


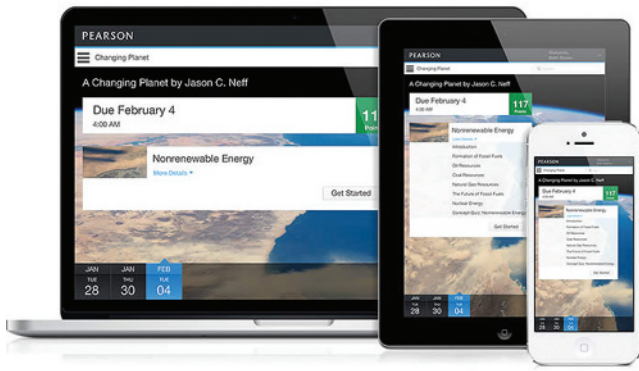
2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION EDITION

# Living Democracy

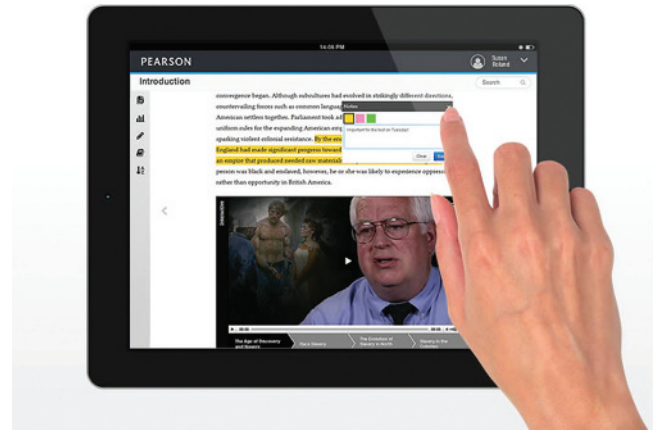


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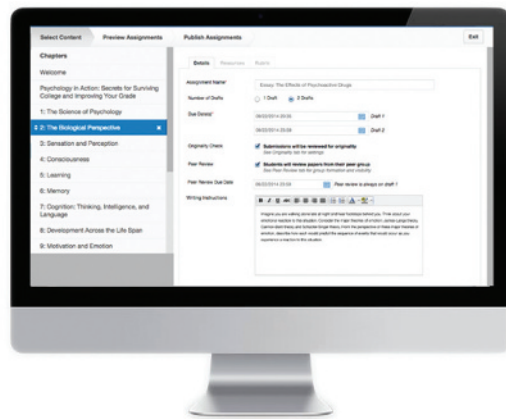
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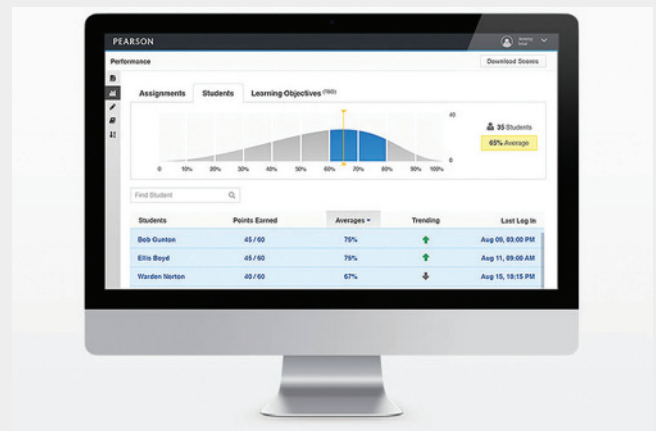
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# LIVING DEMOCRACY

## 2016 Presidential Election

Fifth Edition

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# To The Student

It's probably natural that each generation feels as though they are at the cusp of great political transformation. Certainly those coming of age in the 1950s and 1960s could make that claim. Television burst onto the scene, quickly transforming how Americans would spend their leisure, how products were sold, and how candidates would run for office, among much else. New modes of political activism, like mass protests, rallies, sit-ins, marches, and boycotts were used with great effect to advance feminism, civil rights, anti-Vietnam war and environmental movements. Money became a key factor in electoral campaigns, campaign consultants replaced local party activists, and the explosion of interest groups stunned even the most seasoned observers.

Many feel the same way about our current political scene. In the past few years, we have witnessed incredible changes in the way average Americans experience government and politics. Only a few decades ago the election of an African American to the presidency seemed impossible, and just as remote were the prospects of electing a woman to lead the nation. That changed in 2008, of course. The Internet, with social networks, online fundraising, video sharing sites, blogs, and Twitter, is transforming the way Americans interact. The exact depth and breadth of recent partisan polarization has been a source of scholarly dispute, but at the minimum we have not seen this intensity in generations. The mushrooming weight of social media, the continued strength of the partisan press, and the breadth of demographic changes are remarkable. The number of twists and turns witnessed during the 2016 presidential election was incredible.

Yet the heart of the American political experience remains constant: Change happens when citizens become involved. When concerned citizens—young and old—roll up their sleeves and enter the political trenches, the system responds. Unfortunately, too many young Americans doubt their ability to bring about change by utilizing the political process. They fret about problems and injustices but believe their efforts to change the system would be meaningless. Part of this despondency likely springs from bewilderment over how our political system works. It is true that quite often these changes come slowly, and it can take a concerted effort by many, but individual political action matters.

*Living Democracy*, the book in your hands, was conceived after the 2000 election, when youth electoral turnout was at historic lows. There have been signs of improvement in some areas, but on the whole, we are confronted with a generation divorced from politics. So one goal is to help readers learn about our political system, but we also want the reader—you—to come away with a greater appreciation of how to use our political system to bring about a better nation. We look forward to being on that journey with you.

# Meet Your Authors



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# To The Instructor

Those who have been fretting about levels of youth political engagement breathed a sigh of relief after the 2008 election. Turnout for voters younger than 30 grew from 35 percent in 2000 to 51 percent in that election. Other indicators of political behavior—such as participating in campaign events, talking about politics with friends and family, and attention to the news—seemed to suggest greater interest. Yet we now know that this was probably a temporary surge rather than a sea change. Youth turnout in the 2010 midterm election reached just 22.8 percent—less than four years earlier. Turnout for those under 30 once again dropped in 2014—with 37 percent overall and 21 percent under 30 voting. In the 2016 presidential contest, it was once again lackluster: just 49 percent of those under 30 came to the polls. This was rather surprising given that the race was so long and hotly contested and, of course, the importance of the outcome. Stated simply too many young people shun politics and are indifferent to the duties and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

So if we can agree that young citizens are generally indifferent to politics, and that things may have gotten worse in recent decades, what are we to do about it? Should instructors of American Government care about this trend? If so, is this really an issue we might confront in meaningful ways?

Instructors of American Government especially understand the fragility of democracy and the importance of participation from a broad spectrum of citizens. A generation turned off from politics is a problem. Many have come to understand that introductory courses in American Government offer a unique opportunity to make a difference, as we have a captive audience for at least 45 hours per semester! And a stunning number of Americans take this course each year—upward of nearly one million. What a unique opportunity. There are numerous objectives in the introductory course, but surely one should be the cultivation of civic skills and an understanding of how average citizens can bring about change.

Our goal in writing and organizing this book has been to provide a tool to engage students—not only in the democratic process, but in the course itself. This course is fascinating, important, and fun—and we bring that feeling into the pages of this book.

