

**AMERICAN
DEMOCRACY
NOW**



AMERICAN DEMOCRACY NOW

FOURTH EDITION

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AMERICAN DEMOCRACY NOW, FOURTH EDITION

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOR/DOR 1 0 9 8 7 6 5 4

ISBN 978-0-07-802478-8

MHID 0-07-802478-1

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Design: *Debra Kubiak*
Content Licensing Specialists: *John C. Leland, Beth Thole*
Cover Illustration: *McCutcheon Design*
Compositor: *Laserwords Private Limited*
Typeface: *10/12 Times LT Std Roman*
Printer: *R. R. Donnelley*

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Harrison, Brigid C., author.

American democracy now / Brigid Callahan Harrison, Jean Wahl Harris, Michelle D. Deardorff. — Fourth edition.
pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-07-802478-8 (alk. paper)

1. United States—Politics and government—Textbooks. 2. Political participation—United States—Textbooks.

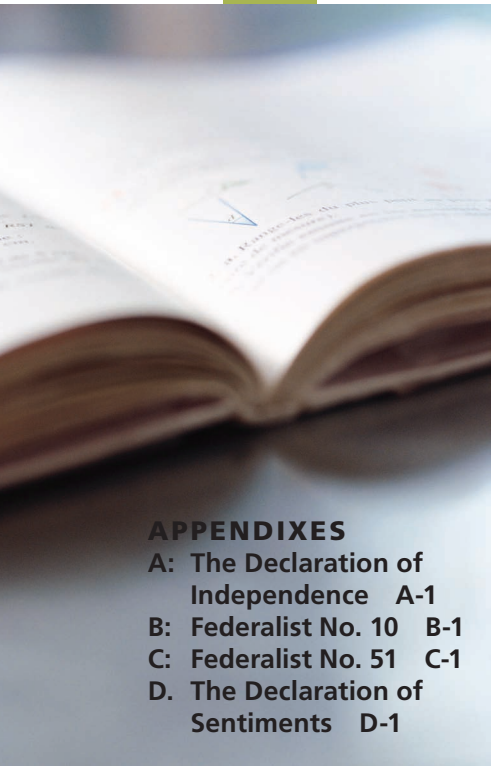
I. Harris, Jean (Jean Wahl), 1960- author. II. Deardorff, Michelle D. III. Title.

JK276.H36 2015

320.473—dc23

2014032197

The Internet addresses listed in the text were accurate at the time of publication. The inclusion of a website does not indicate an endorsement by the authors or McGraw-Hill Education, and McGraw-Hill Education does not guarantee the accuracy of the information presented at these sites.



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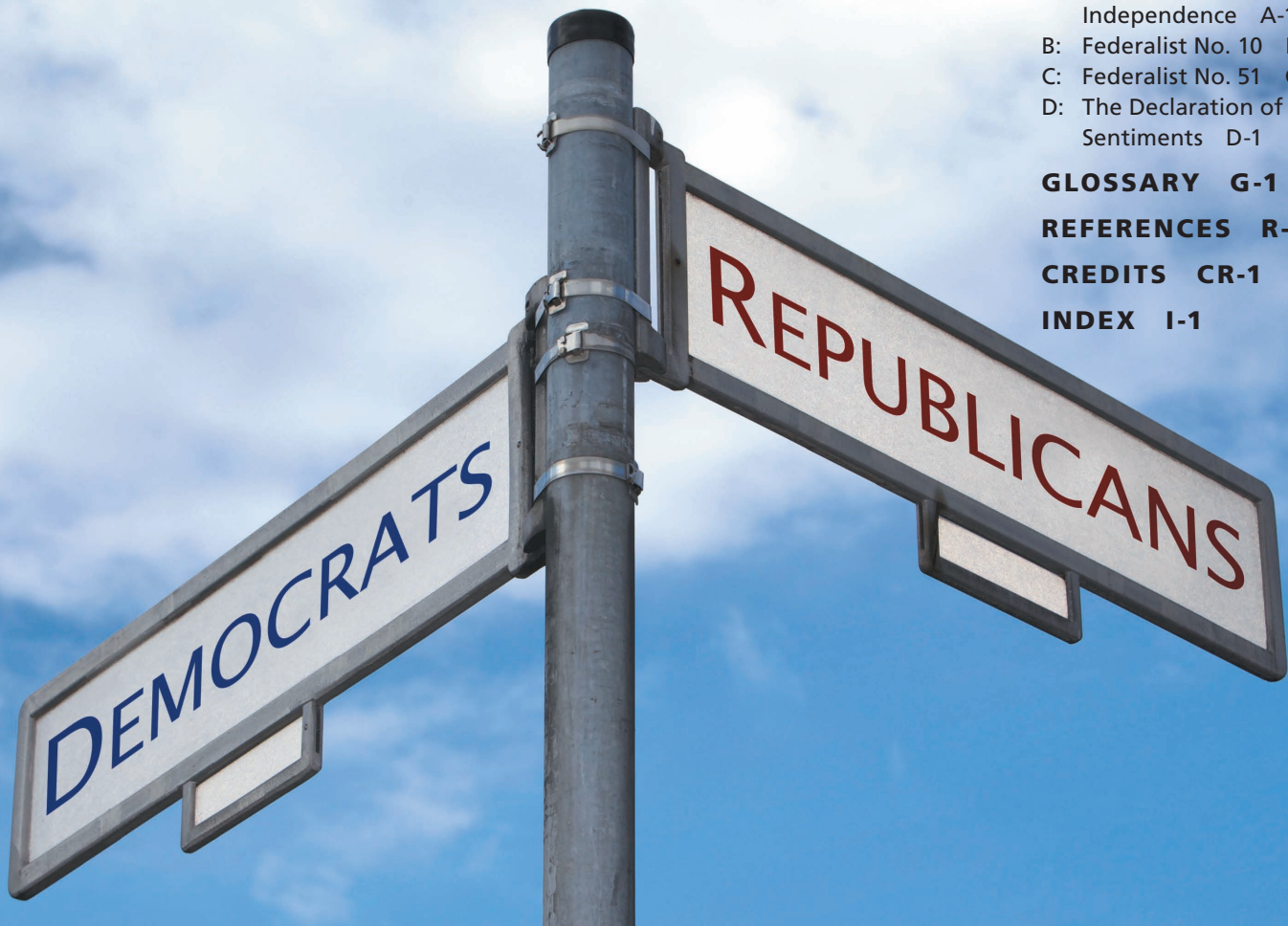


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Part VI

State and Local Government

create CHAPTER 19 STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT



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- C: Federalist No. 51 C-1
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American Democracy Now—built by

American Democracy Now was built by master teachers intent on giving today's students the critical thinking skills needed to actively and critically engage in the American government course. Now, guided by student data, the fourth edition focuses more than ever on helping students interact with the material, perform better during the course, and become more active, engaged citizens in the world.

