Background

As of the 2016 election, the population of American citizens of voting age (18+) was approx 224 million people, but only 157 million of those people were registered, and only 137 million of those reported to the polls to cast their vote in the 2016 Presidential election.

The turnout is far lower for important local elections. For example, mayoral elections in 50 US cities only garnered 15% of eligible voters.

What are the reasons for low engagement among US citizens?

Why is voting important?

What can be done to increase voter engagement?

Related Films:

- *BatKid*: Tells the story of a city which, inspired by a young survivor of leukemia, comes together to make the boy’s wish a reality
- *By The People*, by Edward Norton: The story of Barack Obama's campaign for President
- *Dark Money*, by Kimberly Reed: examines the influence of corporate money in politics
- *Divide in Concord*: The story of an elderly resident of Concord MA who starts a grassroots campaign to ban single serving bottled water.
- *Media Literacy and Democracy in a Hypermedia*: A Chelmsford Library presentation by Dr. Paul Mihailidis
- *The New Deciders*: A PBS documentary that examines new groups around the country that are becoming engaged in the political process.
- *Patriotocracy*: The film explores the roots of polarization in American politics.
- *The People Speak*: Based on the bestselling books by Howard Zinn, the film reenacts the words of historical figures.
- *Street Fight*, by Marshall Curry: Examines now-Senator Cory Booker's battle against longtime incumbent Sharpe James

Related Podcasts:

- Slate's Political Gabfest
- WBUR's On Point
- Pod Save America
- Pod Save the People
- Democracy Works
- Radiolab's More Perfect
- PEW Research Center's After the Fact
READ

**The Basics**
- The Constitution of the United States
- Moyers on Democracy, by Bill Moyers
- Civil Disobedience, by Henry David Thoreau
- Profiles in Courage, by John F. Kennedy

**Recent nonfiction**
- Give Us the Ballot: the modern struggle for voting rights, by Ari Berman (2015)
- Our Damaged Democracy: We the People Must Act, by Joseph Califano (2018)
- The Year of Voting Dangerously, by Maureen Dowd (2016)
- Fault Lines in the Constitution: The framers, their fights and the flaws that affect us today by Cynthia Levinson (2017)
- You’re More Powerful Than You Think, by Eric Liu (2017)
- Dark Money, Jane Mayer (2016)
- The Great Suppression: Voting Rights, corporate cash and the conservative assault on democracy, by Zachary Roth (2016)

**Fiction**
- Election, by Tom Perrotta
- The Plot Against America, by Philip Roth
- A Casual Vacancy, by J. K. Rowling
- All the King’s Men, by Robert Penn Warren

ENGAGE

Register to vote online at [www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/)

Contact the League of Women Voters to find out how you can become a more empowered voter

Get in touch with your town republican, democratic or other political committee and get involved

I ♥ MA

Learn about your federal, state and local representatives and find information about the issues that affect your community:

- [www.townofchelmsford.us](http://www.townofchelmsford.us)
- [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)
- [www.usa.gov](http://www.usa.gov)

COME TOGETHER

**REACT Middle School Book discussion reads The Misfits by James Howe (gr. 5-8)**
- Oct. 9 4-5PM

**Let’s Talk: Civility, a REACT Chelmsford conversation with Keith West, Oct. 9 at 7PM**

**REACT story time and craft: (ages 5-10)**
- Wed. Oct. 10, 4:15-5:15PM

**Voter registration drive with The League of Women Voters, Sunday Oct. 14, from 1-4PM**

**Film Screening: Won't You Be My Neighbor Sunday Oct. 14, 2-3:30**

**Film Screening: Dark Money by Kimberly Reed Sunday Oct. 14, 2-3:30**