbying is often just a drop in the bucket compared to what they can reap in return if their lobbyists are successful. Here you can see who spends what on federal lobbying and where they focus their resources.

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Voting in Ohio

legislature.ohio.gov/publications/voting-in-ohio

Ohio's first formal count of voters age 21 and over began on August 1, 1803. Ohio's first law requiring registration of voters was enacted in 1845. Today, although more than 6 million Ohioans are registered to vote, many citizens remain unregistered and ineligible to vote. It's easy to register by mailing a registration form to the Secretary of State or at any of the designated registration sites listed below.

You are qualified to vote if:

You are qualified to register to vote in Ohio if you meet all the following requirements:

- You are a citizen of the United States;
- You will be at least 18 years old on or before the day of the next general election. (If you will be 18 on or before the general election, you may vote in the primary election to nominate candidates, but you cannot vote on issues or party central committees until you are 18);
- You will be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the election in which you want to vote;
- You are not incarcerated (in prison or jail) for a felony conviction under the laws of this state, another state or the United States;
- You have not been declared incompetent for voting purposes by a probate court; and
- You have not been permanently disenfranchised for violating the election laws.
- You are eligible to vote in elections held in your voting precinct 30 consecutive days after you are duly registered to vote in this state; however, you may request an absentee ballot during that period.

Where can I register?

You may obtain a form in person, and register in person, at any of the following locations:

- The office of the Secretary of State;
- The office of any of the 88 county boards of elections;
- The office of the registrar or any Deputy Registrar of the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles;
- Public libraries;
- Public high schools or vocational schools;

- County treasurers' offices; or
- Offices of designated agencies including:
    - The Department of Job and Family Services;
    - The Department of Health (including the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program);
    - The Department of Mental Health;
    - The Department of Developmental Disabilities;
    - The Rehabilitation Services Commission; or
    - Any state-assisted college or university that provides assistance to disabled students.

When you have completed your voter registration application, please review it carefully for completeness and accuracy. You may either personally deliver, or send by U.S. Mail, your voter registration application to a county board of elections or the Secretary of State's office. You, or another person acting on your behalf, also may deliver your application to one of the offices listed above, but you should ensure your application reaches the office of a board of elections or the Secretary of State no later than the voter registration deadline, the 30th day before the election at which you want to vote.

Where do I vote?

You can cast your ballot at the polling place designated to serve the precinct in which you are registered. If you are in doubt as to the location or hours of this polling place, to determine alternative polling locations, or inquire about absentee ballots, check with your county Board of Elections. Contact information for Ohio's 88 county Boards of Elections is located on the Secretary of State's web site.

Text on this page from the Secretary of State's office.

How To Influence The Government

forbes.com/2009/01/19/government-relations-lobbying-oped-cx_mm_dm_0119mercadomaloney.html

January 19, 2009

Jun 19, 2013, 04:47pm EDT

This article is more than 10 years old.

Some pundits are saying that Barack Obama's election means dramatic changes are coming in advocacy and lobbying campaigns. They're missing the real story: President-elect Obama is reinforcing a sea-change that has already taken place. Despite popular lore, the smoke-filled backroom deals to sneak a provision into legislation died long ago. Hiring the "fixer" is a thing of the past.

Modern day lobbyists--aka government relations consultants or legislative advocates--are essentially campaign managers. They have to approach every advocacy issue like they're Obama strategist David Axelrod, with a focus on message, grassroots organizing and media. And the lobbyists must work with their clients to manage all of these issues in a fast-changing new world.

Just as critical, the advocacy team has to offer genuine expertise in each of those three major components of a campaign. And it must include both Democrats and Republicans, who have a reputation for using real shoe leather to get results for their clients.

Meanwhile, politicians keep promoting a caricature of lobbyists that no longer fits, if it ever truly did. In reality, political campaigns and advocacy now mirror each other tactically. Drawing from our experience, here are the key components of today's lobbying campaign--a set of rules that could have come from any candidate's playbook:

Message. If you're running for office, you quickly learn to tailor your message to your audience. It's no different for lobbyists. The team not only has to determine the best message to deliver, but it must be ready to alter that message for different constituencies or party officials. Take the current discussion about which provisions to include in the stimulus package. The one thing everyone has to focus on is jobs. Energy tax credits that assisted the wind or solar industry now must be shown to provide green jobs. And in the current economic environment, a company needs to put real numbers behind a legislative request, including the number of jobs it would create, as well as other benefits to the local community.

Once a politician or lobbyist decides on the message, he or she has to figure out the best person to deliver it. In politics, it's not always the candidate who can wield the most influence; sometimes it's a surrogate with a special connection to the voters (remember Joe the Plumber?).

In traditional lobbying, a company's CEO always came to Washington. But especially now in Washington, legislators like to score political points by being tough on top executives. It can be better to have the plant manager or the beneficiary of the initiative make the case. That plant manager lives in the member's district and may go to the same church, shop at the same grocery store. The local message resonates with policymakers. Our clients even encourage key decision makers to visit manufacturing facilities, warehouses and corporate headquarters in order to see firsthand how jobs can be created.

Grassroots. This is a broad term, but essentially it refers to the "real people" you need to recruit to promote a message. Companies must identify supporters district by district, state by state, who will get behind a particular message. This is where the Obama campaign broke new ground. Plenty of people have talked about how Obama changed the game by raising so much money online. But he did more than that: He mastered the grassroots by turning a lot of those online supporters into volunteers for the campaign, and along the way captured the e-mail addresses of more than 13 million people who could be recruited later to help Obama in other ways. Whether the issue is health care, climate change or something else, the Obama team has a huge pool of supporters to kick-start a grassroots campaign. That's a model now for every advocacy group.

Media. A growing number of people are getting their information through new media sources--more than a quarter of Americans use the Internet as a news source, for example--and smart political campaigns have adjusted. Think of the way candidates used YouTube videos this past cycle for viral messaging, and social networks like MyBarackObama.com to engage younger voters. A 2007 *National Journal* study of Washington insiders, which included Capitol Hill staffers, shows that these decision makers are also relying on new media sources. For instance, 71% of chiefs and deputy chiefs of staff read blogs on a regular basis.

As a result, Internet sites and Web-based tools are re-writing the playbook for legislative advocates. It's no longer just about promoting favorable coverage in *The Washington Post* or on NBC's *Nightly News*. It's about getting the message out--quickly--through news Web sites, twitter feeds, influential blogs, video-sharing sites and social-networking sites.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is among those that have adapted their tactics to fit today's media landscape. Over the past couple of years, the union has attacked private equity firms with more than just traditional tools of advocacy like congressional testimonies, op-eds and congressional allies. It has also gotten friendly bloggers to help build grassroots opposition to moves by stakeholding private equity firms on a variety of issues important to the union. Now, the business community is fighting back on the No. 1 issue for unions, the Employee Free Choice Act, which, if passed, would do away with secret ballots when workers vote on unionization. The counter-attack includes new media messaging through such outlets as YouTube, as well as sympathetic bloggers with reach and influence.

As with political campaigns, these three components of advocacy--message, grassroots and media--are not separate, unrelated parts of the message campaign. To be successful, they must be integrated. The best advocacy groups and lobbying firms have recognized that stove-piped operations are counterproductive, while coordinated efforts multiply a campaign's effectiveness. That means that a lobbying firm's advertising, marketing, legal and corporate teams must coordinate. So what it takes to win in advocacy today is exactly the same as what it takes to win an election: embracing change with a unified team and a unified strategy.

Moses Mercado and Drew Maloney are Managing Directors at Ogilvy Government Relations, a bipartisan firm in Washington, D.C., that represents corporations and institutions with legislative and regulatory concerns.

Transcript for 60-Second Civics Podcast: Ballot Initiatives

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=br11OEFs9n8

“You are listening to 60-Second Civics, the daily podcast of the Center for Civic Education. I’m Mark Gage.

“Initiative, referendum, and recall are a trio of methods, begun during the Progressive era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which allow citizens to participate in direct democracy in their states. Initiative, referendum, and recall describe discrete actions, but they are related by their direct involvement of citizens.

“South Carolina was the first to permit the initiative. There are two forms of initiative: direct and indirect. In a direct initiative, an individual or a group proposes and drafts a law or state Constitutional amendment. Then the initiator gathers a prescribed number of signatures to place the proposal on the ballot for approval or rejection by the voters. In the indirect process, proposals first go to the legislature. If legislators reject the proposal or take no action on it, then the proposal goes to the ballot. Twenty-four states today use the initiative.

“That’s all for today’s podcast. The show’s theme song is ‘Complacent’ by Cheryl B. Engelhardt. You can find her online at cbemusic.com.

“60-Second Civics, where civic engagement only takes a minute.”

Transcript for 60-Second Civics Podcast: Referendum and Recall

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I1gfeUAXMlA

“You are listening to 60-Second Civics, the daily podcast of the Center for Civic Education. I’m Mark Gage.