We want the reader to understand that government and politics are not distant, abstract concepts but rather forces that shape their lives now and will greatly shape their lives in the future. Students should understand the workings of their government and the value of their engagement. We pull the reader into the subject matter by offering anecdotes and illustrations that “connect,” by localizing politics whenever possible and by using a writing style that is clear and accessible.

Can a single course or the right textbook turn students into activists or politicians? Perhaps not. But we do believe that the material reviewed in this course is important and that offering content in novel and lively ways can help young readers appreciate their potential in a democracy. It is their system, too, and students should understand the workings of their government and the value of their engagement. This persistent indifference to politics compelled our work when we began this project a decade ago, and inspired our efforts and innovations with this new edition.

## New to This Edition

American politics has undergone dramatic changes in the past few years, and this edition attempts to capture many of these adjustments—from the ramifications of **stunningly important elections**, a policy process framed within record level of individual and institutional partisan polarization, **landmark court cases**, immense cultural changes (including the growing acceptance of LGBT rights), the mushrooming importance of social media, and the continued rise of the partisan press. Simply stated, the pace of change in American politics in the last few years has set aback even the most seasoned observers. So much is different, yet so much of our politics is new.

As for key changes in the larger political universe, this new edition picks up after the 2016 elections—as Donald Trump takes over the White House. Not only will this be a change of administrations and a shift in public policy, but the former reality star will likely usher in a very different approach to governance. The pages to follow explore many of the forces that led to his ascent, the numerous twists and turns in the electoral process that contributed to his victory over Hillary Clinton, and how Trump’s brand of leadership will impact the presidency—perhaps for generations. We are at a unique, perhaps critical juncture in our politics. We have done our best to incorporate these big changes within the framework of historical and contextual forces. Our goal is to help students better comprehend what a Trump presidency might imply—the good and the bad—for our experiment in democratic governance.

A central aspect of this book has always been to offer stories of how average citizens—both in the United States and abroad—confront politics, respond, and make a difference. In this edition, we have updated these anecdotes to keep them as current as possible.

**Chapter 1:** This introductory chapter sets the stage for our understanding of how average citizens can play a meaningful role in our government by incorporating the latest data on political engagement. In light of so many significant recent developments in our politics, can citizens still make a difference?

**Chapter 2:** Our system has always wrestled with a desire to bring new, bold leaders into government, with the need for stable governance through seasoned, experienced officials. The struggle between “new” and “establishment” has been recurrent, and this knowledge certainly helps us make better sense of the 2016 presidential election. New material in this chapter puts the rise of candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders in historic context.

**Chapter 3:** The latest trends in federalism, including the controversies surrounding Medicaid expansion, Supreme Court decisions regarding same-sex marriage, contraception, health care exchanges and other issues relating to the Affordable Care Act, are highlighted.

**Chapter 4:** Civil liberties issues are illuminated by the most important recent court decisions including: the Supreme Court declining to examine municipal restrictions on ownership of assault weapons (*Friedman v. Highland Park*, 2015); use of evidence against a driver who had broken no laws but was wrongly stopped by a police officer who misunderstood state traffic laws (*Heien v. North Carolina*, 2014); and limits on police authority to search the contents of drivers’ cell phones during traffic stops (*Riley v. California*, 2014).

**Chapter 5:** This chapter now highlights the most controversial civil rights issues in the past year, the policing issues highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement and the Supreme Court’s approval of same-sex marriage in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015).

**Chapter 6:** New material in this chapter allows readers to better appreciate the breadth and consequence of polarization in Congress and how the prospects of continued gridlock will be shaped by the results of the 2016 election. It also dives into the make-up of the 115th Congress and how the changes ushered in by the 2016 election will continue to redefine the “People’s Branch.”

**Chapter 7:** New material in this chapter will help readers understand the forces that will shape Donald Trump’s Administration. It provides the most up-to-date look at the



development of his cabinet, the role of different advisors, how the new president will work with Congress—particularly Speaker Paul Ryan in the House of Representative, and how Trump may harness social media to put a unique spin on the “powers to persuade.” New to this edition is also a more robust discussion on presidential unilateral actions.

**Chapter 8:** Problems involving the federal bureaucracy are illustrated by contemporary controversies about care at Veterans Administration hospitals and efforts to push the Department of Education to protect student loan borrowers against unfair practices.

**Chapter 9:** The political deadlock over the 2016 nomination of Judge Merrick Garland for a seat on the Supreme Court to replace the late Justice Antonin Scalia illustrates the efforts of presidents, senators, and political parties to shape the composition of the judiciary because of its importance in creating law and policy.

**Chapter 10:** A new section on the impact of social media on public opinion and political action is included as well as an expanded section on religion and party identification and public opinion, noting changes over time as well as contemporary dynamics.

**Chapter 11:** This chapter is significantly updated to include far more information about the lack of diversity in the news media and the concern over media bias. A good deal of attention is placed on the growing role of technology in the delivery of news, the use of social media and “citizen journalists,” the controversies around viral videos and police violence, and divergent consumption patterns and access to technology based upon demographics and ideology. A new section on digital first news media is included as well as data comparing public support for a vigorous and free press in the United States and other countries around the world.

**Chapter 12:** A new section on online activism is included, with special attention paid to examining whether or not online activism helps engagement or provides the illusion of being involved without the necessary commitment of time and energy. All data in the chapter is updated, with new information about Super PACs and nonprofit election spending.

**Chapter 13:** New to this chapter is a discussion of the legitimacy of the presidential nomination process, a topic brought to light by the candidacies of Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. It also provides turnout data from the 2016 election, as well as the most recent campaign finance reports and polling data on voters’ attitudes and behaviors. What factors explain Donald Trump’s surprise victory? How did the Republicans maintain control of both the House and Senate? What will happen to the Democratic Party in the years to come? Many believe the presidential election process has been forever changed by what happened in this election, and this chapter confronts many of these issues.

**Chapter 14:** The opening vignette and conclusion now focus on the 2013 government shutdown and debate over the Affordable Care Act. The discussion about the Obamacare court cases has been updated to include *King v. Burwell* (2015). The chapter now mentions the Flint water crisis as an addition to the issue-attention cycle and discusses the international Paris Agreement on climate change. All budget numbers in the chapter, including defense spending numbers, are updated. Some discussion of how economic policy was debated during the 2016 presidential primaries is also included.

**Chapter 15:** The opening vignette and conclusion discuss new, hot global issues, including the Syrian Civil War, ISIS, a more aggressive Russia, and a more assertive China. American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq has been updated for recent developments as well. The chapter now mentions NATO and Operation Inherent Resolve against ISIS. The discussion of CAFTA has been replaced with a discussion of Trade Promotion Authority. The chapter also looks at President Obama’s Iran deal (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA).

The number of special features in this edition has been streamlined, tightening the focus on the central theme of the book and making the most of students’ allotted reading time. We have also added **polling questions** throughout each chapter to help students

connect the material to their daily lives and explore their opinions on a variety of current issues. Revel takes these polling questions one step further, allowing students to compare their positions with those of their classmates, all *Living Democracy* readers, and national polling data.

The photos in this edition serve important purposes. They capture major events from the last few years, of course, but to illustrate politics' relevancy, they show political actors and processes as well as people affected by politics, creating a visual narrative that enhances rather than repeats the text. Also, all of the **figures and tables** reflect the latest available data.

## Features

Informed by cognitive psychology and proven learning concepts, the 2016 Presidential Election Edition of *Living Democracy* structures the material in ways that are consistent with effective, research-based pedagogy. We use a scaffolding process, for example, where new information builds on an established foundation.

