



Find Your Voice!

Political Participation

How would you define “politics”?

Politics:

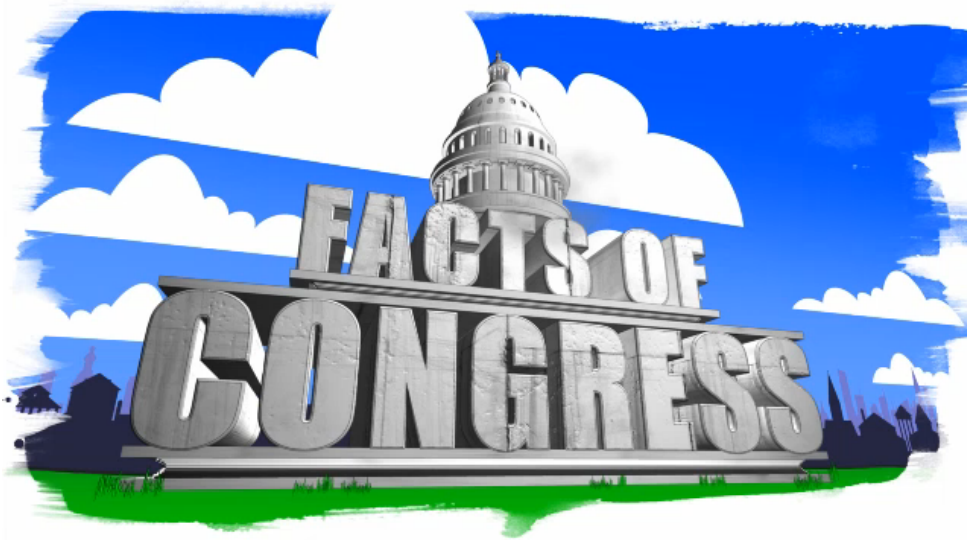
a : the art or science of government;

b : the art or science concerned with
guiding or influencing
governmental policy

So what would political
participation include?

Political Participation

- Political participation is the way citizens participate in their government.



**Click the image above to view
Facts of Congress: Citizen
Participation!**

**How do
citizens
participate in
government?**

Political Participation

There are many ways to participate in government. Today, we are going to look at ten ways in which citizens can participate in government:

- **Becoming and staying informed on political issues**
- **Boycotting a product/business**
- **“Buycotting” a product**
- **Contacting media outlets**
- **Contacting public officials**
- **Peaceably protesting and/or petitioning the government**
- **Running for public office**
- **Voting**
- **Volunteering on a political campaign**
- **Joining an interest group**

Becoming and staying informed on political issues

- Why is it important to be informed about political issues?

Consider this:

What if every voter cast their vote with **no knowledge** about the candidates or the issues? What if the people didn't know what was going on in government?



Citizens should know what is going on in government:

- To hold government accountable
- To know what policies exist and are being proposed...
- ...and how these policies will impact the public

Boycotting

- What does it mean to “boycott” something?
 - Boycotting is an expression of protest or disfavor with a person, organization, company, or country usually for political reasons by not dealing with or buying from that entity.

For example:

Following the BP oil spill in 2010, many residents of Florida and other gulf states “boycotted” BP gas; by not buying their gas, the people were sending a message that they were unhappy with BP and that the company and the government should change their drilling procedures/regulations to protect the environment, and, thus, the economies of those states.

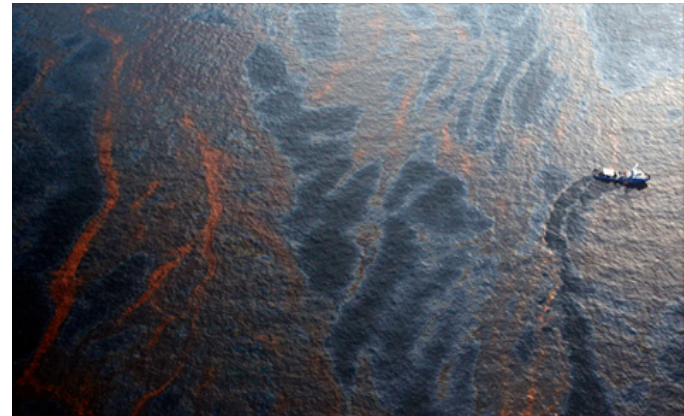


Image from:

http://i2.cdn.turner.com/money/2010/04/30/news/economy/bp_gulf_oil_spill_cost/gulf_oil_spill_100428a.top.jpg

**How can this be used
as political
participation?**

Buycotting

- Buycotting is the opposite of boycotting. A *buycott* is an active campaign to buy the products or services of a particular company or country to show support.