“The referendum involves placing a measure that has been approved by a legislature on the ballot for popular vote. Some state constitutions require the legislature to refer certain kinds of measures to the people. Others permit citizens to demand a vote on a law that has been passed by the legislature by gathering a prescribed number of signatures. Twenty-four states now use the referendum.

“Recall is a process of removing elected officials from office. In the eighteen states that permit recall, it is used most frequently at the local level. However, in 2003, enough California voters signed petitions to call an election to recall Governor Gray Davis and elect a new governor: Arnold Schwarzenegger.

“That’s all for today’s podcast. Be sure to test your knowledge with the Daily Civics Quiz at civiced.org. Or help spread the word about the podcast with a review on iTunes or Stitcher. 60-Second Civics, where civic engagement only takes a minute.”

Ballot Initiative and Referendum Processes

ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Legal/Ballot-Initiatives

Legal > Ballot Initiative and Referendum
As outlined in Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3519

The powers of initiative and referendum are reserved for the people of Ohio under Article 2, Section 1 of the Ohio Constitution, enabling citizens to place an issue directly before voters on a statewide ballot. Citizens who wish to put a statewide issue on the ballot may do so through one of the following three methods:

1. Initiated constitutional amendment — ORC 3519.01(A)To amend or add an article or part of an article to the Ohio Constitution
2. Initiated statute — ORC 3519.01(A) To add a statute to the Ohio Revised Code
3. Referendum — ORC 3519.01(B) To repeal an existing law or section of law. Note that any law passed by voters is not subject to referendum

Petitioners may begin any of these processes by first designating a committee of three to five people to serve as representatives of the petition and points of contact in all matters relating to the petition. (ORC 3519.02).

Once the petitioners have drafted their proposed initiative and a summary of that initiative (constitutional amendments or statutes), or have drafted their proposed changes to an existing law and a summary of those changes (referendum), they must gather the signatures of at least 1,000 registered Ohio voters. See the table on the Initiative and Referendum Signature Requirements page for more detailed information.

After the petitioners have met the signature requirement, they may submit their petition to the Attorney General's Office to conduct a "fair and truthful" determination of the summary and proposed law:

Constitutional Amendments and Initiated Statutes

If the petition is to initiate a constitutional amendment or statute, the full text of the initiative, the summary, and all signatures must be submitted to the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General has 10 calendar days to conduct an examination to determine if the summary is a fair and truthful representation of the proposed amendment or statute. If the Attorney General determines the summary is fair and truthful, the Attorney General must certify the petition to the Ballot Board. (ORC 3519.01(A)).

Referendum

If the petition is to repeal an existing law or section of law ("referendum"), the petitioners must submit the full text of the law including the proposed changes to that law, a summary of those changes, and all signatures to the Secretary of State's Office. On the same day, or within one business day, a copy of the petition, measure, and summary must also be submitted to the Attorney General's Office. The Attorney General then has 10 business days to conduct an examination to determine if the summary is a fair and truthful representation of the proposed changes to the law. If the Attorney General determines the summary is fair and truthful, the Attorney General must certify the petition to the Secretary of State. (ORC 3519.01(B)).

Obtaining the Attorney General's "fair and truthful" certification is the first step in the process of getting an initiative or referendum on the statewide ballot. For more information about the initiative and referendum processes, please refer to the Ohio Revised Code, the Secretary of State's website, and the Initiative and Referendum FAQ

Please click here for a list of petitions submitted to the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

Report Voter ID Laws

ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id

July 30, 2026

Report Voter ID Laws

Updated April 24, 2026

Related Topic: Elections

Introduction

Thirty-six states have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls. The remaining 14 states and Washington, D.C., use other methods to verify the identity of voters. Most frequently, other identifying information provided at the polling place, such as a signature, is checked against information on file. See NCSL's Voter Verification Without ID Documents.

Proponents argue increasing identification requirements can prevent in-person voter impersonation and increase public confidence in the election process. Opponents say there is little fraud of this kind, that the burden on voters unduly restricts the right to vote and that the laws impose unnecessary costs and administrative burdens on elections officials. All voters, regardless of the type of verification required by the states, are subject to perjury charges if they vote under false pretenses. See "State-by-State In-Effect Voter ID Requirements" (Table 2 below) for citations and details on which IDs are accepted and what happens when a voter does not have ID.

Please note that this page reflects the current voter ID laws for in-person voting, not absentee/mail voting. More details can be found on the map and two tables below.

Note: NCSL does not run elections and cannot provide legal advice. If you are a voter looking for assistance, contact your local election official. You can find your local election official's website and contact information by using this database from the US Vote Foundation.

Key Takeaways

- Thirty-six state laws request or require voters to show some form of identification at the polls.
- Fourteen states and Washington, D.C., do not require any documentation to vote at the polls.

Variations in Voter Identification Laws

NCSL categorizes voter ID laws in two ways: what type of ID is required (photo or non-photo) and what actions are available for voters who do not have ID (strict or non-strict). These two categorization schemes can and do overlap.

Photo vs. non-photo identification

Some states request or require voters to show an identification document that has a photo on it, such as a driver's license, state-issued identification card, military ID, tribal ID and many other forms of ID. Other states accept non-photo identification such as a bank statement with name and address or other document that does not necessarily have a photo. Using this categorization for laws that are **in effect as of April 2025,** 23 states ask for a photo ID and 13 states also accept non-photo IDs. (To see this difference, look at the **columns** in Table 1.)

Procedures for when a voter does not have identification

If a voter fails to show the ID that is asked for by law, states provide alternatives. These laws fit two categories, non-strict and strict. (To see this difference, look at the **rows** in Table 1.)

- **Non-strict**: **At least some voters without acceptable identification have an option to cast a ballot that will be counted without further action on the part of the voter**. For instance, a voter may sign an affidavit of identity, or poll workers may be permitted to vouch for the voter. In some of the "non-strict" states (Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Montana, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah and Vermont), voters who do not show required identification may vote on a provisional ballot. After the close of Election Day, election officials will determine (via a signature check or other verification) whether the voter was eligible and registered, and therefore whether the provisional ballot should be counted. No action on the part of the voter is required.
- **Strict**: **Voters without acceptable identification must vote on a provisional ballot and also take additional steps after Election Day for it to be counted**. For instance, the voter may be required to return to an election office within a few days after the election and present an acceptable ID to have the provisional ballot counted. If the voter does not come back to show ID, the provisional ballot is not counted.

View State-by-State Details on In-Effect Voter ID Requirements (Table 2) for specifics.

	Photo ID	Non-Photo ID
Strict	ArkansasGeorgiaIndianaKansasMississippiNew Hampshire [6]North CarolinaOhioTennesseeWisconsin [5]	ArizonaNorth Dakota Wyoming [3]

Non-Strict	Alabama [1] Florida Idaho Kentucky Louisiana Michigan Missouri Montana Nebraska Rhode Island South Carolina [4]South DakotaTexasWest Virginia	AlaskaColoradoConnecticutDelawareIowaOklahoma [2] Utah Virginia Washington

Table 1: Voter Identification Laws In Force in 2025

[1] Some might call Alabama's law a *strict photo identification* law, because voters who don't show a photo ID will generally be asked to cast a provisional ballot and then must bring the required ID to an election office by 5 p.m. on Friday after Election Day. However, there is an alternative: Two election officials can sign sworn statements saying they know the voter.

[2] Some prefer to call Oklahoma a *photo* voter ID state, because most voters will show a photo ID before voting. However, Oklahoma law also permits a non-photo voter registration card issued by the appropriate county elections board to serve as proof of identity in lieu of photo ID.

[3] Some might call Wyoming's law a *strict photo*ID state, because most voters will show a photo ID before voting. However, until Dec. 31, 2029, Wyoming will accept Medicare and Medicaid identification cards as valid forms of ID for voting, neither of which contain a photo.

[4] South Carolina has a photo ID requirement, but this requirement is waived in select circumstances. See details in Table 2, below.

[5] Wisconsin enacted in 2011 a strict photo voter ID law. It has been implemented, even as legal challenges have proceeded through the courts. In July 2016 a federal court ruled that the law was unconstitutional, and that an alternative to showing an ID, such as signing an affidavit attesting to identity, must be permitted. Then in August 2016 an appeals court ruled that the law could be implemented as long as the state keeps its pledge to provide temporary free IDs to those in need, and to publicize the law. Until the state says otherwise, NCSL will leave Wisconsin in the "strict photo voter ID" category.

[6] In New Hampshire, voters who do not have a valid ID must have their identity and qualifications verified by a lead poll worker. Based on statute, it is unclear what the verification process entails and whether a voter would have to produce additional documentation to prove their identity. If the lead poll worker determines that the voter's qualifications and identity have not been established, the voter shall not be allowed to vote. NCSL classifies New Hampshire as strict because the only recourse for a voter not allowed to vote as a result of the poll worker's determination is take an immediate appeal to the superior court.

