

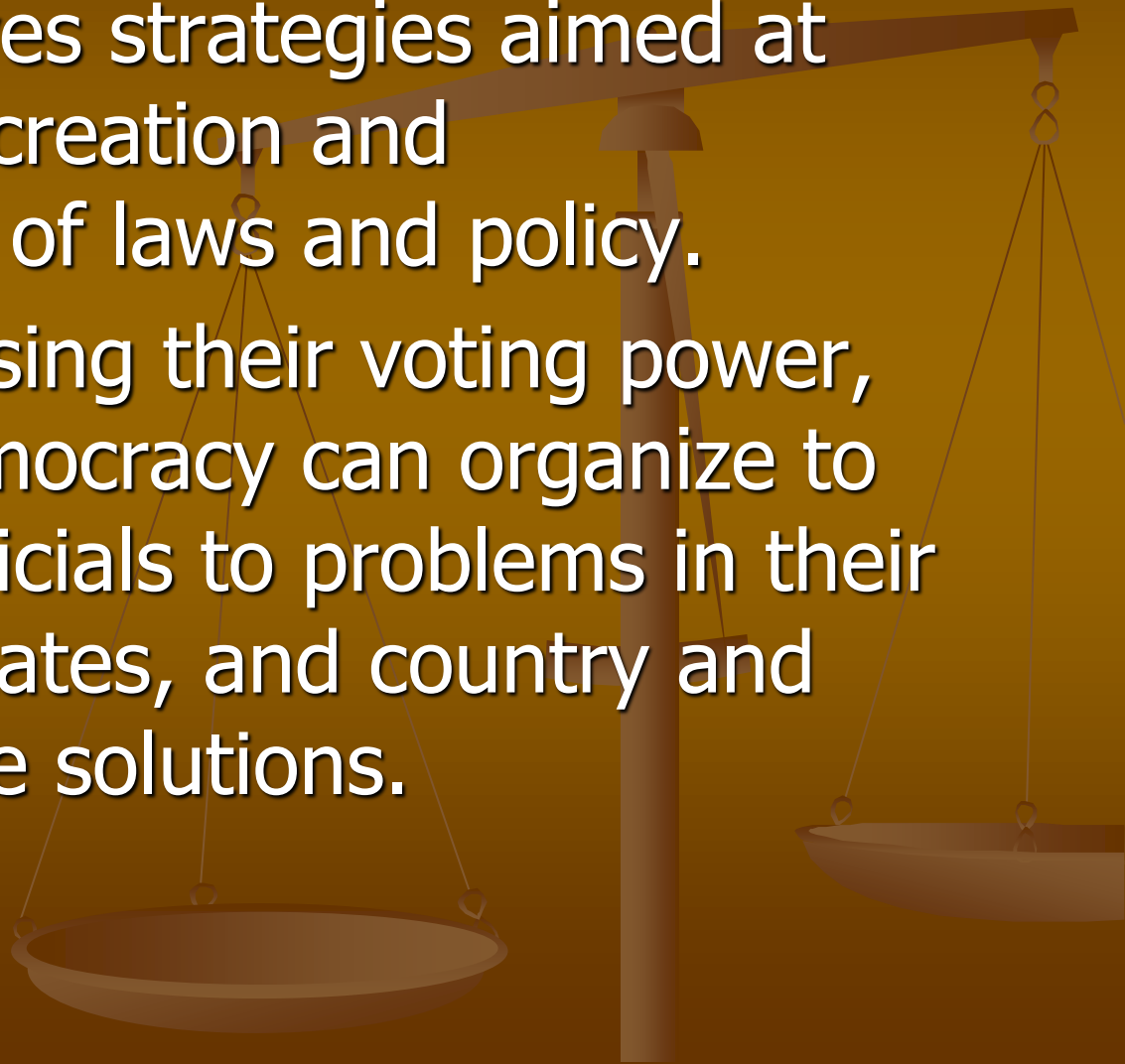
# Chapter 3: Advocacy

## Street Law



# Advocacy

- Advocacy involves strategies aimed at influencing the creation and implementation of laws and policy.
- In addition to using their voting power, citizens in a democracy can organize to alert elected officials to problems in their communities, states, and country and work to promote solutions.



