



Democracy and Voting Rights

This election is more than a choice between parties and ideologies. An even more fundamental question is at stake: Can we preserve democracy in the face of serious threats to fair elections and fundamental rights?

Voting is the very foundation of representative democracy. By ensuring people a voice in their government, the right to vote promotes human flourishing and provides an essential safeguard against tyranny. But this most basic right has been undermined by courts and politicians who make it harder for citizens to participate in the political process. Those who erect obstacles to voting are violating one of our most sacred values, and damaging our democracy.

In a highly controversial decision, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned key elements of the Voting Rights Act in 2013. Since then, numerous state legislatures have put up roadblocks to voting, including purging registered voters from the voter rolls without notifying them, closing hundreds of polling places in communities of color, restricting voter registration windows, and requiring voters to show forms of ID that many people don't have. This year, the Supreme Court even denied extending voting by mail in Wisconsin during the coronavirus pandemic, forcing voters to risk infection with the deadly virus by standing in lines at crowded polling places on the primary election day. Across states, these restrictions have targeted people of color, with the goal of suppressing the vote.

Congress must do everything in its power to ensure that every citizen has safe, equal, unobstructed access to voting. Enacting automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, no-excuse absentee voting, early voting and restoring the voting rights of formerly incarcerated people all advance essential protections for democracy in the face of dangerous voter suppression.

Questions for Reflection and Candidates

- 1 How do you see democratic values at risk today?
- 2 How do systemic barriers to voting undermine our most sacred democratic values?
- 3 How can your faith community better advocate for stronger voter protections at the state and local level?
- 4 As a candidate, what are your specific plans for protecting and strengthening voting rights?



Protecting God's Creation

Climate Justice for our Children and World




As people of faith, we believe that responding to the urgent threat of climate change is essential to caring for God's creation and loving our neighbors. Human activity, primarily the burning of fossil fuels for energy, has thrown nature out of balance, polluted the air, driven thousands of species

of God's creatures to extinction, intensified catastrophic events such as wildfires and hurricanes, and threatened the lives and livelihoods of our most vulnerable brothers, sisters and neighbors around the world. Scientists tell us we have less than a decade to avoid even more catastrophic consequences.




The coronavirus pandemic has shown how interconnected our world is – how the health of one affects the health of all. We also see that air pollution makes us more vulnerable to the disease. People who live in more polluted areas are more likely to become infected and die. Political leaders must take proactive steps to reduce the threat of future disease outbreaks, which are exacerbated by global warming.

Some political leaders ignore, downplay or deny the overwhelming scientific evidence that human behavior is exacerbating global warming and threatening life. We can't afford denial, delay or indifference. From droughts to superstorms to disease, every community faces the threat of destruction – with the poorest and most vulnerable people harmed “first and worst.” This is a moral issue. That's why faith communities across the United States are conserving energy, greening their facilities, and preaching about care for our common home.

The United States has a unique responsibility to show moral and political leadership:

-  Transitioning our economy away from polluting fossil fuels toward 100% clean energy.
-  Honoring the emissions-reduction commitments our nation made at the UN Conference on Climate Change in Paris in 2015, and taking additional actions needed to avert catastrophic global warming.
-  Assisting developing nations — who are least responsible for climate change but most impacted by it — in coping with threats such as increased droughts, disease, and sea-level rise by sharing technology and financial support.

Questions for Reflection and Candidates

-  What does your faith teach about our responsibilities for the Earth and to others? How are they interdependent?
-  Has your faith community made an effort to cut emissions, save energy, or practice environmental stewardship?
-  As a candidate, what specific policies do you support to protect God's Creation and secure a safe climate for our children and future generations?