
June 16, 2020

“We the people”

CIVICS 101

More than government

lwvwilliamsburg.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS—WILLIAMSBURG
AREA

About the League of Women Voters

- Thank you, Allison Norfolk, Williamsburg Regional Library's Adult Programs Librarian, for initiating this idea of CIVICS 101 as a crash course before the November elections.
- The League is a **voters rights** and a **civic education** organization.
- The League has always been nonpartisan, yet political. That means that the League never supports or opposes candidates or parties, but we do take action on positions after thorough studies and consensus by our members.
- Our goals are to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government **and** to increase understanding of major public policy issues.
- Our main mission is making democracy work.



League -now 100 years strong

- More than 700 local and state Leagues in all 50 states - as well as in DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong
- 14 local Leagues in Virginia
- **Williamsburg Area League** began in 1962 as the first integrated local League in Virginia. We are very proud of that history.
- Men are members too - since 1974



C
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Civics!

A bit of levity to a serious topic



"I know all about civics! My mom drives one and says it's a nice car!"

What will we cover today?

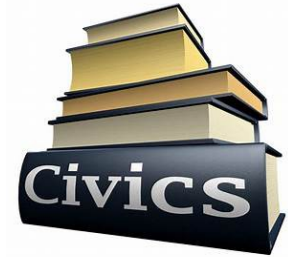
- What *civics* is?
- What civics is NOT!
- Some valuable American flag facts especially since Flag Day was last Sunday
- A few civics resources for teachers & parents
- What YOU can do!



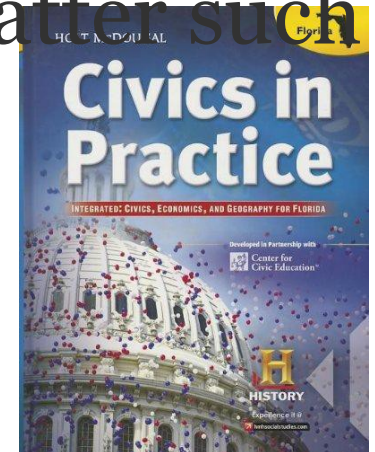
Again. . . THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

What is CIVICS?

More than books can teach you



Some of us remember studying civics in grade school and perhaps high school. Today, civics classes have been dropped in most schools and CIVIC EDUCATION is usually part of another subject matter such as social studies.