 SMARTBOOK™

Students Study More Effectively with SmartBook

LearnSmart is an adaptive learning program designed to help students learn faster, study smarter, and retain more knowledge for greater success. Distinguishing what students know from what they don't, and focusing on concepts they are most likely to forget, LearnSmart continuously adapts to each student's needs by building an individualized learning path. Millions of students have answered over a billion questions in LearnSmart since 2009, making it the most widely used and intelligent adaptive study tool that's proven to strengthen memory recall, keep students in class, and boost grades.

Fueled by LearnSmart, SmartBook is the first and only adaptive reading experience currently available.

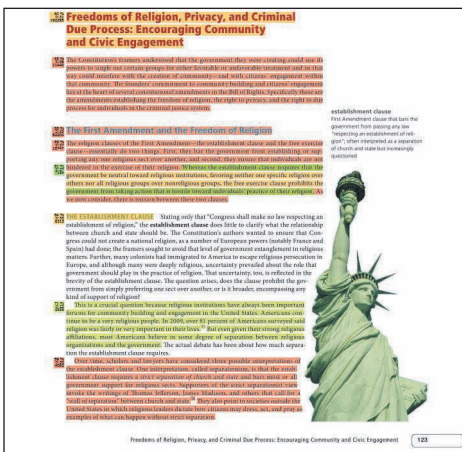
- **Make It Effective.** SmartBook creates a personalized reading experience by highlighting the most impactful concepts a student needs to learn at that moment in time. This ensures that every minute spent with SmartBook is returned to the student as the most value-added minute possible.
- **Make It Informed.** The reading experience continuously adapts by highlighting content based on what the student knows and doesn't know. Real-time reports quickly identify the concepts that require more attention from individual students—or the entire class. SmartBook detects the content a student is most likely to forget and brings it back to improve long-term knowledge retention.

The Power of Student Data

Students helped inform the revision strategy:

STEP 1. Over the course of two years, data points showing concepts that caused students the most difficulty were collected anonymously from Connect American Government's LearnSmart for *American Democracy Now*.

STEP 2. The data from LearnSmart were provided to the authors in the form of a **Heat Map**, which graphically illustrated “hot spots” in the text that impacted student learning (see image to left).



master teachers, informed by student data

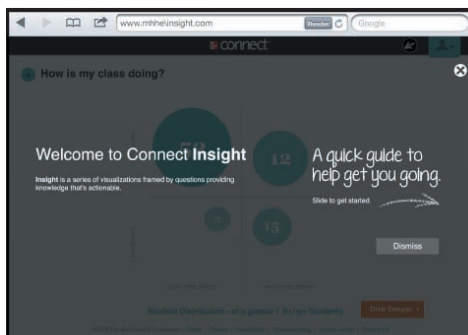
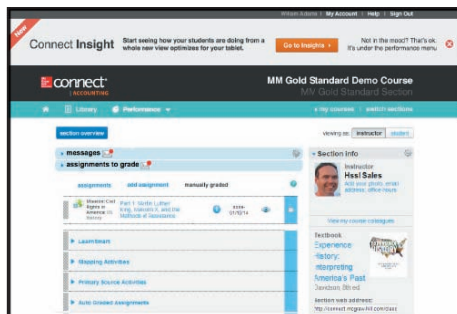
STEP 3. The authors used the *Heat Map* data to refine the content and reinforce student comprehension in the new edition. Additional quiz questions and assignable activities were created for use in Connect American Government to further support student success.

RESULT: Because the *Heat Map* gave the authors empirically based feedback at the paragraph and even sentence level, they were able to develop the new edition using precise student data that pinpointed concepts that caused students the most difficulty.

Student Performance Reports Show You Their Progress

The first and only analytics tool of its kind, Connect Insight is a series of visual data displays—each framed by an intuitive question—to provide at-a-glance information regarding how your class is doing.

- **Make It Intuitive.** You receive an instant, at-a-glance view of student performance matched with each student activity.
- **Make It Dynamic.** Connect Insight puts real-time analytics in your hands so you can take action early and keep struggling students from falling behind.
- **Make It Mobile.** Connect Insight travels from office to classroom, available on demand wherever and whenever it's needed.



Critical Thinking

At the heart of *American Democracy Now* is a rich set of instructional tools that move students along the path to critical thinking.



CHAPTER 12

Congress



THEN

The framers granted to Congress both explicit powers and implied powers, by which the national government strengthened and broadened its authority.



NOW

A much more demographically diverse but ideologically polarized Congress exercises wide powers, its decision making influenced by shifting constituencies in a changing nation.



NEXT

Will increased polarization of Republicans and Democrats in Congress continue to define the congressional agenda?

Will the composition and policy making of Congress more broadly reflect the changing face of the United States?

Will technology significantly affect the ability of “average” citizens to influence Congress?

Then	Now
Then (1980s) Congress was divided; Democrats controlled the House of Representatives, and Republicans controlled the Senate. Although incumbents enjoyed a considerable advantage, many congressional districts were a mix of constituents of both major parties. Partisan voting was evident, but legislators were often forced to base their positions on constituent preferences in addition to their own party loyalty.	Now Republicans control both the House and Senate. Fewer congressional districts are competitive. Many districts are more homogeneous because district boundaries can be drawn with sophisticated computer programs. With the advent of less competitive districts, legislators are more partisan than their predecessors.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- > Has the outcome of the 2014 elections increased or decreased party tensions, in your view? Why?
- > In recent years, partisanship has increased when there has been a president of one party and a Congress of another. Does such a scenario exist today? What implications does that have for the future of partisanship in Congress for the next several years?
- > Increases in technological sophistication could make redistricting an even more exact science. What effect would this change have on partisanship in Congress?

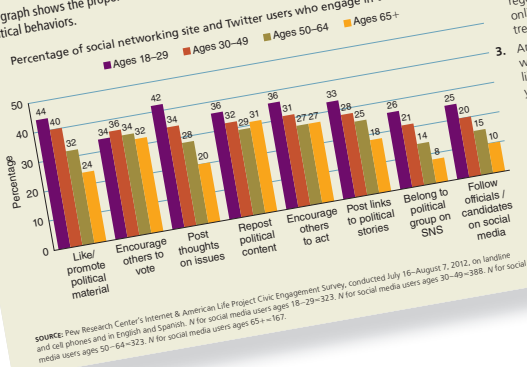
A “Then, Now, Next” framework encourages students to understand historical contexts and precedents, so that they can weigh them against current political events and actions, begin to formulate an informed judgment about politics, and consider how the past and present might shape the future.



Analyzing the Sources

POSTING AND TWEETING ABOUT POLITICS

The graph shows the proportion within each age group who engage in these activities political behaviors.



Evaluating the Evidence

1. What is the most common way in which each age group participates in politics online?
2. Generally, describe the trend with regard to age and political activities online. What is the implication of this trend?
3. Are there any political activities in which Millennials are not the most likely group to participate? Why do you think this might be the case?



