

Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;
At the First Session,

R. C. BEADLE & A. H. BROWN

Begun and held at FRANCES BORKHMAN
Washington, D. C., on the fifteenth day of May,
one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage to women.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution, and shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

Article
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Speaker of the House of Representatives
Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate

A VIRTUAL EVENT:
THE 19TH

**WHOSE VOTE
IS IT ANYWAY?**

BALTIMORE
**CENTER
STAGE**

THE 19TH: WHOSE VOTE IS IT ANYWAY

WELCOME

Stephanie Ybarra, Artistic Director

FANNIE LOU HAMER

Testimony Before the DNC Credentials Committee,
August 22, 1964

Performed by Dawn Ursula

“WE ARE THE PEOPLE”

Performed by Melissa Li

From *99% Stone*

Book and Lyrics by Letta Neely

Music and Lyrics by Melissa Li

“PISCATAWAY REMATRIATION”

Dr. Gabrielle Tayac

**Historian at Smithsonian National Museum of
the American Indian**

“CAN’T BE”

**Written, Composed, and Performed
by Dawn Avery**

“TO THE FRONT:
BLACK WOMEN AND THE VOTE”

**Savannah Wood,
Executive Director of Afro Charities,
Archive Director AFRO**

“BLACK SUFFRAGE”

Written and Performed by Lady Brion

FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

Address before the Eleventh
National Women’s Rights Convention, May 1, 1866

Performed by Tracie Thoms

“WOMAN”

Performed by Shereen Ahmed

Accompaniment by Danny K. Bernstein

From *The Pirate Queen*

Music by Claude-Michel Schönberg

Lyrics by Alain Boublil, Richard Maltby, Jr., and
John Dempsey

“YO MISMA FUI MI RUTA /
I WAS MY OWN ROUTE”

Performed by Yesenia Iglesias

Written by Julia de Burgos

“BODIES ON BALLOTS”

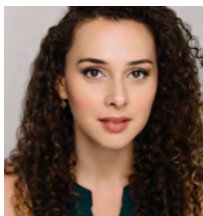
Written and performed by Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi

“TOGETHER, YOU CAN REDEEM THE
SOUL OF OUR NATION”

An excerpt from *The New York Times* Op-Ed
by John Lewis, July 30, 2020

Performed by Treshelle Edmond

FEATURED PERFORMERS



Shereen Ahmed is currently starring as Eliza Doolittle in the first national tour of *My Fair Lady*. Broadway: Lincoln Center Theater's revival of *My Fair Lady* (OBC) understudying Laura Benanti as Eliza Doolittle. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology & Anthropology with a concentration in Criminal Justice from Towson University. Her artistic collaborations inspire raising awareness to issues of diversity, inclusion, and equality through her work, volunteering, and meaningful conversation. www.shereenahmedonline.com | @shereen_ahmed



Dawn Avery is a Grammy-nominated cellist/vocalist/composer who shares contemporary soundscapes from spiritual, pop and classical elements that reflect a deep devotion rooted in her Native American heritage and Sufi experience. Avery looks for opportunities to make a positive difference through art and community. She is especially pleased to be part of this event and would like to honor the

Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) women who played a pivotal role in starting the suffrage movement in Seneca Falls. Avery's exploration of sacred music led her to study the relationship between music and spirituality, having been privileged to work with Pavarotti, Derakshani, Khan, Sting, Cage, the Dalai Lama, Baba Catalkaya, Ray John and Jan Longboat, among others. Honoring both the community and its space as sacred, Avery fosters intercultural and spiritual freedom by creating multimedia concert ceremonies and directing a world music program and festival at Montgomery College in Rockville, MD.



Jordan Bonardi was born in Baltimore, MD and is a recent graduate of The Gilman School. Jordan was presented the 2020 Faculty Award for his knowledge of history. As a sophomore, he was named the school's first student archivist and held that position until graduation in Spring 2020. He is a living historian and an avid traveler, having visited most US states, Canada, the Caribbean, and Europe. He will be attending the University of Virginia in the Fall.