Exceptions to Voter Identification Requirements

Most states with strict voter identification requirements make some exceptions. These exceptions may include people who:

- Have religious objections to being photographed (Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin).
- Are indigent (Indiana and Tennessee).
- "Have a reasonable impediment" to getting an ID (Nebraska, North Carolina, South Carolina).
- Do not have an ID due to a recent natural disaster (North Carolina, Texas).
- Are victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking and have a "confidential listing" (Wisconsin).

Search:

State	Acceptable Forms of ID	Voters Without ID	Notes
Ohio Ohio Rev. Code §§ 3501.01, 3505.18, 3505.181	One of the following photo IDs which must have the individuals name and photograph and not be expired: • Ohio driver’s license. • Ohio state ID card or an interim ID form issued by the DMV. • U.S. passport or passport card. • U.S. military ID card, Ohio national guard identification card, or U.S. department of veterans affairs ID card. • A front and back copy of an individual's photo identification. For a U.S. passport, an image of the passport's identification page that includes the individual's name, photograph, and other identifying information and the passport's expiration date.	An individual who does not provide a photo ID at the polling place may cast a provisional ballot. Most voters will need to return to the board of elections office within four days after Election Day to present their valid photo ID. If the voter does not have a photo ID because of a religious objection to being photographed: The individual must complete an affidavit of religious objection, either when they cast the provisional ballot or within four days of the election at the board of elections office. .	

Table 2: State-by-State Details of In-Effect Voter Identification Requirements

First Time Voters

In addition to the laws governing what identification all voters must show at the polls, first time voters may face additional requirements. The federal Help America Vote Act (section 15483(b)(2)(A)) mandates that all states require identification from first-time voters who register to vote by mail and have not provided verification of their identification at the time of registration. The act lists a "current and valid photo identification" or "a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter" as acceptable forms of ID.

Digital ID

In recent years, states have introduced digital options for driver's licenses and IDs. These IDs are often accessed through phone applications. Some states statutorily permit the use of digital IDs to vote, while other states prohibit them.

States that statutorily allow digital IDs as an acceptable form of identification to vote:

- Arkansas (Ark. Code Ann. 7-1-101(40)(B), enacted in 2019)
- Colorado (Colo. Rev. Stat § 1-1-104, enacted in 2023)
- Louisiana (La. Rev. Stat § 40:1321, enacted in 2018)

States that statutorily prohibit digital IDs as an acceptable form of identification to vote:

- Alabama (effective Oct. 1, 2026)
- Georgia (Ga. Code § 21-2-417, enacted in 2025)
- Tennessee (Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112, enacted in 2025)

Year	State	Description
2026	Alabama	Enacted HB 110 , specifying that digital IDs cannot be used for voting.
2026	Florida	Enacted HB 991 , revising the types of valid IDs for voting.
2026	Kentucky	Enacted HB 139, removing the option to provide a social security card, SNAP card or food stamp ID card, or for a poll worker to attest that they personally know the voter in lieu of providing a valid form of ID to vote.
2026	New Hampshire	Enacted HB 323 , removing student ID cards as a valid form of voter ID.

Year	State	Description
2025	Georgia	Enacted HB 296 , requiring IDs used for voting to be presented only in a physical format.
2025	Montana	Enacted SB 276 permitting certain photo student IDs as valid voter ID.
2025	Tennessee	Enacted HB 1316 , prohibiting the use of digital IDs for voting.
2025	West Virginia	Enacted HB 3016 requiring photo ID to vote; previously required non-photo ID.
2025	Wisconsin	Voters approved a constitutional amendment enshrining existing photo ID requirements.
2025	Indiana	Enacted SB 10 specifying educational institution IDs cannot be used for voting.
2024	New Hampshire	Enacted HB 1569 removing processes to cast provisional ballot without photo ID.
2023	Colorado	Enacted SB 276 , allowing state-sanctioned digital IDs to serve as valid voter ID.
2023	Nebraska	Enacted LB 514 requiring photo ID beginning April 1, 2024. Enacted LB 514 requiring photo ID beginning April 1, 2024 (the bill implemented the voter-approved 2022 ballot measure establishing a constitutional requirement for photo voter ID).
2023	Idaho	Enacted HB 124 removing student IDs from acceptable voter ID list.
2023	Wyoming	Enacted HB 79 allowing concealed carry permits as acceptable ID.
2023	North Carolina	State Supreme Court reversed earlier (2022) ruling and restored the voter ID law (from 2018 SB 824).
2023	Ohio	Enacted HB 458 establishing a photo ID requirement (previously non-photo ID requirement).
2022	North Carolina	State Supreme Court upheld ruling striking down the 2018 voter ID law. (SB 824)
2022	Nebraska	Voters approved Initiative 432 establishing a photo ID requirement in the state constitution.
2022	Missouri	Enacted HB 1878 establishing photo ID and removing sworn affidavit alternative.
2021	Kentucky	Enacted HB 574 updating photo ID requirements.
2021	Wyoming	Enacted HB 75, the state's first voter ID law.

Year	State	Description
2021	Montana	Enacted SB 169 requiring two forms of ID if no qualifying photo ID, and adding concealed carry permits to accepted IDs.
2021	Arkansas	Enacted HB 1112 removing sworn affidavit alternative; also enacted HB 1244 removing religious exemption.
2019	Arkansas	Enacted HB 1868 , allowing digital photo IDs to be used for voting.
2019	North Carolina	Legislation passed delaying implementation of new voter ID provisions until 2020; law struck down in 2021.
2019	Hawaii	Enacted HB 1248 repealing requirement to present ID if requested by precinct official.
2018	Arkansas	Voters approved ballot measures requiring photo voter ID.
2018	North Carolina	Voters approved a ballot measure requiring photo voter ID (the measure did not specify the exact requirements of how to implement the constitutional amendment; the legislature was charged with passing legislation to implement the requirement).
2018	North Carolina	Enacted SB 824 , implementing the photo voter ID constitutional requirement that voters had approved at the 2018 November election (this law was struck down in a 2022 court ruling; that ruling was overturned in 2023).
2017	Arkansas	Enacted HB 1047 reinstituting non-strict photo ID requirement.
2017	Idaho	Enacted HB 149 , adding concealed carry weapon license as an acceptable ID.
2017	Idaho	Enacted bill adding concealed carry weapon license as an acceptable ID.
2017	Iowa	Enacted HB 516 establishing non-strict non-photo ID requirement.
2017	North Carolina	U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the decision by federal court that struck down the state’s voter ID law
2017	North Dakota	Enacted HB 1369 creating strict non-photo ID system with alternative documentation options.
2017	Iowa	Enacted HB 516 establishing non-strict non-photo ID requirement.

Year	State	Description
2017	North Carolina	U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the decision by federal court that struck down the state's voter ID law
2017	North Dakota	Enacted HB 1369 creating strict non-photo ID system with alternative documentation options.
2016	North Carolina	Voter ID law (passed in 2013, amended in 2015) struck down by federal court
2015	North Carolina	Enacted HB 836 , amending the voter ID requirement to non-strict (previously strict)
2013	North Carolina	Enacted HB 589 , a strict voter ID requirement and the state's first voter ID law.
2016	West Virginia	Enacted HB 4013 establishing non-strict, non-photo ID requirement effective 2018.
2013–2016	North Carolina	Passed strict ID requirement (2013), amended to non-strict (2015), struck down by federal court (2016), and SCOTUS declined review (2017).
2016	Wisconsin	Federal court ruled strict voter ID law unconstitutional; alternative such as affidavit required, later allowed with safeguards.

Voter ID News

Related Resources

State Elections Legislation Database

This database contains state legislation related to the administration of elections introduced in 2025. Bill information for the current year is updated regularly each week. New measures are added as they are introduced or identified by NCSL staff.

Elections
Database

Election Administration Is the Midterms' Hot Topic

Conversations around election administration are heating up. Here's what you need to know about the top issues heading into the 2026 general election.

Elections
State Legislatures News

Vacancies in the United States Senate

Provides a 50-state overview of how vacancies in the U.S. Senate are filled.

Elections
Table

Putting an Issue on the Ballot

ohiosos.gov/office/duties-and-responsibilities/putting-an-issue-on-the-ballot

Types of Ballot Issues in Ohio

In Ohio, there are **four types of ballot issues** that can be placed before voters. Each has its own requirements and must follow a specific legal process outlined in the Ohio Constitution and the Ohio Revised Code.

Referendum

A referendum allows voters to approve or reject a law recently passed by the Ohio General Assembly and signed by the governor. This process allows Ohio citizens the right to challenge legislation they disagree with before it takes effect.

Legal authority: Article II, Section 1c, *Ohio Constitution*

Learn More About Referendums

Citizen-Initiated Statute

A citizen-initiated statute lets Ohio voters propose a new law (statute) when they believe an issue is not properly addressed by existing law.

Citizens must follow specific procedures to collect signatures and submit the proposed law for a statewide vote.