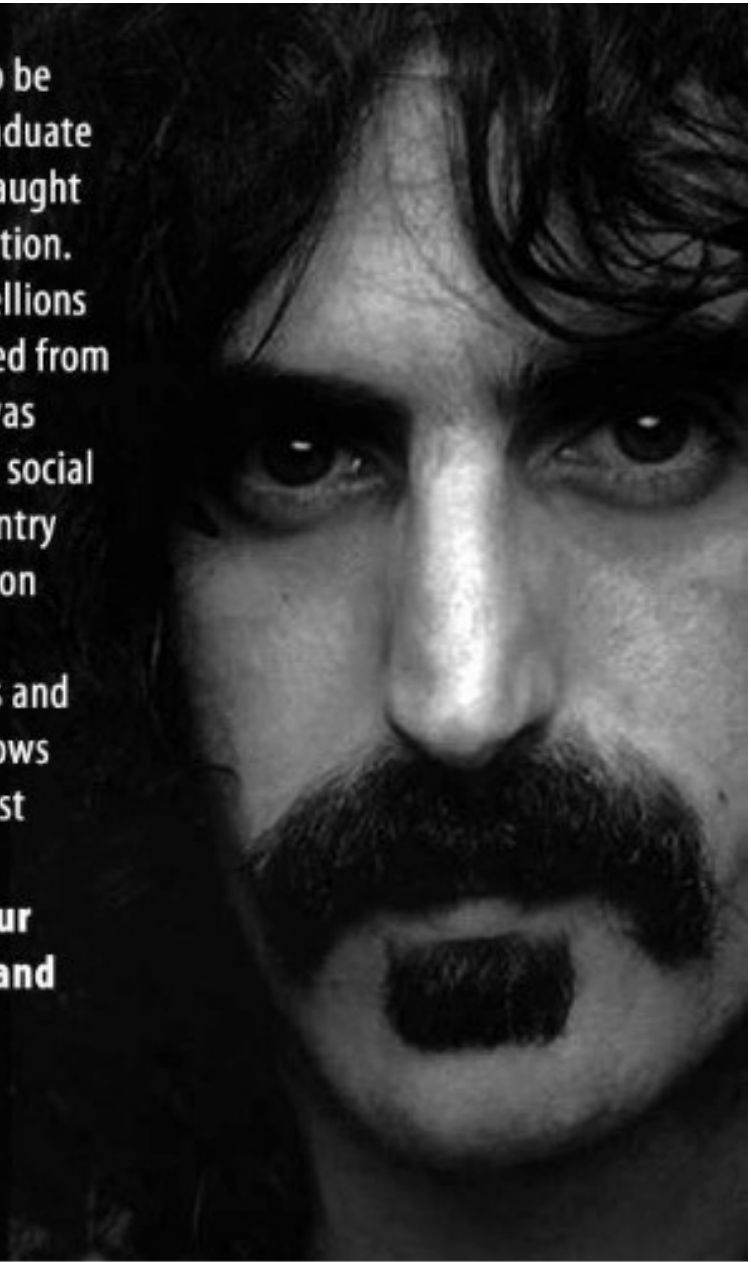


WE LOCALS should be experts on government, but are we? We do live in the historic Triangle.

America's system of representative government began near us in the Jamestown Island church more than 400 years ago from July 30 through August 4, 1619.

Many LWV members attended the local commemoration events held at the College of William & Mary, Colonial Williamsburg and Jamestown Settlement last year.



A black and white close-up portrait of Frank Zappa, showing his face from the nose up, with his characteristic mustache and dark, wavy hair. The image is positioned on the right side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area.

Civics was a class that used to be required before you could graduate from high school. You were taught what was in the U.S. Constitution. And after all the student rebellions in the '60s, civics was banished from the student curriculum and was replaced by something called social studies. Here we live in a country that has a fabulous constitution and all these guarantees, a contract between the citizens and the government - nobody knows what's in it. It's one of the best kept secrets. And so,
if you don't know what your rights are, how can you stand up for them?

Frank Zappa

Spin Magazine, July 1991

Do you check for accuracy?



- You probably don't think of Frank Zappa, of Mothers of Invention fame, as a spokesperson for civic education. But you just read what he had to say in the prior slide.
- Check social media postings for accuracy. FactCheck & Snopes are good sources for the truth.
- Snopes found the preceding meme *UNLIKELY* but not *impossible that he said it*.



But this true!

Of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence, 8 were foreign-born:

- Button Gwinnett (England)
- Francis Lewis (Wales)
- Robert Morris (England)
- James Smith (Ireland)
- George Taylor (Ireland)
- Matthew Thornton (Ireland)
- James Wilson (Scotland)
- John Witherspoon (Scotland)

WE hold these Tr



What does CIVICS usually include?

- Roots of U.S. Constitution & separation of powers
- Government (federal, state & local)
- Significant documents (Declaration of Independence, etc.)
- Politics & elections
- Civic engagement
- Public policy & how those decisions are made
- **Rights and responsibilities of citizens**



Our *BILL OF RIGHTS*



- The first 10 amendments to the Constitution; added in 1791.
- Since then, 17 more amendments have been added.
- The 27th and last Amendment was added in 1992. It explains how senators and representatives are paid. Interestingly, Congress first discussed this amendment back in 1789 as one of the original amendments considered for the Bill of Rights.

