

United We Stand

Together, You Can Redeem the Soul of Our Nation

Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.

You must also study and learn the lessons of history because humanity has been involved in this soul-wrenching, existential struggle for a very long time.

Congressman John Lewis

Your vote has consequences. The American people pride themselves on freedom, justice, economic security, and respect for the rule of law. Their views are varied and made known through the ballot box. Complications arise when their views intersect or conflict with the Constitution, the right to vote, and reach consensus among a population of 339 million people. If you choose not to vote, you will forfeit your right to make your concerns known to your representatives who will represent you. Sadly, this occurs too often in this country. In the 2020 presidential election cycle there were 258 million people in the voting age population, but only 133 million registered voters. Of these registered voters, 66 percent voted. Low voter turnout occurs for many reasons, from a lack of interest to distrust in the political system or candidates seeking public office. None of these are not practical reasons to forgo your civic duty to cast a ballot for the candidate of your choice.

Lessons of history can help citizens better understand why they have more in common than they have in disagreements. Russian author Leo Tolstoy's 1876 book, *War and Peace* provides insight into the Congressman's quote: "...practice empathy, keep an open mind, and do things that make a difference." This work of fiction still resonates today. Critical issues such as the economy, immigration, and national defense are complex with varied views among the populous. Competing ideologies, with a healthy dose of skepticism, can make it difficult to determine what choices to make given a particular set of alternatives. Political parties greatly influence how people react to issues that are important to them. Typically, Democrat and Republican parties communicate choices that lead to more skepticism and confusion. Citizens are smart enough to see mixed messages for what they are; and usually choose a middle-of-the road compromise to prevent the government from falling off a steep hill. A "we versus them" ideology is dangerous to America's survival as a democratic republic. Abraham Lincoln warned us that "a house divided against itself cannot stand. Those words ring true today as they did 166 years ago. Most of all you cannot win if you do not vote.