Legal authority: Article II, Section 1b, *Ohio Constitution*

Learn More About Citizen Initiated Statutes

Citizen-Initiated Constitutional Amendment

A citizen-initiated constitutional amendment is similar to a citizen-initiated statute but proposes a change to the Ohio Constitution rather than creating a new law. This process lets citizens directly propose constitutional changes for a statewide vote.

Legal authority: Article II, Section 1a, *Ohio Constitution*

Learn More About Citizen-Initiated Constitutional Amendments

General Assembly-Initiated Constitutional Amendment

The Ohio General Assembly can also propose changes to the Ohio Constitution. Any proposed amendment must be approved by a three-fifths majority in both the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate before it appears on the statewide ballot.

Legal authority: Article XVI, Section 1, *Ohio Constitution*

Learn More About General Assembly-Initiated Constitutional Amendments

Summary of Ohio Ballot Issue Types

Type	Who Proposes It	What It Does
Referendum	Citizens	Approves or rejects a recently passed law
Citizen-Initiated Statute	Citizens	Proposes a new law for a statewide vote
Citizen-Initiated Constitutional Amendment	Citizens	Proposes a constitutional amendment
General Assembly-Initiated Constitutional Amendment	Ohio General Assembly	Places a constitutional amendment on the ballot

Supreme Court gives Ohio right to purge thousands of voters from its rolls

nbcnews.com/politics/supreme-court/ohio-wins-supreme-court-fight-over-voter-registration-n873226

Pete Williams June 11, 2018

The U.S. Supreme Court gave Ohio a victory Monday in a fight over the state's method for removing people from the voter rolls.

WASHINGTON — In a 5-4 ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court gave Ohio a victory Monday in a fight over the state's method for removing people from the voter rolls, a practice that civil rights groups said discourages minority turnout.

At least a dozen other politically conservative states said they would adopt a similar practice if Ohio prevailed, as a way of keeping their voter registration lists accurate and up to date.

Prof. Rick Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine, predicted that a win for Ohio would escalate voting wars between the political parties.

"You'll see more red states making it easier to drop people from the voter registration rolls," he said.

President Donald Trump, who is in Singapore for the nuclear summit, cheered the decision on Monday night.



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

Just won big Supreme Court decision on Voting! Great News!

Jun 11, 2018 · View on X

All states have procedures for removing from their registration lists the names of people who have moved and are therefore no longer eligible to vote in a given precinct. The issue before the Supreme Court was whether a voter's decision to sit out a certain number of elections could be the trigger for that effort.

Justice Samuel Alito, who wrote the majority opinion, said the court's job was not "to decide whether Ohio's supplemental process is the ideal method for keeping its voting rolls up to date. The only question before us is whether it violates federal law. It does not."

Ohio election officials send notices to anyone who fails to cast a ballot during a two-year period. People who do not respond and don't vote over the next four years, including in two

more federal elections, are dropped from the list of registered voters.

That's what happened to Larry Harmon, a U.S. Navy veteran and software engineer who was turned away from his polling place in 2015 when he found out he wasn't on the list. "I looked and I looked. And I saw my son's name, but I didn't see my name." So he joined a civil rights group in suing the state. Ohio said he was sent a notice, but he said he didn't get it.

A federal appeals court ruled against the state, concluding that roughly 7,500 Ohio voters — in a state that's perennially a presidential battleground — were wrongly purged from the list in the 2016 election.

Opponents of Ohio's system, led by the A. Philip Randolph Institute, said it violated the National Voter Registration Act, which specifies that voters can be purged from the rolls only if they ask, move, are convicted of a felony, become mentally incapacitated, or die. More than half the voters in Ohio fail to cast a ballot over a two-year period, the group said, and those who receive the state's notices simply throw them away.

"The Supreme Court got this one wrong. The right to vote is not 'use it or lose it,'" said Chris Carson, president of the League of Women Voters of the United States. "This decision will fuel the fire of voter suppressors across the country who want to make sure their chosen candidates win reelection, no matter what the voters say."

Justice Stephen Breyer authored the dissent, which was joined by liberal justices Elena Kagan, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor, who also wrote a separate — and scathing — dissent.

Sotomayor scolded the court's majority for ignoring "the history of voter suppression against which the NVRA [National Voter Registration Act] was enacted and upholds a program that appears to further the very disenfranchisement of minority and low-income voters that Congress set out to eradicate."

"Communities that are disproportionately affected by unnecessarily harsh registration laws should not tolerate efforts to marginalize their influence in the political process, nor should allies who recognize blatant unfairness stand idly by," Sotomayor added.

The Ohio Democratic Party issuing a statement condemning the ruling.

"Today’s split decision from the U.S. Supreme Court will unfortunately empower Republican officials across the country to continue making it harder for American citizens to vote," Chairman David Pepper said, adding that "voting rights are on the ballot with this November's elections."

The Obama Justice Department supported the challengers in the early stages of the court fight, arguing that the mere exercise of the right not to vote cannot be the basis for removing a name from the voter rolls. But the Trump administration switched sides and supported Ohio, saying in a court brief that the state's system strikes a balance between "on the one hand dramatically increasing the number of voters on the voter rolls but, on the other, giving states the flexibility they need to manage the issues that arise when you have over-inflated voter rolls."

Ohio Supreme Court kicks kidney dialysis issue off the November ballot

daytondailynews.com/local/ohio-supreme-court-kicks-kidney-dialysis-issue-off-the-november-ballot/article_5c3228f6-5889-5ab8-9c46-73235fbb97ee.html

By Laura Bischoff, Kaitlin Schroeder August 13, 2018

The Ohio Supreme Court delivered a knock out punch to a statewide ballot issue regarding kidney dialysis, ruling the petitions submitted to get on the November ballot invalid.

In a 7-0 decision released Monday, the court determined that the petition circulators failed to file the proper forms before collecting voter signatures, as required by state law. The high court has exclusive jurisdiction over challenges to initiative petitions.

The ballot issue was poised to be a well-funded fight, with millions of health care dollars at stake. The decision comes after opponents of the issue have begun airing television ads across Ohio.

If the ballot initiative had been brought to voters and approved this November, it would have created a constitutional amendment that would have capped the amount dialysis centers can charge to 115 percent of the cost of the service.

The proposed amendment also called for annual state inspections of kidney dialysis clinics and mandate rebates for charges above “reasonable charges” for treatments.

The Ohio Renal Association, which represents dialysis providers, brought the challenge against the Kidney Dialysis Patient Protection Amendment Committee.

The committee fell short of the required 305,591 valid voter signatures and was given 10 days to make up the shortage. On Aug. 1, the committee submitted an additional 41,122 signatures to the Secretary of State.

The committee supporting the amendment includes three officials with the SEIU District 1199, a union that represents health care and other workers.

A message seeking comment was left with the union.

Proponents had said the Ohio initiative would push for-profit dialysis corporations to spend more money on direct patient care and would stop dialysis companies from overcharging.

Anthony Caldwell, spokesman for SEIU District 1199, said in a statement it is shameful that the Ohio Supreme court relied on a technicality “to stop millions of Ohioans from voting on a

critical issue affecting tens of thousands of people who need dialysis to stay alive."

"Those patients will now be denied this chance for improved conditions and better, more sanitary care in the clinics, which this initiative would have produced," Caldwell stated.

Opposition group Ohioans Against the Reckless Dialysis Amendment, which includes the Ohio Renal Association and 24 other organizations, in reaction to the ruling said that "the petitioners didn't follow the law in their $4 million paid petition drive. The court challenge filed by the Ohio Renal Association was a prudent course of action given the potential harm this proposal could bring to Ohio's 18,000 dialysis patients."

The Ohio Renal Association reports that 18,000 dialysis patients receive treatment at 326 clinics across the state. The association said the issue would have placed artificial limits on revenue that clinics receive for their services and mandate that they pay rebates to private insurance companies.

The Dayton Daily News previously reported on how dialysis has grown into a big business, with the majority of the clinics operated by two providers, DaVita and Fresenius Medical Care.

In 2016, Medicare expenditures for outpatient dialysis services were $11.4 billion, a 2 percent increase from 2015.