For example:

On August 1, 2012, people participated in a “**buycott**” of Chick-fil-a to show support for the company’s stance on same sex marriage.

So how does
“**buycotting**”
send a political
message?



At the same time, many people have decided to **boycott** Chick-fil-a for their stance on same-sex marriage.

Contacting media outlets

- Media outlets are a way to make the voices of individuals heard. This gives people access to public forums to discuss, debate, and even protest issues.

What are some media outlets we use to make our political voices heard today?

- **Websites**
- **Newspaper articles and opinion pieces**
- **Radio**
- **Television news programs**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Blogs**

Contacting public officials

- Public officials are in office to represent **We the People**
 - This means they are accountable to the people and should listen to the ideas of their constituents.

How can you contact your public officials?

- Letters
- E-mails
- Phone calls
- Media outlets
(newspaper, websites, blogs)

Constituent: the voters and other individuals being represented in government by an elected official

Protesting and/or petitioning

- **Protesting** is the act of showing disapproval or disagreement with something.



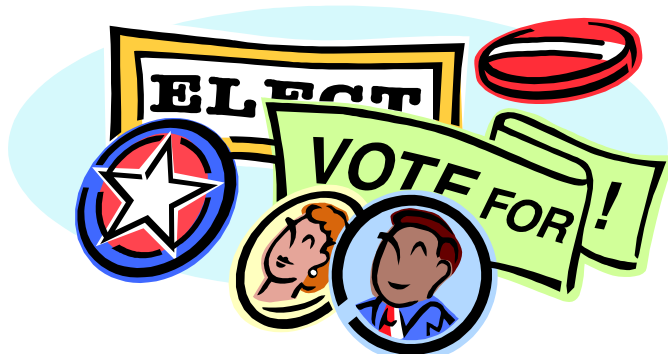
Protesters gather outside of a Florida courthouse to protest a display of the Ten Commandments

- **Petitioning** is appealing to the government for change or other specific action
- Organizations like www.change.org provide a forum for people to create and sign petitions on various topics at a local, state, national, and even international level

Have you ever heard of a protest or petition? What was it about?

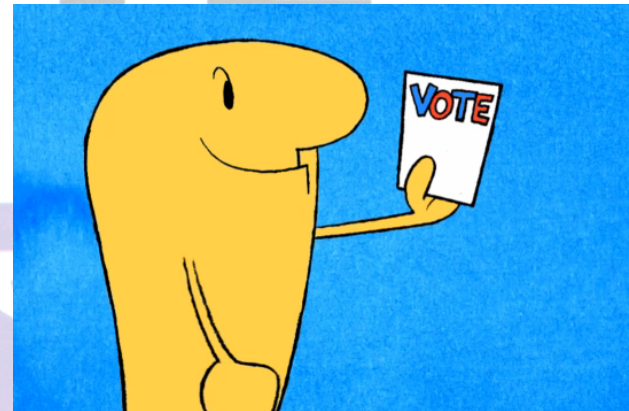
Run for public office

- As citizens, we are allowed to run for public office as long as we meet the constitutional and legal requirements at the federal and state levels.
- This is a way to solve problems that impact our local community, represent the people in our community, and support causes we find important.



Voting

- Citizens eighteen years of age and older are allowed to vote in elections in the United States.
- Voting is a way to have a political voice in who represents *you* and who supports and/or opposes policies that will impact *you* and *munity*.



Click the image above to watch
Facts of Congress: One Vote

Volunteering for a political campaign

- Political parties are groups of people who share similar views on the role of government.
- By volunteering for a political campaign, you are able to show support for candidates and issues you find important



Joining an interest group

- What is an **interest group**?
 - An interest group is a group of people who work together to support a cause and/or impact public policy.

This could mean encouraging certain public policies created by government...

...or trying to influence individuals in government to vote in certain ways.

...or funding a particular candidate...

...or opposing certain public policies created by government...

Some Examples of Interest Groups



American Federation of Teachers

