

Honest
Conversations
About Racism 2.0

Voter Access

October 5, 2022




Honest Conversations About Racism



Following our Lenten program, HCAR 2.0 seeks to continue to:

- open our hearts and minds to people of all races as we work individually and as a community to end the evil of racism
- engage parishioners of St. John's (and friends) in a journey of learning and action



“As people of faith, we have the obligation to help shape the moral character of society by voting and other acts of public participation. **We also must act to ensure that the right to vote is protected for all citizens. This has often been threatened for many minorities in the U.S.**”

[“Racism and Voting”](#) - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018

Opening Prayer



When our eyes do not see the gravity of racial justice,
Shake us from our slumber and open our eyes, O Lord.

When out of fear we are frozen into inaction,
Give us a spirit of bravery, O Lord.

When we try our best but say the wrong things,
Give us a spirit of humility, O Lord.

When the chaos of this dies down,
Give us a lasting spirit of solidarity, O Lord.

When it becomes easier to point fingers outwards,
Help us to examine our own hearts, O Lord.

God of truth, in your wisdom, Enlighten Us.
God of hope in your kindness, Heal Us.
Creator of All People, in your generosity, Guide Us. Amen.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Agreement



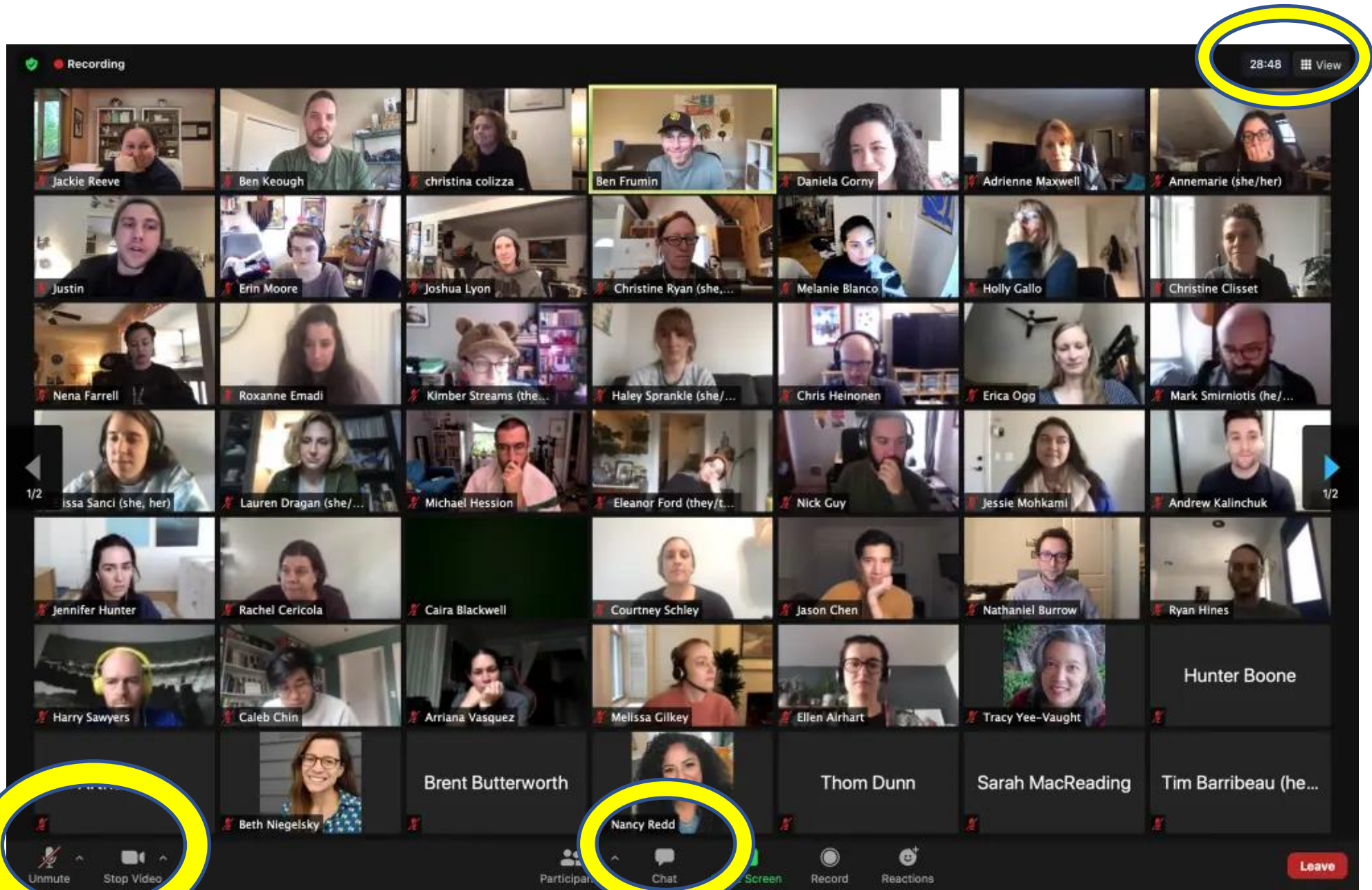
- **Stay open:** Everyone's experiences are unique and valid; see what you can learn from them.
- **Collaborate virtually:** Share your voice equitably; be fully present and allow others the opportunity to share.
- **Respect confidentiality:** After our time together, share valuable ideas but not people's names.
- **Listen fully:** Fully focus on group members when they are speaking.
- **Extend grace** to one another as we are all carrying burdens.
- **Be visible:** Remain on screen as much as possible during the breakout sessions, unless that's very challenging for you.
- **Embrace** one another's company and perspectives!

