

# DAY 15: Voter Suppression Today

*“So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind— it is made up for me.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Today, we are looking at the history of voter suppression and how people of color were— and continue to be— systemically kept from the ballot box, as well as the challenges they had to overcome in order to exercise their right to vote. [Poll taxes, literacy tests, and property ownership](#) have historically been barriers to the right to vote. Now, [felony disenfranchisement](#) is the most pervasive form of voter suppression.

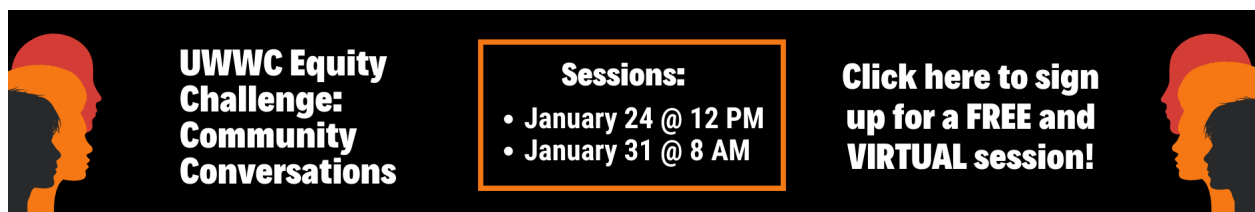
Voter suppression continues to impact our democracy and disenfranchise marginalized groups. With the 2022 midterm elections still in our rear-view mirrors, it is important that we recognize the barriers to voting that many people still face and work to eliminate those barriers so that our elected representatives and laws reflect our increasingly diverse country.

Progress, at least in the state of Michigan, is being made on this front. [Proposition 2 passed during the November 2022 midterm elections](#), with many provisions designed to make voting more accessible without compromising election integrity.

## Today’s Challenge:

### Listen:

- [Listen to this episode of Throughline](#) exploring a question that both haunted and drove Frederick Douglass his entire life. Is our democracy set up to include everyone? And if not... can it ever be?
- [Listen to this episode of Intersectionality Matters](#) with Kimberle’ Crenshaw and Cliff Albright, cofounder of Black Voters Matter. Together, they discuss voter suppression, gerrymandering and intimidation tactics — and the ways they intersect to suppress the voices of Black communities today, and throughout history.



**UWWC Equity Challenge: Community Conversations**

**Sessions:**

- January 24 @ 12 PM
- January 31 @ 8 AM

**Click here to sign up for a FREE and VIRTUAL session!**

**Share your reflections** on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#) or [#uwwcequitychallenge](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).

## Read:

- [Read this article detailing how the Cities of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, along with Washtenaw County](#) passed a resolution calling for vendors to align their political contributions with their stated positions opposing voter suppression efforts.
- The right of Native Americans to vote in U.S. elections was not recognized until 1948. [Read this article on the systemic barriers to voting that Native Americans face today](#) and what steps are being taken to protect the suffrage of Indigenous people.
- 150 years after the 15th Amendment was passed, barriers to voting remain. [Learn about how social media, gerrymandering, access to polling places and other strategies have all been used to limit access to the ballot box.](#)
- [Read this article highlighting the role that the Voting Rights Act played in protecting Asian Americans' voting rights.](#) Until 1952, federal policy barred immigrants of Asian descent from becoming U.S. citizens and having access to the vote.

## Watch:

- [View this interactive timeline of the history of the Voting Rights Act](#) and see how access to the vote has been expanded and restricted over time.(5 minutes)
- Watch this episode of [Whose Vote Counts, detailing the history of U.S. voting](#) and why the right to vote in America is still a fight.
- Watch this Brookings interview with [Stacey Abrams as she discusses the systematic disenfranchisement of voters of color in the U.S.](#) and explores measures that may change this narrative.

## Act:

- From the 1890's to the 1960's literacy tests were designed to disenfranchise people of color from voting (white men were exempt). [Print out and try to complete this test.](#) Be sure to set a timer before you start, you would have been given 10 minutes to finish. (15 minutes)
- [Check out the work of Defend Black Voters Coalition](#), a Michigan-based advocacy group working to hold corporations accountable for bankrolling the politicians seeking unfair political advantage through voter suppression. If you own a business, [take the Defend MI Vote Pledge.](#)
- [RSVP to one or more discussion groups](#) hosted by [Nonprofit Enterprise at Work](#) and UWWC to reflect, share and take action.



**Discrimination?  
Injustice?  
Racial Inequities?**

**YES.**

**Click here to learn more  
and join the  
21-Day Equity  
Challenge: 2023 Edition**

**Share your reflections** on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#) or [#uwwcequitychallenge](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).