

## Connecting Past and Present Struggles for Power

All right. Well, hello everybody and welcome to our webinar tonight. The webinar that we are presenting is part of our Inquiry in the Upper Midwest Library of Congress grant. And so, tonight we're going to be talking about 'Connecting Past and Present Struggles for Power' and specifically about suffrage, so several different suffrage movements. So, we had a little poll up on the screen and only, I think, a couple people had an opportunity to jump in to vote, but the question was, 'Do you think the voting age in United States should be lowered to 16.' And this is one of the things that we're going to be talking about tonight is that struggle for suffrage and how it can be talked about in context of other struggles for suffrage. So, I'm going to share my screen here with you so that you can see the presentation. And please know that I am going to share all of this stuff with you afterward; you are going to get an URL with this presentation and also all of the resources, so don't feel like you need to kind of jot everything down. If you do have a piece of paper and a pen handy, we are going to be doing some interactivity later, as much as you can on a webinar, so just be prepared for that.

So, tonight we're talking about if we live in the present, why should we care about the past? I mean, as educators, this is something that we hear when we're talking to students about history: Why does this matter, why does this matter to me living in 2019? And we know, that there are many reasons to care about the past, but it really helps to make things relevant for students and to tap into their knowledge and what's important to them. So, this presentation has a couple of goals. So, we're going to talk about three historical struggles for voting rights. We're going to connect those struggles to the current discussion on voting rights, in particular about 16 and 17-year olds voting. And then we're going to create an avenue for civic engagement students, because that is really the key to getting students to be civically involved and to know that these things do matter; that they can take action on them. If you're familiar with the C3 framework from the National Council for the Social Studies, the C3 refers to College, Career and Civic Life, as that other third component of readiness for students. And this piece of it will really connect to that civic life.

So, why does this matter? Well, just two weeks ago-not even two weeks ago-Representative Ayanna Pressley from Massachusetts submitted her first amendment as a congresswoman and it's to HR1, which is the bill that is focusing on really overhauling elections and voting in country, and her amendment would lower the voting age from 18 to 16. It was defeated pretty soundly, but this is a pretty important turning point for this type of discussion when there start to be serious amendments that are given to change the voting age or serious discussions had on this level at Congress; it's sort of a signal that the conversation might be shifting or that more people might be talking about it. So, this could not possibly be more relevant than it is right now, because this happened just about a week and a half ago.

So, before we get into the content, I wanted to bring up some suggestions that I have when we're talking about new material and new resources, because I know that as educators you already have a full plate. You are trying to cover a lot of benchmarks and a lot of initiatives at once, but when we are

adding in these stories, it's important to kind of take some things into consideration. So, first of all, don't replace...add. So, we're going to be...you're going to talk about the struggle for women's suffrage, right. Is it possible then, in that context of talking about women's suffrage, you can talk about current struggles for suffrage? I think that that's possible, so add to these conversations. When teaching about a people, find voices from those people. And that tends to be difficult, especially when we're talking about folks who have not been part of what we call the traditional narrative of history. So, again to use women's suffrage as an example, when I was doing my research for this presentation, I found a lot of voices from men about why women shouldn't vote. What I wanted to hear was voices from women about why women shouldn't vote, and I eventually found those, and I find those to be a little bit more authentic. So, make sure you find voices from those people. Present historical humans as complicated, because we're complicated in 2019. Nothing is black and white; everything is grey and nuanced, and people were like that in the past as well, and students need to understand that there's a complexity. Be purposeful in what you're doing. If you're going to be bringing in current events, I'm going to be bringing in things that are happening now, really share that purpose; why are we talking about things happening now if this is a history class. And finally, give students the space to take action. They might feel so inspired by your amazing lesson on suffrage that they want to go out and they want to do something for the world. And we should encourage that, because a student who can do that now is an adult who can do that later.

