



AMERICA 250: **A Guide for** **Defending** **Democracy**

A Nonpartisan Civic Education Tool
for Participating in Democracy

Demand Diversity Roundtable

Convened by the National Urban League

2026

DEMAND
DIVERSITY
ROUNDTABLE



As America marks its 250th year, democracy faces consequential tests.

Americans need clear information—as they engage in their communities with public officials and candidates seeking to hold public office—about where public officials and candidates stand on upholding the nation’s Constitution.

America 250: A Guide for Defending Democracy is a nonpartisan civic education tool designed to help every American, regardless of political affiliation:

- ① Ask values- and action-based questions
- ② Evaluate how well public officials and candidates align with the core commitments of a constitutional democracy and the promise of liberty, justice, and equal opportunity for all, and
- ③ Participate fully in democracy at one of the most pivotal moments in the nation’s history

This guide does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for public office.

The questions in this guide are grounded in the Constitution, long-standing civil rights law, and democratic norms that apply to public officeholders regardless of party. They reflect responsibilities leaders routinely assume when they seek office and take an oath to serve, including:

- Upholding the Constitution
- Protecting civil rights and voting rights
- Rejecting discrimination and dehumanization
- Defending truth and the rule of law
- Expanding equal opportunity and fair access
- Strengthening democracy and public trust
- Serving the whole American people

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

Individuals / Voters

- Ask these questions at candidate forums, town halls, and community meetings
- Use them when meeting with or contacting public officials or candidates and their campaigns
- Compare public officials’ and candidates’ answers in their own words
- Share what you learn with your family, friends, and community
- Vote and engage in civic processes according to your values and the information you’ve gathered

Community Partners

- Host nonpartisan community forums using the questions as a neutral, consistent framework
- Facilitate community conversations about constitutional principles, equal opportunity, and democratic norms
- Educate citizens about civic engagement; equip them with substantive questions
- Localize and adapt the guide for community context—maintaining its nonpartisan purpose
- Encourage informed participation in civic life and critical evaluation of leaders and those who want to lead—not prescribed outcomes

Questions every American should ask every public official and candidate for public office now!

Whether in town halls, community meetings, or one-on-one conversations, use any combination of these questions to better understand the constitutional views of public office holders and candidates seeking appointment or election to public office:

1.

Uphold the Constitution and Equal Justice Under Law.

Values: “What do you believe is your responsibility to uphold the Constitution and its guarantees of equal protection and equal justice under law for every person?”

Action: “Can you give an example of a time when you were willing to follow the Constitution even when it was politically difficult?”

2.

Protect Core Civil Rights and the Right to Vote.

Values: “How do you view the role of this office in enforcing the Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act, and other civil and human rights protections? How would that approach be reflected in your work?”

Action: “What specific steps, if any, will you take to protect every eligible American’s right to vote and to have that vote fully counted?”

3.

Reject Racism, Discrimination, and Dehumanization.

Values: “What responsibility do you believe this office has in confronting anti-Blackness, antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, misogyny, anti-LGBTQ+ bias, anti-immigrant bias and other forms of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination? How would that responsibility be reflected in your rhetoric, policies, and official actions?”

Action: “If leaders or allies—including those within your office—cross the line into hateful or dehumanizing language, how will you address that behavior?”

4.

Defend Truth, Honest History, and Lawful Speech.

Values: “What is your view of efforts to limit the teaching of truthful, fact-based history in schools, museums, and public institutions?”

Action: “How will you balance protecting lawful speech with safety and respect in public life?”

5.

Expand Equal Opportunity and Fair Access, Not Restrict It.

Values: “What role should equal opportunity principles—such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—play in education, employment, housing, and health care? In your view, are we falling short?”

Action: “How will you ensure that people from all backgrounds have a fair, merit-based chance to compete and succeed?”

6.

Strengthen Democracy and Public Trust.

Values: “How do you view issues around the independence of the courts, the rule of law, the peaceful transfer of power, and the integrity of our elections as influencing your day-to-day work in office?”

Action: “How will you approach ethics, transparency, and conflicts of interest so people can trust the decisions you make?”

7.

Serve the Whole American Family.

Values: “What does it mean to you to serve the needs and interests of your whole community of constituents, rather than primarily the interests of a particular base or donor group?”

Action: “When the interests of political gain conflict with the long-term interests of the American people, how will you decide what to do?”



Organizations Supporting this Demand Diversity Roundtable Resource