Dialysis treatment and other health care services for people with end-stage renal disease costs are averaging about $100,000 per year for Medicare beneficiaries, according to a 2016 report from U.S. Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

ELECTION COVERAGE

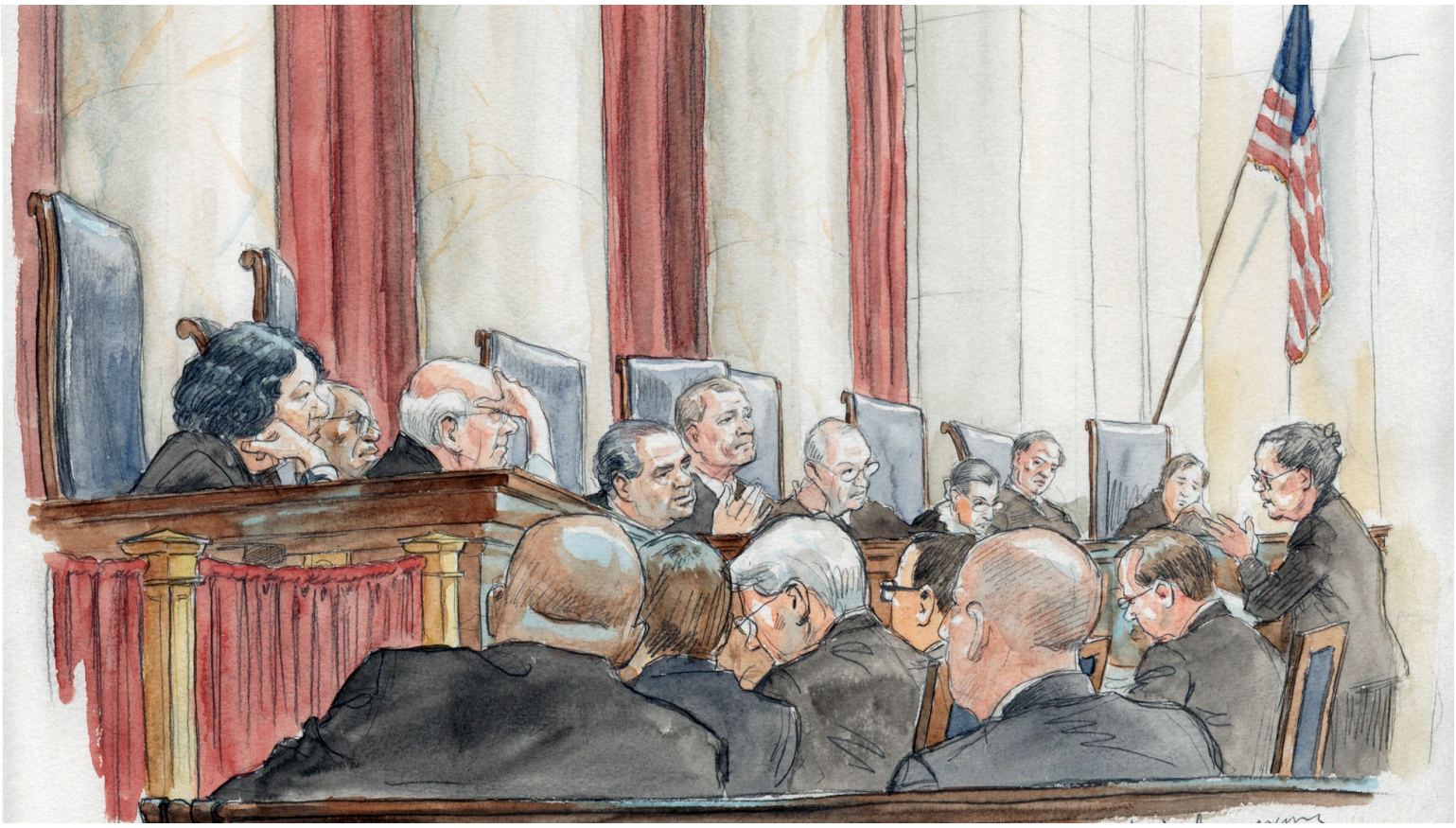
As this fall's election season heats up, follow our team on our Ohio Politics Facebook page. Also follow our team on Twitter at @Ohio_Politics and sign up for our nightly Ohio Politics email newsletter.

U.S.

Why Aren't Cameras Allowed at the Supreme Court Again?

This week, the news cycles has been consumed by the Supreme Court's oral arguments on two closely-watched legal battles in recent history, but unlike virtually every other news story on the planet these days, there were no images or videos because cameras are not allowed in Supreme Court proceedings.

By Robert Kessler



MARCH 28, 2013

SHARE AS GIFT SAVE

This article is from the archive of our partner THE WIRE.

This week, the news cycles has been consumed by the Supreme Court's oral arguments on two closely-watched legal battles in recent history, but unlike virtually every other news story on the planet these days, there were no images or videos because cameras are not allowed in Supreme Court proceedings. Here's why.

The History

The reason why cameras are prohibited in the courtroom goes back to 1946 when the court put into place Federal Rule 53. It states:

> Except as otherwise provided by a statute or these rules, the court must not permit the taking of photographs in the courtroom during judicial proceedings or the broadcasting of judicial proceedings from the courtroom.

In 1972, the rule was expanded to include television cameras.

Then, in 1999, Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley introduced legislation that would have allowed cameras into Supreme Court proceedings. As a response, the Court began to release audio of oral arguments, but only after arguments concluded.

To state the obvious, the Supreme Court last year makes history on a regular basis, whether by ending racial segregation in schools or legalizing both interracial marriage and abortion. In 2000, the Supreme Court essentially picked the President. The Constitution gives a tremendous amount of power to grant a group of nine judges who aren't elected and are given lifetime appointments. Adding a little more transparency into the mix certainly wouldn't hurt anyone.

In Their Own Words

It is Supreme Court Justices themselves who have been the most vocal opponents of allowing cameras into their courtroom. However, there are several members of the current Court who have expressed either a desire to allow cameras in the proceedings or at least some interest in entertaining the idea. C-SPAN has compiled a conclusive list of instances where justices have spoken either for or against cameras in the courtroom. Going by their past statements, the Court is currently split 4-3 towards not allowing cameras, but those two undecided votes could swing the majority in favor of allowing them.

Chief Justice John Roberts; July, 2006, speaking against cameras:

> "There's a concern [among justices] about the impact of television on the functioning of the institution. We're going to be very careful before we do anything that might have an adverse impact."

Justice Antonin Scalia; April, 2005, speaking against because he doesn't trust the media:

> "I wouldn't mind having the proceedings of the court, not just audioed, but televised, if I thought it would only go out on a channel that everyone would watch gavel to gavel. But if you send it out on C-SPAN, what will happen is for every one person who sees it on C-SPAN gavel to gavel so they can really understand what the court is about, what the whole process is, 10,000 will see 15-second takeouts

> on the network news, which, I guarantee you, will be uncharacteristic of what the court does. So I have come to the conclusion that it will misinform the public rather than inform the public to have our proceedings televised."

Justice Anthony Kennedy; March 2007, speaking against because he doesn't trust his colleagues:

> "... But I don't think it's in the best interest of our institution ... Our dynamic works. The discussions that the justices have with the attorneys during oral arguments is a splendid dynamic. If you introduce cameras, it is human nature for me to suspect that one of my colleagues is saying something for a soundbite. Please don't introduce that insidious dynamic into what is now a collegial court. Our court works...We teach, by having no cameras, that we are different. We are judged by what we write. We are judged over a much longer term. We're not judged by what we say. But, all in all, I think it would destroy a dynamic that is now really quite a splendid one and I don't think we should take that chance."

Justice Clarence Thomas; April 2006, speaking against:

> "It runs the risk of undermining the manner in which we consider the cases. Certainly it will change our proceedings. And I don't think for the better."

Justice Stephen Breyer; December 2005, without an opinion:

> "I think there are good reasons for it and good reasons against it. ... I hope eventually the answer will become clear, that either those who are concerned about the negative effects are shown wrong, or they're shown right. But at the moment I think it's quite uncertain what the answer is."

Justice Samuel Alito; January 2006, without an opinion but leaning towards cameras:

> "I had the opportunity to deal with this issue actually in relation to my own court a number of years ago. All the courts of appeals were given the authority to allow their oral arguments to be televised if it wanted. We had a debate within our court about whether we would or should allow television cameras in our courtroom. I argued that we should do it ... The issue is a little different in the Supreme Court. It would be presumptuous for me to talk about it right now ... I will keep an open mind despite the decision I took in the third circuit."

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg; November 1993, speaking in favor:

> "I don't see any problem with having proceedings televised. I think it would be good for the public."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor; July 2009, speaking in favor:

> "I have had positive experiences with cameras. When I have been asked to join experiments of using cameras in the courtroom, I have participated. I have volunteered. "

Justice Elena Kagan; August 2011, speaking in favor:

> "I do think it would be a good idea ... If everybody could see this, it would make people feel so good about this branch of government and how it's operating ... it's such a shame actually that only 200 people a day can get to see it and then a bunch of other people can read about it. Because reading about it is not the same experience as actually seeing..."

***

Many arguments against recording Supreme Court proceedings, including one published Wednesday in *USA Today*, revolve around the idea that, were they televised, these proceedings would turn into some Congressional hearing with each justice fighting to deliver the snappiest soundbite. However, they are neither cable news pundits, nor are they politicians running for re-election and looking to generate publicity, so it's not like they have the same incentives to play for the cameras. Or, rather, they wouldn't have any more incentives

than they currently do.

This article is from the archive of our partner The Wire.

