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Period 4

Founding values essay

From the moment the American children could understand words. They have heard over and over. "The United States is the greatest country in the world. We hold the most power and are built on a sturdy foundation, created by our founding fathers." But this foundation is not as sturdy and solid as they have been told and preached to. From the beginning, it has been full of cracks spidering through the wood into the ground, which we claim as our own. At the time of the founding of the US, people held themselves to different standards, and the spectrum of morality differed. There were people considered less than and treated like objects to be bought and sold. We as a country hold our values with importance. As the decades passed and society changed, laws and rules followed. There has been an evolution and improvement in our original values, but much remains flawed. The wood continues to rot. And for that reason, The United States is not living up to the ideal of its founding values. Yet has upheld and improved what was in place at the time of creation.

Democracy is one of the main components of the creation of the United States as an independent country. The US is built on the desire for independence from the British taxes and overall authority. So, the leaders implemented a form of government connected with their views; a representative democracy. With the objective of including every citizen in important government decisions. With a system o electing leaders to speak for them. From the beginning, the idea and implementation of democracy have rested in a grey area. African American people and women were not allowed to participate in government systems, whether that be running for office, voting, or anything else; Meaning that only 30% of the population was included. There was the existence of slavery which therefore excluded many people were from the terms of citizenship. Since then, there have been improvements and changes created to include everyone, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the voting rights act in 1965. But that took 130 years to fix since democracy was first implemented in the US. And even then, there was inequality in regards to voting and other government activities. To this day, the democratic system is very flawed. A study created over 20 years at Stanford shows that the likelihood of Congress passing or making laws based on the general public’s desire to possess them stays at around 30%. Meaning, if 100% of the US people wanted a law passed, there is only a 30% chance it will be. Unlike the wealthy and influential people, who have a much higher chance of getting the laws they want or would be beneficial to them passed. Overall this shows that even though the US was able to include most people in government systems. The majority of the citizens of the country have little to no say in what is transpiring. Which completely undermines the fundamental base of a democracy.

Over the past few years, there has been an uproar for racial justice and freedom. The BLM movement brought many dark and hidden truths about the unfair and unequal treatment in this country, to light. This showed that minorities, and especially people of color, are in dire need of justice and help. To break down these restrictions and barriers placed on them hundreds of years ago. In the founding of the US, slavery was a big part of their culture and the economy. So much so that The Civil War was fought. There are many false notions about peoples of color through propaganda created to justify their enslavement so that people could obtain free labor. Since then, there has been progress; [The civil rights act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/civil-rights-center/statutes/civil-rights-act-of-1964#:~:text=The%20Civil%20Rights%20Act%20of%201964%20prohibits%20discrimination%20on%20the,religion%2C%20sex%20or%20national%20origin.&text=The%20Act%20prohibited%20discrimination%20in,and%20the%20desegregation%20of%20schools.), is an example of this. Even if legally, people are not allowed to discriminate against others, there has been much leniency to people who have, such as police officers. And systems put in place that keeps people of color poor and living in worse housing conditions. And due to this and other reasons, they are much more likely to be incarcerated and arrested. Black and Latino men are 5.9 times more likely to be incarcerated than white men. The US requires much legal change to occur to fix these issues. Even more than that, people need to change their biases and views created by false stories and older generations. People need to learn from personal experiences, from what they see, not hear or read from others.

Much like the racial justice movements, there have been countless protests and movements supporting women’s rights. The US constitution states, "All men are created equal," excluding women entirely. They were also excluded from voting until 1920 with the passing of the 19th amendment. And since then have been discriminated against in other ways. For decades women were expected to have one role. To get married, have children, and live their lives as mothers and wives. So, when they wanted to break out of this box, they were victims of hatred and oppression. In the present day, it is clear that the treatment and opportunities provided to women have increased, but they still face different treatment and are denied certain rights. A study from 2021 showed the gender pay gap and that women make 84% of what men do. A recent law passed in texas denies women the right to legally get an abortion after the 6th week of pregnancy, denying women the right to have control over their bodies. Laws such as this exist in many US states.

This topic is significant and concerns everyone who lives in this country. First of all, it is essential to recognize our faults and history so everyone can understand how the country was built and how to improve it. We need to be able to understand and sympathize with the people facing oppression. So we can understand different perspectives and experiences things through their eyes that we would have overlooked or ignored before; since they do not relate to us. The following steps are spreading knowledge amongst the population, and especially in places with a worse education. Teaching children, so they do not grow up learning about greatness. Instead, learning about reality and how the negative works amongst the positive. Next; would be for everyone to access their mind, acknowledge any biases they have, and try to adjust their mindset. Everyone should learn how to accept change. The US as a people has remained stuck in many of its ways for so long. And there is a need for a change, whether that occurs in the government system or something else. As people change and new opinions and ideas form, so should the represented government and overall country.

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