So, the big question is should [insert group here] vote? And this has been a question several times throughout the course of American history; should this particular group of people be allowed the franchise? So how did these groups agitate for power when they didn't have any power? How do you do that? If you don't have the vote, if you don't have a say, how do you get the vote? And so, in particular, we're going to talk about African Americans, women and 18 to 20-year olds. And then, like I said, how do we see that taking place today. Youth movements, in particular the last eighteen months and especially with the Parkland students in Florida, how we've seen this rise of youth movements.

So, first of all, let's talk about the struggle for the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment. So, the question is, 'Should black men vote?' Some free blacks could vote before the Dred Scott Decision in 1857; there were some pockets of the country where free blacks had the franchise for many years. But then when Dred Scott was handed down in 1857, the Supreme Court case declared that African Americans were not actually citizens. If you're not a citizen, you can't vote. And so those voting rights were actually taken away from people who had already had them. So, now the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment guaranteed citizenship, but it didn't guarantee suffrage, so that's why we needed the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to guarantee suffrage. But, as you might recall, it was only for black men and that caused a lot of dissension in women's suffrage movement about should we support this Amendment that doesn't allow women to vote. And it actually split the women's suffrage movement in half because of it. So, after the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed, states, mostly in the south, passed laws to limit black voting. All of the sudden they had to let African Americans vote. It didn't mean they couldn't find ways stateside to limit their voting. So, like poll taxes, grandfather clauses, violence-I mean these are all things that happened after the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

So, what are some of the reasons that people supported and opposed black suffrage? So, the reasons people supported it were that African Americans were citizens; they were members of this country. Many of them had served in the Civil War. They were capable, intelligent human beings who were concerned about what was going on in their country and that they deserved to be part of the decision-making process about things that impacted them. The reasons people opposed? Whites feared black power. And this is very telling if you look at population maps of the South, just before, just after the Civil War about where African Americans, there were a lot of them living in the South and that is a lot of voting power and white Southerners really feared that. They said that African Americans didn't have the mental capacity; that they were just not the same as whites, they were inferior mentally. And then, voting would lead to race mixing: Race mixing in marriage, race mixing in schools, race mixing in public. They said that voting would lead to that. So, it was this huge debate that was kind of very quickly going on right before, during, after the Civil War. Now this document that you see on the screen-I hope that you'll click on this later when I give you this, because this is a letter to Abraham Lincoln in 1864 saying if black men are working for the U.S. Government, they should be able to vote. So, it says if they are working for the U.S. as a soldier or in any other capacity in the U.S. Government, they should be able to vote. It's really interesting the reasons that people gave for why this group of people should be allowed to vote or shouldn't.

So, the unique thing about black suffrage is that they gained suffrage, black men, with the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1868, but they didn't really have full voting rights for almost a hundred more years. And that's the difference we're going to see between this and the women's suffrage movement. So, Reconstruction ends, you know the North kind of pulls out of the South and says, 'Okay, you're on your own.' And so that's when the southern states started to enact these laws to limit black voting, so again, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, literacy tests, threats, violence. And then it wasn't until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, that it finally ensured black voting rights. And so, it happened, but then it took many, many, many, many years before it was finally enforced. This document is one that I just discovered a few days ago and I just love it. If you look at it, if you can see on the screen, it's a poll tax receipt from 1957 and I don't know if you can see the signature there, but that's Rosa Parks. This is Rosa Parks' poll tax receipt. So, we were thinking about this giant of the Civil Rights Movement; this woman who started the Montgomery bus boycott and we think of her as this heroine in this story and she still had to pay a poll tax in order to vote. This is a complex story and I think these types of primary sources really do help tell that story. If you're curious, the Rosa Parks papers have been digitized at the Library of Congress and they are fabulous.