MORE FROM ROBERT KESSLER

See All

Cash Withdrawal Limits Will Last Weeks More for Cypriots

As banks reopened in the beleaguered island nation of Cyprus Thursday, account holders were told daily limits on cash withdrawals would last only a week. But just kidding,

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Accusing the Colorado movie theater shooter's defense team of drumming up publicity and seeking a plea deal bargain that takes advantage of his potential insanity, state attorneys prosecuting

Will Learning Adam Lanza's Motive Make Us Feel Any Better?

Since the morning of Dec. 14 last year authorities have kept a tight lid on how much information was made public during the investigation into the Sandy Hook

Op-Ed: After 50 years, the Freedom of Information Act needs updating

latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-lalwai-winter-levy-foia-50-anniversary-20160708-snap-story.html

Nikita Lalwani and Sam Winter-Levy July 8, 2016

In 1953, newspaper attorney Harold Cross authored a report titled “The People’s Right to Know,” in which he made the case for government transparency. “Public business is the public’s business,” he wrote. “Freedom of information is their just heritage. Without that, the citizens of a democracy have but changed their kings.”

His report came out amid Cold War paranoia and heightened government secrecy, when Washington had gone so far as to classify the amount of peanut butter that U.S. forces consumed. But Cross’ efforts, alongside the tireless advocacy of Congressman John Moss, led President Lyndon B. Johnson, on July 4, 1966, to sign a law guaranteeing the public’s right to obtain government information: the Freedom of Information Act.

This week, the FOIA turned 50. Over the past half-century, the act has been instrumental in revealing government overreach and negligence, and it has provided a vital tool for scholars seeking to correct the historical record.

But the FOIA remains plagued by problems: crippling delays, hefty fees and outdated technology — not to mention expansive loopholes that federal agencies routinely exploit to deny legitimate requests.

The statistics are staggering. Government agencies deny nearly half of all applications, and they heavily redact many of the documents they do release. In 2014, they improperly withheld an estimated 154,750 requests, and the backlog soared to a record 159,741 requests. At least one has been pending for 23 years.

Too often, agencies invoke laughable excuses to retain documents. In 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that a 30-year-old volume of a CIA history on the Bay of Pigs could be withheld because, as the CIA argued, it might “confuse the public.” In response to a request from Human Rights Watch for data on deportations, Immigration and Customs Enforcement claimed that fulfilling the request would cause the agency to “virtually grind to a halt.” After the advocacy group appealed the decision, ICE promptly handed over the information without any apparent difficulty.

> In 2014, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that a 30-year-old volume of a CIA history on the Bay of Pigs could be withheld because ‘it might confuse the public.’

These problems stem from obvious — and fixable — flaws. The first is federal agencies' poor use of technology. In 2008, a survey of government agencies found that none kept consistent electronic records. Today, agencies still print and physically file emails to keep a record of them. In 2011, the State Department saved a mere 0.00006% of its emails.

The second is a lack of oversight. Different agencies exercise broad discretion in responding to FOIA requests, and there is no independent organization to enforce consistency. In 2015, for example, Human Rights Watch requested identical information from each branch of the armed forces. The Air Force demanded $168,316 in processing fees; the Army asked for $1,584.

Technically, the Department of Justice's Office of Information Policy is tasked with overseeing the Freedom of Information Act. But the Justice Department has been antagonistic toward it from the start, testifying early on that the act was unconstitutional. The OIP's director, Melanie Pustay, insists the FOIA "works well for many requesters," and the department recently awarded itself five points out of five for its "proactive" release of records. (Hearing this, Jason Chaffetz, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, told Pustay: "You live in la-la land.")

The final problem is the ease with which agencies can refuse legitimate requests. Under Exemption Five, also known as the "withhold it because you want to" rule, agencies can suppress internal communications that would be inconvenient or incriminating — or simply difficult to process — on the grounds that they constitute an "interagency or intra-agency communication" or "draft."

Of course, agencies sometimes have legitimate reasons for withholding information — national security, for example. Yet too often, agencies err on the side of excessive secrecy. In 2014, agencies cited exemptions more than 550,000 times.

In June, President Obama signed a bill designed to close some of these loopholes. Under the bill, agencies are allowed to withhold information only when there is a foreseeable harm to releasing it, codifying a presumption of openness. The bill prevents agencies from using Exemption Five for information older than 25 years, and it creates a centralized online portal for all FOIA requests.

But there is more to be done. The bill does not authorize any new funding to help agencies comply with the amendments, even though they need money to process backlogged requests, hire new FOIA officers and invest in recordkeeping. Nor does the bill include penalties for agencies that miss deadlines for responding to FOIA requests, creating little incentive for them to change their approach.

What's needed, ultimately, is a shift in priorities: The Freedom of Information Act must become a central part of every agency's mission. Perhaps then it can truly live up to its promise, as Johnson articulated a half-century ago. "No one should be able to pull curtains of secrecy around decisions which can be revealed without injury to the public interest," he said. "The United States is an open society in which the people's right to know is cherished and guarded."

Nikita Lalwani is a former staff editor at Foreign Affairs and freelance writer. Sam Winter-Levy is a staff editor at Foreign Affairs.

What if you had as much political influence as a billionaire?

cnn.com/2015/02/16/opinion/schmitt-politics-money

Mark Schmitt February 16, 2015

Editor's Note: Mark Schmitt, director of the program on political reform at New America, has worked in the U.S. Senate and was editor of The American Prospect. This is the seventh in a series, "Big Ideas for a New America," in which the think tank New America spotlights experts' solutions to the nation's greatest challenges. The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of the author.

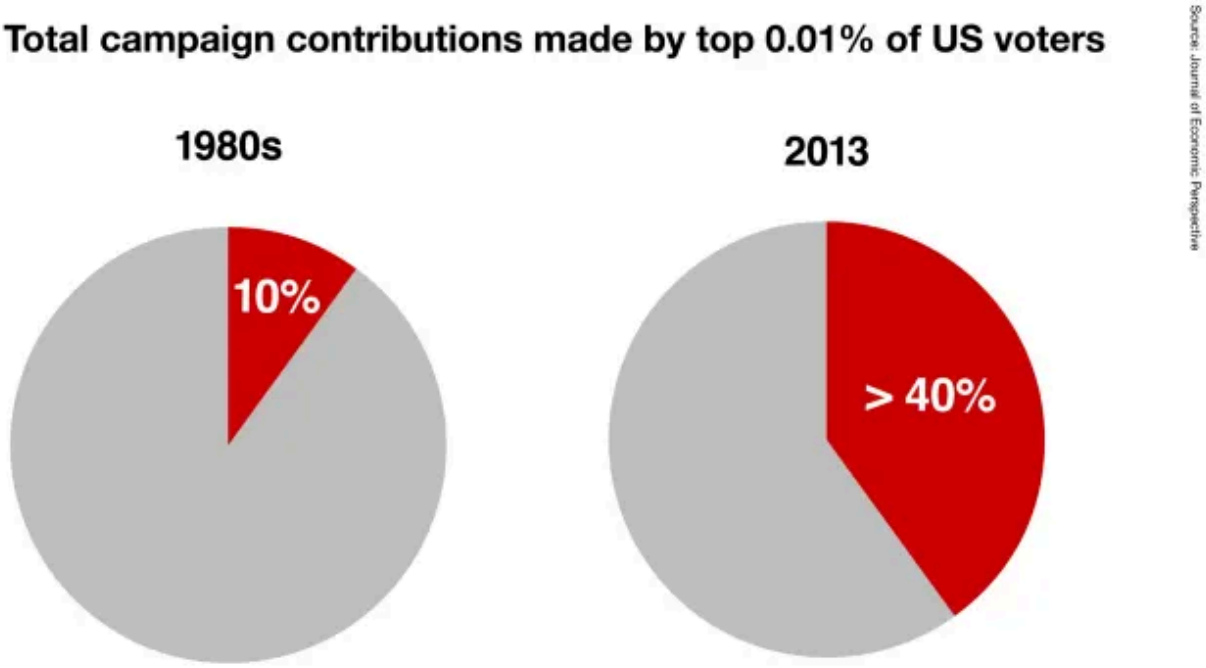
If you want to have influence in the American political process, Michelle Obama in 2014 advised an audience, there's only one thing to do: "Write a big, fat check…Write the biggest, fattest check that you can possibly write."

The only thing surprising about the first lady's statement is that a leading political figure said out loud something we all know. What she didn't say is that her advice doesn't work for everyone, to put it mildly.

For the vast majority of us, the "biggest, fattest check" we can write to a political campaign is probably in the low two digits, and many people can't even spare a few dollars. And that just isn't enough to influence the political process, to help your favorite candidate run a competitive campaign, or to get an issue you care about onto the agenda.

Academic research confirms this intuition. A 2013 study found that the top 0.01% of political donors – just 24,000 people – accounted for more than 40% of campaign contributions, up from about 10% in the 1980s. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the wealthiest 0.01% tripled their share of national income in the same time period.