Lady Brion is a national poetry slam champion and organizer based out of Baltimore, Maryland. She received her bachelors in communication from Howard University and her MFA in Poetry from University of Baltimore. She has performed all around the world and has been published in literary journals from around the country. She recently published her first collection of poetry entitled "With My Head Unbowed". Lady Brion is the founder and director of the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts and Entertainment District.



Angelo Cooper Jr is a 16 year old junior at McDonogh High School. He is an all-around athlete and is currently on his school's football and golf teams. In his spare time, he pursues building his online gear swap business.



Faith Cooper is an 18 year old senior at McDonogh High School. She volunteers at Meals on Wheels and is an avid golfer on her school's varsity team.



Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi has been dubbed the Ancient Jazz Priestess of Mother Africa. Lady Dane Figueroa Edidi is a Nigerian, Cuban, Indigenous, American Performance Artist, Author, Poet Playwright (*Klytmenestra: An Epic Slam Poem* (which garnered 4 Helen Hayes nominations), *For Black Trans Girls...*, *Ghost/Writer*), a 2x Helen Hayes Award Nominated Choreographer (2016, 2018), Advocate (*Founder of the Inanna D Initiatives*), Educator and co-editor of the *Black Trans Prayer Book*.



Treshelle Edmond is from Los Angeles, California and last appeared at Baltimore Center Stage as Sally in *Richard & Jane & Dick & Sally*. She is known for her role of Martha Bessel in Deaf West's production of *Spring Awakening* at the Brooks Atkinson Theater (Ovation Award winner for Acting Ensemble of a Musical). Other Broadway credits: Lydia in the Broadway revival of *Children of a Lesser God*. Treshelle is also known for her American Sign Language performance of the National Anthem at Super Bowl XLIX with Idina Menzel and "America the Beautiful" with John Legend. Her television credits include the 70th Annual Tony Awards, cast performance, *Late Night w/Seth Meyers*, cast performance, and television shows *Master of None* (Netflix) *House, M.D.* and *Glee*. Off-Broadway theater credits include *The Colored Museum* and *What Came After*.



Paige Hernandez (Creative Team) is a multidisciplinary artist who is critically acclaimed as a performer, director, choreographer and playwright. As an AEA equity actress, Paige has performed on many stages throughout the country. She has collaborated with the Lincoln Center and has been commissioned by several companies including the National New Play Network, the Smithsonian, The Kennedy Center, La Jolla Playhouse and the Glimmerglass Festival. She is the recipient of an Individual Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council as well as three Helen Hayes nominations for choreography and performance. Paige has also been named a "classroom hero" by The Huffington Post, a "Citizen Artist Fellow" with the Kennedy Center, "40 under 40" by the Washington Post and one of "Six Theatre Workers You Should Know" by American Theatre Magazine. She is elated to be the Associate Artistic Director of Everyman Theatre in her hometown of Baltimore, MD. With her company B-FLY ENTERTAINMENT, Paige continues to develop and tour original work internationally. www.paigehernandez.com



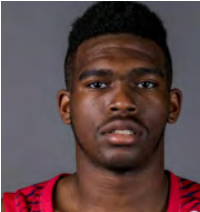
Yesenia Iglesias is a Puerto Rican actor, activist and teaching artist who has been a member of the DMV television and theater community since 2016. Her work has been featured on various stages including Ford's Theater, The Kennedy Center, Folger Shakespeare Theatre, Round House Theatre, Signature Theatre, and Shakespeare Theatre Company, among others. Yesenia is a graduate of the Professional Actor's Training Program at the University of Washington, and a member of the United Stuntmen Association.



Melissa Li is a composer, lyricist, bookwriter, and performer based in NYC and Baltimore. She is a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Award, a Dramatists Guild Foundation Fellow, a Lincoln Center Theater Writer-in-Residence, a 2019 Musical Theatre Factory Maker, a MacDowell Colony Fellow, a Company One Pao Arts Fellow, and a former Queer|Art|Mentorship Fellow. Musicals include *Interstate* (Mixed Blood Theatre, New York Musical Festival Winner “Outstanding Lyrics”), *MISS STEP*, *Cancelled* (Keen Company), *May Day*, *Surviving the Nian* (The Theater Offensive, IRNE Award Winner for “Best New Play” 2007), and *99% Stone*. Her works have received support from 5th Avenue Theatre, The Village Theater, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Musical Theater Factory, Playwrights Horizons, Keen Company, Weston Playhouse, NewYorkRep, Company One Theatre, National Performance Network, and New England Foundation for the Arts, among others.



