

UNCIVIL WAR

EDUCATION GUIDE

Bertelsmann
FOUNDATION




“*There are many forces that have come together in recent years that have us in a position where we’re all inclined to believe that our own voices have been carved into irrelevance before we even go in to vote on Election Day.*”

*Martin O'Malley
Governor of Maryland (2007-2015)*

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A NOTE FROM THE BERTELSMANN FOUNDATION

In 2016, the Bertelsmann Foundation launched *Disrupting Democracy*, a project that was created to examine global trends where economics, politics, society and technology converge. After publishing three books covering thirteen case studies on five continents, we were looking for a different way to tell the important stories that reflect our changing world. Beginning with *The Troubles with Brexit* in 2019, we pioneered a documentary series with two goals in mind: to educate and to motivate.

Uncivil War aims to do both. The issues explored in this film and, indeed, in this guide are often misunderstood, and that misunderstanding has led to voter apathy and the erosion of democracy in the US. Voter suppression and gerrymandering over more than a century has left deeply entrenched scars in the electoral system and voters' psyches. The topic of disinformation is a more recent phenomenon, but one that is equally damaging to those interested in a fair, just and inclusive democracy. Once these issues come into focus, what must be done also becomes clear. Though the challenges are distinct, there is a common remedy: to vote.

UNCIVIL WAR

EDUCATION GUIDE

ABOUT THE FILM

Gerrymandering, disinformation, voter suppression... Do our votes matter anymore? *Uncivil War* unravels a web of threats to American elections, separating truth from fiction, and exposing a war on democracy itself. Through conversations with experts, politicians and activists fighting on both sides of the partisan divide, we examine the US democratic system and search for a way to defend it.

GERRYMANDERING

the practice of dividing or arranging a territorial unit into election districts so that one political party has an unfair advantage

Drawing electoral districts for partisan benefit has been happening in the US since the country's founding. But recent advances in technology, combined with a nationally orchestrated effort by Chris Jankowski's REDMAP in 2011, resulted in historic gains for Republicans nationwide. That victory still reverberates and has ignited a partisan arms race for 2020 state-level elections. It's a winner-take-all contest to decide who will draw the maps that determine the balance of power for the next decade. *Uncivil War* explores cases in two states, one controlled by Democrats and one by Republicans.

In Maryland, former Democratic Governor Martin O'Malley admits he gerrymandered districts to the best of his ability in 2011, but he has since changed his opinion of the practice after seeing the adverse impact on voter turnout. With Republican Governor Larry Hogan now in charge of this deep blue state, is there any chance Democratic state legislators will work with him to change the system?

Indiana Republicans orchestrated the most effective gerrymander in the state's history in 2011 and, by 2014, voter turnout in the state had plummeted to the lowest in the country. Races there have become foregone conclusions. Of 100 Indiana House seats up for re-election in 2018, 33 Republicans ran completely unopposed. And only four seats switched hands after 300 electoral races since 2012. We go behind the scenes with the people and organizations fighting an uphill battle to change Indiana's state constitution to create a fairer and more transparent process.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

a strategy used to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting

Uncivil War goes deep into the history of voter suppression in Mississippi, the US state with the highest percentage of African Americans in its population. It remains one of only ten states never to have elected an African American candidate through a statewide popular vote.

DISINFORMATION

false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) to influence public opinion or obscure the truth

What happens to a democracy when there is no common acceptance of truth? When facts are dismissed as fake news? When the threshold for breaking news is defined by a 280-character tweet? A vacuum develops, and it has been filled by foreign governments, domestic mischief makers and others seeking to destabilize and divide American society. By all accounts, those forces have succeeded. The question now is: Can the system be repaired or has the point of no return been passed? We go to the sources of disinformation and follow them into the political bloodstream to illustrate the dramatic and often disastrous results.

USING THE EDUCATION GUIDE

This education guide is a companion piece to the documentary *Uncivil War* that will provide additional background, depth and analysis to the central issues covered in the film. It is designed for students from middle school through university, allowing for exploration that is age-appropriate at all levels.

This education guide includes supplemental content to deepen students' knowledge in three thematic areas that have undermined Americans' faith in their own democracy:

- Gerrymandering
- Voter Suppression
- Disinformation

In American schools, students are often exposed to “big picture” concepts such as US government, US history and elections, but they rarely are offered time to cover many of the unique elements that comprise these broad topics. In the case of gerrymandering, a standard curriculum would typically include the census, divvying up seats in Congress and who controls the levers of power. Here, we'll examine who draws the Congressional and state-level district lines, who benefits from drawing maps for partisan advantage, and how this distortion of American democracy can be corrected.

Regarding voter suppression, American students are given a healthy dose of the Civil War before fast forwarding to the civil rights movement with a narrow focus on the efforts of Martin Luther King, Jr and Rosa Parks. Little attention is devoted to what happened in the century between the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil Rights Act. This film and guide seek to fill that massive gap with a particular focus on the Jim Crow laws that laid the groundwork for modern voter suppression, and the various suppression tactics that currently exist and, in fact, are being expanded in many states.

In recent years, digital literacy programs have become a feature in American schools, but the content of those courses tends to focus on verifying sources, internet hygiene and navigating various platforms. We pick up on those themes but apply them directly to the current information environment as it pertains to the American electoral system. This guide examines the role of foreign and domestic actors in polluting the information space and the motivation behind their efforts.

