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Untitled Essay by

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America. The poster child for democracy. A governing system for the people, by the people. And yet, I walk outside and see injustice. This is a country where 66% of the population votes to make decisions for 100% of the people.

I wish I could say this is new, that the country was not always like this, but that would be a lie. Thirty years after this quote was written, it is more applicable than ever. Before the mass incarceration system which prevents felons from voting indefinitely, there was Jim Crow and literacy tests, and before that, blatant racism and sexism, written directly into the Constitution. The founding document of this "great" government did not allow for anyone but white, landowning males to vote for over a hundred years, until the 15th and 19th amendments. And since their passing, subsequent legislation has been required to ensure the protection of these rights, including the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Even given the ability to vote, the next challenge comes from our current form of democracy. Although we fall under the label of a democracy, we are a representative democracy far removed from policy making. We vote for representatives who we hope have our best interests in mind, but often, they fall short of our expectations. As much rhetoric as they try to push, representatives aren't like you and I. It is impossible to find someone who will accurately represent all our interests, so we settle for the candidate who is least offensive. Yet, wasn't a democracy created to allow for the common citizen to have a say in the policy and legislation that would dictate his or her life? A democracy, a real and direct democracy allows for people to have control over their own lives.

The electoral college is one major example of the disconnect between representatives and the population they are meant to represent. The outcome of a presidential election is decided by the electoral college, a small group of people tasked with representing the

entire nation of 330 million. There have been multiple times when the winner of the election, in terms of electoral votes, did not coincide with the popular vote. So then what's the point of voting if our votes mean nothing? We simply vote for representatives who will decide and vote on policy and legislation for us, and during the most important representative election of them all, the presidency, our votes can be simply ignored and overturned by a few hundred people.

Another major flaw in our system is the Senate. The Senate, half the legislative power in Congress, takes equal membership from each state. Do our 39 million votes as Californians just equate to the same amount as those 581,000 living in Wyoming? Is this democracy?

And so we circle back to the question: does America have the right to teach others what constitutes a democracy? I'm sure the ancient Athenians can agree - we still have much to learn before we can teach.