Valeria Morales is a 10th grader at our Lady of Good Counsel High School who is thrilled to be back at Baltimore Center Stage after reading for Mother Bayard and Cousin Ermengarde in their iteration of *The Long Christmas Dinner*. Some more recent previous works include Olney Theatre: *Miss You Like Hell* (Olivia), Adventure Theatre: *Fantastagirl and the Math Monster* (Fantastagirl), *Luchadora* (Vanessa and Lupita), and Washington National Opera: *Holiday Concert*, *Tosca*, and *The Lion, the Unicorn, and Me*. She’d like to thank Baltimore Center Stage for the opportunity and everyone involved in the creation of this super relevant and meaningful event!



Jason Murphy is a rising sophomore at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, attending on a full athletics scholarship, where he is a member of the basketball team and a communications major. Jason graduated with high honors from Saint Frances Academy in Baltimore where he also served as senior class president. He has twice earned Presidential and Congressional Awards for community service and traveled to South Africa at fifteen as a delegate of the National Basketball Association to participate in Basketball without Borders.



Madeline Sayet (Creative Team) is a theater maker who believes the stories we pass down inform our collective possible futures. For her work as a director, writer, and performer she has been honored as a Forbes 30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment, TED Fellow, MIT Media Lab Director’s Fellow, National Directing Fellow, Drama League Director-In-Residence, NCAIED Native American 40 Under 40, and a recipient of The White House Champion of Change Award from President Obama. She is a member of the Mohegan Tribe, serves as the Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program (YIPAP), and is known throughout the field for her work promoting indigenous voices and decolonizing systems. She recently premiered her solo performance piece *Where We Belong* at Shakespeare’s Globe and RichMix in London to critical acclaim. Recent directing work includes: *Staged at Home: A Virtual Benefit Concert* (Long Wharf Theatre), *Midsummer Night’s Dream* (South Dakota Shakespeare), *Henry IV* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre), *Whale Song* (Perseverance Theatre), *She Kills Monsters* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre), *As You Like It* (Delaware Shakespeare), *The Winter’s Tale* (Amerinda/HERE Arts), *Poppea* (Krannert Center, Illinois), *The Magic Flute* (Glimmerglass), *Macbeth* (NYC Parks), *Miss Lead* (59e59). www.madelinesayet.com

www.madelinesayet.com



Chayla Stanton is from Baltimore, Maryland. She is a graduate of Baltimore School for the Arts, and is now a freshman at Bowie State University, where she will be majoring in Theatre Arts. She is looking forward to pursuing a career in the arts.



Dr. Gabrielle Tayac, a member of the Piscataway Indian Nation, is an activist scholar committed to empowering Indigenous perspectives. Gabi earned her Ph.D. and M.A. in Sociology from Harvard University, and her B.S. in Social Work and American Indian Studies from Cornell University. Her scholarly research focuses on hemispheric American Indian identity, multiracialism, indigenous religions, and social movements, maintaining a regional specialization in the Chesapeake Bay. Gabi served on NMAI’s staff for 18 years as an educator, historian, and curator. She engages deeply in community relationships and public discourse. She recently returned from a two year journey to uplift the voices of indigenous elder women leaders, sponsored by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. Gabi has now settled back into the local landscape as an Associate Professor of Public History at George Mason University.



Tracie Thoms is a series regular opposite Octavia Spencer on Apple’s *Truth Be Told*. She’s best known for her roles in *Love* for Netflix, *UnREAL* for Lifetime, *Cold Case* for CBS, *Rent* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. She’s recurring on *9-1-1* for Fox, and recently appeared in multiple episodes of *Lincoln Rhyme: Hunt for the Bone Collector* for NBC, *The First* for Hulu and *Gone* for WGN.