One of the key pedagogical features of this book is the pathway of politics concept. We posit that democratic politics filters down into five “pathways” of change: the court process, elections, lobbying, grassroots activism, and cultural change. Many instructors have told us that this approach simplifies the process for students, and it helps them understand that voting is not the only route to change. American government can seem overwhelmingly complex and intricate—because it is! So we introduce this model early and use it throughout every chapter to untangle key concepts and thus aid student learning.

*Living Democracy* opens with an examination of the historical context and structure of our government, paying close attention to our constitutional system and our civil liberties and rights. Next, we move into a comprehensive examination of our political institutions and introduce students to the complex organization of our federal government. We are careful to place contemporary issues in historical and comparative context so that students understand the political intricacy of contemporary issues. Political linkage mechanisms are presented next, exposing students to various entities that tie us to our government and promote (and complicate) democracy. The last two chapters introduce students to the policymaking process by using economic and foreign policies as case studies. The text will help you teach students how to be active participants in the political process by giving them the knowledge and skills they will need to be interested and informed consumers throughout their lives.

- **Pathways of Action** sections illustrate how citizens—often average citizens—have made key changes in the system. At times these changes have been very broad, but in other instances, they have been much more localized.
- **Policy Timelines** explore the “when, where, and why” of significant changes in our political history in every chapter.
- **Confronting Politics and Policy** features close every chapter by laying out an important, on-going issue—a topic that could affect the readers' lives—and suggesting a series of steps they can take to become more informed and involved, and to make a difference. The goal is to explore a real issue and to suggest concrete steps for the reader's engagement.
- Every chapter includes **learning objectives** and a **marginal glossary** to support students' understanding of new and important concepts at first encounter. For easy reference, learning objectives and section summaries and key terms are repeated at the end of each chapter. There is also an end-of-book glossary.

Participation is surely at the center of this book. But so is pedagogy. We have worked diligently to incorporate research-based learning strategies. Our “pathways” approach is part of that, but so are all of the features described above. Our goal is to offer core information and proven learning tools to help the student feel better

about the class and about future involvement in politics. If we have done our job, this text will encourage a deeper level of connection to the system, and afford the reader a foundation of understanding—a framework for a lifetime of democratic engagement.

## Revel™

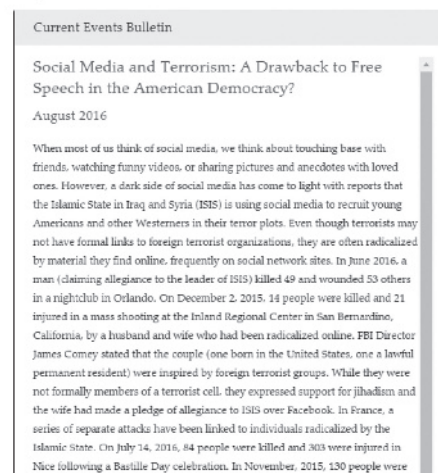
Educational technology designed for the way today’s students read, think, and learn

When students are engaged deeply, they learn more effectively and perform better in their courses. This simple fact inspired the creation of Revel: an immersive learning experience designed for the way today’s students read, think, and learn. Built in collaboration with educators and students nationwide, Revel is the newest, fully digital way to deliver respected Pearson content.

Revel enlivens course content with media interactives and assessments—integrated directly within the authors’ narrative—that provide opportunities for students to read about and practice course material in tandem. This immersive educational technology boosts student engagement, which leads to better understanding of concepts and improved performance throughout the course.

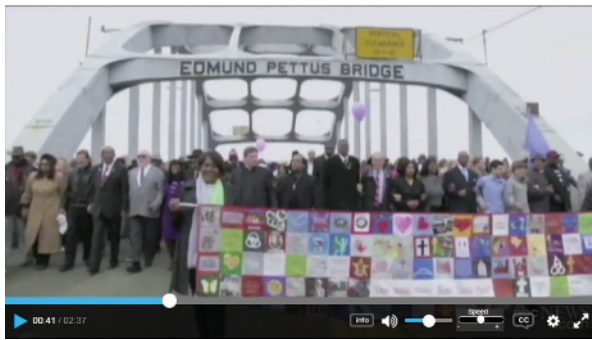
- Chapter-opening and closing **Current Events Bulletins** feature author-written articles, refreshed twice a year, that put breaking news and current events into the context of American government. The end-of-chapter bulletins, new to the 2016 Election Edition, lay out two sides of a hot-topic debate and encourage students to develop their own informed opinions.

### Chapter 10 Political Socialization and Public Opinion

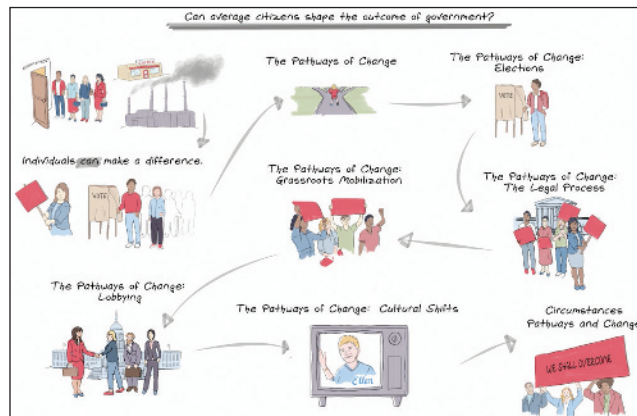


- **Videos** vividly illustrate key moments in American government. **News footage** provides examples from both historical and current events, from pinnacle civil rights demonstrations and hallmark presidential speeches to extensive coverage of the 2016 election and the issues that resonate with students today like climate change and new media. In addition, popular **Sketchnote videos** illustrate the material’s “pathways” framework, showing individuals how they can make a difference, and walking students through difficult-to-understand concepts such as how a bill becomes a law and the policymaking process. Through the visual storytelling approach, Sketchnote videos cater to visual and audio learners and hit a high level of engagement in students who can see the concept come to life.

Watch MARCH ON SELMA REMEMBERED 50 YEARS LATER



Watch JOHN OLIVER ON MAKING CURRENT EVENTS FUNNY



- **Interactive maps and figures** featuring Social Explorer technology allow updates with the latest data, toggles to illustrate movement over time, and clickable hot spots with pop-ups of images, detailed data, and captions.