“Analyzing the Sources” guides students in thinking through original resources in American politics.

“Thinking Critically About Democracy” gives students a comprehensive appreciation of the many sides of a political issue and an opportunity to formulate well-reasoned opinions.



Thinking Critically About

Democracy

Should Super PACs Enjoy Unlimited Free Speech?

The Issue: Super PACs emerged as an important factor in the 2012 elections, and remained so in the 2014 midterm congressional elections. Super PACs are a special, relatively new form of PAC that raise unlimited amounts of money from individuals and then spend unlimited amounts in political races. Unlike traditional PACs, they may not contribute directly to the candidates they are supporting, and they must report their independent expenditures to the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The legal path for the creation of Super PACs was paved in the 2010 D.C. District Court of Appeals decision *SpeechNow.org v. Federal Election Commission*. The question has thus become whether Super PACs represent an important tool of free speech or whether they constitute merely another avenue for the wealthy to dominate the electoral process.

Yes: some free speech proponents argue that the ruling has increased the amount of information available to voters. Under previous regulations, free speech advocates argue, the contribution limitations to PACs restricted “the individuals’ freedom of speech and thus the amount that an individual can contribute to SpeechNow and thus the amount the organization may spend.” Brad Smith, former chairman of the FEC and founder and chair of the Center for Competitive Politics, argued in favor of the decision: “The rise of independent expenditure groups made possible by the *SpeechNow* ruling has increased the information available to voters and increased the number of competitive races.” Many conservatives also argue that organizations consist of individuals who form associations and that the Constitution protects not only free speech but also freedom of association.

No: Critics of the decision argue that it facilitates unmitigated corporate influence in political campaigns. Giving organizations protected

rights that individuals enjoy, like free speech, detracts from the protection of individual human rights. Some critics argue that enabling these organizations to spend freely to influence campaigns has a detrimental effect on campaigns, because the wealthy have a disproportionate say in campaigns through their ability to spend unlimited sums.

Other Approaches: In light of the *SpeechNow* ruling, voters need to be increasingly skeptical of claims made by organizations about political candidates. In effect, these Super PACs are only as powerful as average Americans enable them to be, and their influence can be countered through the formation of opposing groups comprising individuals who share a viewpoint. The availability of technology provides a medium for average citizens both to get information and to form groups with like-minded people, thus potentially mitigating the effect of the influence of Super PACs.

*Federal Election Commission, “*SpeechNow.org v. FEC* Case Summary,” 2010, www.fec.gov/law/litigation/speechnow.htm#summary.
**Center for Competitive Politics, “*SpeechNow.org v. FEC—Protecting Free Speech for the Last 2 Years*,” 2012, www.campaignfreedom.org/2012/03/23/speechnow-org-v-fec-protecting-free-speech-for-the-last-2-years/.

What do you think?

1. Do you believe that enabling Super PACs to purchase unlimited independent expenditure ads is a protected right?
2. What will be the effect of this decision, in your view?
3. How can average Americans get their opinions about candidates heard? How can they find out whether allegations made by Super PACs are accurate?

POLITICAL

Inquiry

FIGURE 4.2 ■ TECHNOLOGY MOVING FROM FIGHTING TERROR TO CRIME CONTROL What message is the cartoonist trying to convey? What challenges might the government find in using technologies initially deployed for the war against terror in domestic criminal investigations? How does this revise the debate over liberty versus security? Are the constitutional due process provisions robust enough to protect citizens against abuses in the use of this technology?



Students continue to build skills through additional tools, such as “Political Inquiry,” which prompts them to analyze data and images presented in the program.

The accompanying Instructor’s Resources contain a wealth of materials: an Instructor’s Manual that goes beyond lecture topics and outlines—tying all text features to individual and group projects in and out of class; a full Test Bank tied to Bloom’s taxonomy; PowerPoint slides; and an Image Gallery. See more information about specific assets below.

- The Instructor’s Manual includes chapter summaries, chapter outlines, lecture outlines with integrated PowerPoints, and abundant class activities.
- The Test Bank includes more than 1,000 multiple-choice and short-answer questions to accompany the chapters in *American Democracy Now*, along with questions to be used in class (with PowerPoints) and student self-check questions.

Staying Current

This edition reflects the November 2014 midterm election results.

CHAPTER 1 PEOPLE, POLITICS, AND PARTICIPATION

- An exploration of the importance of the Millennial generation in American democracy today
- An investigation into recent trends in voter turnout by age group
- Updated analysis of Egypt's movement toward or away from democratic practices
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 2 THE CONSTITUTION

- New material about the evolution of the constitutional structures of the United States
- New coverage of the constitutional movement in Iceland that resulted from the financial crisis

CHAPTER 3 FEDERALISM

- A new feature investigating intergovernmental conflict over marijuana policies
- New coverage of the Supreme Court ruling on the Affordable Care Act
- A new Figure 3.1, to clarify the differences among unitary, confederal, and federal systems, a concept that students struggle with, based on our analysis of test data

CHAPTER 4 CIVIL LIBERTIES

- Updated coverage of Second Amendment rights in light of the revitalized debate about gun laws and “Stand Your Ground” laws
- An introduction to the privacy issue related to the domestic use of drones

CHAPTER 5 CIVIL RIGHTS

- New in-depth coverage of same-sex marriage and LGBT rights
- New coverage of the recent court decisions and their impact on the Voting Rights Act
- Updated coverage of immigration policy

CHAPTER 6 POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

- New and updated figures and coverage of the latest trends in public opinion

CHAPTER 7 INTEREST GROUPS

- Added in-depth analysis of the role of PACs and Super PACs in recent elections
- A look into the achievements of Change.org and Project Vote Smart

CHAPTER 8 POLITICAL PARTIES

- New in-depth coverage of the partisanship crisis
- Updated analysis of the impact of the Tea Party within the Republican Party
- Updated tables and figures
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 9 ELECTIONS, CAMPAIGNS, AND VOTING

- An added section investigating new trends in voting by mail and early voting
- A look at the recent elections in South Africa
- A new Then/Now photo pairing to help clarify the changing role of the party and campaign professionals in electoral races, a concept that students struggle with, based on our analysis of test data
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 10 THE MEDIA

- An investigation of the use of infotainment by President Obama to push enrollment in the Affordable Care Act
- An updated analysis of the response of traditional media to its shrinking market
- An analysis of the media focus on same-sex marriage to explain priming, a concept students that struggle with, based on our analysis of test data
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections



CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER CHANGES

CHAPTER 11 POLITICS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Updated coverage of the role social media is playing in campaigns and political action
- An examination of NSA surveillance and other emerging privacy concerns
- A new “Global Context” feature, exploring the role of blogger Tetyana Chornovol in eliminating corruption in Ukraine

CHAPTER 12 CONGRESS

- An investigation into the 2013 introduction of the “nuclear option”
- Updated coverage of the partisan divide
- A comparison of the U.S. legislature to the Indian parliament
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 13 THE PRESIDENCY