This Evening's Agenda



- Content and videos
 - Please stay muted and save your questions for the breakout sessions.
 - Jot down brief notes about things you find especially striking
- Breakout sessions
 - Facilitator-led, structured around discussion questions
 - "Parking lot" for any hard questions you all may have or requests for further information
- Group sharing
- Taking action

Content and Taking action will be recorded and made available on St. John's website along with the slides.



View

Mute and Video

Chat

History of Voting Rights



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg38u6lvpRA>

Enslaved Africans and the $\frac{3}{5}$ Clause



The Constitution of the United States

Excerpt from Article I, Section 2

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, **three fifths of all other Persons.**

Dred Scott v. Stanford (1857)

In this ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court stated, **“A free negro of the African race, whose ancestors were brought to this country and sold as slaves, is not a ‘citizen’ within the meaning of the Constitution of the United States”**, and therefore, could not expect any protection from the federal government or the courts.

The opinion also stated that Congress had no authority to ban slavery from a Federal territory.

Source: [Oyez.org](https://www.oyez.org)

The 15th Amendment



Amendment XV of the Constitution of the United States

*Passed by Congress February 26, 1869. Ratified February 3, **1870.***

Section 1.

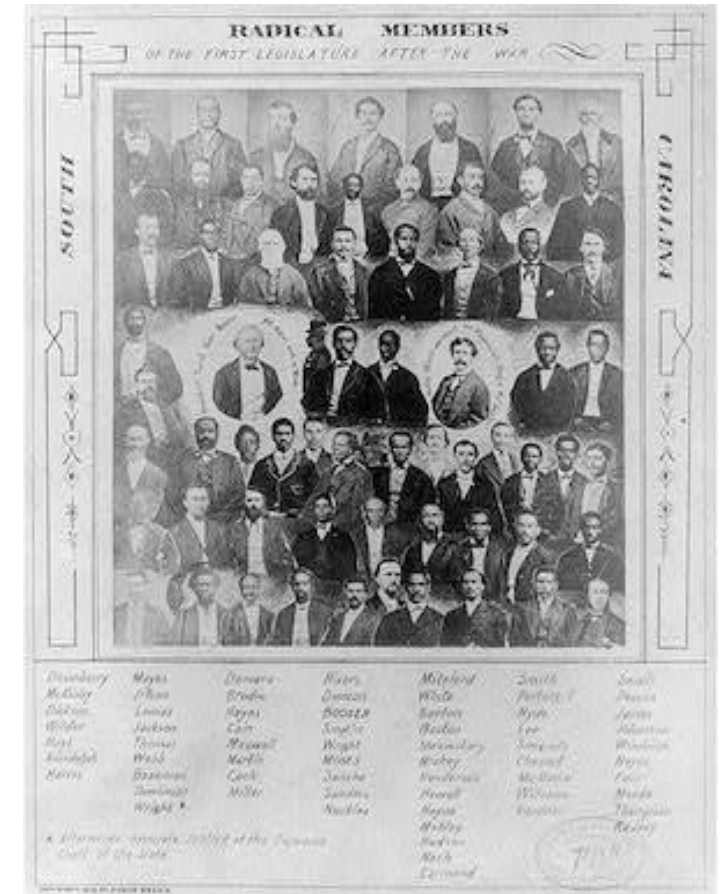
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2.

The **Congress shall have the power to enforce** this article by appropriate legislation.