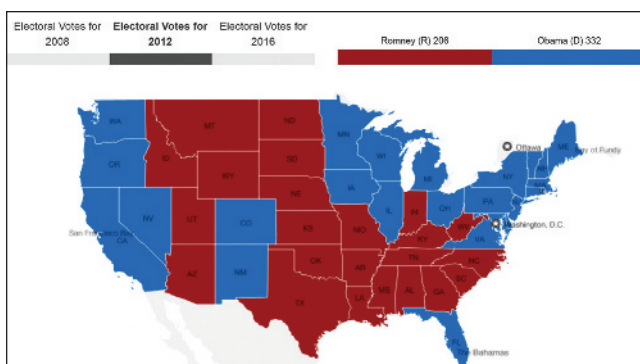
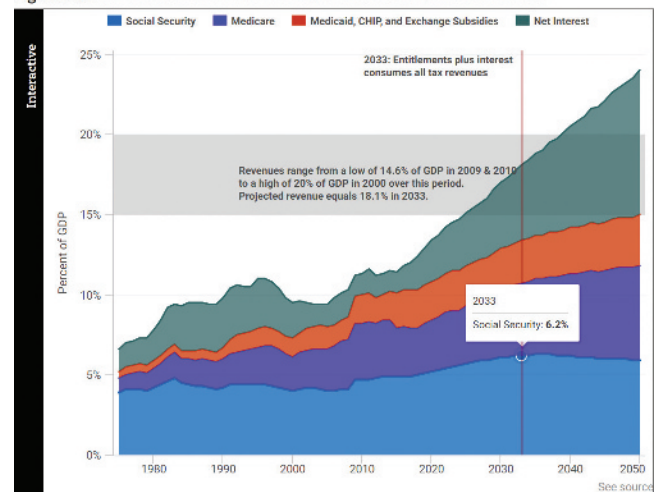


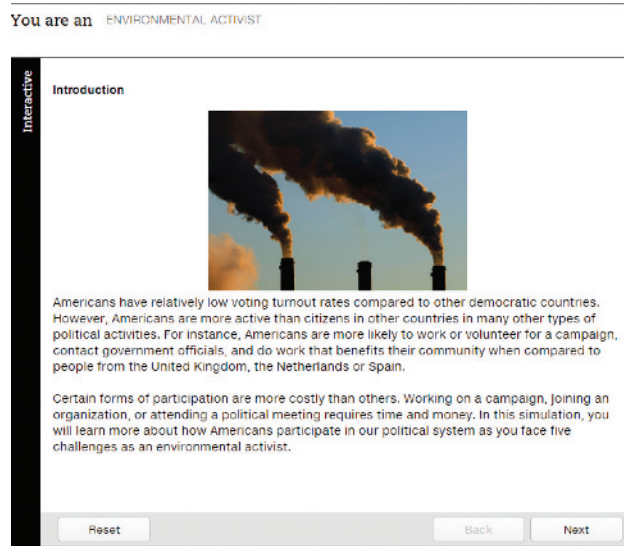
Figure 14.8 TAX REVENUE AND HEALTH CARE, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND NET INTEREST



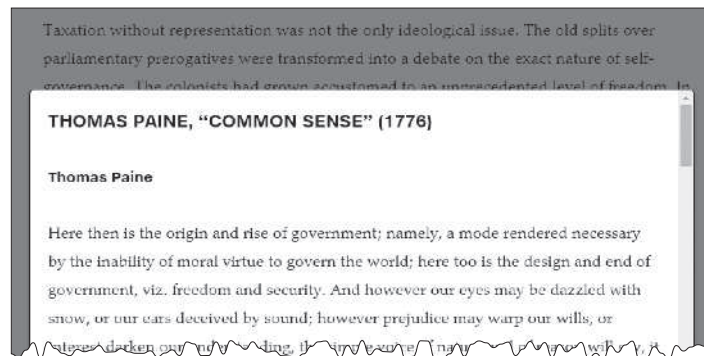
Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and interest on the national debt are projected to consume virtually all federal revenue within the next 25 years.

*How will tax policy be impacted by the increasing share of entitlement expenditures as a percentage of GDP?*

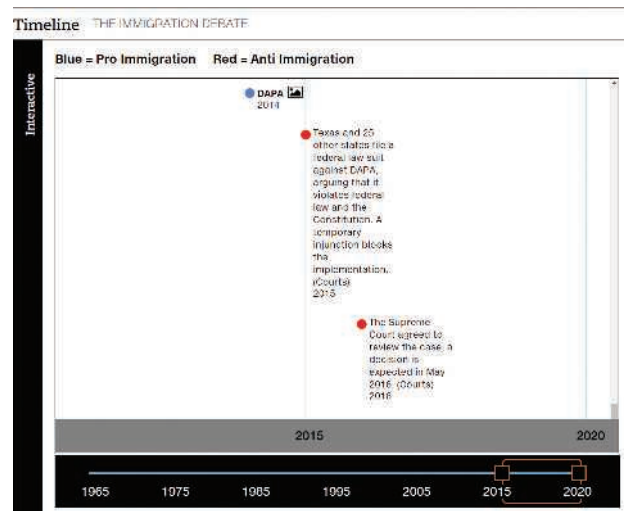
- **Interactive simulations** allow students to apply each chapter’s concepts in real-world scenarios and explore critical issues and challenges that the country’s Founders faced and that elected officials, bureaucrats, political activists, and average citizens still face today.



- Primary source **documents**, such as Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, the Emancipation Proclamation, and various Supreme Court cases and *Federalist Papers*, open alongside the material’s narrative so that they can be read in context.



- **Interactive timelines** in each chapter allow students to explore important events and the development and different sides of key issues in American political history.





- **Polls** encourage students to explore their own views on important political issues and often compare their opinions to similar national polling results.

Weigh In POLL

Interactive

1. Which of the following reasons best explains why some young Americans don't vote?

a. Too busy

b. Not interested

c. Cynicism and distrust of the system

d. Rules that make it hard to vote, like registration requirements

e. An inability to connect with candidates of either party

f. Other

1 of 1    Reset    Next

- Interactive **Review the Chapter** summaries that utilize learning objectives and flashcards featuring key terms and definitions allow students to review the chapters and reinforce the content.

Learn THE TERMS

Start Over    Swap    2/22 REVIEWED · 0 MASTERED

Interactive

*McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)*

U.S. Supreme Court decision that defined the respective powers of the state and federal governments. The opinion established that the Constitution grants to Congress implied powers for implementing the Constitution's express powers in order to create a functional national government, and that state action may not impede valid constitutional exercises of power by the Federal government.

Previous    Next    Got It!

- **Assessments** tied to primary chapter sections, as well as full chapter exams, allow instructors and students to track progress and get immediate feedback.

Chapter Quiz: Foreign And National Security Policy

Worth 5 Points ⓘ

Which foreign policy concerns disappeared with the end of the Cold War?

Communist takeovers of Third World countries

Weapons of mass destruction held by rogue states

Nuclear proliferation

Global terrorist attacks

3 attempts remaining

Submit



- **Integrated Writing Opportunities** To help students reason and write more clearly, each chapter offers two varieties of writing prompts:
  - **Journal prompts** ask students to think critically and apply what they have learned.
  - **Shared writing prompts** encourage students to consider how to address challenges described in the chapter. Through these prompts, instructors and students can address multiple sides of an issue by sharing their own views and responding to each other’s viewpoints.

Shared Writing: Congress

Worth 20 Points

A key characteristic of the contemporary Congress is partisan polarization. There seems to be fewer and fewer issues that produce compromise solutions. But what is wrong with party unity? Shouldn't members of Congress stick to their ideals and the concerns of constituents? Conversely, what makes compromise such a good thing?

A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

Post

0 characters | 140 minimum

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Make more time for your students with instructor resources that offer effective learning assessments and classroom engagement. Pearson’s partnership with educators does not end with the delivery of course materials; Pearson is there with you on the first day of class and beyond. A dedicated team of local Pearson representatives will work with you to not only choose course materials but also integrate them into your class and assess their effectiveness. Our goal is your goal—to improve instruction with each semester.

Pearson is pleased to offer the following resources to qualified adopters of *Living Democracy*. Several of these supplements are available to instantly download on the Instructor Resource Center (IRC); please visit the IRC at [www.pearsonhighered.com/irc](http://www.pearsonhighered.com/irc) to register for access.