Okay. So, let's now shift and talk about the women's suffrage movement. And so, just like free blacks, there were a small number of women who could vote in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. And actually New Jersey, when they wrote their constitution, they didn't write suffrage in with the word male attached and so women could vote. And then after the turn of the century, they rewrote their constitution and they put in the word male. So again, this group of people who had this franchise, had it taken away from them. So, the other issue of citizenship is one that's really interesting for women, because African Americans were granted citizenship with the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Women already had citizenship, but that still didn't guarantee voting rights. And so, women became agitated, started agitating for the vote in about 1848 with the Seneca Falls Convention. There had been movements before that, but that's when it became

really organized. And then, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment wasn't ratified until 1920. So, now let's compare this to the black suffrage movement. Right so, there are there is some agitation going on before the Civil War, during, but then the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment passes pretty quickly. But then it takes a hundred more years for it to be enforced. Whereas with women, it took seventy-two years of organization and protests and agitation to pass an amendment, but then immediately women could vote. And I want to qualify that by saying white women could vote, okay, because it did take quite a bit longer for women of color to have that franchise.

So, as we're looking at the reasons that people supported and opposed, I want to draw your attention to this marvelous cartoon-one of my favorites. It says, 'A squelcher'-boy that's a word, we don't use much anymore- 'Squelcher for women's suffrage. She can't fit into the voting booth, because her hat and dress are too big.' So, it was so many things like this that people, that the propaganda would come out and say that woman can't do this, because of these ridiculous-well, we know are ridiculous-reasons, but I love this source. So, the reasons that people supported this is that women contributed to the economy. They had jobs. They paid taxes. Decisions impacting them were made without their input. Women should not be limited to the home. I mean at this point in time, the woman's sphere was the home and she had influence over her children and over schools and over charities and things like that, but it was very limiting, and she should not go out into the realm of the outside world. And they wanted to vote; this becomes a really important point in the women's suffrage discussion.

So, why do people oppose the vote? Women will vote like their husbands; they said that women will be unduly influenced by their husbands, so there's no reason to give them the vote. Men will be forced into domesticity-this is my favorite one. You see all those political cartoons with this hapless, sad man holding a baby and there's dishes everywhere; and this was one of the reasons where they said that women shouldn't be allowed to that, because men will be forced to become domestic. Women already have enough influence over their home and family. So, they're saying that women are kind of held up on this pedestal of so much influence over the affairs of the home, that she doesn't need this additional right. And in that same sort of vein, women are not political creatures; that's not what they're built to do, they're not built to be part of the political sphere.

So, what happened next? Like I said, in 1920 the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is passed-we're coming up on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, which is very exciting. White women then could vote in all elections. Native women, indigenous women, couldn't vote until 1924, because they weren't citizens until the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924. Asian women couldn't vote until 1952 with new laws that were passed regarding their status. And then, the black woman's vote was not guaranteed until 1965. So even though the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed, there were a lot of steps so that all women could enjoy the franchise. And then the other piece of that is that the ERA, Equal Rights Amendment, was introduced in 1923. So, Alice Paul who was sort of the radical suffragette of the end of the movement. They got the right to vote and she was like, 'Okay, what's next?' And so, she worked to craft the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923. It has still not been ratified. We are one state short of ratification in the United States, which means that a lot of states have started ratifying their own equal rights amendments in place of the federal amendment. So, for example, in Minnesota there is currently in this

legislature-legislative session-an Equal Rights Amendment bill that has passed the House and now is in the Senate. So, this conversation is absolutely still happening.

Alright, and finally let's talk about the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment-the struggle for youth suffrage. So, after World War II there were some congressman who said, 'You know, there were a lot of young men who fought and died in WW II. Shouldn't they have the right to vote?' But it didn't really pick up steam until Vietnam. There was a lot more public protest. There was a lot more youth protest during the Vietnam War on a lot of youth campuses or college campuses and they were saying if we are old enough to fight, we're old enough to vote. And so, the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, when it passed in 1970, it passed faster than any other amendment. It was just a couple of months. So, that case was made very clear for people that these young men were going to Vietnam and dying, and they should be able to vote.

So, the reasons people supported and opposed. So, supporting youth voting would start early voting habits; you vote when your 18, you get used to it, you keep voting. 18 to 20-year olds were adults; they had jobs, a lot of them had families, they had responsibilities. They were fighting in Vietnam. That was really the kicker, the big one. And then many youths were living on their own and had adult responsibilities. You know some of them were living with their parents, but a lot of them had these adult responsibilities.