Civics is more than reciting the Pledge of Allegiance



- Original pledge, 1892: *“I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands: one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all”*
- Recited by children in American public schools for the first time on October 12, 1892, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America *by Columbus*
- Officially recognized by Congress in 1942
- Congress added *“Under God”* to the pledge on June 14, 1954



Civics is more than Displaying the U.S. Flag

Especially on:

- New Year's Day
- Inauguration Day, January 20
- Lincoln's Birthday, February 12
- Washington's Birthday, third Monday in February
- Easter Sunday (variable)
- Mother's Day
- Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May
- Memorial Day (half-staff until noon)
- Flag Day, June 14
- July 4
- Labor Day
- Constitution Day, September 17
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October;
- Navy Day, October 27;
- Veterans Day, November 11;
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- Others as proclaimed by the President; the birthdays of States (date of admission) and on State holidays.

Half-staff?

- May 15th – Peace Officers Memorial Day
- Last Monday in May – Memorial Day (half-staff until noon only, then raise to the top of the staff)
- July 27th – Korean War Veterans Armistice Day
- September 11th – Patriot Day
- December 7th – Pearl Harbor Day
- By order of President or state governor

When raising the American flag to half-staff on a vertical pole, raise it briskly to the top of the flagpole for a moment before lowering it. When taking it down for the night, raise it to the top of the flag pole again and lower it to the bottom.



Patriotic Americans like showing off their love for all things red, white, and blue.

What is your reaction to these?



OLD GLORY Etiquette

The flag's a flag; it's not clothing.



- You might hear that the American Legion considers flags on T-shirts only a “representation,” and that they have no problem with that, as long as it's not repurposed from an actual flag.
- But if you're celebrating the 4th of July complete with burgers, hot dogs, and American flag napkins, you might consider some other sort of napkin. The flag code is very particular when it comes to wiping mustard off your mouth with the flag.
- BUT there are no flag police.

Federal “Flag Code” - recommended guidelines; not legally binding

- Never use the flag as clothing, bedding or drapery. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing.
- It should not be used on a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be attached to the uniform of patriotic organizations, military personnel, police officers and firefighters.
- The code also bans the material of a flag from being converted into clothing of any kind. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart."
- Never use the flag for advertising or promotion purposes or print it on paper napkins, boxes or anything else intended for temporary use and discard.

National Motto?

- *E Pluribus Unum* became nation's official motto in 1776
- July 30, 1956: under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Congress established "*In God We Trust*" as the national motto of the United States
- "*In God We Trust*" can be traced back nearly 200 years to the War of 1812 at Fort McHenry when Francis Scott Key wrote the poem with this final stanza: "*And this be our motto: 'In God is our trust!'*"
- 1864: Key's phrase was changed to "*In God We Trust*" and included on the redesigned two-cent coin; added to all gold and silver coins the next year. Not on all U.S. coins until 1938.
- "*In God We Trust*" began being added to paper money in 1957; on all currency since 1963.



Constitution Day - September 17

AKA “Citizenship Day”



- Promote the annual national simultaneous recitation of the Preamble across all of America, especially in the schools
- Involve all 50 states in the roll call of states in the order they ratified the Constitution or were admitted to the Union
- Educate each new generation to the uniqueness and brilliance of our Constitution
- Show the need to protect and defend it to maintain our liberties

3rd week of September is Civics Education Week in Virginia

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

- **Citizenship** is the common thread that connects all Americans.
- Former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once said, *“The only title in our democracy superior to that of President [is] the title of citizen.”*
- We are a nation bound not by race or religion, but by the shared values of freedom, liberty, and equality.
- Thousands of immigrants seek naturalization each year.



Path to citizenship



- You may qualify for naturalization if you are at least 18, have been a permanent resident for at least 5 years, have no special circumstances and meet all other eligibility requirements
- If you are the spouse of a U.S. citizen and have been a permanent resident for **3 years or more**, you can apply for naturalization.
- Members of the Armed Forces who have served for at least one year and apply within 6 months of honorable discharge are eligible.
- Have not been absent from U.S. for 6 months
- Pay a fee of about \$725 to process a citizenship application
- Pass the U.S. Citizenship Test

US Citizenship & Immigration Services claims it needs \$1.2 billion in emergency funding and to charge higher fees just to stay afloat.