**TEST BANK** Evaluate learning at every level. Reviewed for clarity and accuracy, the Test Bank measures this book’s learning objectives with multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay questions. You can easily customize the assessment to work in any major learning management system and to match what is covered in your course. Word, BlackBoard, and WebCT versions available on the IRC and Respondus versions available upon request from [www.respondus.com](http://www.respondus.com).

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discussion suggestions, activities for in or out of class, research activities, participation activities, and suggested readings, series, and films as well as a Revel features section. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

**POWERPOINT PRESENTATION WITH LEARNING CATALYTICS™** Make lectures more enriching for students. The PowerPoint Presentation includes a full lecture outline and photos and figures from the textbook and Revel edition. With integrated Learning Catalytics™ questions, get immediate feedback on what your students are learning during a lecture. Available within Revel and on the IRC.

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# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



Efforts to expand the legal protections for LGBT Americans have produced significant changes in recent years due to the will and dedication of average Americans. In a very real way, our democracy has been created and redefined through the centuries by citizens demanding change.

■ *Do you think most Americans, particularly younger citizens, today believe they can make a difference in the conduct of government?*

### → LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1** Illustrate how citizens participate in a democracy and why this is important.
- 1.2** Relate the themes of this book to American politics today.
- 1.3** Outline the various “pathways” of involvement in our political system.
- 1.4** Analyze the forces of stability in American politics.



During the 1950s, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Americans were subjected to widespread discrimination. Early in the decade, a Senate report said “homosexuality” was mental illness, and that this group constituted a security risk because “those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons.”<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the American Psychiatric Association listed homosexuality as a sociopathic personality disturbance and in 1953 President Eisenhower signed an executive order banning gay and lesbian citizens from working for the federal government. These citizens were subjected to an array of treatments to find a “cure,” including electroshock therapy. By the 1960s, 82 percent of American men and 58 percent of American women believed that only Communists and atheists were more dangerous than “homosexuals.”

Things began to change. In the 1960s, a number of local organizations began to emerge—likely drawing energy from other civil and human rights movements. Sit-ins and other small-scale protests started to take place. In June of 1969, the patrons of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village (a neighborhood in Manhattan) rioted when police officers raided the popular gay bar. Over the course of three days, thousands of protestors stood their ground against the police. Many believe the Stonewall Riots ignited the modern LGBT rights movement.

The pace of change accelerated in the 1980s and 1990s, but there were also setbacks. The AIDs crisis, which affected a disproportionate number of gay men, rekindled fears of the LGBT lifestyle. In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Defense of Marriage Act—a law that defined marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman, and stipulated that states were not required to recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states. A rash of state ballot initiatives and constitutional amendments were passed to prohibit gay marriage. Many candidates were sent to office on an anti-gay marriage platform.

And yet, the LBGT movement continued. The tide of public opinion turned, pushed along by shifts in popular culture. State after state began passing laws to protect LGBT citizens. The military changed course on “don’t ask, don’t tell” and several states allowed gay marriage. In June of 2015, precisely 46 years to the day after the Stonewall Riots, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to marry in *any* state.

Amy Snow and Christelle show their wedding rings as they celebrate the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage on June 26, 2015. The Supreme Court has said that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry nationwide without regard to their states’ laws.

- Do you think the decision will settle the gay marriage issue once and for all?



## CAN AVERAGE CITIZENS PLAY A MEANINGFUL ROLE IN AMERICAN POLITICS?

For those who suffered discrimination and hatred because of their sexual orientation, the pace of change was surely not swift enough. And of course the issue of gay marriage remains controversial in many states and communities; some believe the issue has not been settled. But in historic terms, the pace of the gay rights movement has been rapid.

How did this happen? As with all significant political movements in our nation's history, a host of forces came together. At the very heart of this transformation, however, were countless acts by ordinary citizens. Struggles took place in large and small protests, voting booths, courtrooms, and legislatures. Political action took place in classrooms, in bars, and at kitchen tables across the nation. The acts of public officials were instrumental, but these moves were made possible because average citizens refused to sit on the sidelines.

As you will see throughout the pages of this book, there are forces that suggest ordinary citizens cannot make much of a difference in our political system. The United States is not a perfect democracy, as we all know. But political engagement matters—and it always has. Time and again, ordinary men and women have shifted the course of government. The story of the LGBT rights movement underscores a fundamental and enduring truth that our government can be responsive, so long as citizens demand to be heard.

## It's Your Government

### 1.1 Illustrate how citizens participate in a democracy and why this is important.

**O**n some level, everyone knows that government affects our lives. We must obey laws created by government. We pay taxes to support the government. We make use of government services, ranging from police protection to student loans. It is easy, however, to see government as a distant entity that imposes its will on us. It provides benefits and protections, such as schools, roads, and fire departments. But it also limits our choices by telling us how fast we can drive and how old we must be to get married, purchase alcoholic beverages, and vote.

Would your view of government change if a new law dramatically affected your choices, plans, or expectations? Imagine that you and your four best friends decide to rent a house together for the next academic year. You find a five-bedroom, furnished house near campus that is owned by a friendly landlord. Then, you sign a lease and put down your deposit. During the summer, however, the landlord sends you a letter informing you that two of your friends will need to find someplace else to live. The city council has passed a new ordinance—the kind of law produced by local governments—declaring that not more than three unrelated people may live in a house together.

Now what would you think about government? After your initial feelings of anger, you might resign yourself to the disappointment of moving back into a dormitory or finding a different apartment. You might also ask yourself an important question: Is there anything that I can do about this new ordinance?

A distinguishing feature of democracy—the form of government in the United States—is that people have opportunities to influence the decisions of government. One individual cannot realistically expect to control the government's choice of priorities or the laws that are produced. However, in some circumstances, individuals can participate in activities that ultimately change government and lead to the creation of new laws and regulations—as was suggested in the opening section on the LGBT rights movement. Let us take the example of the housing ordinance and consider what you might do to attempt to change that law:

- You could encourage students to register to vote and help with political campaigns for city council candidates who promise to listen to students' concerns and get rid of the housing ordinance. In some college towns, individual students have

become so energized by specific political issues that some have actually run for and been elected to city councils. These activities, *voting* and *elections*, are the most familiar forms of citizen participation in a democracy.

- You could organize your friends to contact members of the city council asking them to change the restrictive new law. You could also go to city council meetings and voice your opposition to the law. We often characterize these activities as *lobbying* lawmakers in order to pressure or persuade them to make specific decisions.
- You could talk to the local landlords' association about whether it might file a lawsuit challenging the ordinance on the grounds that it improperly interferes with the landlords' right to decide how to use their private property. You might talk to an attorney yourself about whether, under the laws of your state, a new ordinance can override the rental lease agreement that you and your friends had already signed. If the new ordinance violates other existing laws, then taking the issue to court by filing lawsuits—a process known as *litigation*—may provide the means for a lawyer to persuade a judge to invalidate the city council's action.
- You could write articles in the college newspaper or blog about the new ordinance to inform other students about the effect of the law on their off-campus housing choices. You could publicize and sponsor meetings in order to organize *grassroots activities*, such as marches, sit-ins, or other forms of nonviolent protests. These actions would draw news media attention and put pressure on city officials to reconsider their decision.

### politics

The process by which the actions of government are determined. For example, by appealing to members of the city council to change the new housing ordinance, several students decided to roll up their sleeves and become engaged in local politics.

### public policy

What government decides to do or not do; government laws, rules, or expenditures. For instance, it is state public policy that you must be 21 years old to purchase alcohol.