So, the reasons people opposed? See if this sounds familiar to you. Youth would vote like their parents; sort of like women would vote like their husbands. 18 to 20-year olds aren't mature enough to vote; they don't have the mental capacity. Youth had fewer responsibilities in the past. I found this one so interesting that people who were opposing were saying, 'Well, it's not like they were...like these youth are like they were a hundred years ago where they're out on prairie breaking sod and, you know, planting corn all by themselves in the middle of nowhere.' I mean that was the argument that was used; that youth were not as responsible, because the responsibilities had changed. And then the constitutionality of it was another piece, was that Voting Rights Act was extended to include 18 to 20-year olds, but that was challenged in the Supreme Court saying that the federal government can't extend a law to state elections, only federal elections. And so that would mean two different ballots. That would mean two different registration processes. Which is why the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed to cover all the elections.

Oh, went the wrong way.

Okay, so, what happened next? So, half of the newly enfranchised voters voted in the 1972 presidential election, the Nixon election. Since then, every year 18 to 20-year-old voting percentages have decreased, with two exceptions: 1992, which was Clinton and 2008, which was Obama. And there have been some struggles to define where college students can vote; should they vote where their parents

live, or should they vote where their college is? And so, there's a lot of discussion about where is the best use of that student's vote.

Alright, are there any questions so far? We're doing okay? Okay, great. Feel free to jump in if you do have questions. So, you got one in the chat here.

So, how did they win the vote? So again, it's really difficult if you don't have the power, how do you get the power? So, black men demanded the rights of full American citizenship and they fought back against these southern black codes. Women organized for seventy years, locally and nationally; I mean they really, you know, the success of that movement was the fact that they were able to do both, and they petitioned, they spoke, they protested. 18 to 20-year olds, there were massive youth protests due to the Vietnam War and the thousands of young men who were dying because of the draft. Kent State being one of the most famous, where four students died when the National Guard was called in to campus.

So, that's what we know, right, but then there's also that pesky little piece of why did they really get the right to vote? Why do these people who are holding the power decide that they were going to open up the power? So, for black men northern Republicans feared that their party would decline in the South without black votes and so they said we need Republican votes in the South, because the South was heavily Democrat at the time, so we need to extend the vote to black voters. For women, President Wilson was shamed a bit when he was calling for democracy abroad during World War I, but wasn't showing full democracy at home. Plus, the suffragettes that were doing hunger strikes in jail; he was nervous about having dead or dying women on his hands and so he was essentially shamed into making this decision. And then for the 18 to 20-year olds, it was a Supreme Court case, it was about constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act. So, when we think about why these things shift, yeah, they definitely shift because people are standing up and they're protesting, but then there's also a point when the people in power have to say we're going to do this.

So, what actions did they take? So, different times, different actions. Black men gave speeches; Frederick Douglass being one of the best-known who fought for black suffrage way before the Civil War. There was local organization, national organization. They used newspapers quite a bit, especially black newspapers. Women did all kinds of things, because they had seventy-two years to try to figure it out, because had to keep fighting and finding different ways to fight: so, petitions, speeches, organization and then eventually the picketing at the White House and the hunger strikes. With the 18 to 20-year olds, it was largely the protests; it was largely them going out into the streets.

All right, I'm going to check, we've got a question here. Okay, so Wendy asks, 'Will you have the details for the women's suffrage laws for women of color?' Yes, Wendy, I will. Those are in the resources you'll get at the end of the presentation-that's an excellent question. Thank you.

Okay. So, the question at hand, the question of the moment then, 'Should 16 and 17-year olds vote?' Okay, so here's what's happening now. There are some municipalities that allow for 16 and 17-year old voting; I think Frederick, Maryland is one of them and there's a couple of other places. There have been a couple of attempts to lower the voting age nationally, but nothing as high profile as what happened a few weeks ago. And the discussion has really increased in the last couple of years. In particular, related to the youth movements for gun control and climate change, because we see students saying, 'We are affected by these things that are going to harm us and we have no say.' It's also encouraged a new discussion, or a bigger discussion, about civics instruction in schools, okay, because a lot of people are saying, 'Well, students don't have the education, they don't have the thought processes, they don't know enough.' So, then we start to take a look at, well, what are they learning in school. More social studies for everybody, as far as I'm concerned.