Could YOU pass a citizenship test??

- There are 100 civics questions on the oral naturalization test.
- During the naturalization interview, applicants will be asked up to 10 questions from the list of 100 questions & must answer 6 of the 10 questions correctly to pass the civics test.
- *Certain applicants, because of their age and time as an Legal Permanent Resident may take the civics test in the language of their choice.*

Click
picture



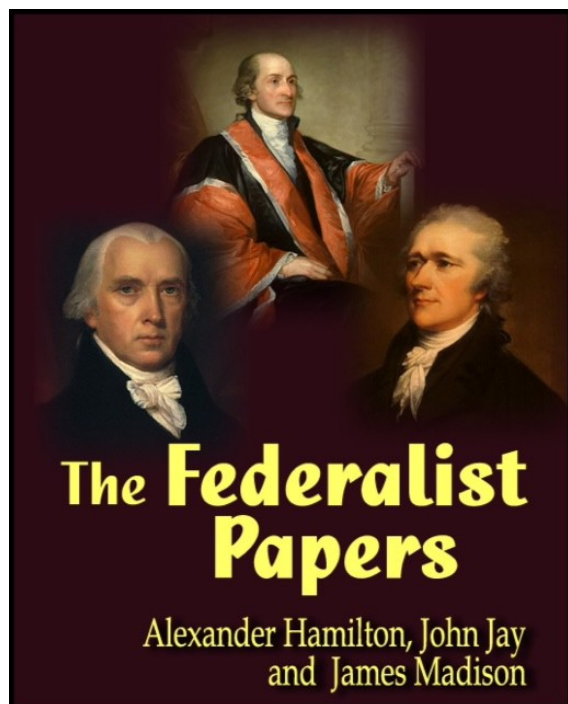


Sample questions:

- How many amendments does the Constitution have?
- **27**
- The House of Representatives has how many *voting members?
- **435**
- When was the Constitution written?
- **1787**
- Name one of the writers of the Federalist Papers.
- **James Madison (*Publius*), Alexander Hamilton, & John Jay**

* *6 non-voting* members represent D.C., Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands & U.S. Virgin Islands.

In Federalist 51, Madison wrote, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.”



- *The Federalist Papers*, hailed as one of the most important political documents in U.S. history, explained the key provisions of the proposed Constitution & the nature of our republican form of government.

Have YOU read them?

The Federalist Papers?

85 essays written between 1787 and 1788

- Argued that the decentralization of power that existed under the Articles of Confederation prevented the new nation from becoming strong enough to compete on the world stage, or to quell internal insurrections
- In *Federalist 10*, which became the most influential of all the essays, Madison addressed political factions. He understood that factionalism was naturally occurring within democratic political structures & that people of different economic, social, religious, and ethnic backgrounds are bound to disagree over issues and ally themselves with those who are similar. Madison saw factionalism as a danger to the American people as a whole, and he wrote *Federalist No. 10* to promote national unity.

Full texts on the Library of Congress website

Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America

"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."

How many of us born in America could recite this oath as enthusiastically as those at naturalization ceremonies?

