

AMERICA AND THE FATE OF DEMOCRACY WHY IT MATTERS BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The United States has been a beacon for democratic nations since its founding in the Constitution. Throughout America's history, regardless of the political climate, democracy has seemed to be a given—an unquestioned principle so instrumental to the lives of its citizens that it would never come under threat. However, what happens when the “absolute democracy” of the United States crosses lines, marked by an absence of checks and balances? Democracy is not solely a voting system, but a means by which people hold leaders accountable for their actions and behavior. As the modern international model of democracy, the United States has historically set the standard for developed democracies across the globe.

Historically, democracy has been studied through international relations, dating back to Athens, Greece. While not comparable to modern democracies, the principles of public participation in law and governance propelled their society forward. Today, increasing tensions between countries, economic disparities within them, and the gradual disappearance of the middle class have contributed to a global shift toward far-right agendas. As a global superpower, the deterioration of American democracy has the potential to trigger a chain reaction of undemocratic practices worldwide, placing the lives and rights of global citizens at risk. The United States has historically promoted democracy across the globe following World War II and beyond, instilling principles of popular sovereignty and the rule of law in countries such as Mexico, Japan, Liberia, and Cuba. International norms and patterns are shaped by global perceptions, which members of the international community observe and model their own democracies after. As the United States slowly descends into a more authoritarian approach to governing, democracy becomes less incentivized globally. Unchecked checks and balances directly contradict the foundation of America—a nation formed in opposition to totalitarianism. The rise of authoritarianism worldwide reflects this trend, leaving the future of human rights uncertain.

The preservation of American democracy extends beyond protecting the personal rights and freedoms of those living within the United States; it carries global ramifications significant enough to destabilize democracy worldwide. It is the responsibility of American citizens to hold the current administration accountable for its actions and to refuse complacency in the face of governmental abuse of power