# The Art of Advocacy

- Advocacy is the active support of a cause and the attempt to persuade others.
- Successful advocates must be organized, use effective methods of communication, and choose the appropriate level of government to which to address their particular issue.
- Advocacy groups are often called “interest groups” or “special interest groups”



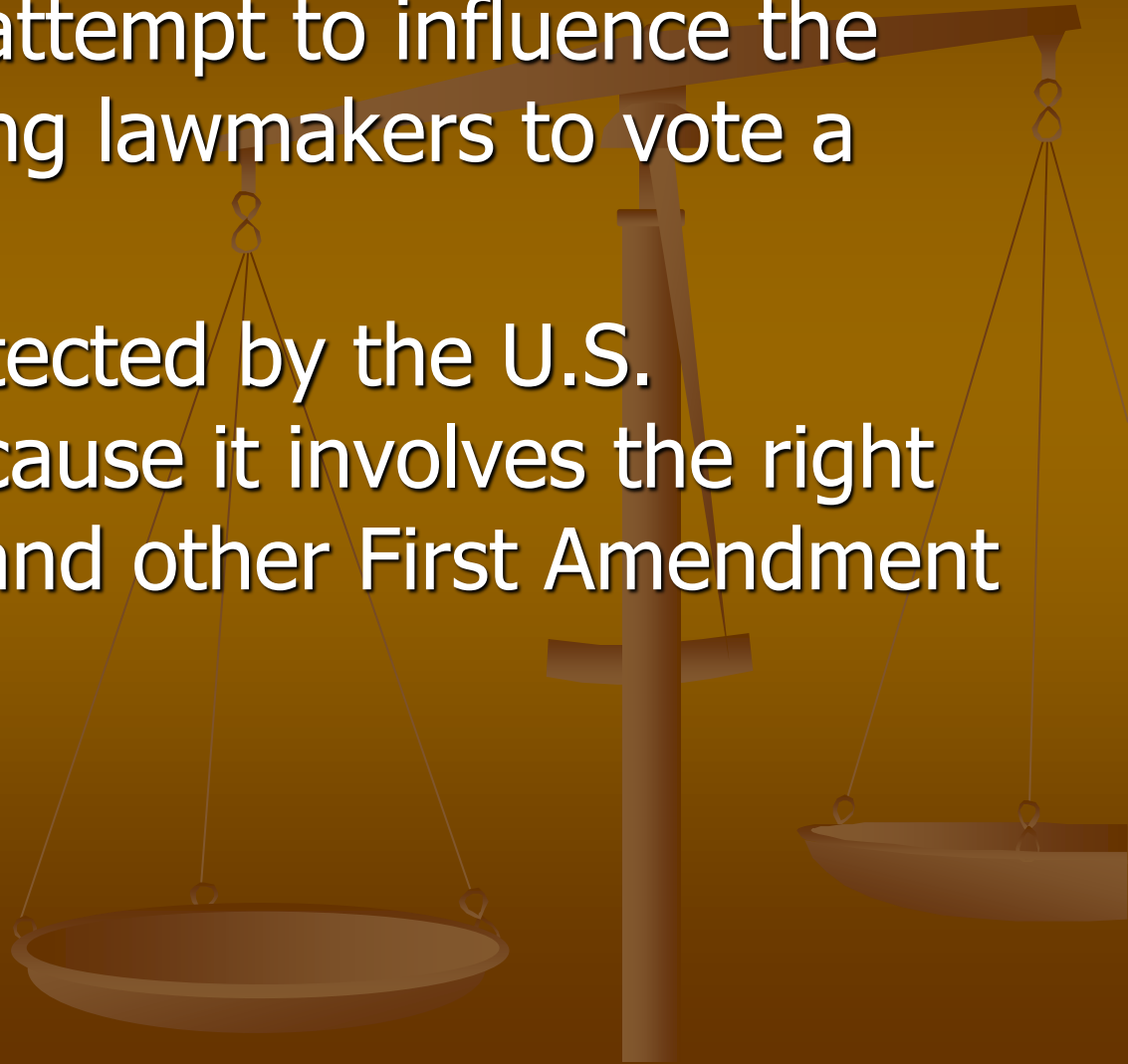


REFORM? NO WAY. YOU COULD MAKE A REAL MESS OF THINGS.