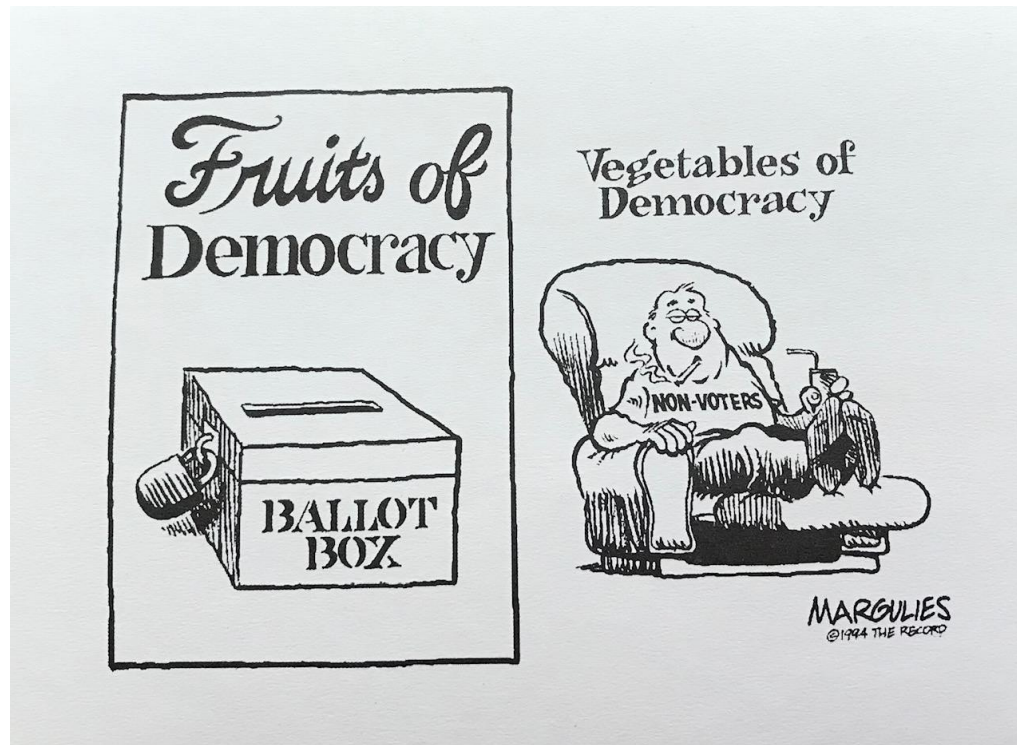
LOCAL NATURALIZATION CEREMONIES

- Usually on Flag Day inside Colonial Williamsburg Capital building
- 2017: 22 people from 17 countries
- 2018: 99 people from 41 countries
- 2019: 25 people



League of Women Voters after the naturalization ceremony.

Most new citizens are very excited about voting for the first time. Hopefully, they will not join the large number of non-voters we already have in this country.



Is there a difference between a Civic Duty & a Civic Responsibility?

Some differentiate between civic **duties** and civic responsibilities; the two are essentially the same.

Mandatory civic duties:

- Serving on a jury
- Paying taxes
- Registering with the Selective Service (all males ages 18 to 25)
- Obeying the law

Voluntary civic duties:

- Voting in elections
- Serving on boards or commissions
- Speaking out when liberties are threatened



Citizen “RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

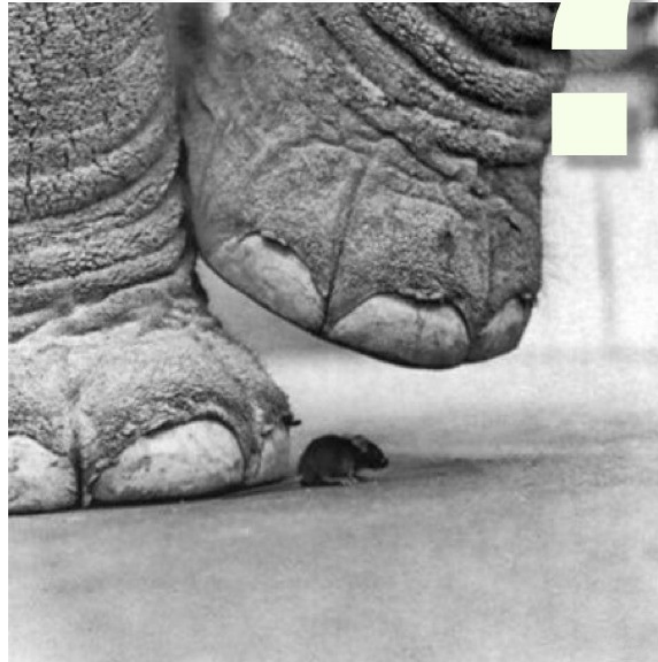
Two words as connected as . . .