- Updated coverage of President Obama’s use of presidential powers to pursue his agenda
- A new exploration of presidential ranking

CHAPTER 14 THE BUREAUCRACY

- A new look at what bureaucrats do and what opportunities are open to students in public service
- An exploration of the impact of the government shutdown
- Updated data on the federal workforce and budget
- New Figure 14.5, portraying the formation and implementation of the Affordable Care Act to clarify the role of the federal bureaucracy in public policy, a concept that students struggle with, based on our analysis of test data
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 15 THE JUDICIARY

- Updated analysis of the Roberts Court
- A comparison of the U.S. and Mexican judiciary systems
- A look into the efficacy of the jury system
- Updates based on the November 2014 elections

CHAPTER 16 ECONOMIC POLICY

- An analysis of how partisan gridlock in recent years has transformed the budget-making process
- The latest data illustrating the health of the U.S. economy

CHAPTER 17 DOMESTIC POLICY

- An updated analysis of the energy policy and current issues such as fracking
- An in-depth look into the minimum wage debate
- An analysis of the policy priorities of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents

CHAPTER 18 FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

- An exploration of recent tensions between Russia and the West and the historical basis of this conflict
- Coverage of the recent negotiations among Iran, the United States, and other Western nations to halt Iran’s nuclear enrichment
- Historical analysis to clarify the meanings of balance of power and hegemony, two concepts students struggle with, based on our analysis of test data



Acknowledgments

We owe a debt of thanks to all of the people who contributed their thoughts and suggestions to the development of *American Democracy Now*.

Manuscript Reviewers

Stephen Anthony, *Georgia State University*
Stephen Baker, *Jacksonville University*
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Ronald Vardy, *University of Houston–Houston*
Sarah Velasquez, *Fresno Community College*
Peter Wielhouwer, *Western Michigan University–Kalamazoo*
Robert Wilkes, *Atlanta Metropolitan State College*

American Government Symposia

Since 2006, McGraw-Hill has conducted several symposia in American Government for instructors from across the country. These events offered a forum for instructors to exchange ideas and experiences with colleagues they might not have met otherwise.



They also provided an opportunity for editors from McGraw-Hill to gather information about what instructors of American Government need and the challenges they face. The feedback we have received has been invaluable and has contributed—directly and indirectly—to the development of *American Democracy Now*. We would like to thank the participants for their insights:

Melvin Aaron, *Los Angeles City College*
Yan Bai, *Grand Rapids Community College*
Robert Ballinger, *South Texas College*
Nancy Bednar, *Antelope Valley College*
Jeffrey Birdsong, *Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College*
Amy Brandon, *San Jacinto College-North*
Jane Bryant, *John A. Logan College*
Dan R. Brown, *Southwestern Oklahoma State University*
Monique Bruner, *Rose State College*
Anita Chadha, *University of Houston–Downtown*
John Clark, *Western Michigan University–Kalamazoo*
Kathleen Collihan, *American River College*
Steven Collins, *Oklahoma State University–Oklahoma City*
John Davis, *Howard University*
Kevin Davis, *North Central Texas College*
Paul Davis, *Truckee Meadows Community College*
Vida Davoudi, *Lone Star College–Kingwood*
Robert De Luna, *Saint Philips College*
Jeff DeWitt, *Kennesaw State University*
Kevin Dockerty, *Kalamazoo Valley Community College*
Cecil Dorsey, *San Jacinto College–South*
Hien Do, *San Jose State University*
Jay Dow, *University of Missouri–Columbia*
Manar Elkhaldi, *University of Central Florida*
Karry Evans, *Austin Community College*
Pearl Ford, *University of Arkansas–Fayetteville*
John Forshee, *San Jacinto College–Central*
Ben Riesner Fraser, *San Jacinto College*
Daniel Fuerstman, *Dutchess Community College*
Marilyn Gaar, *Johnson County Community College*
Jarvis T. Gamble, *Owens Community College*
Michael Gattis, *Gulf Coast Community College*
William Gillespie, *Kennesaw State University*
Dana K. Glencross, *Oklahoma City Community College*
Larry Gonzalez, *Houston Community College–Southwest*
Nirmal Goswami, *Texas A&M University–Kingsville*
Daniel Gutierrez, *El Paso Community College*
Richard Gutierrez, *University of Texas, El Paso*
Michelle Kukoleca Hammes, *St. Cloud State University*
Cathy Hanks, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*
Wanda Hill, *Tarrant County Community College*
Joseph Hinchliffe, *University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign*
John Hitt, *North Lake College*
Mark Jendrysik, *University of North Dakota*
Brenda Jones, *Houston Community College–Central*
Franklin Jones, *Texas Southern University*
Lynn Jones, *Collin County Community College*
James Joseph, *Fresno City College*
Jason Kassel, *Valdosta State University*

Manoucher Khosrowshahi, *Tyler Junior College*
Rich Kiefer, *Waubensee Community College*
Robert J. King, *Georgia Perimeter College*
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Chien-Pin Li, *Kennesaw State University*
Fred Lokken, *Truckee Meadows Community College*
John Mercurio, *San Diego State University*
Janna Merrick, *University of South Florida*
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Eric Miller, *Blinn College*
Kent Miller, *Weatherford College*
Charles Moore, *Georgia State University*
Eduardo Munoz, *El Camino College*
Kay Murnan, *Ozarks Technical Community College*
Carolyn Myers, *Southwestern Illinois College*
Blaine Nelson, *El Paso Community College*
Theresa Nevarez, *El Paso Community College*
James A. Norris, *Texas A&M International University*
Kent Park, *U.S. Military Academy at West Point*
Eric Rader, *Henry Ford Community College*
Elizabeth Rexford, *Wharton County Junior College*
Tara Ross, *Keiser University*
Carlos Rovelo, *Tarrant Community College–South*
Ryan Rynbrandt, *Collin County Community College*
Ray Sandoval, *Richland College*
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Edward Senu-Oke, *Joliet Junior College*
Mark Shomaker, *Blinn College*
Thomas Simpson, *Missouri Southern University*
Henry Sirgo, *McNeese State University*
Amy Smith, *North Lake College*
Daniel Smith, *Northwest Missouri State University*
John Speer, *Houston Community College–Southwest*
Jim Startin, *University of Texas at San Antonio*
Sharon Sykora, *Slippery Rock University*
Tressa Tabares, *American River College*
Beatrice Talpos, *Wayne County Community College*
Alec Thomson, *Schoolcraft College*
Judy Tobler, *Northwest Arkansas Community College*
Steve Tran, *Houston Community College*
Beth Traxler, *Greenville Technical College*
William Turk, *University of Texas–Pan American*
Ron Vardy, *University of Houston*
Sarah Velasquez, *Fresno City College*
Ron VonBehren, *Valencia Community College–Osceola*
Albert C. Waite, *Central Texas College*
Van Allen Wigginton, *San Jacinto College–Central*
Charlotte Williams, *Pasadena City College*
Ike Wilson, *U.S. Military Academy*
Paul Wilson, *San Antonio College*
John Wood, *University of Central Oklahoma*
Robert Wood, *University of North Dakota*
Larry Wright, *Florida A&M University*
Ann Wyman, *Missouri Southern State University*
Kathryn Yates, *Richland College*

Personal Acknowledgments

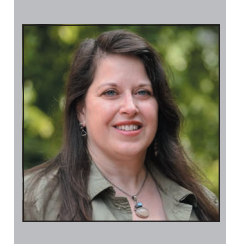
We must thank our team at McGraw-Hill: Laura Wilk, brand manager; Dawn Groundwater, lead product developer; Naomi Friedman, product developer; April Cole, marketing manager; and David Tietz, photo researcher. We are extraordinarily grateful to all of you.