Access to links and other resources can be found at www.uncivilwarmovie.com.



ORGANIZING A SCREENING EVENT IN CLASS OR ON CAMPUS

- 1** To request a screening, email Anthony Silberfeld at the Bertelsmann Foundation, anthony.silberfeld@bfna.org. Please include a proposed date, time and location.
- 2** For downloadable assets, including the film poster and images from the film to promote your event on your website and social media platforms, contact Anthony Silberfeld at the Bertelsmann Foundation, anthony.silberfeld@bfna.org.
- 3** Circulate an electronic copy of this education guide in advance of the film screening.

BEFORE THE SCREENING

Prior to watching *Uncivil War*, start a debate among students about the issues covered in the film. This may reveal preconceived notions about the workings of the American political system and give instructors indications of knowledge gaps.

Here are sample questions to spark a debate:

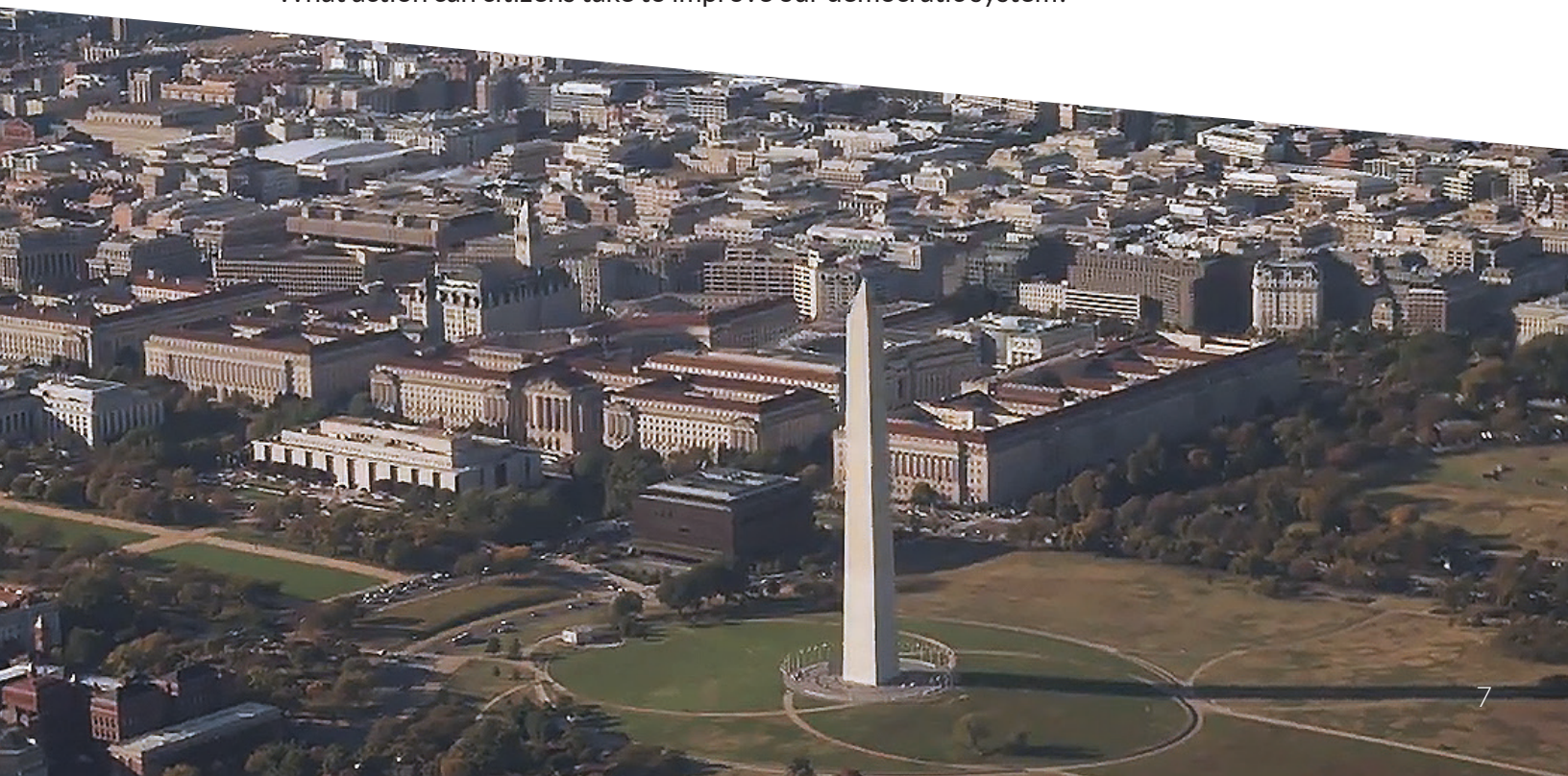
- What is democracy?
- How would you characterize the state of American democracy?
- What are the greatest threats to the US political system?
- Is American democracy responsive to the needs of the electorate?
- What is your primary source of information? Do you trust what you read, hear and see?

POST-SCREENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The purpose of post-screening questions is to gauge the gut reaction to and impact of the film on students. They also serve as a transition to the rest of the guide, which drills down on the individual topics covered in the film.