DOES SILENCE = COMPLICITY?



NEUTRAL?



Text


If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.

Desmond Tutu

AN ONGOING DEBATE



WORDS MATTER!



What you **do**
matters more than
what you **say**.

WORDS MATTER!

What you do NOT say matters too



- If this was your phone the last time you called any elected official, it has been too long.
- Call your Members of Congress
- Call your City or County elected officials
- Speak out against racial injustice & all evils
- Protest peacefully (*observing social distancing & wearing a mask*)
- Attend a Board of Supervisors, City Council or School Board meeting (*when it is safe to do so*)
- “*Start by learning*” as Elmo’s Daddy advises him

Visit LWV-Williamsburg Area's website
lwvwilliamsburg.reg

Click on *FACTS FOR VOTERS* for contact info for:

- Virginia Governor, Lieutenant Governor & Attorney General
- VA General Assembly (Senate & House of Delegates)
- Williamsburg City Council
- James City County Board of Supervisors
- York County Board of Supervisors
- + Voter Registration & Elections info



MARCHING & PROTESTING FOR DECADES

These women marched in 1912 so that women could someday vote. Today, League members still march or attend rallies. Today we march for voting rights, redistricting, racial justice, sensible gun laws, etc



Do teachers still teach Civics?

The **Virginia Commission on Civics Education** was established by House Bill 1769 in 2005. A League member will now serve on that Commission!!!!!! along with elected and appointed members.

The purposes of the Commission are to :

- Educate students on the importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic
- Promote the study of state and local government among the Commonwealth's citizenry
- Enhance communication and collaboration among organizations in the Commonwealth that conduct civic education





150 teachers from around Virginia participated in a one-day CIVICS SUMMIT on November 15, 2019 at Jamestown Settlement. 7 W/JCC civics/government teachers attended.



Our League provided funds for substitute teachers, allowing seven W/JCC teachers to attend the Civics Summit. In honor of its 400th anniversary, Jamestown Settlement was the conference host. Approximately 150 Commonwealth teachers attended. Pictured are W/Jcc attendees.

Virginia Department of Education

State law requires that these SHALL be taught to all pupils in the public schools of the commonwealth:

- *Declaration of Independence*
- History of the United States and Virginia flags
- General principles of the Constitution of the United States
- *Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom*
- *Three Charters of the Virginia Company*--April 10, 1606, May 23, 1609, and March 12, 1612
- *Virginia Declaration of Rights*
- Emphasis given to the **citizenship responsibilities** inherent in the rights included in these documents



Resources for teaching civics

- *Frequently part of Social Studies, History or Government*
- The next few slides focus on a few of the organizations that offer civic education resources.
- Teachers may already be familiar with some of them.
- Great for parents who are home-schooling too



Civics Renewal Network

civicsrenewalnetwork.org



- A consortium of 32 nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations committed to strengthening civic life in the U.S. by increasing the quality of civics education in our nation's schools and by improving accessibility to high-quality, no-cost learning materials.
- Links to **Annenberg Classroom**, Center for Civic Education, Library of Congress, **National Constitution Center**, ConSource PLUS 27 more
- Searchable by subject, grade, resource type, standards, and teaching strategy

Center for Civic Education

civiced.org



Center for
Civic Education

Mission since 1965: to promote an enlightened, responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy in the United States and other countries

Curricula taught in 80 countries worldwide and in every U.S. state

Umbrella organization sponsoring civic education programs including:

- We the People
- Project Citizen
- Campaign for Promote Civic Education
- Civitas
- James Madison Legacy Project



- Founded by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to develop new and innovative approaches to civic education
- Provides teachers with free resources to enhance their civic education lessons
- icivics.org

Constitutional Sources Project

Consource.org



ONE Vote Does Matter!



