

The Pursuit of Civil Discourse



The “Democracy, Republic or Democratic Republic?” Series

Part I. The Pros & Cons of Democracy

Free Event: August 15, 2026 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM CST

To request giving an 8-minute presentation, write to Ted Wills: president@naeif.org

To register: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9xG0pKqVQyCYA_1IHpaUkw

In a really equal democracy, every or any section would be represented, not disproportionately, but proportionately. ... Unless they are, there is not equal government, but a government of inequality and privilege: one part of the people rule over the rest: there is a part whose fair and equal share of influence in the representation is withheld from them, contrary to all just government, but, above all, contrary to the principle of democracy, which professes equality as its very root and foundation.

John Stuart Mill, Ch. VII: Of True and False Democracy; Representation of All, and Representation of the Majority only (p. 248) – “On Representative Government” (1861)

Round 1: The Indigenous Perspective

1. As an indigenous student living in Canada, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

2. As an indigenous student living in Mexico, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

3. As an indigenous student living in the United States, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

Round 2: The Traditional Historical Perspective

4. As a Canadian student with a traditional historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

5. As a Mexican student with a traditional historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

6. As an American student with a traditional historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

Round 3: The Critical Historical Perspective

7. As a Canadian student with a critical historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

8. As a Mexican student with a critical historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

9. As an American student with a critical historical perspective, what do you believe are the “pros and cons” of a democratic system of government?

University Student:

High School Student:

SUGGESTED READINGS

“Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto” by Taiaiake Alfred

“The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial” by Robert N. Bellah

“The Declaration of Independence: A Radical Experiment in Liberty” by Bradley J. Birzer

“Democracy in America” by Alexis de Tocqueville

“An Indigenous People’s History of the United States” by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

“When Democracy Breaks” edited by Archon Fong, David Moss, and Odd Arne Westad

“The 1619 Project Book” by Nikole Hannah-Jones

VIRTUAL NORTH AMERICAN STUDENT CONGRESS

“On Representative Government” by John Stuart Mill

“We Hold These Truths” by Rev. John Courtney Murray, SJ

“Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy” by Deborah C. Mutz

“Animal Farm” by George Orwell

“The Republic” by Plato

“Democracy’s Discontent: A New Edition for Our Perilous Time” by Michael J. Sandel

"Caste: The Origins of our Discontent" by Isabel Wilkerson

“The Creation of the American Republic, 1776 - 1787” by Gordon S. Wood

PERSONAL RECOGNITION

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