



DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS

Concerned Citizens Defending Democracy

Promoting Democratic Institutions, Deliberative Dialogues, and Racial Justice and Reconciliation

By Building Bridges and Strengthening Partnerships

<https://www.cddus.org/>

May 2022

Events of Interest

[A Conversation about Meaningful Steps toward Campaign Finance Reform](#)

Wednesday, May 4, 2022; 12:00-1:00pm CT

The US Supreme Court decision on the Citizen United case essentially granted the right to unchecked political spending by corporations, union, special interest groups and wealthy individuals. This webinar will discuss the current problems that are causing issues for both political parties and eroding citizen confidence in our political process. Hosted by America Promise.



[Common Ground and Creative Spaces for Civil Dialogue](#)

Wednesday, May 4, 2022; 2:00-3:00pm ET

This webinar will focus on how community members and local leaders can find opportunities and areas for agreement and dialogue and reduce the level of vitriol in public discourse. Hosted by National League of Cities.



[Is the Big Lie Protected Speech?](#)

Wednesday, May 4, 2022; 6:00-7:00pm ET

The Supreme Court has ruled that certain lies and inaccuracies are protected under the First Amendment, mostly pertaining to political campaigns. But when an elected official's lies intentionally undermine our democracy or result in an undue electoral benefit, does that protection extend? Hosted by The Brennan Center for Justice.



[Talking About Democracy with Millennials and Gen Z](#)

Thursday, May 5, 2022; 2:00-3:00pm ET

Civic language both reflects civic culture and shapes it, providing insights into the lived experiences of everyday young Americans. Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) recently released new data from its Civic Language Perceptions Project. The event will include a discussion on how perceptions differ across age groups, ways to use this data to engage young Americans in civic engagement and democracy work. Hosted by Our Common Purpose.



[Realizing American Democracy Town Hall: Representation For All Includes DC!](#)

Tuesday, May 10, 2022; 8:30-9:30pm ET / 5:30-6:30pm PT

Join this virtual town hall to hear from movement leaders on the importance of DC statehood for the health of our democracy, and learn how you can take action to protect our democracy. Hosted by DC Vote and Declaration for American Democracy Coalition.



Events of Interest continued on next page.....

Opinion

[Critical Race Theory Explained](#)

By Anita P. Jackson, Ph.D.

So often people are asked what they think about critical race theory. Too often many people do not know how to respond or simply repeat what they have heard others say.

Critical Race Theory is a theory. A theory is defined as “a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained.”

It begins with a question that arises from what one sees, hears, or reads to explain something. A theory, after it is tested, becomes a well substantiated explanation of an aspect of the natural world that can incorporate laws, hypotheses, and facts. The theory of gravitation for instance, explains why apples fall from a tree and the astronaut floats in space. Basically, a theory predicts what you ought to find from other observations and experiments.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

As we consider Critical Race Theory, it has been **perceived** that laws regarding African Americans have changed to provide more equality, e.g. the abolishment of slavery, desegregation of public facilities, and hiring practices without regard to race or ethnicity. But the greatest hopes of equality for our republic are not being realized even though these hopes have been encoded in law. So, now the **question – Why?** Why does this phenomenon continue to exist? What are the factors that contribute to the disparities?

CRT is a way of looking at race to figure out why after so many centuries we have patterns of inequality that are enduring and to determine how our laws may be a contributor to the inequalities.

How did CRT begin?

Critical Race Theory started in law schools. It was developed for law students and was a law school course. CRT is a way of looking at how law contributes to the subordinate status of people of color. Its primary objective is to understand legal policies and our history in order to make changes to bring about greater equality for all. CRT inherits the beliefs and hopes of Dr. Martin Luther King, Frederick Douglass, and the hope that the law will do for formerly enslaved people, what it has done for White people. Thus, CRT instills the hope for a better life for all people through the process of **investigating** and analyzing our laws and policies.

Lack of knowledge and understanding is what exacerbates fear and unreasonable actions like banning books and firing educators. Furthermore, the **reality is that CRT is a university law course and is NOT TAUGHT IN K-12 SCHOOLS.**

So, what is taught in K-12 schools? Our local, state, national and world history. However, for many years, history classes in U.S. schools were taught from the perspective of white citizens and cultures. In more recent years there have been attempts to teach a more culturally inclusive perspective of history; one that includes the perspectives and realities of the people that lived that history. Just as we, as individuals, have both positive and negative aspects of our own lives, such is true of our U.S. history. Our nation has its fault. As we examine our true history, we can become better. The goal is to become better, not hateful. As Marcus Tullius Cicero said, “To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child.” Let’s grow up.