There is no guarantee that any of these approaches would produce the change you desire. But each of these courses of action, depending on the circumstances in the community and the number of people who provide support, presents the possibility of changing the government's decision.

Each one of these approaches is part of **politics**. You should understand that politics concerns the activities that seek to affect the composition, power, and actions of government.

American government should *not* be viewed as “distant,” “all-powerful,” or “unchangeable.” Although government buildings are often designed to instill feelings of respect and admiration and to convey permanence, stability, and power, they are much more than awe-inspiring works of architecture. They are *arenas of activity* that determine **public policy**—what government does and does not do. The

Pictured here are demonstrators, marking the one-year anniversary of the shooting of Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri. Black Lives Matter, a grassroots protest organization, has drawn a lot of media attention.

- Do you think the group's efforts have been effective in helping to bring change?





**TABLE 1.1** Government Is All Around Us

Many doubt that government plays a role in your daily life. If you agree, consider the following timeline of a typical day in the life of an average college student and the number of times governmental control comes into play. Keep in mind that this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Time	Event	Government Agency
6:22 A.M.	You awaken to the sounds of a garbage truck outside. Annoyed, you realize that you forgot to bring the recyclables to the street last night.	Local department of sanitation; local recycling program
6:49 A.M.	Unable to get back to sleep, you take a shower, thinking about the cost of rent for your apartment and wondering if your next place will have a decent shower.	Local water filtration plant; federal Department of Housing and Urban Development
7:22 A.M.	You read the news, noting that interest rates are going up and that troop levels in Afghanistan are on the rise.	Federal Reserve Board; Selective Service; Department of Defense
8:34 A.M.	Driving to class, you notice the airbag, but you don't notice dirty car exhaust. You also note that your inspection sticker is about to expire.	Federal Environmental Protection Agency, state and local environmental agencies; state Motor Vehicle Bureau
8:43 A.M.	You stop at a gas station and are so pleased that prices seem to be going down.	Federal government investments in oil exploration and alternative fuels; presidential oversight of the Strategic Oil Reserves; federal trade agreements
9:05 A.M.	You arrive on campus, find a parking space, and walk to class.	State and federal support for higher education; state and federal tuition support and student loan programs
11:00 A.M.	In accounting class, you discuss the CPA exam.	State professional licensing program
12:09 P.M.	At lunch, you discuss the upcoming elections. Your best friend realizes that she won't be able to vote because she missed the registration deadline.	State election commission; Secretary of State Office
3:00 P.M.	You receive a paycheck for your part-time restaurant job. In spite of the low hourly wage you receive, a bunch of money has been deducted for taxes.	Federal and state minimum wage laws; local, state, and federal income tax regulations; federal unemployment program; federal Social Security program
4:15 P.M.	You figure out a customer's bill, carefully adding the sales tax to the total.	Local and state sales taxes
9:47 P.M.	You settle in for some television after studying and wonder why profanity is allowed on some cable shows, but not on network television.	Federal Communications Commission
11:49 P.M.	You collapse into bed and slip into a peaceful sleep, taking for granted that you are safe.	Local police department; state militia; U.S. military

laws and policies produced by government in these arenas affect the lives of everyone in the United States—including students like you, as suggested in Table 1.1. It is essential for you to understand that laws and policies are influenced by the actions of groups and individuals and that *you* can play an important role in the policy process.

## Our Unique Political System

The United States is different from other countries in the world. Our government and laws reflect our unique history as a group of former British colonies that fought a war for independence, expanded westward across a wilderness through the efforts of pioneers, experienced waves of immigration, and survived a bloody civil war that occurred, in large part, over the issue of race-based slavery. While many aspects of American government, such as elections and the right to a fair trial before being convicted of a crime, can be found in other countries, the organization of American elections and the rights possessed by criminal defendants in American courts differ from those found elsewhere in the world. For example, in the United States, defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty, which forces the government to prove someone's guilt, rather than compelling individuals to prove their own innocence. In addition, judges at the federal level are appointed for life, a scheme designed to remove them from the pressures of public opinion. Compared to judges in other democracies, American judges also possess significant power to invalidate laws and policies created by other government decision makers. Thus, Americans have unique opportunities to use litigation as a means to influence government. Yet another example of our

uniqueness is the fragmented nature of our system—the check and balances, sharing of powers, bicameral legislature, federated system, and much else. Likely, this scheme has led to stability, but also a slow-moving, incremental policy process.

If we look at countries around the world, we can discover a variety of forms of government. By classifying forms of government according to two factors, citizen participation in governmental decisions and freedom for individuals, a number of different types of governments emerge. Freedom House, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, makes just such an assessment. Every year, it issues a rating of countries according to the extent of political rights (for example, voting) and individual liberties (for example, freedom of speech) that their citizens have. Countries are rated on a scale from 1 to 7, with 1 meaning the highest level of political rights. Political rights are evaluated based on a number of factors, including whether the process of candidate selection is free from government approval, whether voters are presented with genuine choices at the ballot box, and whether the elections and governments are free from military involvement. Representative findings are shown in Figure 1.1.

### democracy

A political system in which all citizens have a chance to play a role in shaping government action and are afforded basic rights and liberties.

### totalitarian regime

A system of government in which the ruling elite holds all power and controls all aspects of society. Nazi Germany was a totalitarian government in the 1930s and early 1940s.

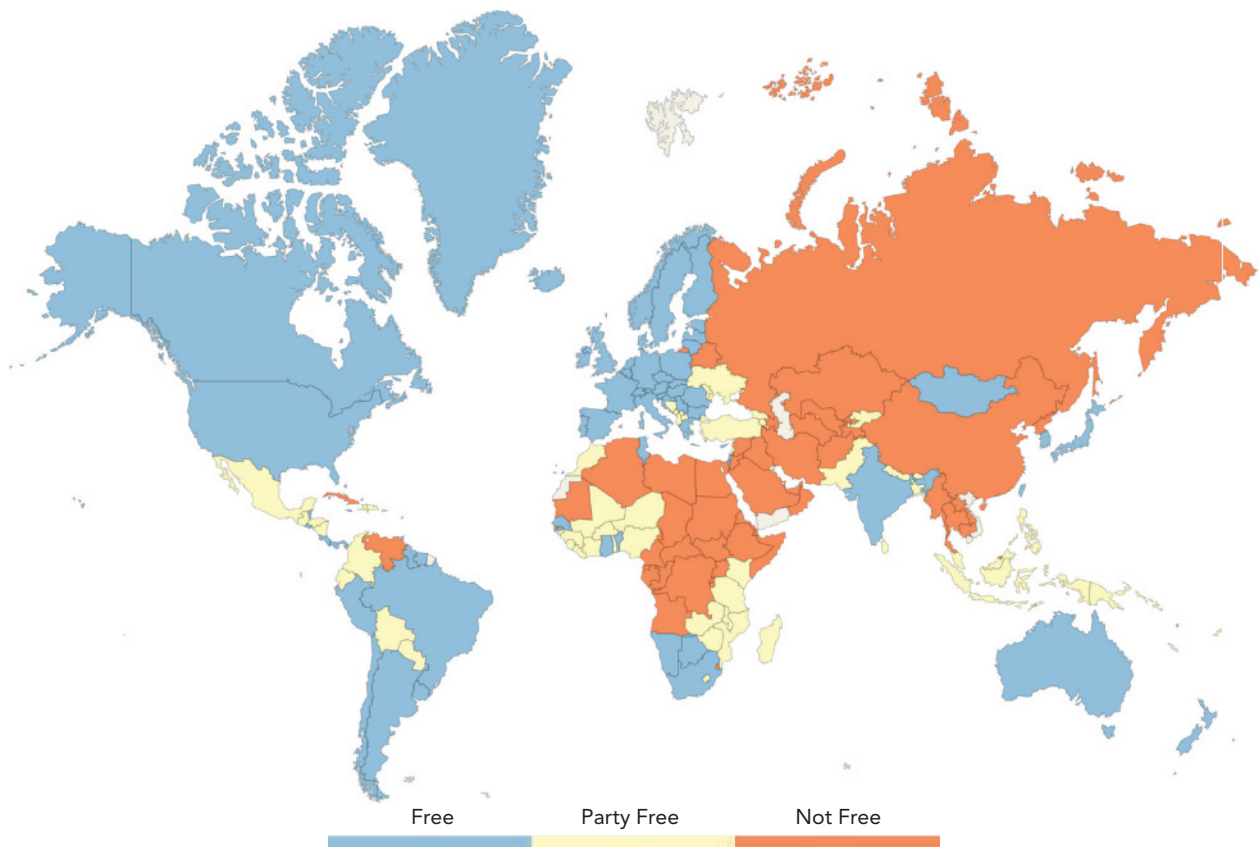
At the top end of the scale are **democracies**, including the United States, in which citizens enjoy a large measure of personal freedom and have meaningful opportunities to participate in government through voting, organizing protests against government policies, and other forms of free speech and political action. At the other end of the scale are countries with **totalitarian regimes**, in which the leaders of the government hold all of the power and control all aspects of society.