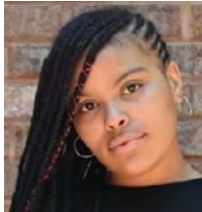


Dawn Ursula last appeared in the title role of *Toni Stone* at ACT; A resident company member with Everyman Theatre, she most recently appeared as Mame in *Radio Golf*. Also a resident company member with Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, she most recently appeared there as Madre Maria in *Botticelli in the Fire*. Other credits include: Ruth in *A Raisin in the Sun* at Arena Stage; the Angel in *Angels in America 1 & 2* (Round House Theatre and Olney Theatre Center) and Grace Kumalo in *Lost in the Stars* (Washington National Opera). She has received two Helen Hayes Awards and thrice been nominated. On-camera credits include Isabella in PBS’ *Prince Among Slaves* and Mrs. “Bunny” Colvin on HBO’s *The Wire*. Pronouns: she/hers. Private coach: Vera Katz Instagram: @dawnursula, www.dawnursula.com.



Nicole A. Watson (Creative Team) is the associate artistic director at Round House Theatre as well as a freelance director and educator. Recent credits include *The Niceties* (Geva Theatre) *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Round House Theatre), *A Doll’s House Part 2* (Round House Theatre), *Sweat* (Asolo Repertory Theatre), and *Skeleton Crew* (Baltimore Center Stage). She is an associate artist at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, a New Georges affiliated artist, an alum of the Women’s Project Lab, the Drama League, and a member of the SDC. As a director

she has worked at the O’Neill Theater Center, the Chautauqua Theater Institute, Playmakers Rep, the Working Theater, Theater Latte Da, Asolo Rep, the New Black Fest, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, New Georges, Working Theatre, the Lark, New Dramatists, and the 52nd Street Project. As an educator she has worked at the University of Maryland College Park, the Kennedy Center, NYU, North Carolina School of the Arts, Smith College, Two River Theater, Long Island University, and ACT in San Francisco. Her interest is in new plays, especially those that interrogate history and amplify the narratives of those who have been ignored or misrepresented. www.nicoleawatson.com



Stephanie Corrin Williams is an activist and an entrepreneur focused on creating and promoting natural beauty products and sharing vegan lifestyle tips with fellow teens. She is an active community volunteer and is a rising senior at Owings Mills High School in Owings Mills, Maryland.



Savannah Wood is an artist and cultural organizer with deep roots in Baltimore and Los Angeles. Through her work with LA-based arts organization Clockshop, and Theater Gates Studios in Chicago, she has had the opportunity to work with unique archives, interpreting their contents for the wider public. As Director of Afro Charities and Archives Director for the 128-year-old Afro American Newspapers, Wood is creating programming and infrastructure to increase access to the Afro’s extensive archives. She is the editor and creative director of the newly released *To the Front: Black Women & the Vote*, which celebrates Black women’s contributions to the suffrage movement, and connects their activism with that of their 21st century counterparts.

CREATIVE TEAM

Paige Hernandez, Nicole Watson, and Madeline Sayet — Creative Team

Kat Pagsoligan — Video Editor

Samuel Morreale — Artistic Line Producer



MULTIPLE PATHS TO THE 19TH

By Sabine Decatur

The road to the 19th amendment was *long and winding*, and paved by a broad coalition of intersecting multi-racial movements. The suffrage movement was filled with fraught racial politics and exclusionary tactics, but women of color and working class women agitated for the vote in other organizing spaces. In order to begin to understand the full story of the 19th amendment, we have to look at the people of color who inspired the suffrage movement and at the intersecting movements that brought it across the finish line:

For hundreds of years before the 19th amendment, and for the hundred years since, Indigenous women all across Turtle Island (North America) have been using their voices in political spaces.