So, why do they support and why do they oppose? And I want you to start really taking a look at these reasons for support and opposition and I want you to think back to what we've already talked about for black men, women and 18 to 20-year olds. So, the reasons people support it-some 16 to 17-year olds, when they commit a crime are charged as adults. 16 and 17-year olds are impacted by gun violence, climate change and other huge issues. They often pay taxes, because they have jobs, they drive, they contribute to their community. Youth voting will create good voting habits; there was done in Denmark that students who were of voting age, but still lived with their parents, actually increased their parents' voting habits, as well as their own. So, there is some evidence of that. And then youth want to have voice. I mean you all work with youth, you know they have a lot to say. They want to share.

So, what are the reasons people oppose? They don't have the interest or the education; they're not interested in what's happening with elections and they just don't really care. 16 and 17-year olds are not mature enough to vote. You know, as I was doing my research for this, I found a lot of political cartoons that portrayed our youth as this sort of vapid, texting, social media obsessed generation. So, I think there's a lot of people who think they just don't have that maturity. Youth will vote just like their parents; we've heard that before. And that youth don't have the mental capacity. Okay, so now as you're looking at this list, do you see similarities to the arguments from the past? It's really interesting once you start to line them up how similar a lot of these things are.

Okay. So, we're going to try to an activity here as a group, because I feel like a good presentation isn't actually good unless it has primary sources. So, I want you to sketch out if you have a piece of paper in front of you, make a little chart like the one you see on the screen. So, it's going to have six rows and two columns, because we're going to look at six primary sources. And you need just enough space to write either the title or just a descriptor, you know cartoon, photograph, what have you. Then enough space to kind of jot down some clues about what you see in these...in these primary sources. And this is all mapped out as a classroom activity for you as well that you're going to get at the end of the presentation along with a graphic organizer that I created, because I do feel like sometimes there're student's that need a little bit more structure in this type of analysis, so I did create that for you. So, what we're going to do is we're going to analyze the sources, we're just going to kind of take a look at them and determine if they're for or against. And then think about the clues that led you to this

analysis, okay, and then we're going to start to identify the arguments used by the creators. So, if you'd like to speak at any point while we're looking at the primary sources, feel free to unmute yourself and jump into the conversation, you know there's only a few of us and so it's not going to echo too much, I think, but I do want you to be part of the conversation if you like.

Okay. Here we go. So, here's the first one. So, at the very bottom on the first panel-it's really, really small-it says, 'Should I trust these men' and on the second panel 'And not this man.' Okay, so does anybody have any thoughts about this as we're thinking about African American suffrage?

[Off-screen speaker]: It looks like it's calling on the-this is Wendy-it looks like it's calling on the veterans are therefore heroic and patriotic and good people stereotype

[Presenter] Mm-hmm. Yep. Absolutely. Any other thoughts? Any ideas as to who these guys are? If she's saying-this is Columbia here-, 'Shall I trust these men not this one.'

[Off-screen speaker] One of them looks like Clay, maybe. Are they the congressmen?

[Presenter] I think they might be clay, but you're right, the geography of it, these are the southerners. These are the former Confederate states. And as we're thinking about Columbia saying, 'Should we trust these traitors, the Confederate States to vote again, but not this man?' And as you say, Wendy, the African American clearly is a soldier, lost a leg in service to his country. So, this is sort of appealing to African Americans as citizens and as contributing to their community.

All right, so, if you've had a chance to kind jot down some thoughts about this one. And these are all available on Library of Congress and the great thing about it is that you can zoom way in. So, if you've got a smart phone, if you're kids are one to one, you can zoom way into this and really take a good look at the details of the source.

All right let's look at this one. So, this is 1860's. What do you see here?