Unlike residents living in countries with totalitarian regimes, you can actually use your knowledge, critical analysis skills, time, and energy to improve America's

**FIGURE 1.1** Global Ratings on Political Rights, 2016

■ Do you find anything in this figure surprising, or are the ratings as you expected?

**SOURCE:** Freedom House, Inc., <http://www.freedomhouse.org>.





laws and policies. Your efforts might be aimed at decisions by local government, as in the example of the controversial housing ordinance, or you might roll up your sleeves to help an underdog candidate win an election. There are numerous pathways for your involvement, and you can seek to affect government at the local, state, and national levels. The chapters of this book will help you to see how you can actively participate in processes that influence the decisions and actions of your government.

## Themes of This Book

### 1.2 Relate the themes of this book to American politics today.

American government is complex. The functions of government are divided among different institutions and people. While in some countries, a national government creates law and public policy to handle all issues and priorities for its people, in the United States, by contrast, there are multiple governments. In addition to the familiar institutions of the national government—including the president, Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court—there are parallel institutions and actors in all 50 states, plus additional agencies and actors in cities, counties, and townships within each state.

To illustrate how government works and how you can affect the way it works, this book first shows the opportunities for *citizen participation in democratic government*. Second, the text identifies and analyzes the *pathways of action* through which individuals and groups can seek to influence law and public policy in American government. Third, the text emphasizes the importance of American society's *diversity and the effect that has on government and our participation in it*. Let's take a moment to consider these three themes in greater detail.

## Citizen Participation in Democratic Government

As we noted earlier, a distinguishing feature of democracy is that it provides opportunities for citizens to participate in their government. In nondemocratic governing systems, people have few lawful ways, if any, to shape law and policy. For example, *totalitarian governments* swiftly arrest and even kill people who express opposition to the central authority. When 50,000 people stormed into the streets of Moscow in December 2011 to protest what they believe to be rigged parliamentary elections, the leader of the protest was promptly arrested. After what many believed would be an opening of the system by the so-called “Arab Spring,” leaders in Egypt moved aggressively to detain and sentence some 41,000 people between July 2013 and May 2014 for speaking out against the government. Thousands were held without a trial and human rights groups reported hundreds of deaths due to medical negligence, ill-treatment, and torture.<sup>2</sup> In some of the oppressive countries, the only option available to citizens who want to affect change is an armed revolt—using violence to change the system of government.

In contrast, people in the United States have opportunities to express their viewpoints and take actions to influence the government without resorting to violence. These opportunities to participate help create and maintain a stable society. You will find many examples throughout this book of such opportunities.

**› POLL** Generally speaking, would you say students at your college or university are very interested in public affairs, somewhat interested in public affairs, or not at all interested in public affairs?

These options for engagement will not be fully effective, however, unless people actually become engaged in public affairs. If large numbers neglect to vote, fail to keep

themselves informed about the government’s actions, or passively accept all decisions by lawmakers, governing power may come to rest in the hands of a small number of individuals and groups. The quality and effectiveness of laws and policies suffer if there is inadequate input from the full range of people who will be affected by them. Without knowledge about carbon dioxide emissions, for example, well-intentioned decisions to address climate change by Congress and the president may be misdirected and fail to get at the actual source of the problem. In the same way, lawmakers might make more effective laws concerning financial aid programs for college students, if students provide information and express their viewpoints about the best courses of action. In other words, the laws and policies of a democracy will reflect the preferences and viewpoints of a diverse country only if citizens from all segments of society make their voices heard.

Now look at the comparison of voting rates in Figure 1.2. Does this raise any concerns about whether Americans are active enough in shaping their government’s decisions? Note that some of the countries with the highest voting rates impose fines on citizens who fail to register to vote and cast their ballots. Would such a law violate Americans’ notions of freedom?

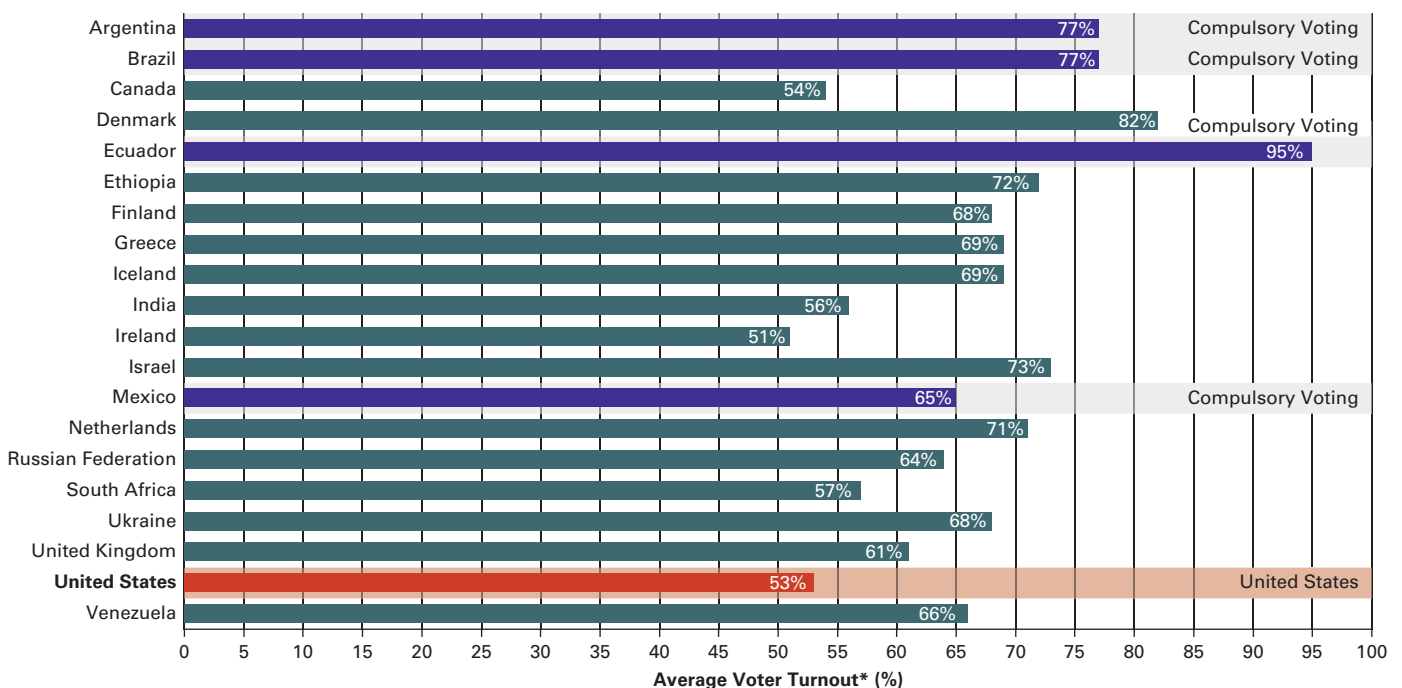
To many, it seems ironic that the legal opportunities to participate in the electoral process have expanded greatly during the past 50 years, but a bare majority of Americans seem willing to do so. Numerous measures of political engagement suggest a somewhat disengaged citizenry in the United States. In the past few years, the Pew Research Center has been tracking levels of engagement in the United States. Figure 1.3 includes some of their findings. It should also be noted that election turnout continues to shrink. In fact, turnout for the 2014 midterm elections was the lowest recorded since World War II. In the 2016 election that swept Donald Trump into the