Reconstruction 1867-1872

- Strategy developed by the Republican Party of the North aimed to fully integrate African Americans into political life throughout the South. The belief that African Americans deserved equal rights in the United States was radical.
- During Radical Reconstruction, Southern states were required to ratify the 14th and 15th Amendments before they could rejoin the Union.
- By 1870, all former Confederate States had returned to the Union while enacting some of the most progressive policies the region had seen in its history. It officially ended with the Hayes/Tilden Compromise of 1876 and the removal of federal troops throughout the South.



Source: [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov)

African Americans Elected to Congress After Reconstruction

At the national level, 22 African Americans held seats in Congress between 1870 and 1901.

Republican Rep. George White of North Carolina left office in 1901:

- 28 years later in 1929, the next African American U.S. representative in Congress
- 1967 - First African Am. U.S. senator.
- 1969 - First African Am. Congresswoman
- No African Americans elected to Congress from the original 11 Confederate states until 1973 -- they were **Democrats**

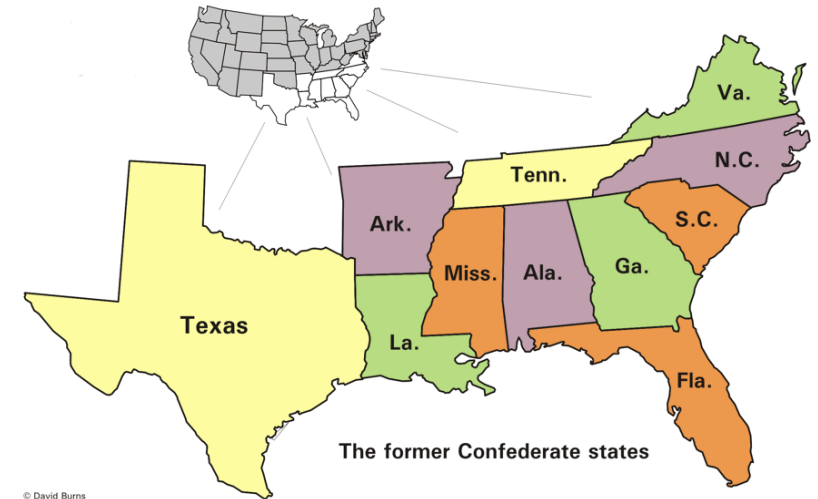


Image source: http://www.fasttrackteaching.com/ffap/Unit_1_Reconstruction/U1_Maps.html

Sources: [History Channel](#) and [Smithsonian](#)

African American Suffrage After Reconstruction



"It is an undisputed fact the Negro vote in the State of Alabama, as well as most of the other Southern States, have been effectively suppressed ... in some instances by constitutional amendment and State legislation, in others by cold-blooded fraud and intimidation."

—NC Representative George H. White, in the House of Representatives, January 29, 1901.

In Louisiana in 1896, there were 130,334 African Americans registered to vote. In 1900, there were only 5,320. The trend repeated throughout the South.

Sources: [History Channel](#) and [Smithsonian](#)

South Carolina v. Katzenbach (1966)



The Voting Rights Act of 1965 prevented states from using a "test or device" to deny citizens the right to vote. Federal examiners were empowered to intervene to investigate election irregularities.

Question: Did the Act violate the states' rights to implement and control elections?

Ruling: The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in an 8-1 decision that the Fifteenth Amendment is a valid constitutional basis for the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The Act was deemed a "legitimate response" to the "insidious and pervasive evil" which had denied blacks the right to vote since the Fifteenth Amendment's adoption in 1870.