[Off-screen speaker] Oh, this is Miranda. Just comparing the two sides, we've got an actual depiction of a white man versus a characterization of an African man-that's just the stark difference to me.

[Presenter] Mm-hmm. Yeah, absolutely. I mean it's very characterized, you know, in the way that the shadow of the black man is drawn. And it, you know, the white man he's got, looks like tools in his hand, so are they saying he's industrious, that he's a worker. Whereas, they're putting African



Americans in the same category as carpetbaggers, which if you know anything about Reconstruction South, carpetbagger was not a very...it was not a compliment to call someone that. So, as we're thinking about this, I mean is this for or against black suffrage? I mean to me the use of the caricature and the setting aside Africans as entirely different types of people is dehumanizing them and saying they don't have the same capacity, the same needs and they're not at the same level. On the other side of this document, which we're not going to look at, but you can look at online, there's a pretty stark, horrific description of why white men should not allow black men to vote, including we don't want our white children in school with negro children. So, you can take a look at that later. So, okay, we've got essentially one that's a little bit more for you would say, I mean it's holding up African Americans as members of a community and then another one that's saying they're an entirely different type of person.

All right, this is one is really tiny, so I pulled out some of the main points and we can see pretty clearly that this is against women's suffrage. If you look at the title, you've got, 'Some Reasons We Oppose Votes for Women.' But I pulled out some specific quotes, 'Because it is a demand of a minority of women, and the majority of women protest against it.'; 'Because our present duties fill up the whole measure of our time and ability.'; 'Because it is our duty as fathers, brothers, husbands and sons who represent us at the ballot box.' So, the people who wrote this document, what are they trying to say about women and why they shouldn't vote? Any thoughts?

[Off-screen speaker] I guess I'd say they're trying to point out that women are a gentler sex of the two and the last point makes me think, 'Oh how chivalrous. My husband is going to represent me.' Which is clearly wrong.

[Presenter] Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's that whole holding up women on a pedestal thing, right, like, 'Oh, you don't want to dirty yourself with politics.' And I think there actually are propaganda that say exactly that. I also find it really interesting the number, the first one that says it's the demand of a minority of women and the majority of women protest against it. Saying women don't want this, okay, and now is coming from the National Association Opposed to Women's Suffrage, which was largely a women's organization. So, these are women saying we don't want this. And there's a lot of other really great things in this document too, but I only had room for three.

All right, so if we looked at that one that opposed, let's take a look at this one. I like this one, because it doesn't have as many words and so if we're looking for something for our struggling readers or students who are a little bit younger this is a little bit easier to pick apart. So, there's a young girl shaking her finger in the face of a boy and it says, 'For the work of a day, for the taxes we pay, for the laws we obey, we want something to say.' Okay, so this is arguing for women, for votes for women and they're giving three very specific reasons why women should have the right to vote. One they work, two they pay taxes and three they obey the laws. Because of those three reasons, they said we should be involved in the decision making. What do you think about the reason that these are children featured in this

image? Do you think that was done purposefully or is that just the illustration of the time? Do you have any thoughts about that?

[Off-screen speaker] I feel like- this is Wendy- I feel like it makes everybody look more, or it makes the two of them look more innocent more, you know they don't seem to have nefarious purposes.

[Presenter] Yeah, absolutely; look at these kids, they think it's okay for women to vote, they're not trying to take over the world, right. Yeah, I think that's a really good point. There were actually Kewpies, if you're familiar with Kewpie dolls. Kewpies were featured in a lot of suffrage propaganda of the time and a lot of that you can find on the Library of Congress, as well.

All right, so, let's jump into talking about the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment. So, what do we see here? We've got a political cartoon where it says, 'Hey, they're going to treat me like a man.' And if you can see the newspaper, he's holding in his hands it says, 'LBJ wants voting age lowered to 18.' So, what does this look like to you? What are they trying to depict? I believe this is 1968, so this would be toward the end of LBJ's tenure as president and right in the middle of the Vietnam War. You could have students do a lot of clue digging, with this type of source. If you look at the terrain, as you look at the weaponry, as you look at the uniforms, right. Like you could have kids pull out clues about where they are and then connecting the newspaper headline to the title of the cartoon really shows that the soldiers understand that their manliness, their adulthood is connected to being able to vote and being respected in the same way as the same way they are respected as being old enough to fight in a war.