One Vote MYTHS & FACTS



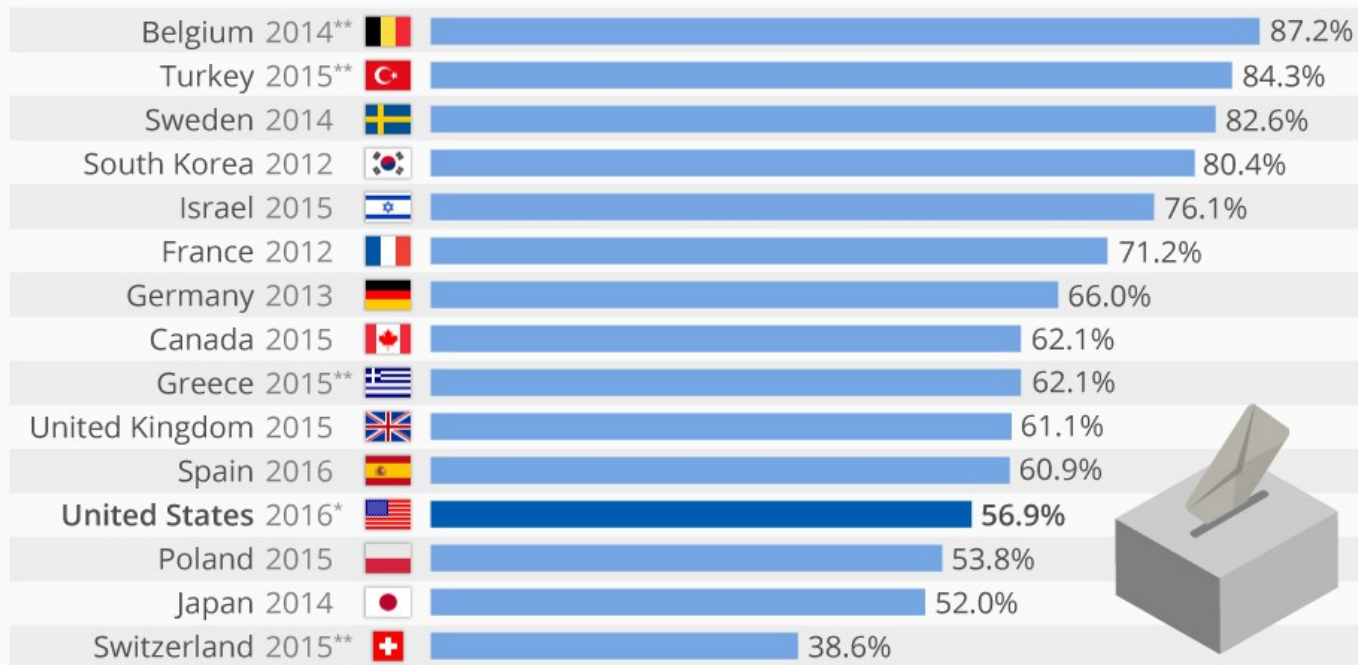
- One **myth** that refuses to die is that one vote preserved English as our official language. Another debunked story is that one vote gave Adolf Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party. **HOWEVER**, there are quite a few elections that were decided by one vote.
- In Virginia in 2017, we had a civics lesson in *one-vote-counts*. The control of the Virginia House was in limbo for a few days, as to who would be representing Newport News. The first election results showed one winner by a small margin. Then a recount ended in a tie. Finally a drawing was held and her opponent was the winner.
- Do you want to be represented this way? By sheer luck? Is that the way that democracy is supposed to work?

One graph is worth a thousand words

We must do better than that!

U.S. Voter Turnout In Perspective

Share of voting age population that voted in most recent national election



* Based on votes counted as of 02:30 EST, November 11, 2016.