Reduction of Voter Access



Claims of Voter Fraud Leading to Reduction in Voter Access



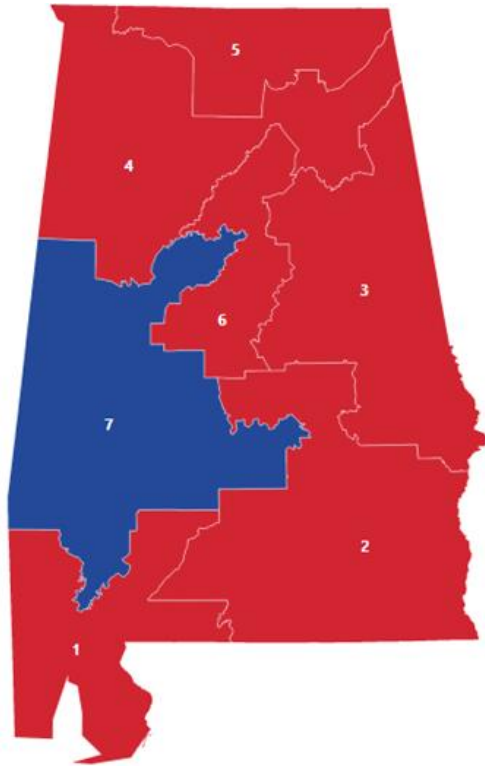
- Voter ID requirements
 - States with voter ID requirements: [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)
- Prohibition of food and water - Georgia SB202
- Legislative interference - Election officials now appointed by elected officials
- Purging voter rolls
 - Indiana laws Senate Enrolled Act 442 and Senate Enrolled Act 334 violated the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) by eliminating requirements to provide a notice and waiting period for a group of voters flagged as having moved out of state.

Racial Gerrymandering

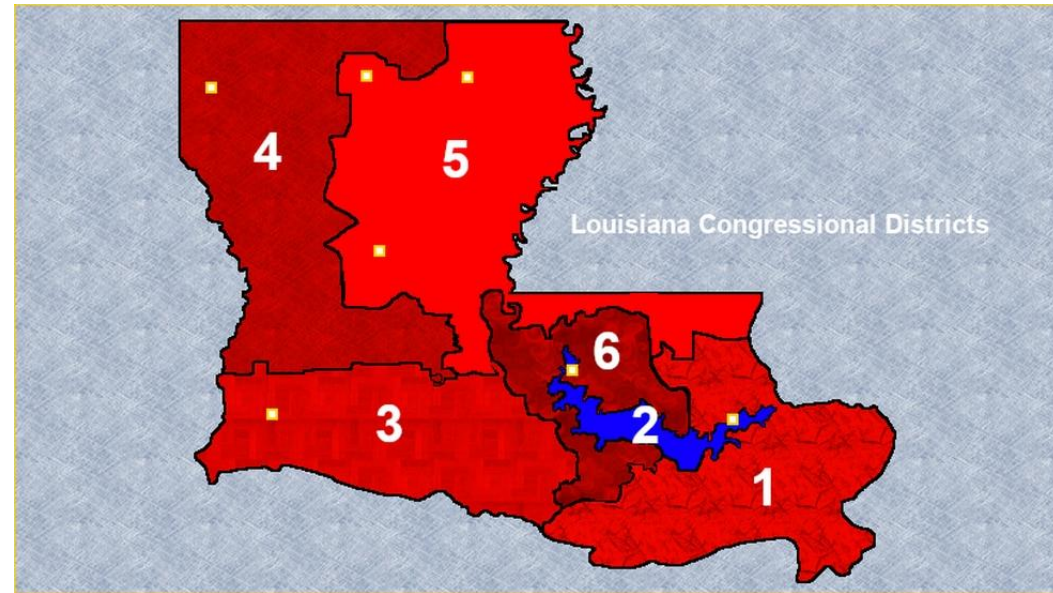


Recent Examples of Racial Gerrymandering

Alabama congressional districts



Source: 270toWin.com



Source: KNOE News

Source: AP News

Discussion Breakout Sessions

Group Sharing

Taking Action

"We must keep on talking, protesting, praying, appealing, and agitating but we must do more — **we must ACT and ACT NOW, PROMPTLY AND VIGOROUSLY.** We have health, we have strength, we have intelligence, we have money — let us use all these God-given elements to win our battle for liberty, opportunity and social justice."

--Ida B. Wells

What You Can Do

- Educate yourself about your [local election rules](#)
- Vote! Stay in line.
- Get involved with [Maryland State Board of Elections](#)
- Assist others with requesting mail-in ballots or getting to the polls
- Encourage [young people to vote](#)
- Get involved in a voting advocacy organization
- Other ideas? Please put them in the chat!



Additional Resources



- [150 Years and Counting](#) – website from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture about African Americans and the right to vote
- [Black Americans and the Vote](#) – website from the National Archives containing links to many resources about African Americans and voting
- [Democracy Denied podcast](#) – distinguished guests discuss historical issues related to racism and voting as well as the impact of the U.S. Census and gerrymandering on the democratic process

Closing Prayer



O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored. You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need.

Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required, "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8). Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others.

Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities. Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity.

Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Upcoming HCAR 2.0 Sessions



November 9: Catholic Church

January 4: Economic Development

February 1: Education

April 12: Healthcare

May 3: Criminal Justice

For more information & registration:
<https://sjcolumbia.org/honest2022/>