

Will Your Vote Count?

CSLi Lecture Notes

In this lecture, we will explore the history of voting rights in the United States, the current state of voting laws, and the challenges that voters face today. We will also discuss the importance of civic engagement and how we can all work to ensure that our votes count.



Broken Ballots: Will Your Vote Count? (CSLI-Lecture Notes) by Douglas W. Jones

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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History of Voting Rights in the United States

The right to vote is a fundamental right in a democracy. In the United States, the right to vote was not always guaranteed. In the early days of the republic, only white male property owners were allowed to vote. Over time, the right to vote was gradually expanded to include all adult citizens, regardless of race, gender, or wealth.

The following are some of the key milestones in the history of voting rights in the United States:

- **15th Amendment (1870):** Granted African American men the right to vote.
- **19th Amendment (1920):** Granted women the right to vote.
- **Voting Rights Act of 1965:** Prohibited racial discrimination in voting and established federal oversight of voter registration and elections in areas with a history of discrimination.
- **National Voter Registration Act of 1993:** Made it easier for people to register to vote by allowing them to register by mail or at government agencies.

Current State of Voting Laws

Today, the right to vote is guaranteed by the Constitution. However, there are still many challenges that voters face. These challenges include:

- **Voter suppression:** Voter suppression is any effort to prevent eligible voters from casting their ballots. This can include things like purging voter rolls, closing polling places, and requiring voters to show photo ID.
- **Gerrymandering:** Gerrymandering is the practice of drawing electoral districts in a way that gives one political party an unfair advantage. This can make it harder for voters to elect candidates who represent their interests.
- **Disenfranchisement:** Disenfranchisement is the denial of the right to vote to a person who is otherwise eligible to vote. This can include

people who are homeless, people who have been convicted of a felony, and people who are mentally ill.

Challenges to Voting Today

In the 2020 election, there were a number of challenges to voting, including:

- **Long lines:** Many voters had to wait in long lines to cast their ballots, especially in minority and low-income communities.
- **Poll closures:** Some polling places were closed, making it harder for voters to cast their ballots.
- **Voter intimidation:** There were reports of voter intimidation, including people being harassed or threatened while trying to vote.
- **Mail-in ballots:** There were delays in the processing of mail-in ballots, and some ballots were rejected.

Importance of Civic Engagement

It is more important than ever to be civically engaged. Civic engagement is the process of participating in the political process and working to make a difference in your community. This can include voting, volunteering for a campaign, or attending a town hall meeting.

When you are civically engaged, you are helping to make your voice heard. You are also helping to make your community a better place. By working together, we can overcome the challenges to voting and ensure that our votes count.

How to Ensure Your Vote Counts

There are a number of things you can do to ensure that your vote counts:

- **Register to vote:** The first step is to register to vote. You can register online, by mail, or in person at your local voter registration office.
- **Know your polling place:** Find out where your polling place is located before Election Day. This will help you avoid long lines and other problems on Election Day.
- **Vote early:** If you are able to vote early, do so. This will help you avoid long lines on Election Day and make sure that your vote is counted.
- **Volunteer for a campaign:** Volunteering for a campaign is a great way to get involved in the political process and make a difference in your community.
- **Attend a town hall meeting:** Attending a town hall meeting is a great way to meet your elected officials and learn about the issues that are important to you.

By following these tips, you can help ensure that your vote counts.



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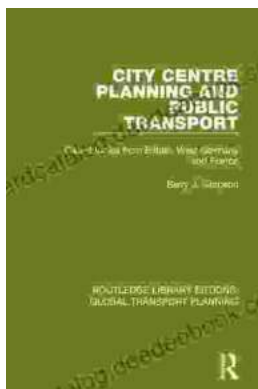
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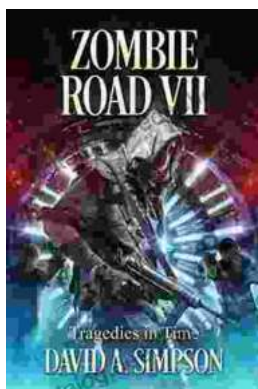
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