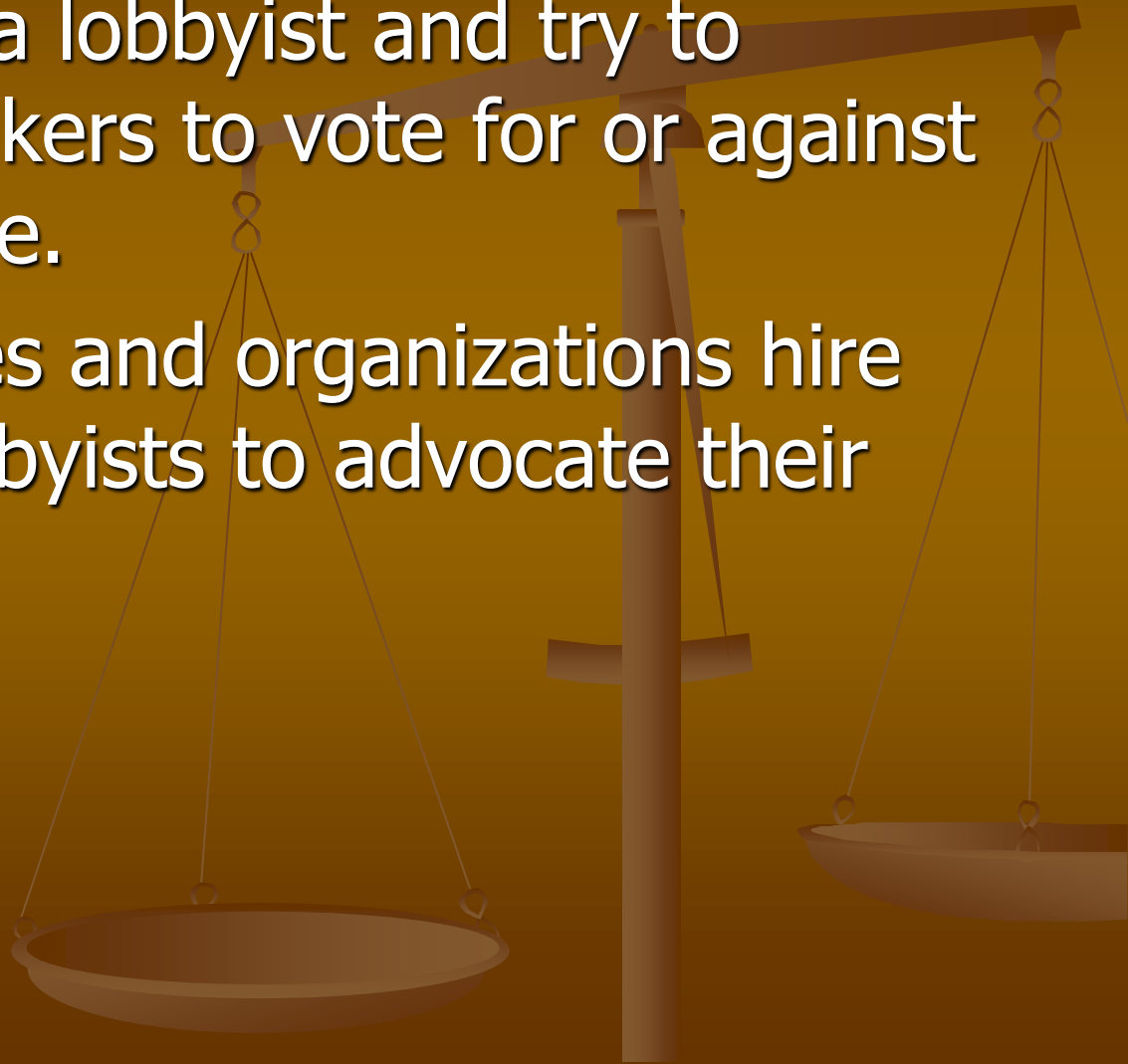
# Lobbying

- Lobbying is an attempt to influence the law by convincing lawmakers to vote a certain way.
- Lobbying is protected by the U.S. Constitution because it involves the right to free speech and other First Amendment protections.



# Lobbying

- Anyone can be a lobbyist and try to convince lawmakers to vote for or against a particular issue.
- Some businesses and organizations hire professional lobbyists to advocate their positions.





# Concerns about Lobbying

- Some people are concerned that individuals and special interest groups use the lobbying process to buy the laws they want.
- However, others say that lobbying is an effective strategy for groups to make their voices heard.

