

Local Politics Matter

Are We Really A Democracy

What Do You Think?

The term **democracy** comes from the Greek language and means "rule by the (simple) people".

In the United States we often hear about rogue or third world Governments in other countries where the Governments are super rich while the citizens are what we call dirt poor. Typically these Governments are run by Dictators or Authoritarian leaders. The common line of thinking is that this could never happen in America, the cradle of Democracy. In America each person has one vote and each vote counts equally. If this is truly the case how do you explain the state of our political, social and economic systems.

Political: We now have a political system where the men and women who are sent to congress on behalf of their constituents no longer vote based on the wishes of those very constituents. We have a political system that allows our elected officials to pass legislation that 75% of the public

opposes. A system where less than 50% of the voting public actually voted for the current President. A system where our intelligence agencies confirm that a foreign adversary tried to influence the 2016 Presidential election but we continue to stand tall and defiant as we say that the election was legitimate and should not be questioned.

Social: In a true Democracy justice should be equal for all regardless of a person's race, religion or sexual orientation. Despite this claim we continue to see reports that indicate that African American men are far more likely to be incarcerated than Caucasian males. They also receive sentences that are almost 20% longer (1). In a true Democracy you would not see the President constantly attacking a group of individuals (Muslims) based on their religious beliefs. A true Democracy would also be devoid of political leaders who spew outright hatred towards individuals because of their sexual orientation.

Economic: Gaps in wealth between America's most affluent and the rest of the country continue to grow year after year. Income disparities have become so pronounced that America's top 10 percent now average more than nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent. Americans in the top 1 percent tower stunningly higher. They average over 40 times more income than the bottom 90 percent. But that gap pales in comparison to the divide between the nation's top 0.1 percent and everyone else. Americans at this lofty level are taking in over 198 times the income of the bottom 90 percent (2).

How can a Country like the Unites States of America, a Country that prides itself on its Democratic values find itself dealing with such inequalities in 2017? Are the political, social and economic conditions a function of our system or has the system been manipulated so that it yields such striking disparities? After all what are the real differences between America and other "Third World Countries"? Are we really "of the people, by the people, and for the people"?

Democracy

O

Authoritarianism

O

C

Autocracy

A

C

Kleptocracy

1. Black men are sentenced to far more time in prison than white men for committing similar crimes, according to a new report from the U.S. Sentencing Commission.

A [report](#) released last week from the USSC — an independent agency of the U.S. judicial branch — looked at federal prison sentences in the United States from Oct. 1, 2011, to Sept. 30, 2016, and found that [black male offenders received sentences on average 19.1 percent longer](#) than those of "similarly situated" white male offenders.

2. Inequality.org

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