Here are sample questions to launch the discussion:

- What is the film's most impactful moment?
- Does the film change your perspective on the state of American democracy?
- Are there aspects of the film with which you disagree?
- What lessons do you take away from the election hacking simulation?
- What action can citizens take to improve our democratic system?







UNCIVIL WAR

GERRYMANDERING

GERRYMANDERING

DRAWING THE LINES

Gerrymandering is all about drawing federal- and state-level maps to create an environment that gives the majority party the best opportunity to control the levers of power for a decade. The voices from *Uncivil War* focus on this practice and note that this is a majoritarian, not a partisan, problem.

Martin O'Malley, Governor of Maryland (2007-2015)



"We understood that with Pennsylvania using redistricting to create districts that would likely elect more Republicans; with Virginia creating districts that would likely elect more Republicans; with Michigan, with North Carolina carving districts that would make their delegations more Republican...it was our hope that if we elected a democratic governor – at least in this current imperfect system of check and balances – we would be pushing back against that. We would be balancing against that by doing everything legally, and within the Constitution to draw our congressional lines in ways that would help us elect hopefully another Democratic congressperson, and we did."

Connie Morella, US Congresswoman, Maryland's 8th Congressional District (1987-2003)



"I don't think redistricting would be hard to understand. It's just not the top of the priority list. I mean, if you think yourself, you've got three kids and when you're talking to them about values and about government, you're not talking to them about redistricting. But you hope that they will learn when the time comes. They'll learn something about it and realize that it is important."

Julia Vaughn, Policy Director, Common Cause Indiana



"It's always been an uphill battle here in Indiana. You know, we're one of the more conservative states in the Midwest. It was certainly easier back in the days when we had a more balanced legislature, when one party didn't control everything. We had a little bit more success, or at least we had opportunities to discuss our issues. Since the Republican super majorities have taken control here, that is less likely to happen. I think one party government is just bad. You know, we are not a state that is hundred percent one party or the other. There needs to be balance because when there's not, there are too many issues that not only get short shrift, they just don't even get touched upon."

Peggy Welch, Member, Indiana House of Representatives (1998-2012)



"Quite honestly, I didn't strongly identify what party I was. I was representing myself. Again, it was a 60 percent Republican district, but I didn't use walking sheets to say that I'm only gonna go to this Democratic household and then I'm gonna skip that Republican household. I had to go to every house."

STATE PROFILES



MARYLAND

Total Population: 6 million

White: 55 percent

Black: 29 percent

Latino: 9 percent

Asian: 6 percent

Other: 1 percent

Population Centers: Baltimore
Montgomery County
(DC Suburbs)

Per Capita Income: \$41,522

Governor in 2002: Paris Glendening
(Democrat)

Governor in 2012: Martin O'Malley
(Democrat)

2002 Gerrymander: 6 Democrats and 2
Republicans in the House

2012 Gerrymander: 7 Democrats and 1
Republican in the House



INDIANA

Total Population: 6.7 million

White: 85 percent

Black: 10 percent

Latino: 7 percent

Asian: 3 percent

Other: 1 percent

Population Centers: Indianapolis

Per Capita Income: \$28,461

Governor in 2002: Frank O'Bannon
(Democrat)

Governor in 2012: Mitch Daniels
(Republican)

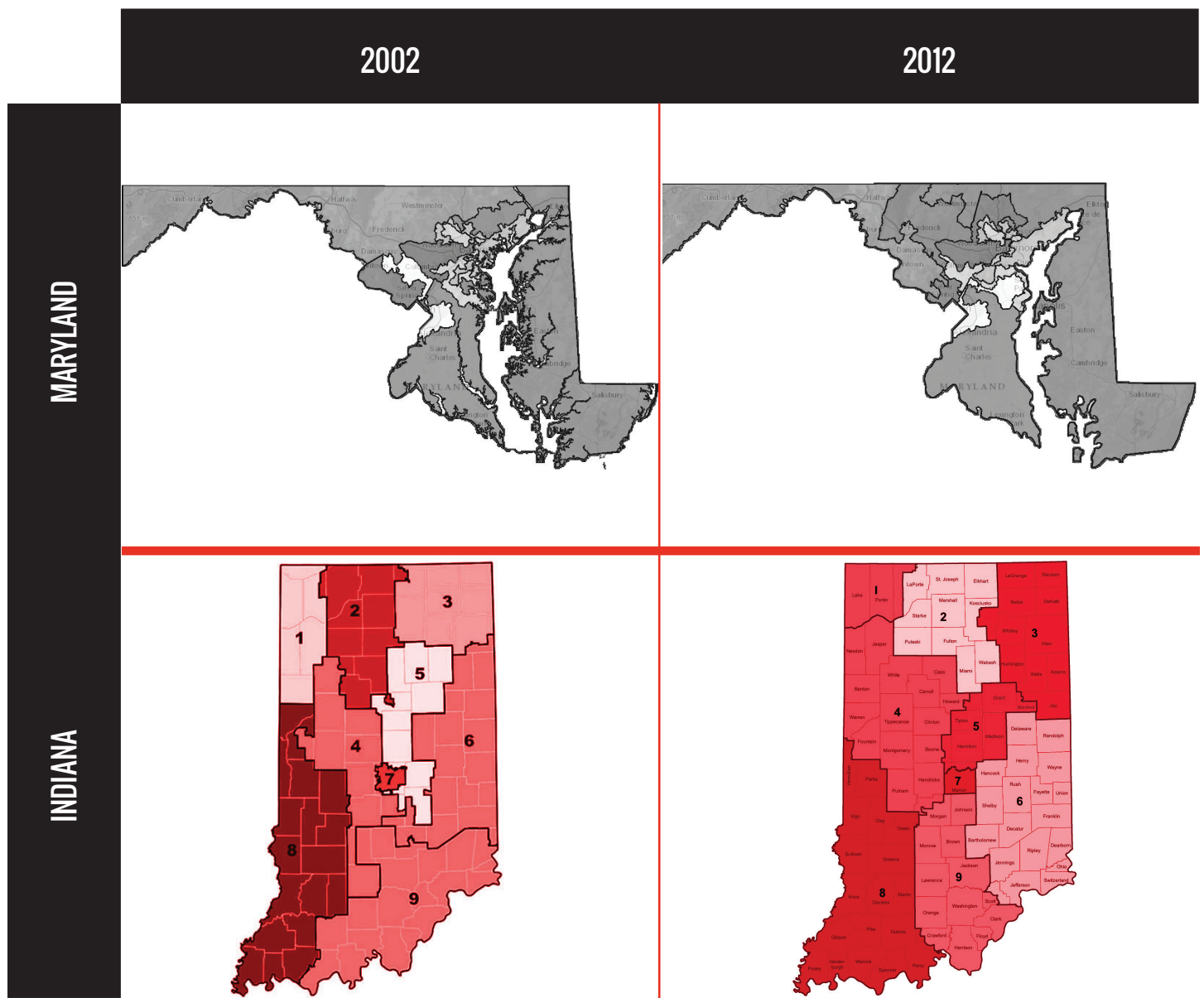
2002 Gerrymander: 2 Democrats and 7
Republicans in the House