Okay, and this one, the final one, is from an article from US News and World Report, 1971. It's a very long article and it's questioning how college students are going to destroy democracy, essentially, they'll destroy the vote. But I pulled these clips, because I think it's really interesting to look at this particular argument about how the youth vote will liberalize the voter base. Okay, so it's talking about Princeton, New Jersey saying it's been a Republican area, 'Now it is Democrat controlled for the first time thanks to the narrow victory of one candidate in the election for township committee last November. Older voters, mostly Republicans, blame easy registration of married graduate students.' And it goes on to talk about a catastrophic effect and the Students for a Democratic Society, a militant, liberal student organization. Okay, so the argument they're trying to make here is that if you let youth vote, they will all be liberal and, you know, especially during Vietnam when you saw so many protests at college campuses, this was a real fear for a lot of people who were more conservative. Okay, so again we've got one that's showing an emphasis on supporting the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment and then another one that shows emphasis on, well what are going to be the detrimental effects.

Okay, so as part of this activity when you do it with your students, you know, you want to have them pull out the clues of these sources, why do you think this one supports it and why do you think this one opposes it. But then you really want to take a look at the arguments for and against, okay, and look at your sources and we're not going to have enough time to do this fully, but as you look at the things that you wrote down about your sources, you can go through the 'for' list and the 'against' list and start to

kind of make assumptions what particular argument that creator was using. So, for example, in the document from the women's suffrage, the opposition document, one of the things they very clearly employed was they don't want to vote as well as they will vote the way they're family members do. So, getting students to not only identify the argument of the source and the clues in the source but then attach it to these very specific reasons that were used by the support and oppose communities gets them to start thinking about the complexity of what people had to do to fight for this right to vote. Okay.

All right. Now let's look at this list. So, this is where we bring it to the present. So, these are the arguments currently being used for and against the 16 and 17-year-old vote. So, do you see parallels here? I can't show them side by side; I should have put them up and down in slide. But, I mean, if you, you know once you have access to this presentation, you can look back and the first one is, 'They want to vote' and 'They are not mature enough.'

[Off-screen speaker] I think the other one is that they will be overwhelmingly liberal voters.

[Presenter] You think that's different from the past or similar to the past?

[Off-screen speaker] It's the only thing that looks different. I mean there were other it would bring in too many whatevers...Republicans or whatever, but all the others, jobs, drive a car and support families is slightly updated, but the we work thing is there.

[Presenter] Yep. Absolutely, absolutely. So, this is a really valuable comparison and, of course, it's not identical. I mean, history repeats itself in different clothing and in a lot of ways it is a little bit apples and oranges, but I think what's really valuable about this is to show students that those struggles happened in real time too; that what we're seeing now with 16 and 17-year olds and these particular arguments are happening in real time. 26<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment-all of that happened for these people where they had to actively push back or push forward these arguments.

So, the next step is where we take what we have done and pick apart these primary sources and start to analyze these arguments about these past suffrage movements and then make this very explicit connection to what's happening today. And then have students create propaganda or materials of their own for or against lowering the voting age today based on one or more of these reasons. And I would be fascinated to know what your students think. I think that would be so interesting, like what do these 14, 15, 16-year old kids think about their rights should be. I was trying to think the other day about what I would have said when I was 16 and I just don't know; so, I think it would be really interesting.