There are as many Indigenous social structures as there are Indigenous nations (over 500), but many embraced equality across genders, and many were—and still are—matriarchal. The political work of these women still ripples through American culture, especially those of the matriarchal Iroquois confederacy, whose [“Great Law of Peace” inspired the US Constitution.](#)

In the 1830s, abolitionism moves into the mainstream, due largely to the [highly visible efforts of Black activists](#) like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, David Walker, and Maria Stewart.

Inspired by the work of Black organizers, white women start to get involved in the anti-slavery movement; Some, like Susan B. Anthony, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, and Abby Kelley Foster, even become full-time paid organizers. Through the abolition movement, they assert their right to participate in public life. But not everyone in the movement has the same view on women’s involvement. When they are denied participation in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in 1840, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton decide to start their own movement to advocate for women’s rights. From the start, the women’s movement is interconnected with abolition, with shared strategies, shared membership, and a shared interest in voting rights that helps establish women’s suffrage as a central issue in the national dialogue.

In the late 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement opens the door for the Women’s Liberation Movement, but this second wave of feminism largely benefits only middle-class white women.

In 1848, suffragist Lucretia Mott visits the Seneca Nation, one of the nations of the Iroquois Confederacy.

[Mott cites her experience](#) with the Seneca women as the model that showed her that western mythologies of natural male superiority were a lie and that another world is possible. Later that year, they would return to Seneca Falls for the now iconic women’s rights convention. They discussed matters from women’s rights to equal pay, to education, to property, to divorce, and to vote. No Black or Indigenous women were invited.

In 1992, Carol Moseley Braun becomes the first woman of color elected to the US Senate, a full 70 years after the first white woman US Senator. Of the 57 women who have ever served in the Senate, only 5 have been women of color.



By the 111th United States Congress (2009–2011), the number of women Senators had increased to 17, including 4 Republicans and 13 Democrats

In 1861, the Civil War begins, and the suffrage movement splinters over the issue of race.

When the 15th amendment expands voting rights to Black men, many white women suffragists come out in opposition; Elizabeth Cady Stanton says “it is better to be the slave of an educated white man, than of a degraded, ignorant black one ...”. Along with Susan B. Anthony, Stanton forms the National Woman Suffrage Association, while those committed to racial justice—including Lucy Stone and Josephine Ruffin—found the American Woman Suffrage Association.

In 1874, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union begins to advocate for moral reform, with a focus on the issue of alcohol.

For them, women’s suffrage is a tool to pass Prohibition laws, because temperance was considered a women’s rights issue: men drink their money away and subject their wives and children to domestic violence and poverty. Temperance leaders like Frances Willard utilize racist rhetoric to gain support, arguing that Black and immigrant men abuse alcohol and pose a threat to society and to white women in particular. In an [1890 interview in the New York Voice](#), Willard says “The problem on [white Southerner’s] hands is immeasurable. The colored race multiplies like the locusts of Egypt. The grog shop is its center of power.”

During the crack epidemic of the 1980s and 90s, politicians use similar moralistic rhetoric to paint Black people as “gangbangers,” “welfare queens,” and “superpredators” to justify anti-Black policies.

In the late 1800s, millions of white middle-class women join women’s clubs, social gatherings that evolved into civic ones.

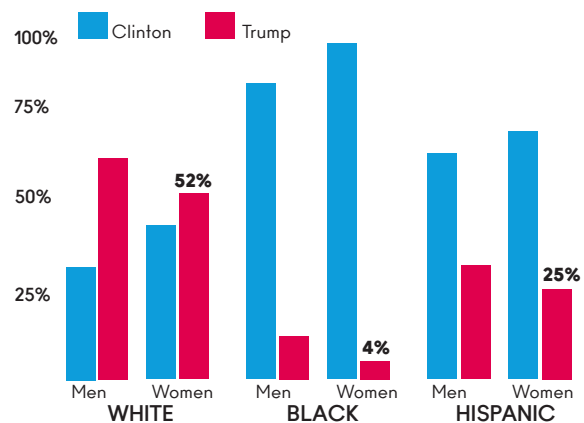
By mobilizing constructions of womanhood with language like “municipal housekeeping” and “maternal expertise,” these women are able to find their way into political reform, establishing libraries, protecting natural resources, even raising the age of consent. They also advocate for suffrage, arguing that women could help “clean up” the government. Still, in the late 19th century, women’s clubs are largely uninterested in racial justice and are deeply segregated.