We would also like to thank the contributors to our previous editions: Susan Tolchin at George Mason University, Suzanne U. Samuels at Ramapo College, and Elizabeth Bennion at Indiana University.

For their patience, understanding, and support, the authors also wish to thank: Paul Meilak; Caroline, Alexandra, and John Harrison; Rosemary Fitzgerald; Patricia Jillard; Kathleen Cain; John Callahan; Teresa Biebel; Thomas Callahan; Michael Harris; Jim and Audrey Wahl and the Wahl “girls”—Eileen Choynowski, Laura McAlpine, Audrey Messina, and Jaimee Conner; David Deardorff; Amy Donaldson; and Michael, Kelly, Logan, and Lauren Donaldson.

John and Rosemary Callahan, Jim and Audrey Wahl, and Earl and Fonda Donaldson first began the conversation of democracy with us, and we thank them and all of the students and colleagues, friends and family members, who continue that conversation now.

BRIGID CALLAHAN HARRISON
JEAN WAHL HARRIS
MICHELLE D. DEARDORFF



Welcome to the fourth edition of *American Democracy Now!* In this program, we share our passion for politics while providing students with the foundation they need to become informed citizens in a rapidly changing democracy.

In creating the first edition of *American Democracy Now*, we sought to merge our years of experience as classroom instructors and our desire to captivate students with the compelling story of their democracy into a student-centered program. We refined those goals with an integrated learning program for American government to maximize student performance in the second edition. The third edition revolutionized how we think about American democracy by incorporating for the first time a chapter on Politics and Technology, demonstrating the extent to which technology has become integral to how citizens participate in their democracy and how governments serve their citizenry.

The fourth edition of *American Democracy Now* continues our tradition. Relying on data garnered from thousands of students who have used our Connect and LearnSmart platforms, we have revised our program to ensure greater clarity in areas that have proven complex for past student readers. We have continued to integrate an examination of the increasing role that technology is playing in politics. And we have continued our quest to create a student-centered program that increases students' sense of political efficacy by exciting them about the political conversations of the day and by integrating a critical thinking framework that not only explains the past and present of politics, but also asks them to think critically about the future: What's next for their democracy? In *American Democracy Now*, fourth edition, students learn how the fundamental principles of American democracy inform their understanding of the politics and policies of today, so that they can think about the policies they would like to see take shape tomorrow. In short, they learn to inquire: How does *then* and *now* shape what's going to happen *next*? This "Then, Now, Next" approach to critical thinking serves as the basis for student participation.

American Democracy Now, fourth edition, takes a broader view of participation than other programs. To us, participation encompasses a variety of activities from the modest, creative, local, or even personal actions students can take to the larger career choices they can make. And today, technology plays an enormous role in shaping political participation—particularly the participation of young people. By recognizing the legitimacy of new forms of political participation, we are giving students the tools needed to define what participation means to them and to make active choices about where, when, and how to participate. And choosing how to participate makes American government matter.

Today's partisan politics and ever-changing technology provide challenges for those seeking to ensure that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are protected, and they present opportunities for those striving to fulfill the responsibilities that come with living in a constitutional democracy. *American Democracy Now*, fourth edition, enables students to garner a solid understanding of the essential elements, institutions, and dynamics of national government and politics, while fostering critical thinking skills that are essential to meeting these novel challenges and realizing these new opportunities.

Facilitating success—as students, but also as citizens and participants—means honing their critical thinking skills, harnessing their energy, and creating tools that foster success in the American government course and in our polity. We know we have succeeded when students apply their knowledge and sharpened skills to consider the outcomes they—as students, citizens, and participants—would like to see.

Creating this success means joining increasingly diverse students where they are so they can see the relevance of politics in their everyday lives. The fourth edition of *American Democracy Now* further integrates technology into our students' study of politics, so that their engagement with content is seamless. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram are not only powerful social networking tools, but also powerful political and educational tools. New technologies help politicians to communicate with citizens, citizens to communicate with each other, and you to communicate with your students.

We are excited to present you with this revised edition of *American Democracy Now*, and we wish you and your students success.

BRIGID CALLAHAN HARRISON
JEAN WAHL HARRIS
MICHELLE D. DEARDORFF

BRIGID CALLAHAN HARRISON specializes in the civic engagement and political participation of Americans, especially the Millennial Generation, the U.S. Congress, and the Presidency. Brigid has taught American government for 20 years at Montclair State University in New Jersey. She takes particular pride in creating a learning experience in the classroom that shapes students' lifelong understanding of American politics, sharpens their critical thinking about American government, and encourages their participation in civic life. She enjoys supervising student internships in political campaigns and government and is a frequent commentator in print and electronic media on national and New Jersey politics. She currently serves as president of the New Jersey Political Science Association, and is past president of the National Women's Caucus for Political Science. She received her B.A. from The Richard Stockton College, her M.A. from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and her Ph.D. from Temple University. Harrison lives in Longport, New Jersey, and has three children: Caroline (20), Alexandra (14), and John (11). She is engaged to be married to Paul Meilak, a retired New York City police detective. Born and raised in New Jersey, Harrison is a fan of Bruce Springsteen and in her spare time, she enjoys reading on the beach, traveling, and cycling.

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MICHELLE D. DEARDORFF'S teaching and research focus on the constitutional and statutory protections surrounding gender, race, and religion. She particularly enjoys developing classes that allow students to apply their understandings of law, politics, and political theory to current events; she seeks to foster critical citizens prepared to participate in governing our communities and nation. Deardorff is currently head of Political Science, Public Administration, and Nonprofit Management at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Before coming to UTC, she spent 10 years teaching at Jackson State, an historically black university in Mississippi, and another decade at Millikin University, a small private college in Illinois. She recently chaired the American Political Science Association's standing Committee on Teaching and Learning and is a founding faculty member of the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy, a coalition of academics who promote civic engagement and popular sovereignty through the study of the struggle for civil rights in the United States. She lives in Chattanooga with her husband, David, where they enjoy kayaking, hiking, live music, and reading in beautiful places.

