



Voting in the United States

Originally Discussed: November 2020

Description: This conversation includes discussion of major issues around voting and elections in the U.S. Participants will be asked to share their perspectives around voting eligibility requirements, the voting process and other issues.

Estimated time: 90 minutes

(1) Getting acquainted and comfortable

5 - 10 min.

Welcome

- Thank you for coming...
- We are a part of The Great Reset, which was born out of a shift we're seeing in our country. We have been in a place where we don't tend to speak 'beyond our bubbles' and across perspectives. The Great Reset has been opening up a grey space for such conversations since 2018. You are now part of keeping the conversation going and we thank you.

The Pillars of The Great Reset

- To share our own thoughts and perspectives with humility
- To learn from others and listen with respect

Ground Rules

- Every comment is valid and deserving of respect
- We show respect by speaking one at a time, putting our phones on silent and staying engaged, even when we are not speaking
- In the interest of time, I may cut in to ask you to 'top-line' something if we need to move on. This means simply offer up a synopsis of your thoughts and speak in bullets, not paragraphs

Confidentiality

I would like a verbal from everyone that you are here of your own volition and out of respect for one another I would ask you to keep what others say in this room unless they give you permission otherwise. (go around and get verbal agreement). Further, you agree to adhere to

the principles outlined already: to deliver your perspectives bound to the principles of respect, to **listen with humility and offer grace to others who are sharing this space.**

Personal Introductions

Please share your name, where you live and how frequently you vote in national and local elections.

*****Remember to ask to record and PRESS RECORD*****

(2) Major issues related to Voting and Elections 10- 15 min.

- What do you think are the major issues or problems that involve voting and elections?
- Probe to include voter eligibility (who can vote), voter ID, voter suppression, and voter turnout as the topics for this discussion.

(3) Voter eligibility 15 - 20 min.

- Who should be able to vote?
 - Probe for age and any other criteria.
- What about felons?
 - 1 of 13 vs. 1 in 56, Blacks vs. Whites have lost the right due to a felony.
- What about requiring an ID?
 - 1/2 of minorities vs. 20% of whites don't have a license.
 - 11% of US Citizens don't have a photo ID.

(4) The voting process

30 - 35 min.

- How easy or difficult is it to vote in the US? And why is it easy or difficult? Probe for personal, social and legal obstacles. Probe for ways the process has improved or been simplified.
- Do you feel that voter suppression is a major problem in the US, and if yes, why is it happening? What are some tactics of voter suppression?
 - If you disagree that voter suppression is a major problem, why?
- Do you agree or disagree with removing voters from registered voter rolls if they have not voted in more than a specified number of years?
 - Ohio does this for 6 years, and other states are planning similar laws. Wisconsin purged 14% of voters b/t 2016-18. Voters in Black neighborhoods are twice as likely to be removed.
- Election turnout in the US is low compared to many other countries -- 56% of the voting-age population. What can we do to make it easier for people to vote and increase voter turnout? Probe for early voting, Sunday election days, a national holiday for elections, etc.
- Do you think that voter fraud is a major problem in the US, and if yes, what causes it? And what can we do about it?

(5) Closing comments

5 - 10 min.

- Any additional comments or questions about this topic?

Resources:

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-vote-by-mail-explainer/explainer-fraud-is-rare-in-u-s-mail-in-voting-here-are-the-methods-that-prevent-it-idUSKBN2482SA>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election/confusion-long-lines-at-some-poll-sites-as-eight-u-s-states-vote-during-coronavirus-pandemic-idUSKBN2391B5>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-alabama/u-s-supreme-court-blocks-alabama-order-easing-voting-restrictions-idUSKBN24409Fvoting>

<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/04/864899178/why-is-voting-by-mail-suddenly-controversial-heres-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement/>

<https://www.ncsc.org/trends/monthly-trends-articles/2019/the-future-of-restoring-voting-rights-for-exfelons>

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/21/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/>

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id.aspx>

<https://www.aclu.org/other/oppose-voter-id-legislation-fact-sheet>

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2012/08/voter-id-laws-why-do-minorities-lack-id-to-show-at-the-polls.html>

<https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/challenge-obtaining-voter-identification>

https://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/2016/discriminatory-voter-id-laws?utm_medium=paidsearch&utm_source=google&utm_name=bj_alwayson_brand2019_traffic&utm_term=&utm_content=serp&utm_topic=flavors&utm_objective=discover&utm_root=d&gclid=CjwKCAjwx9_4BRAHEiwApAt0zrfGylhawNFBt2jXgy0Zp0O27oOS6C79BKjzDpnofOvhckFf50N48RoC880QAvD_BwE

<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/5/23/17383400/vote-by-mail-home-california-alaska-nebraska>

<https://time.com/5852837/voter-suppression-obstacles-just-america/>

https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/analysis/Briefing_Memo_Debunking_Voter_Fraud_Myth.pdf

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/31/a-threat-to-democracy-republicans-war-on-minority-voters>