In 1890, after their proposed women’s rights amendment gets no traction in Congress, the suffrage movement reunites and shifts to a state-by-state strategy.

Over the next 20 years, they secure voting rights for women in 18 states. In southern states, they appeal to anti-Black racism

by arguing that giving white women voting rights would help keep white people in power. The few Black women who are left in these organizations are pushed out.

2016 VOTE: WASHINGTON POST



In 2016, 52% of white women vote for Donald Trump.

In 1896, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Mary Church Terrell, [Hallie Quinn Brown](#), Francis E.W. Harper, and others respond to segregated women’s clubs by creating the National Association of Colored Women.

They adopt the motto “lifting as we climb,” and advocate for suffrage as a part of a broader strategy to end violence against the Black community. Dozens of local Black women’s clubs do deep work in their communities. In Baltimore, suffragists [Margaret Gregory Hawkins](#), [Estelle Young](#), and [Augusta T. Chissell](#) form [the DuBois Circle](#), an advocacy group that still exists today.

In the early 1900s, working class women argue that suffrage is a labor issue.

Immigrant women workers demand the vote as a tool for women to advocate for safe and equitable working conditions. These labor movements give rise to anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist ideologies and anarchists like Emma Goldman and Afro-Indigenous activist Lucy Parsons, whose labor strikes, anti-police demonstrations, draft resistance, and more make suffrage look conservative.

In 1913, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organize the Woman Suffrage Procession, a massive parade of over 5,000 protestors in the nation's capital on the eve of Woodrow Wilson's inauguration.

This march is the culmination of an organizing strategy that launched "women's parades" around the country in order to increase pressure on local governments. Black women are not allowed to march with their state's delegations, but were rather relegated to a segregated group in the back of the parade.

In 2017, thousands of women march through those same streets of DC and around the country the day after Donald Trump's inauguration, but the organizers still champion white feminism and exclude trans women and women of color.

In 1915, DW Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* becomes a symbol of the new mass media era, circulating its pro-KKK message widely, even in the White House.

The film weaponizes white womanhood, representing Black men as a primitive threat to fragile white femininity, and erasing the [real history](#) of white women as active perpetrators of brutality during and after slavery. The popularity of the film amplifies anti-Black sentiments that already proliferate through even the radical movements for justice.

In 2020, Amy Cooper calls the police on Christian Cooper while he is birdwatching in Central Park, claiming that "an African American man is threatening [her] life."

In 1918, World War I ends, but a virus continues to sweep across the globe, killing millions.

With America positioning itself as a beacon of democracy abroad during the War, the state of women's voting rights appears increasingly hypocritical. Mounting pressure from protests, as well as appreciation for women's contributions to the war effort, [shift public opinion](#), and President Woodrow Wilson stops opposing suffrage. His begrudging support nudges the Senate towards passing the 19th amendment.

In July 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on and disproportionately impacts communities of color, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez speaks up against the misogyny that still exists in US political spaces, describing "a culture of a lack of impunity, of acceptance of violence and violent language against women, an entire structure of power that supports that."



IDA B. WELLS -BARNETT

In August 1920, the 19th amendment is ratified by 36 states.

But the work wasn't done for women of color: Indigenous suffragists like Zitkála-Šá and Susette LaFlesche Tibbles kept fighting until they secured citizenship in 1924 and voting rights in 1947. Puerto Rican suffragists like Luisa Capetillo kept fighting for their access to the ballot until 1935. Asian suffragists like Mabel Ping-Hua Lee kept fighting against rising anti-immigrant and anti-Asian sentiment, achieving voting rights in 1952. Black suffragists like Ida B. Wells-Barnett faced increasing anti-Black violence and a reinvigorated KKK (spurred on in part by the racist rhetoric of the temperance and white women's suffrage movement), but kept fighting through organizations like the NAACP. The official women's suffrage movement ended in August 1920, satisfied with its partial victory, and leaving women of color to finish the fight for themselves.



TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE

By Sabine Decatur

That is the question. The current US governance system, including some of its most convoluted structures like the Electoral College, were designed with the specific desire to keep the power out of the hands of the American people and in the hands of a more “trustworthy” elite class of electors and representatives. And if you’ve seen any episode of *The West Wing*, *Scandal*, or *Veep*, (or felt betrayed by your own real-life elected officials), you know that these elite representatives are not always trustworthy. So given all of that, what value is there in gaining the right to vote? Activists, scholars, and thinkers have had many different takes over the years:



“I have said this before, and I will say it again. The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. **It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democracy.**”

There are forces in this country that want to keep American citizens from having a rightful say in the future of our nation. That’s why the [Voting Rights Act] was gutted. We have to change that. We must change it and we will.”

JOHN LEWIS, 2013,
[RESPONDING TO THE SHELBY V. HOLDER
SUPREME COURT DECISION](#)

“Tribal, local, and regional politics are situated in the same colonial arrangement that benefits the ruling class: politicians are concerned with rules and ruling, police and military enforce, judges imprison. Regardless of who and on what scale, no politician can ever represent Indigenous lifeways within the context of a political system established by colonialism. A less harmful form of colonial occupation is fantasy.

The process of colonial undoing will not occur by voting. You cannot decolonize the ballot.”

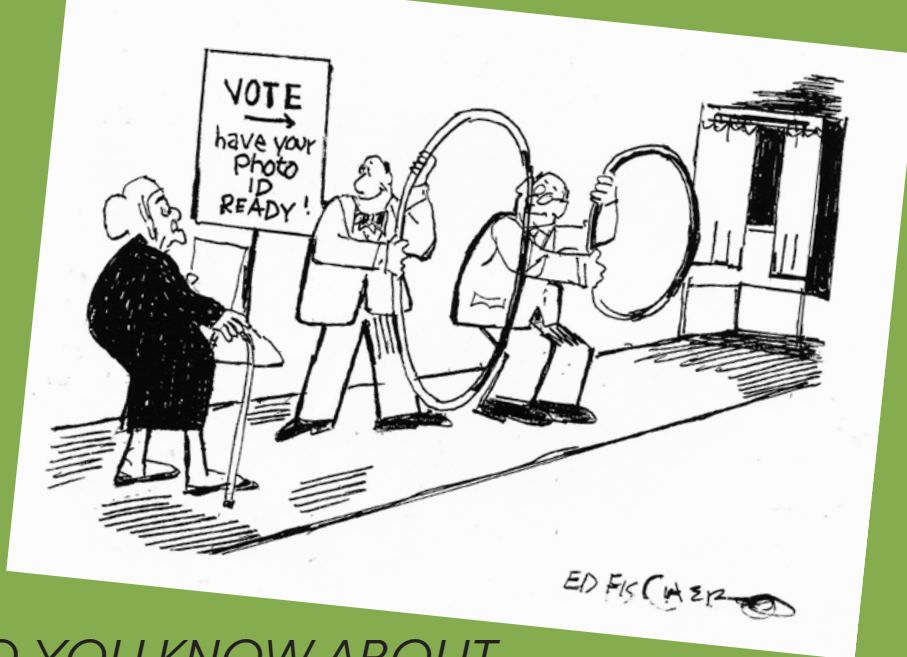
INDIGENOUS ACTION, JUNE 2020,
[“VOTING IS NOT HARM REDUCTION” ZINE](#)

“In our electoral system as it exists, neither party represents the future that we need in this country. Both parties remain connected to corporate capitalism. But the election will not so much be about who gets to lead the country to a better future, but rather how we can support ourselves and our own ability to continue to organize and place pressure on those in power...”

**recognizing that the electoral arena
is not the best place for the expression
of radical politics.”**



ANGELA DAVIS, JUNE 2020,
[QUOTED FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH DEMOCRACY NOW](#)



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT

DISENFRACTISEMENT?

By Sabine Decatur

LET'S FIND OUT!

