

## Throughout our nation's history,

Americans have cherished the ideals of democracy — government of, by, and for the people. Yet today, many are not familiar or comfortable with how democracy works in practice in the halls of Congress and in our state capitols. They view the legislative process as slow, contentious, unresponsive — a perception that leads to cynicism and disengagement.

America's representative democracy is a constantly evolving process, one that relies on **public participation** and the Voices of the People.

The Center for Civic Education, the Trust for Representative Democracy at the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Center on Congress at Indiana University are allied in a project called **Representative Democracy in America: Voices of the People**. We are working to reinvigorate participation in our system of government through an array of programs to foster civic learning and citizen engagement.

# Representative Democracy in America

## Voices of the People

A civic education and outreach project of  
the Alliance for Representative Democracy:

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*Representative*  
**DEMOCRACY**  
*in America*

Voices of the People

[www.representativedemocracy.org](http://www.representativedemocracy.org)

# Representative Democracy in America

## Voices of the People



The Alliance for Representative Democracy is working across a broad front to improve public understanding of representative democracy and encourage Americans to play a responsible role in their government—not just voting, but also staying informed, contacting elected officials and getting involved in communities.

Highlights of the Alliance's activities include:

**Congressional Conference on Civic Education** An annual gathering in Washington, D.C., including key education policy leaders, members of the judiciary, state legislators and civic groups from each state and the District of Columbia. State teams develop ways to strengthen civic education and spur citizen involvement.

**America's Legislators Back to School** This program brings civics to life by encouraging state legislators to visit classrooms to teach about American democracy. More than 1,600 legislators bring their firsthand experience to nearly 300,000 students each year.



**Representative Democracy in America** A six-part video series designed for middle- and high-school students, accompanied by an instructional guide for teachers that includes lesson plans, a correlation to the *We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution* text and other resources.

**Web-based educational tools** This ten-part series includes interactive e-learning simulations and activities on the work, role, and impact of Congress, and the importance of citizen participation. Simulations include lesson plans for teachers and information on correlating to state curriculum standards.



**Teacher training** The Alliance works with educators to help make civics instruction effective, interesting and relevant. We offer Best Practices videos, lesson plans and resource materials. Professional development institutes have involved more than 3,000 teachers nationwide.



**Democracy Kids** This website, [www.democracykids.org](http://www.democracykids.org), designed for students in grades four through six, presents information on government and civics through a variety of interactive games and other features, from crossword puzzles to examples of young people who have made a difference.

**American Civic Education Teacher Awards** Awards are given annually to elementary and secondary teachers of civics, government and related fields who show exceptional expertise, dynamism and creativity in motivating students to learn about the U.S. Constitution, Congress and public policy at the state and local levels.

**Survey on Congress** This annual national survey of the public's attitudes about Congress examines how people learn about and interact with Congress, how they rate its performance and how they regard their responsibilities as citizens.

**American Democracy Television** ADTV provides timely video programs that public, educational and government channels, public access stations, statewide networks and others can use to engage citizens with their representative government. ADTV programming is provided to more than 300 stations in 50 states.

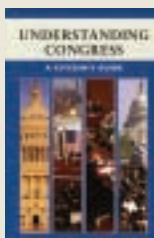


**Citizen Brain: Feeding on American Democracy** This fifteen-minute video for upper-elementary students takes a humorous tack to convey serious concepts in civics and government. It educates young people about the fundamental ideals of representative democracy, focusing on the different roles of federal, state and local governments.

**Facts of Congress** Thirty fast-paced, one-minute video segments for middle school students on basic concepts and terms of representative government, such as "Representation," "Compromise" and "Checks and Balances."

**Congressional Moments** An extensive series of two-minute radio programs, each explaining a way that the work of Congress has made a difference in people's lives.

**Public Service Announcements** The Alliance has produced a series of PSAs for television and radio that deliver the message, "It's your government—get involved." They are distributed in cooperation with the National Association of Broadcasters.



**Understanding Congress: A Citizen's Guide** A concise, readable introduction to Congress, this booklet explains the concept of representative democracy, how Congress functions, its impact on people's lives and the importance of citizen participation.

**Making Your Voice Heard: How to Work With Congress** This booklet gives practical advice on how citizens can constructively express opinions to their elected representatives.



**Your Ideas Count! Representative Democracy and You** A booklet that challenges citizens to assess their knowledge of and trust in our system of government. It makes the case that disagreement, debate and compromise are a natural part of representative democracy.



**TIME for Kids** A series of mini-magazines—one for second and third graders, one for fourth through sixth grade students and one called *inTIME* for the high school audience. These explain how government works and why citizen input is important.

They are sent free of charge to civics teachers nationwide for distribution and discussion in their classrooms and at home.

**Alliance on the Web** [www.representativedemocracy.org](http://www.representativedemocracy.org) is the comprehensive source for up-to-date information on all the resources, programs and projects of the Alliance for Representative Democracy.

Whether you are a citizen, student, educator or elected official, contact us to learn about the important role you can play in strengthening representative democracy in America.

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