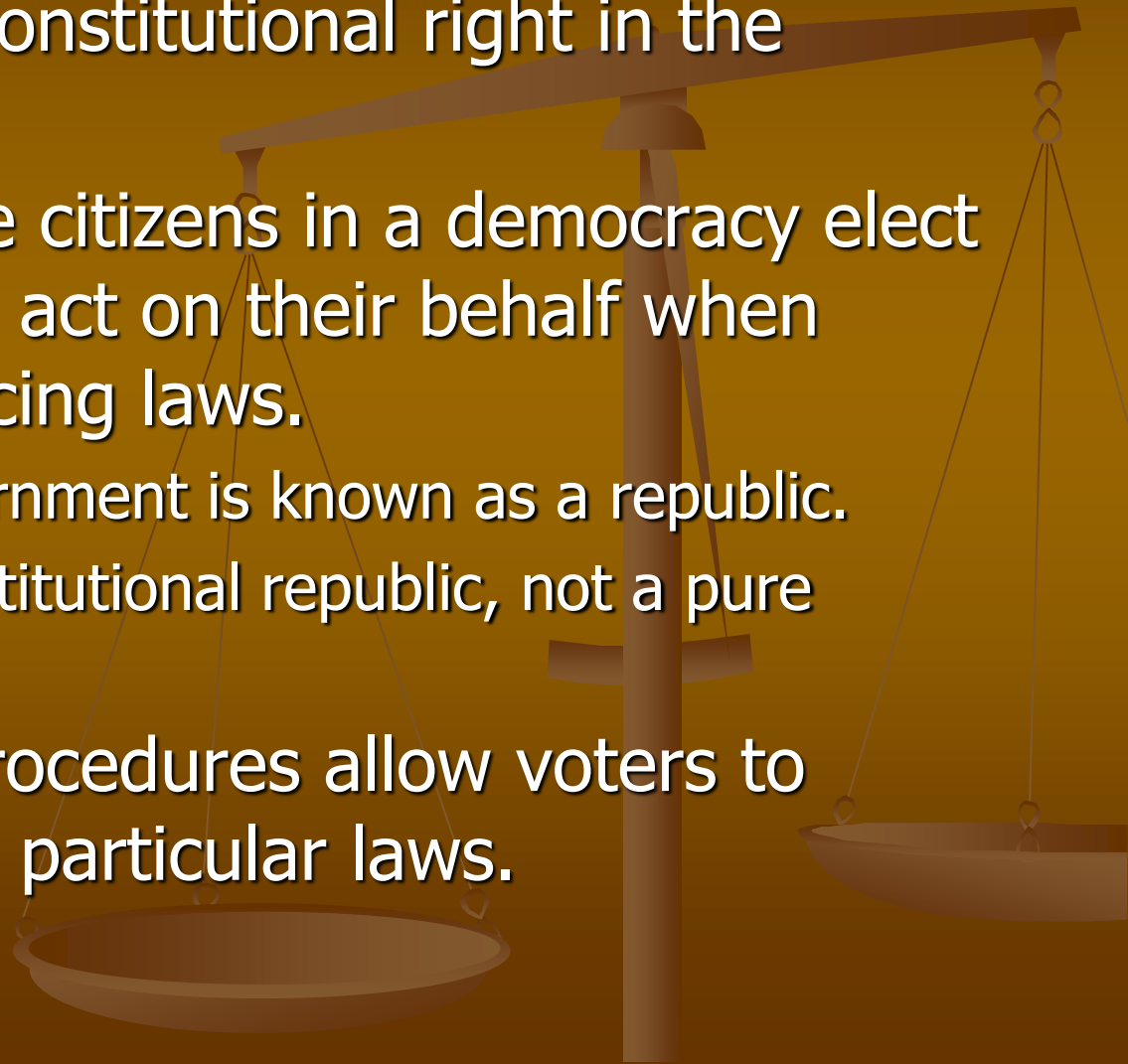






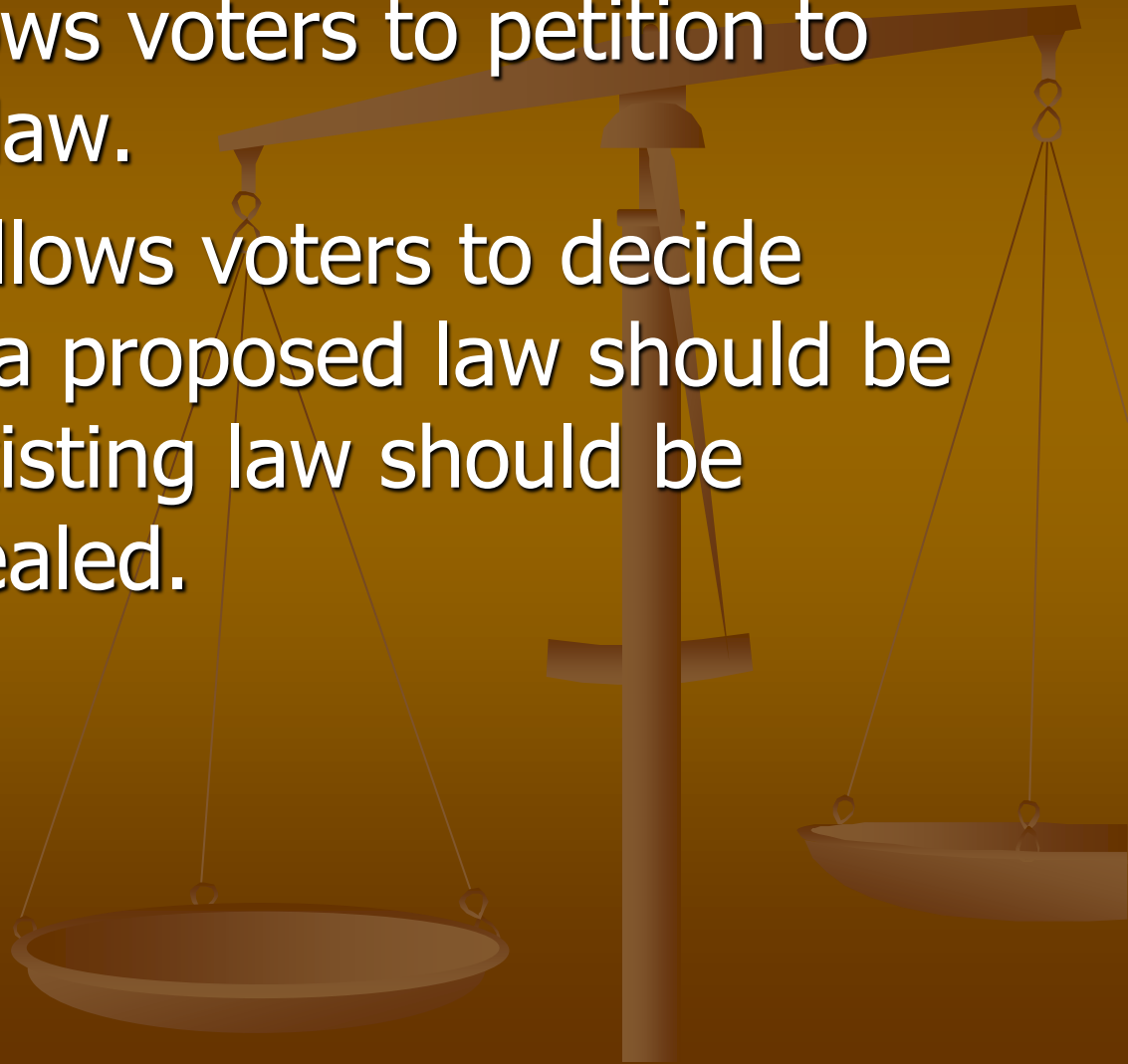
# Voting

- Voting is a basic constitutional right in the United States
- In general, eligible citizens in a democracy elect representatives to act on their behalf when making and enforcing laws.
  - This form of government is known as a republic.