**AMERICAN
DEMOCRACY
NOW**

CHAPTER

1



People, Politics, and Participation



THEN

Cynicism, distrust, and apathy characterized Americans' relationship with their government for the past generation.



NOW

New information technologies, generational politics, and a diversifying population give cause for optimism as the nation responds to the challenges of a new millennium.



NEXT

Will the present generation break the cycle of cynicism that has pervaded the politics of the recent past?

Will new information technologies facilitate and energize political participation?

Will the face of American politics change as the nation's population grows and shifts?



PREVIEW

This chapter of *American Democracy Now* provides a framework for your study of American government.

FIRST, we delve into the basic question, why should you study American democracy now?

SECOND, we explore what government does.

THIRD, we explain how political scientists categorize the various types of government.

FOURTH, we consider the origins of American democracy, including the ideas of natural law, a social contract, and representative democracy.

FIFTH, we examine political culture and American values, which centrally include liberty; equality; consent of the governed; capitalism; and the importance of the individual, the family, and the community.

SIXTH, we look at ideology as a prism through which American politics can be viewed.

SEVENTH, we focus on the changing face of American democracy as the population grows and diversifies.

politics

the process of deciding who benefits in society and who does not

The United States was founded

by individuals who believed in the power of democracy to respond to the will of citizens. Historically, citizen activists have come from all walks of life, but they have shared one common attribute: the belief that, in the ongoing conversation of democracy, their government listens to *people like them*. This idea is vital if individuals are to have an impact on their government; people who don't believe they can have any influence rarely try. From the Pilgrims' flight from religious persecution, to the War for Independence, to the Civil War, to the Great Depression, to World War II, and to the great movements for social justice—civil rights, women's liberation, gay rights, and more—the story of the United States is the story of people who are involved with their government, who know what they want their government to do, and who have confidence in their ability to influence its policies.¹ *American Democracy Now* tells the story of how today's citizen activists are participating in the conversation of democracy—in the politics, governance, and civic life of their communities and their nation during a time of technological revolution and unprecedented global change. This story is the next chapter in America's larger story.

The history of democracy in the United States is rife with examples of ordinary people who have made and are making a difference.² Throughout this book, we describe the effects that individuals and groups have had, and continue to have, in creating and changing the country's institutions of government. We also explore how individuals have influenced the ways in which our governments—national, state, and local—create policy.³ These stories are important not only in and of themselves but also as motivators for all of us who want to live in a democracy that responds to all its citizens.

A fundamental principle underlying this book is that your beliefs and your voice—and ultimately how you use those beliefs and that voice—matter. Whatever your beliefs, it is important that you come to them thoughtfully, by employing introspection and critical thinking. Similarly, however you choose to participate, it is crucial that you take part in the civic life of your community. This book seeks both to inform and to inspire your participation. A sentiment voiced by American anthropologist Margaret Mead expresses a powerful truth: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Why should you study American democracy now? Or, Why Should You Study American Democracy Now?

Politics as practiced today is not your parents' brand of politics. **Politics**—the process of deciding who benefits in society and who does not—is a much different process today than it was even a decade ago. Advances in technology have altered the political landscape in many ways. In some countries, these advances have facilitated the overthrow of governments. In other countries, they are changing how voters and candidates communicate with each other, how governments provide information to individuals, how people get their news about events, and how governments administer laws. The political landscape has also changed because of world events. In the past several years, a slow recovery from a global recession has placed demands on governments and propelled policy makers to reconsider issues of income

inequality in the domestic policy sphere. Meanwhile, the federal government has had to contend with the instability of regimes in the Middle East and Asia. These realities take place within a political context built on the foundation of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which markedly changed many aspects of American life. These shifts in how Americans interact with government and in what issues concern them represent distinct changes that make the study of politics today interesting, exciting, and important.

How Technology Has Changed Politics

It would be difficult to overstate the influence of the technological revolution on politics as it is practiced today. In electoral politics, faster computers, the Internet, micro-targeting, and social media have revolutionized a process that, until the advent of the personal computer, the Internet, and cellular technology, was not very different in 1990 from the way it was carried out in 1890. Today, many voters get much of their information from Facebook, Twitter, and Internet-based news sites and blogs. Campaigns rely on e-mail and instant and text messaging, and they use websites and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate with and organize supporters. State governments rely on computers to conduct elections, and cities use computers to provide services to their residents.

Because of these unprecedented shifts in the ways politics happens and government is administered, Americans today face both new opportunities and new challenges. How might we use technology to ensure that elections are conducted fairly? How might the abundance and reach of media technology be directed toward informing and enriching us rather than overwhelming us or perpetuating the citizen cynicism of recent years? What privacy rights can we be sure of in the present digital age? Whatever your age, as a student, you are a member of one of the most tech-savvy groups in the country, and your input, expertise, and participation are vital to sorting out the opportunities and obstacles of this next stage of American democracy. Throughout this text, we examine the many ways in which people are using technology to link with each other and with the branches of government in an effort to influence those branches.

The Political Context Now

The political context today centers on a debate taking place in Washington, D.C., and throughout the nation about the appropriate size and role of government, particularly as it relates to health care. In the 2014 midterm elections, campaign battles in many U.S. congressional districts focused on whether a candidate had supported the health care reform act passed by Congress in 2010. But policy makers and private citizens also have placed the issue of economic equality—and the government’s responsibility to create more equitable conditions—on the national political agenda. These issues have sparked great passion, primarily because of the tenuous economic

Then

Now

Next

Technology and Political Participation

Then (1970s)	Now
47 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds voted in the 1976 presidential election.	About 50 percent of 18- to 20-year-olds voted in the 2012 presidential election.
People got their national news from one half-hour-long nightly news broadcast.	People get their news from an array of sources, including Twitter feeds, Internet news services, and 24-hour news networks available on demand via computers and cell phones.
Many people participated in civic life primarily through demonstrations, protests, and voting.	Voting remains the pinnacle of political participation. While some people still participate through demonstrations and protests, Internet activism is now mainstream. Online protests and petitions are commonplace and Facebook groups designed to express viewpoints and mobilize activists have replaced many in-real-life (IRL) groups.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- > Will the upswing of voter participation by 18- to 20-year-olds continue?
- > How might advancing media technologies further transform the ways that people “consume” their news?
- > What new forms of civic participation will emerge?

situation many Americans find themselves in as a result of the nation's slow economic recovery from the global recession of 2007–2009. Government officials today seek to walk a fine line between placating those demanding action on the economy to create more equitable conditions and those who fear that increased government spending and regulations on business will overburden a fragile recovery process.

Also part of the U.S. political context is a global environment, which is characterized by violence and instability. In 2014, the United States initiated air strikes in Iraq targeting the insurgent group ISIS, or the Islamic State, which had taken control of parts of Iraq and Syria. In the meantime, Syria was embroiled in a civil war, and tensions flared between Israel and Palestine, as Israel launched rocket strikes against Palestinians in retaliation for mortar shelling launched into Israel by Palestine. Instability also reigned in Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists sought to carve out a section of eastern Ukraine as part of Russia.

