

NO CITIZEN SHALL BE DENIED: A WORKSHOP FOR MISSISSIPPI CIVICS AND UNITED STATES HISTORY TEACHERS

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

In his account of 1964 Freedom Summer, Julian Bond wrote, “When we began to go to Mississippi, the black people we met there were not interested in lunch counters. They weren't interested in sitting in the front of the bus. There were no lunch counters. There were no buses. They wanted to vote.” The fight for voting rights has been at the center of the fight for citizenship in the South; the battles over enfranchisement highlight the mechanics of federal, state, and local government and the role of citizens in shaping these institutions.

The Southern History Project curriculum *No Citizen Shall be Denied: The Fight for Voting Rights*, teaches the history and current debates surrounding the Voting Rights Act. This Common Core aligned resource will utilize a combination of direct instruction, document analysis, and student role plays to engage students in an extensive study of the history of voting rights, and current efforts at the federal, state, and local level to protect voter access.

In partnership with the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, the Southern History Project is facilitating a 1/2-day workshop for high school civics and United States history teachers, interested in incorporating analysis and discussion of voting rights into their classrooms. Participants will engage in the curriculum through the classroom strategies that shape the unit: document analysis, role playing, and academic discussion. All present will receive a copy of *No Citizen Shall be Denied: The Fight for Voting Rights*, as well as the strategies designed to engage students meaningfully in its content.

CURRICULUM COMPONENTS

Unit Essential Questions:

What is the role of federal, state and local government in protecting and advancing voting rights? Everyday citizens?

How should the 1965 Voting Rights Act shape the policy decisions that we make today?

Unit Enduring Understandings:

- The Voting Rights Act was passed in order to hold all states accountable to the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution.
- The debate over voting rights continues today, involving all branches of government at the federal, state, and district level.
- Arguments to advance and limit voting rights are rooted in the history of disenfranchisement, disproportionate racial impact, and debates over constitutional law and states' rights.

Unit Components:

PART 1: Advancing and Resisting Voting Rights: Federal, State, Local Government and Everyday Citizens

PART 2: Close Reading: The Voting Rights Act

PART 3: Debating Section Five: Shelby v. Holder

PART 4: Role Simulation: Voter Integrity Bill

PART 5: Voting Rights Today: Voter Identification Laws and Felon Disenfranchisement

Like all struggles for human rights, that for voting rights continues well beyond landmark legislation or court cases. Through this curricular unit, students will emerge understanding how the role of each branch of government at each level, as well as everyday citizens, are engaged in an ongoing and dynamic battle to secure voting rights. This workshop and unit will prepare educators to teach these ongoing challenges in the context of United States history. It will enable participants to ground student's debates in historical events, and highlight the role of government and citizen-led initiatives in facilitating new triumphs and new challenges.