  - The U.S. is a constitutional republic, not a pure democracy
- However, some procedures allow voters to directly determine particular laws.



# Voter Initiatives and Referenda

- An initiative allows voters to petition to propose a new law.
- A referendum allows voters to decide whether or not a proposed law should be passed or an existing law should be retained or repealed.



# Controversy over Referenda

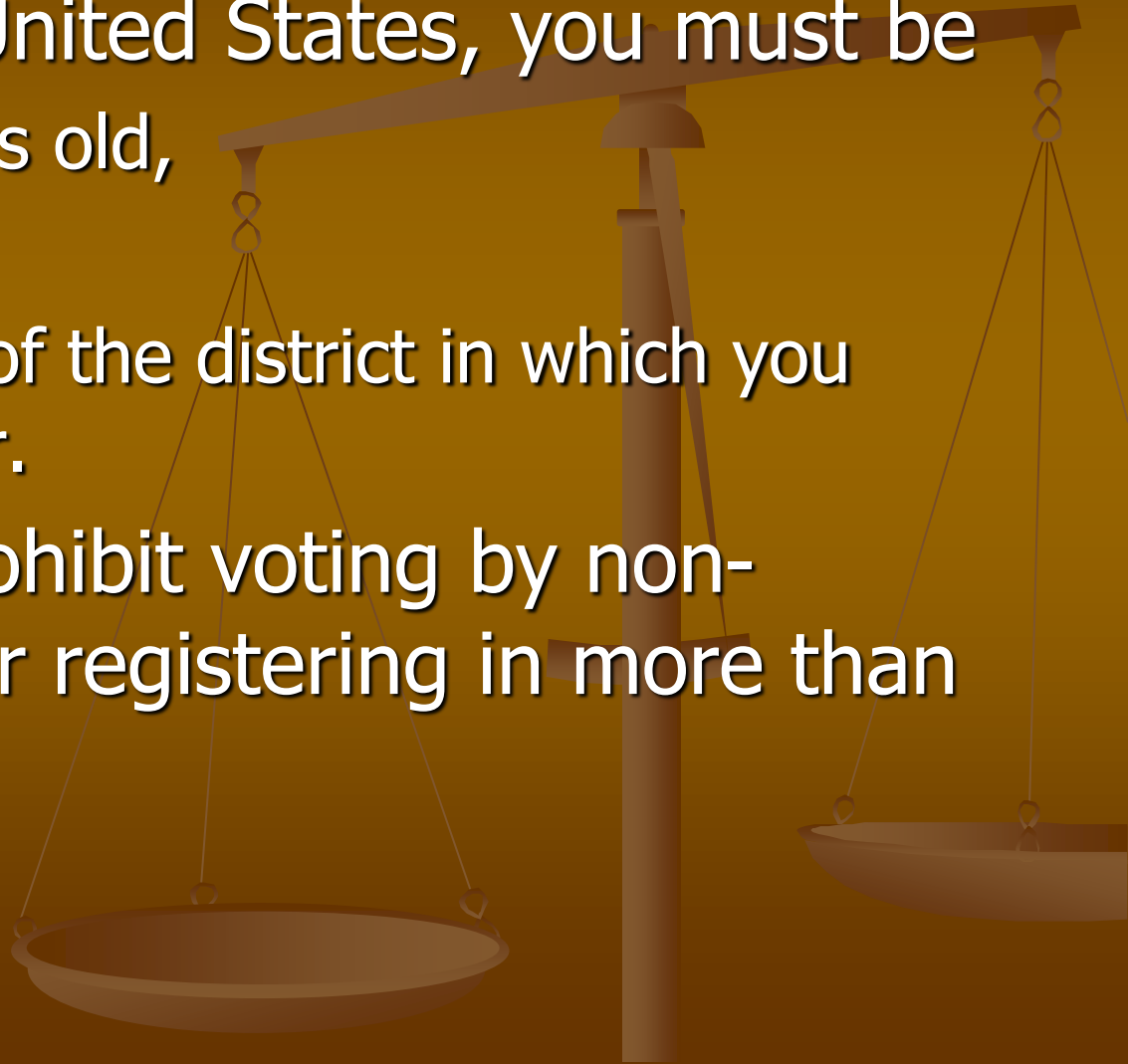
- Some people believe that initiatives and referenda allow voters to be more involved in the democratic process.
- However, others fear that these tools are inefficient for a variety of reasons.