2012 Gerrymander: 2 Democrats and 7
Republicans in the House

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Following the 2000 and 2010 censuses, Maryland and Indiana congressional districts were redrawn as authorized under their respective state laws. As the governors and state legislators set out to draw lines on the map, the principles of compactness, contiguity and racial equity were meant to drive the exercise. Instead, voter and demographic data provided mapmakers with enough information to craft districts that would maximize partisan gains.

Below are the two most recent maps from both states. See if you can spot the changes between 2002 and 2012. What explains those changes? Were those changes legal?



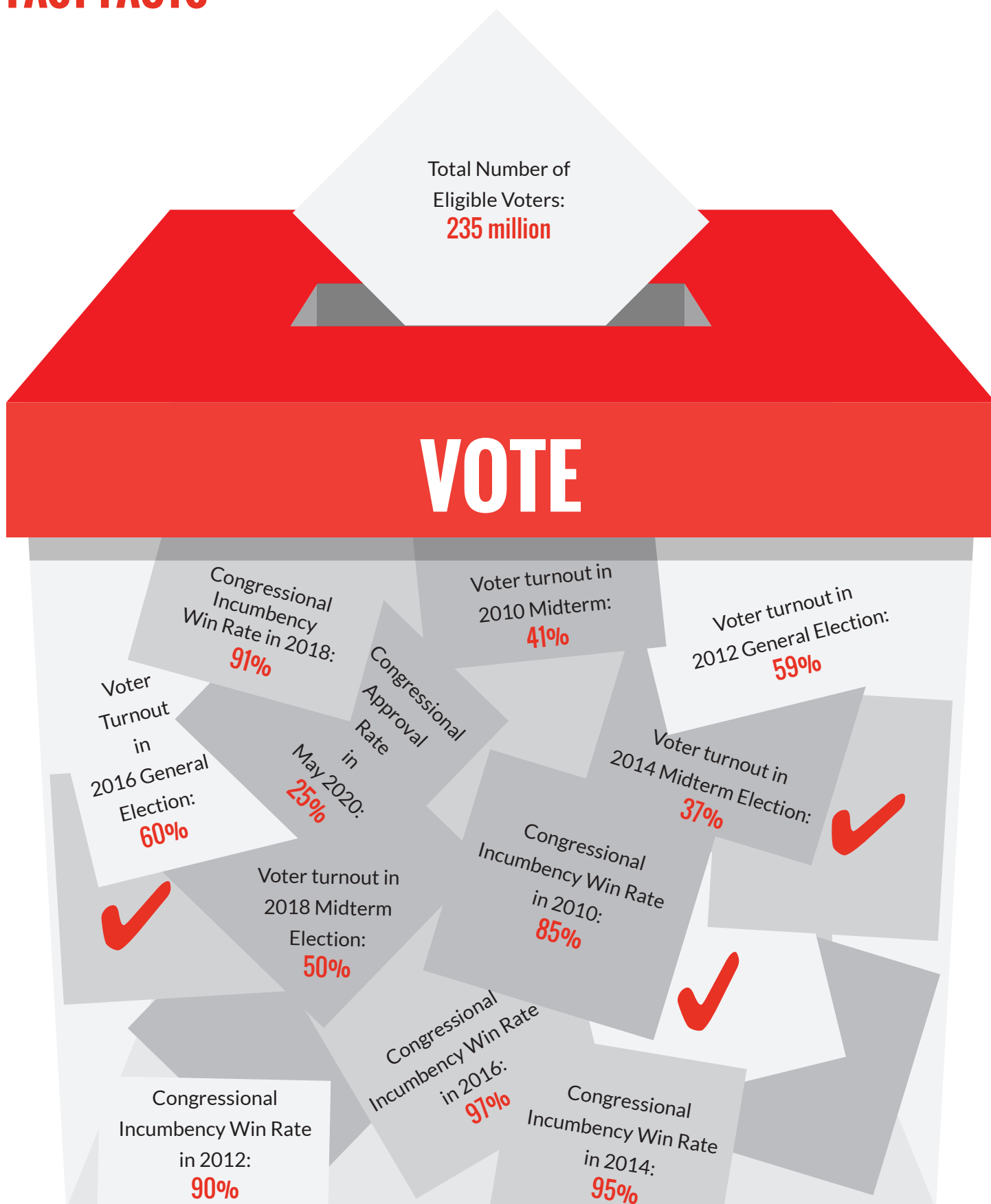
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryland%27s_congressional_districts#/media/File:United_States_Congressional_Districts_in_Maryland_\(2003%E2%80%932013\).tiff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryland%27s_congressional_districts#/media/File:United_States_Congressional_Districts_in_Maryland_(2003%E2%80%932013).tiff)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maryland%27s_congressional_districts#/media/File:United_States_Congressional_Districts_in_Maryland_since_2013.tif