But have your students choose a side and then again, provide evidence for what they're choosing, but have them really think about what method would be most effective for sharing perspective. Now, in the 1860's it was very, very long speeches-like we're talking a couple of hours-to large groups of people. In the 1970's it was college campus protest, right. So, have students think about what is the most effective way to get their idea across for the 16/17 year old vote. Is it an editorial to their local newspaper-people read those; I mean that's where people in a lot of these communities get their information. Do they want to start a petition? There were a group of sixth grade students in Owatonna who wanted to know why there was nothing at the State Capitol honoring the people who built the Capitol, so they started a petition in their community, which then got around to the desk of their state senator, which then got around to a bill in the legislature, which ended up with a plaque at the Capitol; so, that's possible. Do they want to give a speech to their class, to other people in their school? I don't know that if you as a teacher can encourage staging a protest, but maybe you could have them make a sign or talk about what they might do if they were in a public space. So, in order to do that, a way you could structure that is a RAFT. I don't know if any of you have ever done a RAFT before, but it's kind of a way to get kids to think about how they want to structure their argument and then their created material. They choose a role-who are you; I'm a 15-year old student in this particular high school. Who is the audience for your propaganda; Is it the people in my community? Is it my elected officials? Is it my parents? What's the format and that goes back to the most effective method of sharing your information. And then, what's the topic; I mean are you for or are you against? And if students create something that feel like they want to share with their elected officials, I think that that's always a great thing to sort of end with and say, 'Okay, now you did this thing, you did this research, what about the people who are actually in power right now?' And I think it's really empowering for students to know, that okay, I can't vote, but I can sure pick up the phone and call the person who represents me in St. Paul. So, that's something to think about-training students to really know that their voice matters.

And, finally, how do we make this connect back to what is important to our students? Now that they've practiced this civic action-they've analyzed past movements, they looked at primary sources and arguments, they've been able to into action for the current 16/17-year old vote-what matters to them, right? Should oil companies be able to drill in Alaska? Should students have the right to protest during school hours? Should preschool be provided for all students? You know, things like that; these things are important to students. And so, having them consider the question what does my community or state or nation need from me? How might people have fought for similar things in the past and how can we learn from those methods, the opposition and the outcomes of those movements to take action today? Because really what we want to leave with is students who feel like I understand why the past is important and I understand that my voice is important. Okay, so, it's not just a bunch of dead people that we talk about in the past, but it's about me and my place in the community.

All right, well we have come to the end of the presentation, but I wanted to take a minute to see if anybody had any questions or thoughts or light bulbs going off in their head about what they could do with their class. I'm always interested to hear from teachers.

[Off-screen speaker] I'll just share a little bit. I know you were saying about encouraging students to protest at school. I think this was a really long time ago, so it might have been my first or second year teaching, but I encouraged them to make a protest-or a mini-movement, we called it-something within the school that they cared enough about and, you know, in okaying it with my principal we found a time of just going through during lunch hours and assigning kids to a protest time during a lunch period, holding up signs and just kind of marching around the lunchroom. And it wasn't, but it worked, and it helps them feel like they had a little bit more say and control.

[Presenter] That's great! Did they feel like they were being heard and that the other students were looking at them and...

[Off-screen speaker] They actually did end up getting other students to join in with them, so that was really unique about it, too. And it was sixth graders in a middle school, so you know that can be kind of nerve wracking when you're taunted or teased by the eighth graders all the time, but they did, they joined in, so...

[Presenter] That's fantastic, that's great.

[Off-screen speaker] I have a student right now researching the 16-year old vote questions, so I'm excited to show some of that stuff to that student.

[Presenter] Yeah, because this is not just a discussion that's happening in the United States; it is happening all over the world and there are some places, like in Scotland where students can vote in some elections as 16 and 17-year olds. So, the wave of 18-year olds voting, kind of all happened around the same time, and so we do see that this is happening all over the world as well. Any other last thoughts?

Okay, as you can see the first bit.ly is for the Google slides, so if you want to take a snapshot of this page. And then the link to the primary sources and the graphic organizers is in that second link. So, feel free to use any of this, as much as you want or, you know, share it with folks; I'm happy to share. And there's also my e-mail address and my Twitter handle. I love to hear from teachers. I love to hear about how you're using primary sources and civic action in the classroom, so please feel free to connect with me at any time tell me about your great stuff and your great students. I just love it. So, all right, well thank you so much for all of you, for spending the evening here with me; I know that you probably have a lot of other things to do, so I really do appreciate it.

