



Day 18 - Democracy & Civic Engagement

"America's founding principles of liberty and justice have always been compromised by the reality that Black Americans were enslaved when those words were written. Our democracy will never be strong until we fully acknowledge and address this fact." -Daniella Ballou-Aares, CEO, The Leadership Now Project

If we are to confront American racism, we must also acknowledge its intersection with American democracy.

The right to vote is a fundamental right and, as the Supreme Court noted more than a century ago, it is preservative of all rights. Historically, the franchise was not open to all citizens in the United States. Only with years of struggle and a demand for inclusivity was the right to vote expanded to include women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinxs, Native Americans and young voters. It is imperative that we build a 21st-century democracy that represents our growing and diverse nation—a democracy that welcomes every person's voice and participation, no matter who they are and regardless of their race, color, language or ability.

Today's Challenge:

OPTION 1: See how [racial injustice impairs our democracy](#). Leadership Project Now's analysis looks at voter participation, electoral systems and the concentration of campaign funding as factors preventing a truly representative democracy. (20 minutes)

OPTION 2: Read the Leadership Conference's [Vision for Democracy](#) and recommendations for policy reform to remove obstacles to voting, guarantee that every vote is accurately counted and create a more equitable system of representation. (30 minutes)

OPTION 3: Read the [Brennan Center's "How to Ensure American Can Vote In Person Safely During COVID-19."](#) (5 minutes)

OPTION 4: Select a podcast from Spotify's [Racial \(In\)justice](#) playlist today. Podcasts are a great way to see the world through a perspective other than your own. This playlist covers a variety of topics, from the history of the civil rights movement to present-day marginalization, antiracism and what equality can look like moving forward. (Episode times vary between 28-89 minutes)

OPTION 5: Learn more about the new opportunity in corporate citizenship: [Corporate Civic Responsibility](#). (3 minutes)

OPTION 6: See how [youth protesting racism](#) are the civic educators the nation needs. (5 minutes)