** National law makes voting compulsory, though not necessarily enforced.
One Swiss canton has compulsory voting.

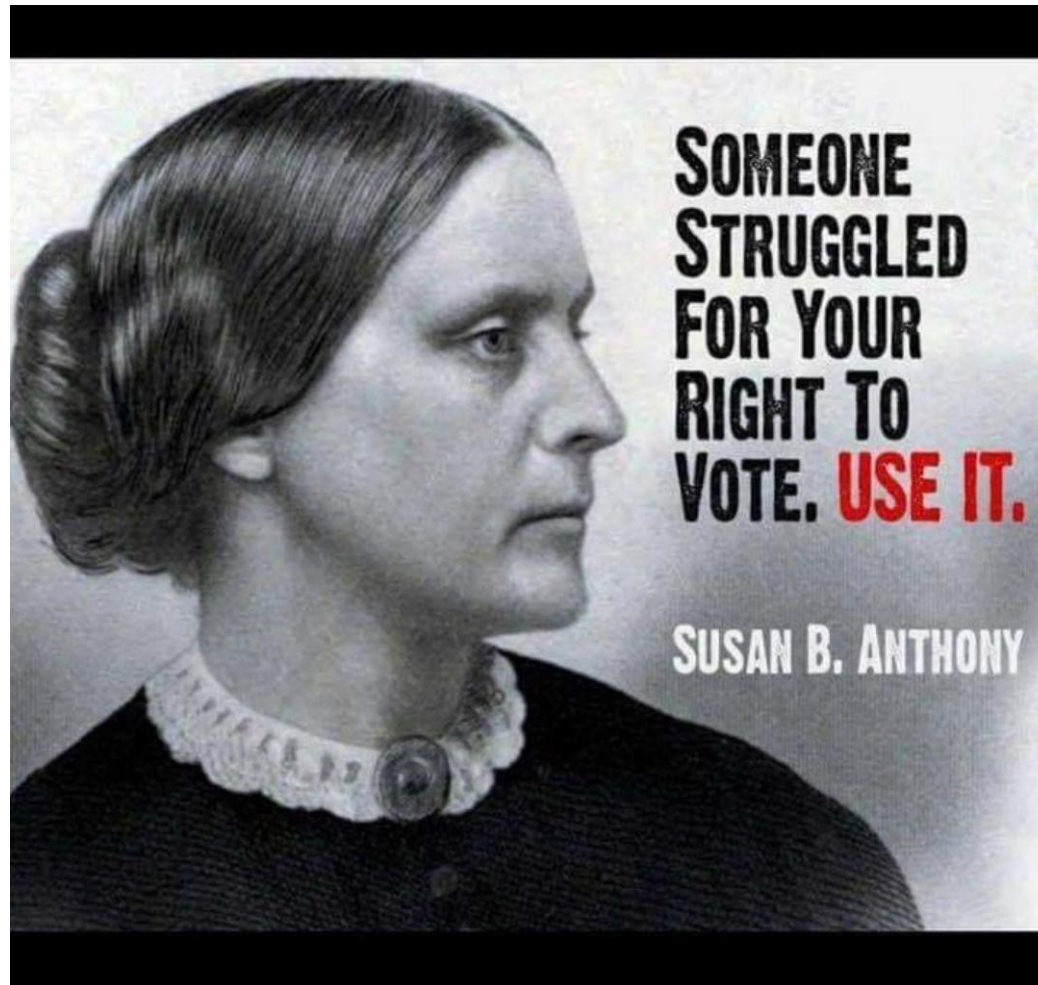


@StatistaCharts

Sources: Pew Research Center, United States Elections Project

statista

VOTE in 2020!



CIVICS 101 - Coming Up

*co-sponsored with Williamsburg Regional
Library*



July 21, 2020: Voting Rights in America
August 18: Women Suffrage in America
September 15: Barriers to Voting