Other research, by political scientists Martin Gilens and Andrew Bartels, has shown that the policy preferences of the very wealthy consistently prevail over the preferences of middle-class and poor voters. Because of those "big, fat checks," economic inequality crosses over into the political sphere, where the wealthy gain advantages that lock in their gains, threatening the vibrancy and growth of our economy.



The traditional approach to reducing the influence of economic inequality on democracy has been to limit those fat checks, by capping individual contributions, the total amount one person can give to campaigns, or outside spending intended to influence elections. It is those limits – enacted into law after Watergate, and after the “soft money” scandals of the late 1990s – that have been weakened by recent Supreme Court decisions such as Citizens United and McCutcheon.

But even without judicial intervention, the big checks and the people who can write them have always found ways to influence elections and policy. In a time of staggering inequality, the political influence of the very wealthy cannot easily be contained.

What if we consider an alternative approach? Instead of trying to limit money, and failing – let’s empower everyone. What if everyone could write a check, not necessarily a fat one, but enough that, together with others, it could make it possible for people to run who don’t have access to the very wealthy, or ensure that the concerns and preferences of ordinary voters carry at least some weight in the process?

This approach is the opposite of limits – it aims to open up the system, and to encourage broader participation by citizens, not only as voters, but as volunteers and even donors. If politicians have a broad base of support, they will be far less dependent on the 0.01%, even though the big spenders will be out there.

Politicians will have as much reason to spend time with ordinary voters – who might become donors – as with the very wealthy. And it will be easier for a candidate who doesn’t start with

her own million-dollar bank account, or a cadre of rich friends or business allies to reach the point where she can be heard and potentially competitive.

There are several ways to use modest amounts of public funds to make this vision a reality, and all of them have been tested. One that seems to work well, in various states and cities, provides voluntary full public financing to candidates who show a broad base of support through small donations – in other words, several thousand small checks turn into one big one, and candidates can stop; others, such as New York City, successfully encourage candidates to reach out to small donors by supplementing contributions of $175 or less with public funds.

But many people can't even consider donating $50 or $175 in the hope that their views will be reflected in government. (For someone who earns the minimum wage, $175 is more than three days' pay.)

To make sure that everyone can have a voice in the dialogue of democracy, we should go further by establishing a system that gives everyone a small stake in the political marketplace. Legal scholars Bruce Ackerman and Lawrence Lessig have proposed to give everyone a voucher – "Patriot Dollars" in Ackerman's term – of $50 to give to any candidate or a political party.

"Patriot Dollars" or a similar system of vouchers would require building a new system to distribute and redeem the vouchers, and avoid fraud, but we could achieve much the same effect with a tax credit: Allow every adult to reduce the taxes they owe, or increase their refund, by the amount they contributed to campaigns, parties, or even small political organizations, up to $50.

The tax credit should be refundable, like the Earned Income Credit that encourages work, in order to the extend the benefits of political participation to everyone, including people who don't earn enough to pay federal income tax. Tax credits have traditionally had bipartisan support, including from conservatives who oppose most efforts to limit campaign money, and legislation to create a tax credit for political contributions was introduced by now-retired Republican Rep. Thomas Petri of Wisconsin.

While the federal tax code included a credit for political giving in the 1970s and 1980s, the idea seems to have been forgotten, except in a few states. The best model for the design of a tax credit is Minnesota's Political Contribution Refund, which allows donors to collect their $50 immediately, simply by sending a receipt to the state revenue office.

The result is the exact reverse of the top 0.01% dominance that we see in federal elections: donations of $100 or less account for 45% of political funding in Minnesota, compared to less

than 10% in 20 states, according to the Campaign Finance Institute.

Tax credits aren't the only way to moderate the influence of the very wealthiest on democracy, and they won't solve all the problems. With tax credits alone, a little-known candidate might have trouble raising enough money in very small donations to reach a competitive position.

But combining the tax credit with a system of matching funds, such as New York City's, or full public financing, would make those first dollars go further. And we'll still need limits on contributions to prevent the corruption that's likely when a politician owes his power to a few large donors.

Call it the opportunity agenda for politics – in which everyone has the opportunity to exercise the same kind of influence Michelle Obama was talking about. For Washington policymakers, the next steps include:

– Study state tax credit systems, like Minnesota's and Oregon's, and figure out what works and why.

– Combine tax credits with public financing, on the model of Rep. John Sarbanes' bipartisan Government By the People Act.

– Encourage private-sector technology innovations to help candidates, voters and organizations use the tax credit and make small donations easier.

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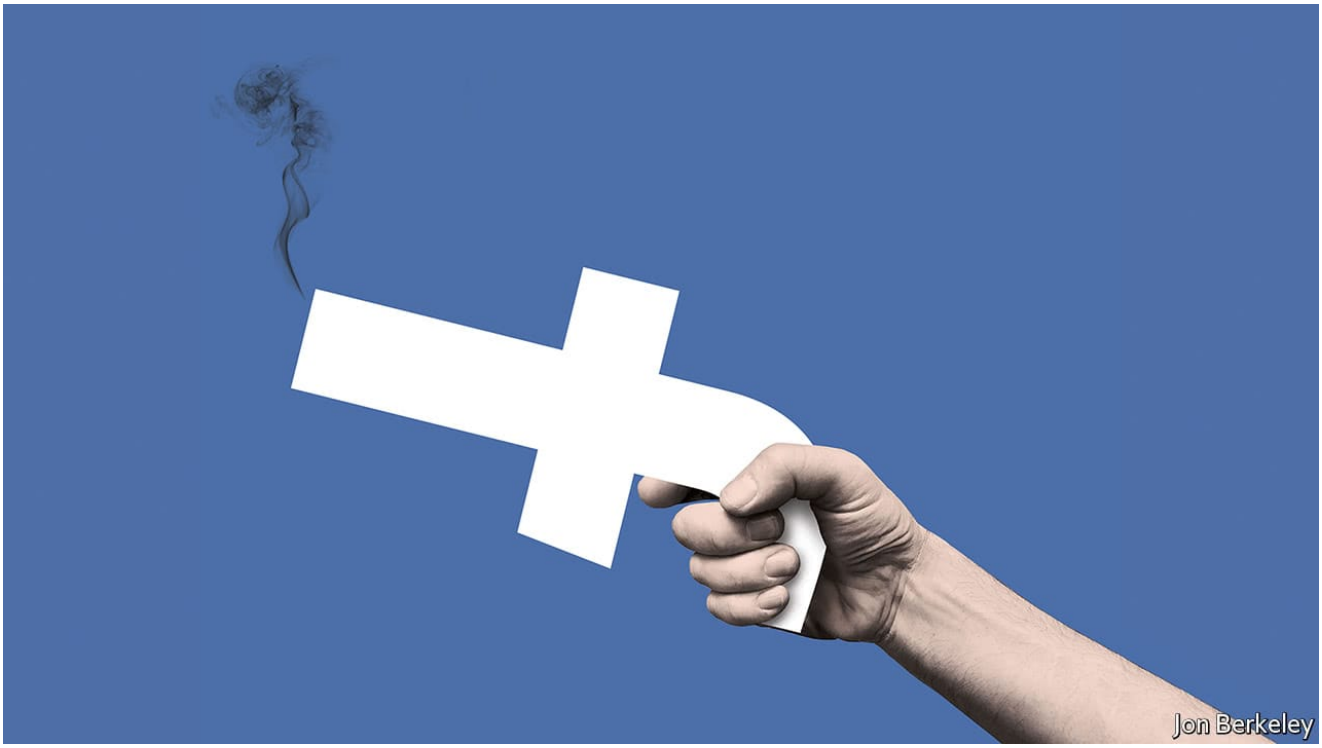
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Do social media threaten democracy?

economist.com/leaders/2017/11/04/do-social-media-threaten-democracy

The Economist November 4, 2017

Leaders | Scandal, outrage and politics



Nov 4th 2017|5 min read

IN 1962 a British political scientist, Bernard Crick, published “In Defence of Politics”. He argued that the art of political horse-trading, far from being shabby, lets people of different beliefs live together in a peaceful, thriving society. In a liberal democracy, nobody gets exactly what he wants, but everyone broadly has the freedom to lead the life he chooses. However, without decent information, civility and conciliation, societies resolve their differences by resorting to coercion.

How Crick would have been dismayed by the falsehood and partisanship on display in this week’s Senate committee hearings in Washington. Not long ago social media held out the promise of a more enlightened politics, as accurate information and effortless communication helped good people drive out corruption, bigotry and lies. Yet Facebook acknowledged that before and after last year’s American election, between January 2015 and August this year, 146m users may have seen Russian misinformation on its platform. Google’s YouTube admitted to 1,108 Russian-linked videos and Twitter to 36,746 accounts. Far from bringing enlightenment, social media have been spreading poison.

Russia's trouble-making is only the start. From South Africa to Spain, politics is getting uglier. Part of the reason is that, by spreading untruth and outrage, corroding voters' judgment and aggravating partisanship, social media erode the conditions for the horse-trading that Crick thought fosters liberty.