These domestic and foreign policy debates take place within the context of a post–September 11 world. Though we are removed from the terror attacks of that day by more than a dozen years, that watershed event inexorably changed both our national consciousness and the global political environment. The United States' international image was altered in light of the nation's decision to engage in a multi-front war on terror that began in 2002 and lasted for over a dozen years. But Americans themselves changed, too. Their attitudes about their government and their priorities shifted in light of the attacks. Some of these changes were temporary, but others remain a deeply ingrained part of Americans' national identity.

The events of September 11, 2001, jolted American politics and the nation, and the altered political context provoked changes in popular views—notably, young people's opinions. “The attacks of 9/11 . . . changed the way the Millennial Generation [people born between 1981 and 2000—the first generation to come of age in the new millennium] thinks about politics. Overnight, their attitudes were more like [those of] the Greatest Generation [the generation of Americans who lived through the Great Depression and World War II],” observed John Della Volpe, a pollster who helped Harvard University students construct a national poll of young people's views.⁴

As patriotic spirits soared, suddenly 60 percent of college students trusted government to do the right thing. Ninety-two percent considered themselves patriotic. Some 77 percent thought that politics was relevant to their lives.⁵ In the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, then-president George W. Bush and Congress enjoyed record-high approval ratings. Roughly 80 percent of young people and nearly that same percentage of all Americans supported U.S. military actions in Afghanistan. Beyond opinions, actions changed as well:

- More than 70 percent of college students gave blood, donated money, or volunteered in relief efforts.
- Nearly 70 percent volunteered in their communities (up from 60 percent in 2000).
- Eighty-six percent believed their generation was ready to lead the United States into the future.⁶

Then the political context changed again, over months and then years, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wore on, as casualties mounted, and as military spending skyrocketed. Trust in government, particularly of the president, plummeted. The changes after September 11 continued to affect how Americans, particularly young Americans, participate in politics.

These transformations in attitude are remarkable, particularly given the recent history of Americans' views of their government. Since the early 1970s—a decade blemished by the intense unpopularity of the Vietnam War and by scandals that ushered in the resignation of President Richard Nixon in 1974—Americans' attitudes about government have been dismal.⁷ Numerous surveys of the American public, including an ongoing Gallup poll, have demonstrated low levels of trust in government and of confidence in government's ability to solve problems.⁸ Young people's views have mirrored those of the nation as a whole. In 2000, one study of undergraduate college students, for example, showed that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) did not trust the federal government to do the right thing most of the time, an attitude that reflected the views of the larger population.⁹ Distrust; lack of **efficacy**, which is a person's belief that he or she has the ability to achieve something desirable and that the government genuinely listens to individuals; and apathy are prevalent among young people.

efficacy

citizens' belief that they have the ability to achieve something desirable and that the government listens to people like them

These attitudes are expressed through one of the most easily measured contexts: voter turnout. Figure 1.1 shows the jump in participation by young voters in the 2004 presidential election. (In contrast, for voters aged 66–74, participation actually decreased in 2004.) Among voters aged 18–21, the largest increases in turnout occurred among 19-year-olds, whose turnout rivaled that of voters in their 30s. (See “Thinking Critically About Democracy.”) In 2008, that trend continued, with estimates indicating that voters aged 18–20 increased by 2.2 million, surpassing the young voter turnout since 18-year-olds voted for the first time in 1972. In 2012, the youth vote dipped. But because Millennials now constitute over 25 percent of the electorate, their vote is important, particularly in presidential races.

As these statistics demonstrate, lingering media characterizations of a cynical young electorate are off the mark. Evidence indicates that many young people are enthusiastic participants in civic and political life.¹⁰ Others are taking part in ways that have not traditionally been thought of, and measured as, participation, including Internet activism and using one’s power as a consumer to send political messages. For many students, that foundation of political participation, volunteerism, or community action has already provided them with a rationale for increasing their knowledge of, and participation in, their communities.

Individuals who engage in politics and civic life experience many benefits. Engaged citizens are knowledgeable about public issues; actively communicate with policy makers and others; press government officials to carry out the people’s will; advocate for their own self-interest and the interests of others; and hold public officials accountable for their decisions and actions. You will find that advocating for your own interests or working with others in similar situations sometimes (perhaps to your surprise) leads to desired outcomes. This is efficacy in action. And you will discover that with experience you will become more effective at advocacy—the more you do, the better you get. Furthermore, you will derive social and psychological benefits from being civically engaged.

In addition, and equally important, local communities, states, and the nation benefit from an engaged populace. Governments are more effective when people voice their views. As we will see as we explore *American Democracy Now*, today’s citizens and others have more opportunities to influence governmental action than at any other time in history. If you have the knowledge and tools, you should be able to make the most of these opportunities.

Civic Engagement: Acting on Your Views

One vitally important goal of this book is to encourage you to engage in a respectful, continuing conversation about your views and to make the connection between having ideas and opinions and acting on them. Political scientist Michael Delli Carpini has defined **civic engagement** as

individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.¹¹

The possibilities for citizen involvement are so broad and numerous that the idea of civic engagement encompasses a range of activities. Civic engagement might include everything from tutoring an underprivileged child to volunteering at a conservative think tank. In this book, we focus in particular on civic engagement that takes the form of **political engagement**—that is, citizen actions that are intended to solve public problems through political means. As you read this book, you will find that a variety of political actions are possible, from boycotting and *buycotting* (buying goods produced by companies whose policies you agree with) to running for office.

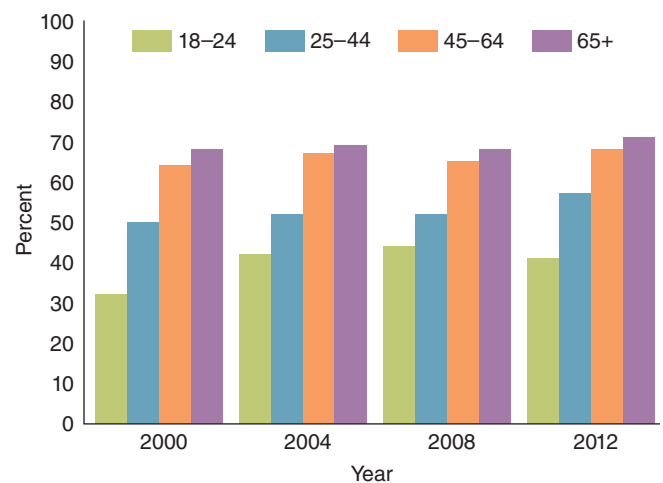


FIGURE 1.1

Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections (2000–2012) by Voter Age How has the turnout rate changed over time for voters aged 18–24? For other age groups?