<https://www.in.gov/sos/elections/3007.htm>

<http://www.stats.indiana.edu/maptools/maps/boundary/legislative/2011/Congress2012.pdf>

FAST FACTS



10 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What are the benefits of gerrymandering?
- 2 What are the consequences of gerrymandering?
- 3 Is the principle of “one person, one vote” what the framers of the Constitution had in mind?
- 4 What are the driving factors that motivate you to vote?
- 5 Do you believe every vote matters?
- 6 How has gerrymandering impacted the political center?
- 7 If Congress typically has an approval rating below 30 percent, why do voters routinely reelect 90 percent of its members?
- 8 What are the alternatives to a partisan-driven redistricting process?
- 9 Have independent redistricting commissions worked?
- 10 Would eliminating partisan gerrymandering bolster voter turnout in the US?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Biography - Elbridge Gerry

https://www.senate.gov/about/officers-staff/vice-president/VP_Elbridge_Gerry.htm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CK4KtoZklc>

Cracking, Stacking and Packing Explained

<https://www.aclu.org/video/stacking-cracking-and-packing>

Draw Your Own Maps

<http://www.publicmapping.org/resources/software>

Gerrymandering Explained

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/27/us/what-is-gerrymandering.html>

Governor O'Malley Deposition

https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/17/17-333/28857/20180123103523326_Appendix%20Volume%201.pdf

League of Women Voters - Fair Maps Project

<https://www.lwv.org/peoplepoweredfairmaps>





UNCIVIL WAR

VOTER SUPPRESSION



VOTER SUPPRESSION

In a healthy democracy, everyone who is eligible to vote should be allowed to do so. Any obstacles, legal or illegal, that prevent voters from exercising that constitutional right are forms of voter suppression. In the US, voter suppression has disproportionately impacted minority and disadvantaged communities. While the days of poll taxes, literacy tests and having to answer questions such as “How many bubbles are in a bar of soap?” are over, Americans today face modern tactics that have the same effect as those White supremacist, Jim Crow-era laws of the past.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Elections in the US are administered at the state and county levels, so our elections are a patchwork of rules and regulations that vary depending on where you live. The US is, however, one of the few democratic countries that requires most of its citizens to opt IN to vote, and the result is predictable. Some states have online voter registration, others allow voters to register by mail. Yet in 2010, at least 51 million voting-age Americans were not registered to vote at all. Of that number 37 percent were Black, and 48 percent were Hispanic. Erecting hurdles such as requiring voters to prove their citizenship, dictating when a voter can register, and imposing penalties on those organizing voter registration drives hamper civic participation in already-marginalized communities.

VOTER PURGES

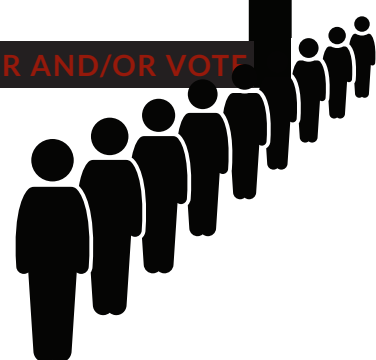
Registering to vote in an election does not necessarily mean you are registered to vote in EVERY election. In fact, state election officials are responsible for periodically updating their state’s voter registration lists to account for information such as new addresses, name changes and removing the deceased. Keeping the records up to date is a tall order, and 1 in 8 voter registration records contains inaccuracies. In some states, particularly those in the former Confederacy with a history of racial discrimination, discrepancies have been used to purge minority voters. According to the Brennan Center, approximately 16 million voters were purged between the 2014 mid-term election and the 2016 general election. Up to 17 percent of them were removed without justification.