# Voting

- To vote in the United States, you must be
  - at least 18 years old,
  - a U.S. citizen,
  - and a resident of the district in which you want to register.
- Federal laws prohibit voting by non-eligible voters or registering in more than one district.



# Informed electorate

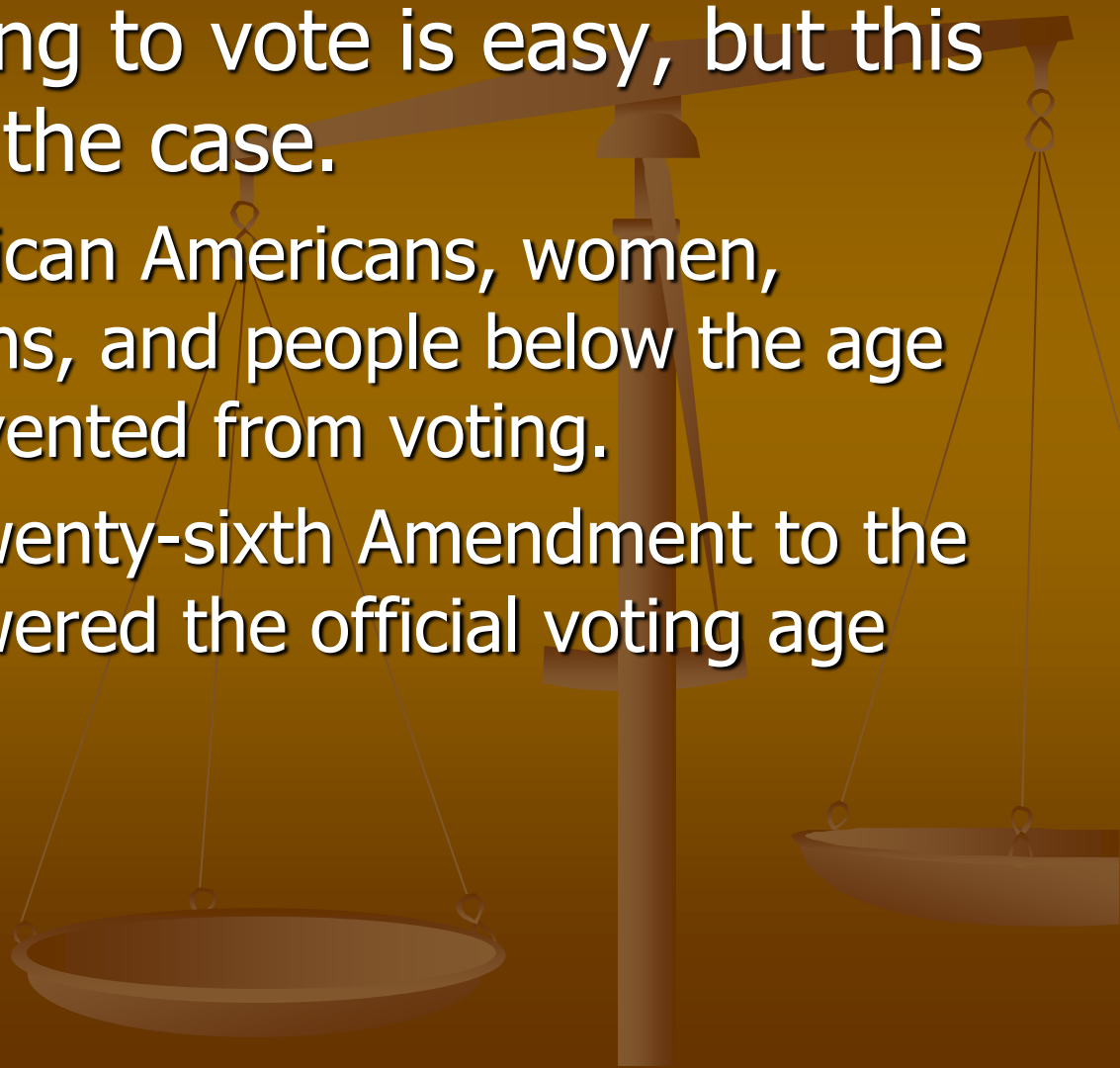


The facts are coming! The facts are coming!

- It is also important for voters to be informed about the candidates and their positions in order to make wise decisions.

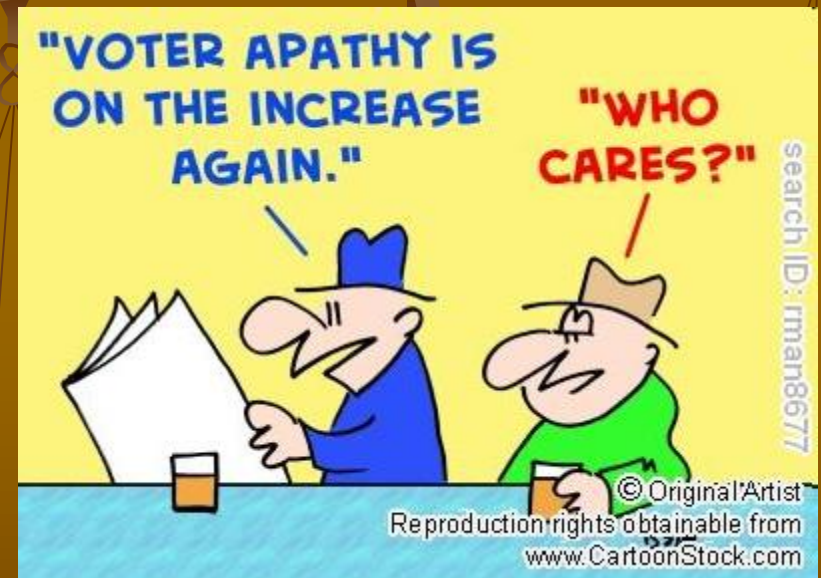
# Registering

- Today, registering to vote is easy, but this was not always the case.
  - In the past, African Americans, women, Native Americans, and people below the age of 21 were prevented from voting.
  - In 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution lowered the official voting age from 21 to 18.



# Ineligibility or apathy

- In many states, people who have committed serious crimes are prevented from voting, even after release from jail.
- Many Americans who are eligible to vote do not register or participate in elections.





# Campaign Finance Reform

- Some people believe that the process of raising money for campaigning must be reformed to limit the influence of money on politics.
- The goal of campaign finance reform is to prevent corruption in the election process.
- In January 2010 in the *Citizens United* case, the Supreme Court ruled that corporations enjoy the same First Amendment free-speech rights as individuals.