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Events of Interest *(continued)*

Rural Assembly Everywhere

Tuesday & Wednesday, May 10 & 11, 2022; 2:00-4:00pm ET

Rural Assembly Everywhere is a virtual festival for rural advocates and the rural-curious, listeners and leaders, neighbors and admirers. We'll enjoy two days of programming, featuring artists and poets, civic leaders, and experts. Hosted by Center for Rural Strategies.



The Independent State Legislature Theory's Radical Threat to Democracy

Wednesday, May 11, 2022; 1:30-2:45pm ET

Conservative legal activists are pushing the Supreme Court to make the so-called Independent State Legislature Theory the new law of the land - state legislatures would have exclusive power to make election law, unconstrained by state constitutions, state courts, and maybe even federal law. Hosted by The Brennan Center for Justice.



Universal Voting

Tuesday, May 17, 2022; 6:00-7:00pm ET

Twenty-six countries require participation in their elections. In [100% Democracy: The Case for Universal Voting](#), co-authors E.J. Dionne and Miles Rapoport argue that the United States should follow in their footsteps. Hosted by The Brennan Center for Justice.



Trash-Talking Democracy

Thursday, May 19, 2022; 11:30am-12:45pm PT / 2:30-3:45pm ET

Democratic backsliders attack not just institutions but the culture of democracy – the public's beliefs about the quality and value of their democracies. This trash-talking of democracy has been unevenly successful. Why does it sometimes fail, and what do its failures suggest about effective resistance to democratic backsliding? Hosted by Stanford Center of Democracy.



Majority Minority with Justin Gest

Thursday, May 19, 2022; 7:00-8:30pm ET

How do societies respond to great demographic change? This question lingers over the contemporary politics of the United States and other countries where persistent immigration has altered populations and may soon produce a majority minority milestone. Hosted by The Village Square.



Poor Peoples Campaign: Washington DC March

Saturday, June 18, 2022; 9:00am Gather / 10:00am Start ET

This nationwide movement is working to address six issues facing our nation today: systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the lack of healthcare access, militarism and religious nationalism. We march because any nation that ignores nearly half of its citizens *is in a moral, economic and political crisis*. Register your organization as a mobilizing partner and join this historic movement, rooted in the work of Dr. King, to press for true democracy and concrete action for equity and justice.



Safeguarding our Democracy:

Six on the Sixth

January 6, 2021 was a sad day for our country. To move forward as one nation we need a fact-based investigation like the one the bipartisan January 6 House Select Committee is holding. If we know what went wrong we can take steps to fix the problems. But the first step is getting a full picture of the day's events.

The House Select Committee needs to know that it has the support of the American people. We ask that on the *sixth day of every month at 6:00pm* you commit to celebrating and safeguarding our democracy by sending a tweet or message to Members of Congress; joining neighbors on your street corner with signs in support of the January 6 Committee; going outside, banging on a pot and pan and chanting: "To safeguard our future, examine the past. We support the January 6 Committee."



Latest News from the January 6 Select Committee

News directly from the Select Committee on their investigation of the January 6th attack on the United States Capitol. Please click the link to read more.



Additional

ESG and Corporate Political Spending

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) topics continue to drive discussion across corporate and investor communities, but often overlook one of the most critical drivers of impact: [corporate political influence](#). The research linked explores the impact of corporate political spending across ESG dimensions, current tools and data sources that support greater visibility into this spending, leading practices for transparency and disclosure, and recommends actions for business leaders.



2022 United States Congress Elections

A total of 469 seats in the [U.S. Congress](#) (34 [Senate](#) seats and all 435 [House](#) seats) are up for election on November 8, 2022. Click the link to see the breakdown.



What Redistricting Looks Like In Every State

An updating tracker of proposed congressional maps and whether they might benefit Democrats or Republicans in the 2022 midterms and beyond.



2022 Midterm Primary Election Calendar

The primaries began with Texas on March 1 and continue through September before the general election on November 8. Click the link to see the schedule by state.



Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery

On April 26, 2022, Harvard President Larry Bacow released the Report of the Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, accepted the committee's recommendations in full, and announced a historic commitment of \$100 million to fund their implementation.



Please provide any comments or suggestions to:

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