**FIGURE 1.2** A Comparative Look at Voting Rates Since 1992

Historically, Americans have voted less often than citizens in other countries. However, in the last two elections, the percentage of voters in the United States participating in the election increased.

■ *Why do you suppose this is true?*

**SOURCE:** International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, “Voter Turnout,” accessed July 30, 2014, at <http://www.idea.int/vt/viewdata.cfm#>.



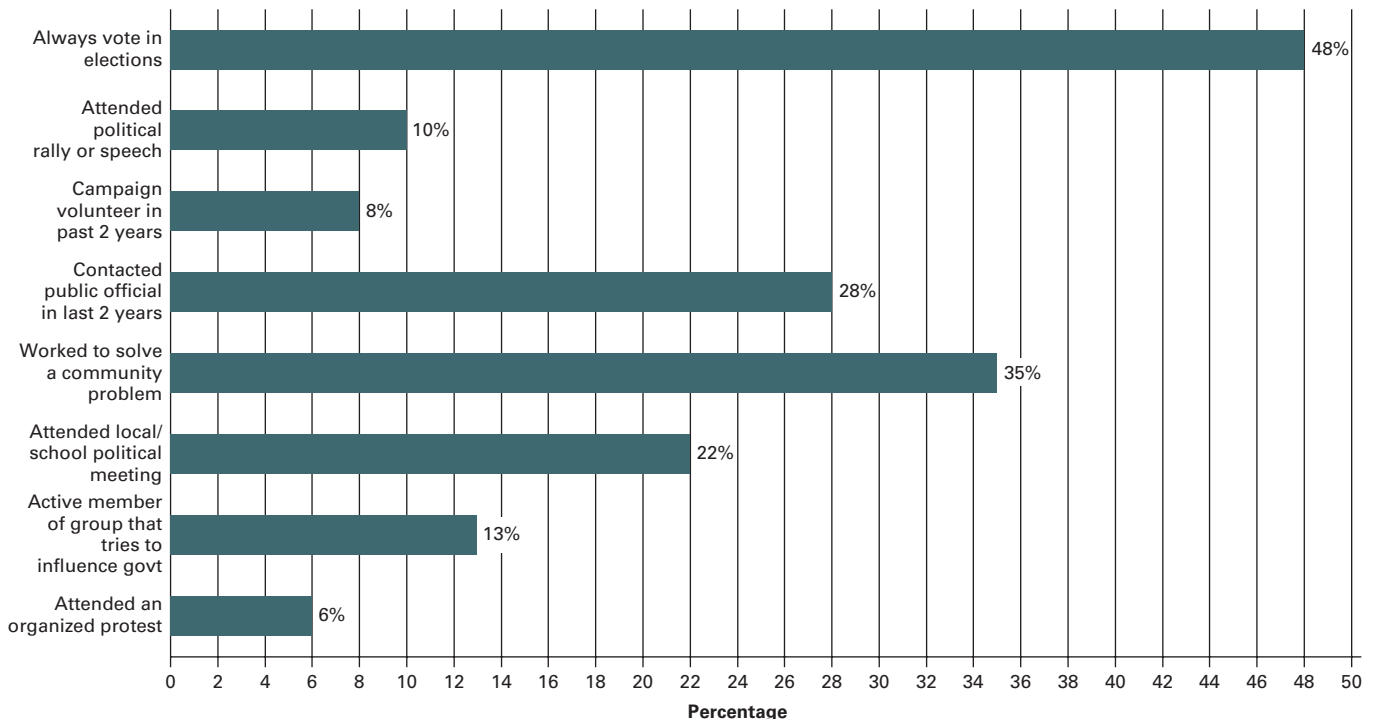
\*Percentage of total voting-age population participating in election for highest-level office (president of the United States, for example).

### FIGURE 1.3 Levels of Political Engagement

America has always been a “beacon of democracy,” but levels of political engagement have been quite modest in recent years.

■ Are there problems when elections choose most of our public leaders and most citizens sit on the sidelines during these contests?

**SOURCE:** Pew Research Center, “Political Engagement and Activism,” June 12, 2014, accessed at: <http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/section-5-political-engagement-and-activism/>; Pew Research Center, “Civic Engagement in the Digital Age,” April 25, 2013, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/04/25/civic-engagement-in-the-digital-age/>.



presidency, the story of election turnout was a bit mixed. Overall, roughly 55 percent of Americans came to the polls—roughly the same as in previous elections. There was a bit of a decline for some groups, such as younger citizens and African Americans, but a surge in white, working-class voters. In fact, it is likely that surge was the key to Trump’s victory. As you can see in Figure 1.4, levels of engagement seem rather modest, given the openness of our system and the opportunities for involvement. These figures are also a bit low given advancements in our ability to organize and to receive information (social networks and Internet sources), and given what many suggest is a politically active period in our history.

As noted, active participation by citizens is necessary in order for a democracy’s laws and policies to reflect what people want. Yet, there will always be disagreements and conflicts among an active citizenry, which can prolong decision making and make democracy seem inefficient. Laws and policies in a democracy often represent compromises between the viewpoints and interests of different individuals and groups. On top of this, the framers, the individuals who drafted the U.S. Constitution, worried a great deal about sudden shifts in public policy, and so they sought to create a system that would produce slow, moderate change. What does all of this mean? It means that active citizen participation does not produce smooth, dramatic policy making. Instead, it ensures that a range of viewpoints and interests are presented before compromises are reached.

## Pathways of Action

**Pathways of action** are the activities, institutions, and decision points in American politics and government that affect the creation, alteration, and preservation of laws and public policies. In other words, they are the methods to bring about change in our system of government. Certain pathways are open to citizens, who can cast their

### pathways of action

The activities of citizens in American politics that affect the creation, alteration, and preservation of laws and policies. For instance, average citizens can change the course of public policy by bringing new officials into government through elections and by lobbying existing legislators.