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, www.census.gov/hhes/www/socdemo/voting/publications/historical/index.html.

civic engagement

individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern

political engagement

citizen actions that are intended to solve public problems through political means

Does the Youth Vote Matter?

The Issue: During the 2012 presidential election, much emphasis was placed on the importance of the youth vote. After President Barack Obama received resounding support from young Americans in the 2008 campaign, many pollsters and pundits argued that he could not sustain this support, particularly given the impact that a struggling economy had on the financial prospects of the youngest voters, who were hardest hit by the recession. In 2012, many political scientists believed that turnout among young voters had the potential to determine the outcome of that year's presidential race.

To that end, we saw a multitude of individuals, from politicians to rappers to clothing designers, urging young people to come out and vote. The national political parties took notice, too: Because Americans aged 18–29, drawn exclusively from the vast Millennial generation, constitute a larger cohort than similar age brackets, both parties sought to tap the potential of this huge voting bloc in 2012.

Yes: The youth vote did matter in 2012, and it will continue to play an important role in future elections. The 2012 presidential election saw strong participation by young Americans: About 50 percent of those aged 18–29 voted, though participation did dip for the younger members of that cohort. Only 41 percent of those under age 25 voted. Although that turnout rate is not comparable to that of older segments of the population (whose turnout rates ranged from 52 percent to 68 percent, depending on age), the overall trend among young people indicates that they are increasingly involved in political issues. In 2008, a near record turnout rate was magnified by the large proportion of young Americans who voted for Barack Obama. Fully 66 percent of those aged 18–29 voted for Obama that year, and although his support was not as strong among young voters in 2012, a generational divide in candidate preference was evident nonetheless. This breakdown was the first sign of a new era of generational politics, and those who came of age politically in the era of Obama will be loyal to the Democratic Party for years to come. Because of the size of this generation, the impact of their participation is likely to be influential in future campaigns. In 2012, voters under age 30 constituted 25 percent of the electorate; by 2020, nearly 37 percent of American voters will be members of the Millennial generation.

No: The turnout of young Americans, though increasing historically, will not be the determining factor in future federal elections. The low participation rate by young Americans in 2010 and the decline in their 2012 participation indicates that the 2008 Obama phenomenon was a flash-in-the-pan occurrence and that Democrats cannot count young Americans among their loyal party supporters. As a candidate in 2008, Obama relied on a message and an electronic medium that were attractive to young Americans. But those tactics proved difficult to replicate in the complicated process of governing, and the 2010 and 2012 turnouts among young people are indicative of young voters' disenchantment with both President Obama in particular and politics in general.

Other Approaches: Younger voters were attracted to Obama's brand of politics, and they will remain loyal to Democrats nationally in years to come. But as the 2010 and 2014 turnout indicated, that support does not translate into support for other Democratic candidates who are running in non-national contests such as congressional races. In smaller-scale elections, there is little chance of developing the momentum generated by a national movement that relies on technology to mobilize a broad-based constituency. Nonetheless, today's younger voters—Millennial voters—will become the determining constituency in federal elections in years to come, because of the size of their generation and because of the unique set of political viewpoints they bring to the political table as a result of being socialized in a post–September 11 world.

What do you think?

1. How did the significance of the youth vote in 2012 compare with that of 2008?
2. What issues motivate young voters to vote? What kinds of candidates motivate younger voters?
3. Do the positions of Millennial voters differ from those of older voters?

We hope that this book not only empowers you by teaching you about the institutions, policies, and processes of government but also inspires you to become civically and politically engaged. Today, many students choose to stick their toes into the waters of political activism by using the Internet—by following an elected official on Twitter, for example. You can take part in your democracy by joining a Facebook group advocating for an issue you care about, organizing a fund-raising event, signing an e-petition, joining a volunteer group, volunteering for a campaign, or even participating in a protest march, to name just a few of the many options available to you.

Consider which potential volunteer activities pique your interest. Think about what might best suit your schedule, lifestyle, and personal and professional goals. By taking part, you will ensure that your voice is heard, and you will derive the satisfaction of knowing that your community and the nation benefit from your actions as well.

What Government Does

In this section, we look at the nature of government and the functions a government performs. **Government** is an institution that creates and implements the policy and laws that guide the conduct of a nation and its citizens. **Citizens** are those members of a political community—town, city, state, or country—who, through birth or naturalization, enjoy the rights, privileges, and responsibilities attached to membership in a given nation. **Naturalization** is the process of becoming a citizen by means other than birth, as in the case of immigrants. Although governments vary widely in how well they perform, most national governments share some common functions.

To get a clear sense of the business of government, consider the following key functions performed by government in the United States and many other national governments:

- **To protect their sovereign territory and their citizenry and to provide national defense.** Governments protect their *sovereign territory* (that is, the territory over which they have the ultimate governing authority) and their citizens at home and abroad. Usually they carry out this responsibility by maintaining one or more types of armed services, but governments also provide for the national defense through counterterrorism efforts.
In the United States, the armed services include the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard. For the year 2015, the U.S. Department of Defense budget was approximately \$525 billion. Governments also preserve order domestically. In the United States, domestic order is preserved through the National Guard and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.
- **To preserve order and stability.** Governments also preserve order by providing emergency services and security in the wake of disasters. Governments also maintain stability by providing a political structure that has **legitimacy**: a quality conferred on government by citizens who believe that its exercise of power is right and proper.¹²
- **To establish and maintain a legal system.** Governments create legal structures by enacting and enforcing laws that restrict or ban certain behaviors. In the United States, the foundation of this legal structure is the federal Constitution.¹³ Governments also provide the means to implement laws through the actions of local police and other state and national law enforcement agencies. By means of the court system, governments administer justice and impose penalties.
- **To provide services.** Governments distribute a wide variety of services to their citizens. In the United States, government agencies provide services ranging from inspecting the meat we consume to ensuring the safety of our workplaces. Federal, state, and local governments provide roads, bridges, transportation, education, and health services. They facilitate communication, commerce, air travel, and entertainment.

Many of the services governments provide are called **public goods** because their benefits, by their nature, cannot be limited to specific groups or individuals. For example, everyone enjoys national defense, equal access to clean air and clean water, airport security, highways, and other similar services. Because the value and the benefits of these goods are extended to everyone, government makes them available through revenue collected by taxes. Not all goods that government provides are public goods, however; some goods, such as access to subsidized housing, are available only to the poor.



> One way in which individuals articulate their political views is through the products they choose to purchase. In 2014, Nabisco created a stir when it featured gay, lesbian, and mixed-race families in advertisements for their Honey Maid Graham Crackers using the slogan “this is wholesome.” The ads prompted some protests, but also generated much support. Have you ever boycotted or buycotted a manufacturer based on your political view?

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the institution that creates and implements policies and laws that guide the conduct of the nation and its citizens

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members of the polity who, through birth or naturalization, enjoy the rights, privileges, and responsibilities attached to membership in a given nation

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public goods

goods whose benefits cannot be limited and that are available to all