VOTER ID LAWS

So let’s say you’ve figured out how to register to vote and managed to remain on the list of eligible voters without getting purged. Depending on your state, you may still have to present identification when you arrive at the polling station on Election Day. In the US, however, more than 21 million citizens have no photo identification. It may be too expensive for some (the cost ranging from \$75 to \$175), while traveling to a government agency to get an ID may be a hardship for others. Nevertheless, 36 states have instituted voter ID laws, which have resulted in an estimated 2 or 3 percent reduction in voter turnout. In some of those states, that translates into tens of thousands of votes that could be decisive in any race, from that for dog catcher to US president. It is often said that Americans get the leadership they deserve. If that is true, breaking down obstacles to voting so that the results reflect the will of the people is a great place to start. After all, nearly 100 million eligible voters stayed home in the 2016 US presidential election.

Three identical ballot boxes are shown side-by-side. Each box is light gray with a darker gray top and a slot for a ballot. The words "VOTE HERE" are printed in red on the front of each box. The boxes are set against a dark gray background.

Three identical ballot boxes are shown side-by-side. Each box is light gray with a darker gray top and a slot for a ballot. The words "VOTE HERE" are printed in red on the front of each box. The boxes are set against a dark gray background.



10 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 What does the principle of “one person, one vote” mean?
- 2 Should it be compulsory for all eligible voters to vote?
- 3 Is there a voter fraud problem in the US?
- 4 Have US elections ever been fully free and fair?
- 5 What is the most damaging voter suppression tactic?
- 6 Is there a case to be made for any of the 61 forms of voter suppression?
- 7 Would the US have different leaders if everyone who wanted to vote could?
- 8 Are there any technological solutions to facilitate voting?
- 9 Who are the biggest winners and the biggest losers of continued voter suppression?
- 10 Do these tactics make you want to fight for change or opt out of participating?

“We’re the ones who wrote the book on Jim Crow.”

– De’Keither Stamps

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1890 Mississippi Constitution (with Amendments)

https://www.sos.ms.gov/Education-Publications/Documents/Downloads/Mississippi_Constitution.pdf

Civil Rights Act of 1964

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/civil-rights-act-of-1964.html>

Jim Crow Laws

<https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws>

Lynching in America

<https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/explore>

Murder of Emmett Till

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-death-of-emmett-till>

One Person, No Vote by Professor Carol Anderson

<https://www.professorcarolanderson.org/one-person-no-vote>

Shelby v. Holder - Supreme Court Decision

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/court-cases/shelby-county-v-holder>

Voting Rights Act of 1965

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/history-federal-voting-rights-laws>

Voter Turnout Demographics

<http://www.electproject.org/home/voter-turnout/demographics>

White Rage

<https://www.professorcarolanderson.org/white-rage>





A dark, wavy horizontal band, possibly representing a horizon or a stylized wave, spans across the middle of the page. It is a solid dark grey or black color.

UNCIVIL WAR

DISINFORMATION



The one part of 2016 that we know was wildly successful was that the Russians hacked us. And by that I mean people with consistent and sustained disinformation aimed mostly at really hot button political issues to get us riled up. We are the weak link and the only real security against a very different threat landscape. Now it's not just Russians, but a large number of both international and domestic actors who have the incentive and the desire to hack us. We the people.”

- Justin Levitt

Author of The Truth About Voter Fraud

DISINFORMATION

The state of America's information space has become increasingly unreliable over decades. Some point to the advent of the internet and social media as the turning point for the rapid decline in reliability of information that voters consume, but this erosion began long before Facebook and Twitter. In 1949, the US enacted the Fairness Doctrine, which required all broadcasters to present news fairly and honestly, and give those with opposing viewpoints on any issue the opportunity to present their perspectives.