The fight for the ballot is far from over; Do you know who is and isn't allowed to vote in America today? Let's find out:

Q: Ever since the right to vote was expanded beyond just white men who owned property, those in power have found new ways to limit that right. In addition to literal disenfranchisement, policies at the local, state, and national level continue to restrict people's ability to vote, especially targeting Black and brown folks and other marginalized communities. How many voter suppression tactics can you name?

*A: **There are so many!** Voter ID laws, limiting vote-by-mail, inaccessible polling places, voter purges, voter registration restrictions, gerrymandering, precinct closures and relocations, shortened voting hours, limiting voting to work days, literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses.*

Q: True or false? All Immigrants who legally reside in the United States have the right to vote.

*A: False! In addition to the 9.7 million undocumented immigrants who can't vote, the **10 million legal residents who have not yet been naturalized are disenfranchised as well.** They all still pay taxes and contribute to the local and national economies. Many of these individuals are currently frontline "essential" workers and as such are at higher exposure to COVID-19.*

Q: Which of these groups is entirely or partially disenfranchised by State and national laws?

- A. Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people
- B. Un-naturalized immigrants
- C. Americans who live in Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and other US Territories
- D. Voting-age adults with disabilities who are under legal guardianship
- E. All of the above!

A: You guessed it! It's E; all of the above. The total number of Americans whose right to vote has literally been stripped away is estimated at over 25 million! And that's before we even start talking about tactics of voter suppression...

Q: True or false?

Voter suppression tactics were used back in the day, but we fixed them with the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

A: False! The tactics may have gotten more creative, but they certainly have not stopped. In fact, in just 2013, the Supreme Court struck a piece of the Voting Rights Act that required states to get preclearance to prove that new voting laws aren't discriminatory. Almost immediately following that decision, 10 states introduced new legislation that disproportionately impact people of color's ability to vote.

Q: Which of these voter suppression policies is oldest?

- A. In Tennessee, a law was passed requiring anyone organizing voter registration drives to undergo specific government trainings, severely limiting the organizing work that is generally aimed at increasing access to voting for Black and Latinx people.
- B. In Mississippi, an election law was passed requiring all state candidates to win not just the popular vote, but also the majority of districts. Given their racially and politically polarized landscape, this raises the bar for any Black candidates, making it nearly impossible for them to get elected.
- C. Although the people of Florida voted to restore the right to vote for incarcerated communities after they had completed prison, parole and probation, the State House and Senate passed a bill requiring formerly incarcerated individuals to pay all court fees before becoming eligible to vote again in a move reminiscent of poll taxes.
- D. In North Dakota, a law was put in place right before an election that required a voter ID with a residential address, disenfranchising over 5,000 Native Americans who live on reservations and thus do not have a typical residential address.
- E. In Georgia, election officials threw out thousands of absentee ballots because of seemingly mismatched signatures.

A: B. "The Mississippi Plan" was codified in 1890, a Reconstruction-era policy put in place explicitly to keep Black politicians out of office. This policy is still in place today. The rest on this list were put in place within the last 5 years.

Q: Which one of these is a way that Voter ID laws discriminate against marginalized sociopolitical groups?

- A. For trans and non-binary people, the gender on their ID may not reflect their gender identity
- B. Getting a new ID can cost hundreds of dollars
- C. Distance and lack of public transit makes it nearly impossible to get to the DMV
- D. Those living on a reservation or experiencing homelessness may not have a residential address
- E. Living in a city means you don't drive and therefore don't have a driver's license
- F. Some folks, especially the elderly, may have never had birth certificates or may have incorrectly-spelled names in these documents
- G. All of the above!

A: Yep, it's G: All of the above. There are many perfectly understandable reasons (that don't equate to voter fraud) why one might not be able to procure a photo ID required by Voter ID laws. Systemically, Voter ID laws have the impact of further disenfranchising many of the most vulnerable members of our communities and causing them not to have a voice in policies that affect them.



Students supporting the Red Line, a project that would have created more equitable public transit for a number of predominantly Black neighborhoods in Baltimore. Funding for the Red Line was cancelled in 2015.

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