A shorter attention spa...oh, look at that!

The use of social media does not cause division so much as amplify it. The financial crisis of 2007-08 stoked popular anger at a wealthy elite that had left everyone else behind. The culture wars have split voters by identity rather than class. Nor are social media alone in their power to polarise—just look at cable TV and talk radio. But, whereas Fox News is familiar, social-media platforms are new and still poorly understood. And, because of how they work, they wield extraordinary influence.

They make their money by putting photos, personal posts, news stories and ads in front of you. Because they can measure how you react, they know just how to get under your skin (see article). They collect data about you in order to have algorithms to determine what will catch your eye, in an "attention economy" that keeps users scrolling, clicking and sharing—again and again and again. Anyone setting out to shape opinion can produce dozens of ads, analyse them and see which is hardest to resist. The result is compelling: one study found that users in rich countries touch their phones 2,600 times a day.

It would be wonderful if such a system helped wisdom and truth rise to the surface. But, whatever Keats said, truth is not beauty so much as it is hard work—especially when you disagree with it. Everyone who has scrolled through Facebook knows how, instead of imparting wisdom, the system dishes out compulsive stuff that tends to reinforce people's biases.

This aggravates the politics of contempt that took hold, in the United States at least, in the 1990s. Because different sides see different facts, they share no empirical basis for reaching a compromise. Because each side hears time and again that the other lot are good for nothing but lying, bad faith and slander, the system has even less room for empathy. Because people are sucked into a maelstrom of pettiness, scandal and outrage, they lose sight of what matters for the society they share.

This tends to discredit the compromises and subtleties of liberal democracy, and to boost the politicians who feed off conspiracy and nativism. Consider the probes into Russia's election hack by Congress and the special prosecutor, Robert Mueller, who has just issued his first indictments. After Russia attacked America, Americans ended up attacking each other (see article). Because the framers of the constitution wanted to hold back tyrants and mobs, social media aggravate Washington gridlock. In Hungary and Poland, without such constraints, they

help sustain an illiberal, winner-takes-all style of democracy. In Myanmar, where Facebook is the main source of news for many, it has deepened the hatred of the Rohingya, victims of ethnic cleansing.

Social media, social responsibility

What is to be done? People will adapt, as they always do. A survey this week found that only 37% of Americans trust what they get from social media, half the share that trust printed newspapers and magazines. Yet in the time it takes to adapt, bad governments with bad politics could do a lot of harm.

Society has created devices, such as libel, and ownership laws, to rein in old media. Some are calling for social-media companies, like publishers, to be similarly accountable for what appears on their platforms; to be more transparent; and to be treated as monopolies that need breaking up. All these ideas have merit, but they come with trade-offs. When Facebook farms out items to independent outfits for fact-checking, the evidence that it moderates behaviour is mixed. Moreover, politics is not like other kinds of speech; it is dangerous to ask a handful of big firms to deem what is healthy for society. Congress wants transparency about who pays for political ads, but a lot of malign influence comes through people carelessly sharing barely credible news posts. Breaking up social-media giants might make sense in antitrust terms, but it would not help with political speech—indeed, by multiplying the number of platforms, it could make the industry harder to manage.

There are other remedies. The social-media companies should adjust their sites to make clearer if a post comes from a friend or a trusted source. They could accompany the sharing of posts with reminders of the harm from misinformation. Bots are often used to amplify political messages. Twitter could disallow the worst—or mark them as such. Most powerfully, they could adapt their algorithms to put clickbait lower down the feed. Because these changes cut against a business-model designed to monopolise attention, they may well have to be imposed by law or by a regulator.

Social media are being abused. But, with a will, society can harness them and revive that early dream of enlightenment. The stakes for liberal democracy could hardly be higher.

From the November 4th 2017 edition

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Here's Who Found That Russia Meddled in the 2016 Election

ADD TIME ON GOOGLE



U.S. President Trump (L) and Russian President Vladimir Putin shake hands before attending a joint press conference after a meeting at the Presidential Palace in Helsinki, on July 16, 2018. *Yuri Kadobnov—AFP/Getty Images*

by Abby Vesoulis and Abigail Simon

JUL 16, 2018 3:40 PM ET

When President Donald Trump appeared to accept Russian President Vladimir Putin's denials of Russian meddling in the 2016 election Monday, he wasn't just breaking with Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

He was also disagreeing with U.S. intelligence agencies; two congressional committees that investigated the issue; his own Defense secretary, director of national intelligence and national security adviser; and private cybersecurity experts.

At a joint press conference Monday in Helsinki, Trump declined to criticize Putin for meddling in the election, called his denial "powerful" and criticized the special counsel's investigation as a "total witch hunt."

"My people came to me, [Director of National Intelligence] Dan Coats came to me and some others, they said they think it's Russia. I have President Putin; he just said it's not Russia," Trump said. "I will say this: I don't see any reason why it would be."

Here's a closer look at the U.S. agencies and people who have said that Russia meddled in the election.

U.S. intelligence agencies

A report issued by high-ranking American intelligence officials in January of 2017 concluded that Russian operatives reporting to Putin interfered in the 2016 presidential election in favor of Trump. It was drafted and compiled by the CIA, the FBI and the National Security Agency.

The document stated that Putin "ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election" aiming to "denigrate Secretary Clinton" and showing a "clear preference for President-elect Trump."

The Senate intelligence committee

On July 3, 2018, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence issued a bipartisan report which asserted that the intelligence community's findings on Russian meddling were fairly and professionally done and that more evidence had since come forward.

"As the inquiry has progressed since January 2017, the Committee has seen additional examples of Russia's attempts to sow discord, undermine democratic institutions, and

interfere in U.S. elections and those of our allies," the report noted.

The House intelligence committee

On April 27, 2018, the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence released a report written by the committee's Republicans which found no evidence that the Trump campaign worked with Russia to interfere with the election.

But that report did find that Russia had tried to meddle.

"In 2015, Russia began engaging in a covert influence campaign aimed at the U.S. presidential election," it said. "The Russian government, at the direction of President Vladimir Putin, sought to sow discord in American society and undermine our faith in the democratic process."

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The Justice Department

In May of 2017, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein appointed Special Counsel Robert Mueller to investigate possible collusion between Trump's campaign team and Russian officials.

In February, the Justice Department indicted 13 Russian operatives and three companies on charges related to waging "information warfare against the United States of America" and interfering with the election to help the Trump campaign.

On Friday, the department announced further charges against 12 Russian nationals on counts of hacking the Democratic National Committee, Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and state election systems. Several of those indicted worked for the G.R.U, Russia's military intelligence agency.

"The goal of the conspirators was to have an impact on the election. What impact they may have had ... is a matter of speculation; that's not our responsibility," Rosenstein said, though he also noted Friday's charges included "no allegations of knowing involvement by anyone on the campaign and no allegations that the alleged hacking affected the election result."

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Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats

The current Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, has frequently warned his government colleagues of the dangers Russia poses to America's cybersecurity.

"The warning signs are there. The system is blinking. It is why I believe we are at a critical point," Coats said, while addressing the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C., on Friday. "Today, the digital infrastructure that serves this country is literally under attack."

Coats called Russia the "most aggressive foreign actor, no question."

Defense Secretary James Mattis

The current U.S. Defense Secretary, James Mattis, has tentatively backed the findings of the U.S. intelligence agencies, reaffirming on multiple occasions that America has likely faced Russian meddling in its elections.

When asked by press in December, 2017 about whether he believed Russian interference took place during the 2016 presidential campaign, Mattis said, "Yes, I believe they did." Later, in February, Mattis announced that "there is very little doubt that they [Russia] have either interfered or attempted to interfere in a number of elections in democracies."

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Former CIA Director Mike Pompeo

Mike Pompeo, now Secretary of State, asserted there is agreement among intelligence officials that Russian meddling took place, during remarks he made while he was still CIA director in June of 2017.

"I am confident that the Russians meddled in this election, as is the entire intelligence community," Pompeo said. "This threat is real."

National Security Adviser John Bolton

Bolton, Trump's National Security Adviser, has also indicated he believes Russians interfered in the election, and said Putin probably knew about it.

Bolton told ABC's Jonathan Karl that he found it "hard to believe" Putin didn't know about Russian military intelligence officials' efforts to interfere in the elections.

Bolton said Putin "made it plain that he said the Russian state was not involved," when the pair met in Moscow ahead of the Trump-Putin summit. Putin "was very clear with his translator that [state] was the word that he wanted," Bolton said.

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White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders

During a press conference in February of this year, Press Secretary Sarah Sanders acknowledged Russian involvement, but denied it had any impact on election results.

"It's very clear that Russia meddled in the election. It's also very clear Russia didn't have an impact on the election," Sanders said at the briefing. "And it's also very clear that the Trump campaign didn't collude with the Russians in any way for this process to take place."

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