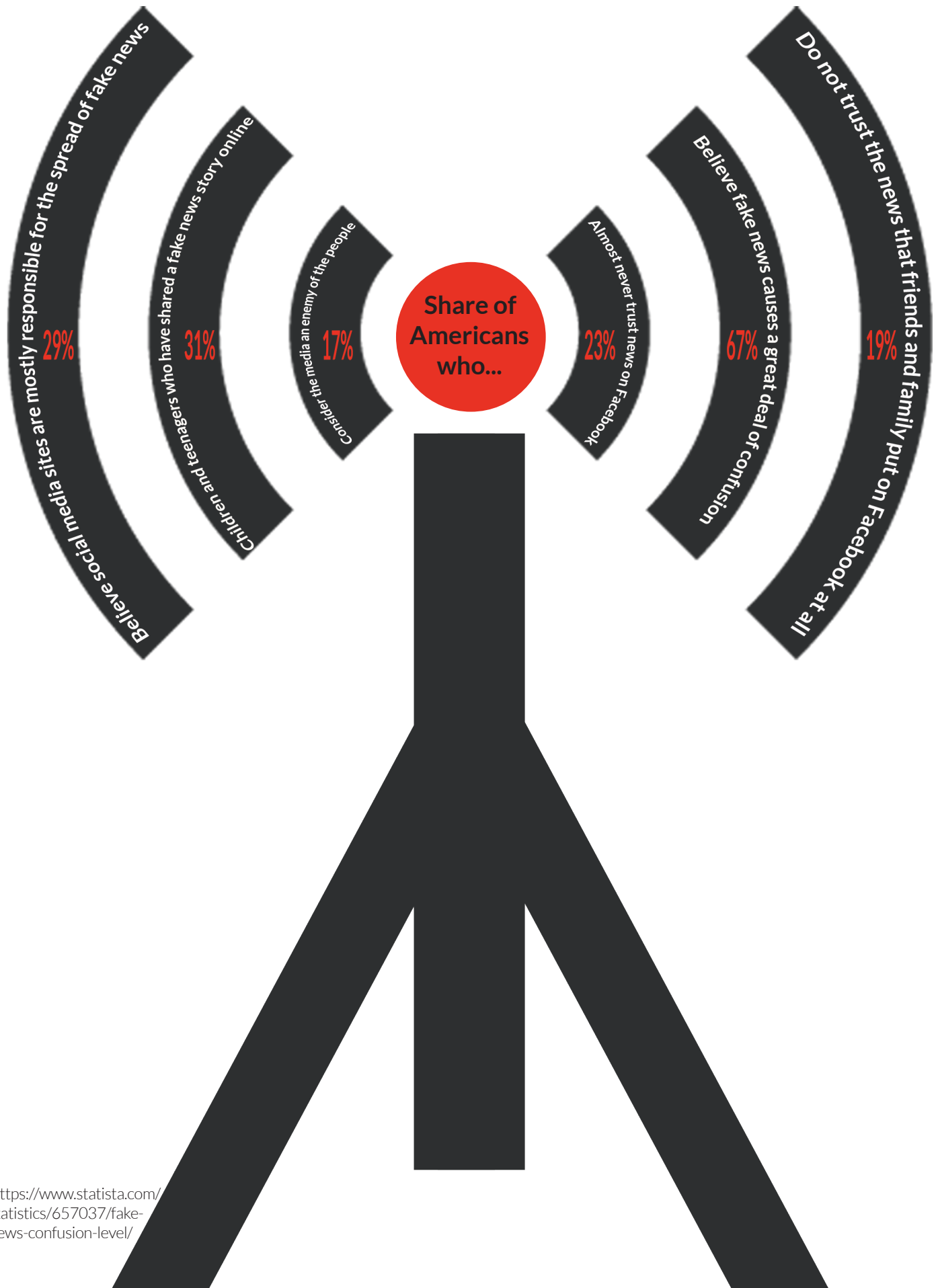
By the mid-1980s, with the emergence of cable news, there was a growing chorus arguing that the Fairness Doctrine excluded voices outside the mainstream of public discourse and that this violated protected speech under the First Amendment. In 1987, the Federal Communications Commission agreed and repealed the Fairness Doctrine. The ripple effects of that decision can be seen today on the airwaves of MSNBC, Fox and CNN, where entertainment and skewed perspectives (on the left or right) can take precedence over giving voters the facts.

This has created information bubbles that have been solidified through algorithms created by Facebook, Twitter and others. Such echo chambers achieve two objectives: They expose users to news and opinions that reaffirm their preconceived beliefs, and they agitate users to increase social division and sow chaos. It is the latter objective that Russia's Internet Research Agency (IRA) exploited to its benefit in 2016. A Senate Intelligence report indicated that the IRA was responsible for, among other actions, organizing pro- and anti-Black Lives Matter rallies that resulted in confrontations that quickly went viral.

The distorted information space has exposed American voters and its democracy to a worst-case scenario of a society that cannot agree on a common set of facts, led by those who capitalize on that uncertainty for their own political gain.



DISINFORMATION BY THE NUMBERS



10 QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1 Where do you go to find reliable information?
- 2 How often are you exposed to information that presents a view different from your own?
- 3 What can social media companies do to improve the information environment?
- 4 Should the US enact a 21st-century Fairness Doctrine?
- 5 Why do foreign actors seek to disrupt our information space?
- 6 Why is there no bipartisan consensus to address this challenge?
- 7 How should young people be prepared for distinguishing fake from real news?
- 8 How can older Americans become better equipped to address echo chambers and disinformation?
- 9 Should social media companies be held to the same (or higher) standards as traditional media outlets are?
- 10 How does America hold an election in which facts are always in dispute and there are no guardrails against spreading disinformation?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



Department of Homeland Security - Election Security

<https://www.dhs.gov/topic/election-security>

Disinformation Tracker

<https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/hamilton-dashboard/>

Facebook Election Integrity Initiative

<https://about.fb.com/news/2019/10/update-on-election-integrity-efforts/>

Putin-Trump Press Conference on Election Interference

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?448421-1/presidents-trump-putin-reject-2016-election-campaign-collusion>

U.S. Senate Report Volume 1 - Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference (Election Infrastructure)

https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume1.pdf

U.S. Senate Report Volume 2 - Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference (Social Media)

https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf

GLOSSARY

Affidavit

a sworn statement in writing made especially under oath

Black Codes

a code of laws especially as adopted by some southern states of the US shortly after the Civil War limiting the rights of black people

Census

a count of the population

Civil Rights

the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to US citizens

Confederate States

the 11 southern states of the US during their secession from the Union between 1860 and 1865: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee

Democracy

a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections

Deposition

testimony taken down in writing under oath

Disenfranchisement

to deprive of the right to vote

Disinformation

false information deliberately and often covertly spread (as by the planting of rumors) in order to influence public opinion or obscure the truth

District

a territorial division (as for administrative or electoral purposes)

Election Interference

any act committed by foreign or domestic actors designed to influence or undermine the outcome of an election

Fascism

a political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts the nation and often race above the individual and that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition

Fifteenth Amendment

guaranteed the right of citizens of the US to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude

Fourteenth Amendment

granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the US—including former slaves—and guaranteed all citizens “equal protection of the laws”

Incumbent

one that occupies a particular position or place

Flipped

a term referring to the change from Democrat to Republican or vice versa

Gerrymandering

the practice of dividing or arranging a territorial unit into election districts in a way that gives one political party an unfair advantage in elections

Hack

to gain illegal access to a computer network or system

Jim Crow

ethnic discrimination especially against African Americans by legal enforcement or traditional sanctions

Malware

software designed to interfere with a computer's normal functioning

Phishing

a scam by which an Internet user is duped (as by a deceptive e-mail message) into revealing personal or confidential information which the scammer can use illicitly

Polarization

a state in which the opinions, beliefs, or interests of a group or society no longer range along a continuum but become concentrated at opposing extremes

Ratify

to approve and sanction formally

Reapportionment

the reassignment of representatives proportionally among the states in accordance with changes in population distribution

Redistricting

to revise the legislative districts

Swing State

a US state in which Republican and Democratic candidates have similar levels of support and which is considered to play a key role in the outcome of presidential elections

GLOSSARY

continued

Voter Suppression

a strategy used to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting

Voter Turnout

the number of eligible voters who participate in an election

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

IRENE BRAAM

Irene Braam joined BFNA as Executive Director in April 2016. Since then she has overseen the transformation from a traditional Washington think tank to a pioneer in tackling complicated policy issues on film. During that time, she executive produced 12 documentary films, and has a slate of three documentaries in development.

An experienced lawyer and media producer, the Dutch native began her professional career in the music industry. Irene was head of international, legal and business affairs at Naïve Records in Paris, in charge of business development for Midbar Tech Ltd. in Tel Aviv, and served as both director of public policy and government affairs, and director of legal and business affairs at the Universal Music Group in London and Brussels. Prior to joining the Foundation, Braam was Vice President Government Affairs and Head of the Bertelsmann Liaison Office in Brussels.

TOM GLYNN

Tom Glynn is an experienced film director and producer. Most recently he partnered with BFNA to direct *The Troubles with Brexit*, a documentary examining the history of conflict in Northern Ireland and the unintended consequences of Brexit there. In 2014, Tom wrote and directed *Automotive*, the Los Angeles Times' "pick of the Dances With Films Festival," a neo-noir shot entirely from inside a '64 Mercury. Prior, he and Pulitzer Prize winner Ayad Akhtar teamed up with Joseph Costello to make the critically acclaimed film *The War Within* (Magnolia, 2006). The film was nominated for two Independent Spirit Awards including Best Screenplay.

Tom founded Gauge Theory Creative in 2011, a production company based in Santa Monica, CA with clients including NBATV, Bleacher Report, Special Olympics, Museum of Natural History, Tiffany & Co., MAGIC Fashion Shows, Coterie and more. Tom earned an MFA in directing from Columbia University, and a BA in Physics from Amherst College.

COLLIN MASTBROOK

Collin Mastbrook is a regional Emmy-winning recipient as a producer and editor for his work on a NASCAR documentary series for DAYSTAR TV. A gifted filmmaker, Collin and Tom have partnered on several productions over the past six years, including most recently *The Troubles with Brexit*.

TONY SILBERFELD

Tony Silberfeld joined the Bertelsmann Foundation in April 2014. As director of the Transatlantic Relations program, he oversees media projects covering politics, economics and social challenges in the Euro-Atlantic sphere. In addition, he has produced six documentary films on the nexus of technology and democracy around the world, including Italy, Mexico, Cuba, Latvia, India and the United Kingdom.

Tony joined the Foundation after seven years with the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office where he was head of political and public affairs at the Northern Ireland Bureau. Prior to his tenure at the embassy, Tony spent several years as a foreign policy advisor in the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. He also spent time in the private sector with the international team of Booz Allen Hamilton.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 2020, the United States found itself at a crossroad. Would it choose to be a beacon of democracy for countries around the globe, or would it descend into authoritarianism? As has been noted in the preceding pages, the erosion of American democracy is not a new phenomenon. In fact, some might argue that it peaked two centuries ago. Wherever one might stand on the history of the republic, it is clear that gerrymandering, disinformation, and voter suppression have all contributed to the US decline over time. The question now is whether voters and policymakers are prepared to take action to turn the tide, and we hope that this education guide plays a role in catalyzing that effort.

This project is part of a comprehensive research initiative undertaken by the Bertelsmann Foundation that doesn't begin and end with *Uncivil War*. We have a series of animations that serve as companion pieces to this film, and a three-volume publication called *Disrupting Democracy*, that takes a global look at the trends we're seeing today. With that in mind, I would invite you to take a closer look at our work by visiting www.bfna.org/democracy.

Finally, I'd like to thank my colleagues at the Bertelsmann Foundation. In our boutique think tank, every member of our team plays an important role in the success of all our projects. First, I want to recognize the author of this education guide, Tony Silberfeld, and our designer Ariana West for their efforts in bringing this important endeavor to life. I'd also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Emily Benson, Brandon Bohrn, Jeffrey Brown, Nathan Crist, Stephen DeGuzman, Samuel George, Tom Glynn, Faith Gray, Megan Long, and Collin Mastbrook for their contributions.

With sincere gratitude,

Irene Braam
Executive Director
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