

# Claim Democracy



**November 22-23, 2003**

**National Conference, Washington, D.C. Convention Center**

**801 Mount Vernon Place, NW • Washington, DC 20001**

Register Online at  
[www.democracyusa.org](http://www.democracyusa.org)

## Schedule at a Glance

### Friday, November 21

**7:30 pm:** An evening of democratic politics and culture at the Washington College of Law, American University. This pre-conference event will feature speeches, music and documentaries about electoral reform.

### Saturday, November 22

(Note: We are inviting presidential candidates to discuss their views on pro-democracy issues and may adjust the schedule according to how many accept this invitation.)

<b>8:30 am – 9:00 am:</b>	<b>Exhibit Room Open</b>
<b>9:00 am – 10:15 am:</b>	<b>Opening Plenary</b>
<b>10:30 am – Noon:</b>	<b>Break-out Sessions on "Securing the Vote"</b>
<b>Noon – 1:30 pm:</b>	<b>Lunch / Exhibit Area Highlights / Book-Signings</b>
<b>1:30 pm – 3:00 pm:</b>	<b>Break-out Sessions on "Enhancing the Vote"</b>
<b>3:15 pm – 4:45 pm:</b>	<b>Break-out Session on "Exercising the Vote"</b>
<b>5 pm – 6 pm:</b>	<b>Plenary</b>
<b>7 pm:</b>	<b>Conference Dinner at Four Points - Sheraton</b>

Each breakout time will have a Youth, State Reformer, and Democracy and the Law session.

**Youth Sessions** – Will focus on key democracy issues affecting 16-26 year-olds. Participants will find out ways that they can connect to the many reform movements happening around the country and how these reforms. This track will look at innovative ways to engage young people in democratic reforms and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts.

**State Reformer Sessions** – Will be targeted toward activists and potential activists working on different reforms. This track will provide tactical advice, explore connections among different reforms and engage participants in new ways of working together

**Democracy and the Law Sessions** – Will discuss current and prospective laws about elections and legal tactics used to pursue democratic reforms, from court challenges to enforcing current election and voting rights laws.

### Saturday Evening Dinner

The Center for Voting and Democracy and Common Cause are hosting a dinner to celebrate the conference weekend

and to honor leaders in the pro-democracy movement. The dinner will take place from 7 pm to 9 pm at the Four Points - Sheraton, two blocks from the Convention Center. Tickets are \$100, with additional gifts appreciated. More details to be posted at [www.democracyusa.org](http://www.democracyusa.org)

### Sunday, November 23

<b>8:30 am – 9:00 am:</b>	<b>Exhibit Room Open</b>
<b>9:00 am – 9:45 am:</b>	<b>Plenary</b>
<b>10:00 am – 11:15 am:</b>	<b>Session 1 of Workshops</b>
<b>11:30 am – 12:30 pm:</b>	<b>Session 2 of Workshops</b>
<b>12:30 pm – 1:30 pm:</b>	<b>Lunch / Exhibit Area/ Book-Signings</b>
<b>1:30 pm – 2:45 pm:</b>	<b>Session 3 of Workshops</b>
<b>3:00 pm – 4:15 pm:</b>	<b>Session 4 of Workshops</b>
<b>4:30 pm – 5:30 pm:</b>	<b>Closing Plenary</b>

\*There will be 8 to 12 workshops and trainings on a range of pro-democracy reforms, including many of the issues at the top of the flier.

## Accommodations and Travel

### The Four Points by Sheraton

The Four Points by Sheraton (at 12th and K St.'s, NW) is located just two blocks from the Convention Center, rooms starting at \$99/night on November 21st and 22nd, 2003. These reservations must be made directly with the Reservations department (1-888-627-8681) by November 7th, 2003 at which time you must indicate that you are with the Center for Voting and Democracy.

### Youth Hostel and Travel

Youth Hostel Approximately a five-minute walk from the Convention Center in downtown DC (located at 11th & K, NW), the discounted room rate is \$26 per night. Please note, you must indicate that you are with the Claim Democracy Conference 2003 at the time of reservation. To book reservations please call (202) 737-2333 or refer to <http://www.hiwashingtondc.org/reservations.htm>

For information on travel, including discounted rates please visit [www.democracyusa.org](http://www.democracyusa.org) or call us at 301-270-4616.

## Why you should claim democracy

- The majority of Supreme Court Justices in Bush v. Gore declared that voters have no fundamental right to vote in presidential elections.
- The United States ranks 139th in the world in voter turnout in national elections since 1945, and turnout has been dropping, particularly among young people and particularly in local and state elections. Nearly a third of adult Americans are not even registered to vote.
- The United States is 59th in world rankings of representation by women. Only 14% of Members of Congress are women, and the number of female state legislators has declined since 1998
- The U.S. Senate lacks a single African American or Latino member, and the number of African Americans and Asian Pacific Americans in the U.S. House has declined since 1994. People of color are under-represented in nearly every state legislature.
- More than 4.5 million Americans are denied the right to vote because of felony disfranchisement laws that disproportionately impact low-income communities of color, including one out of every eight adult African American men.
- More than half a million Americans in our nation's capital are denied voting representation in the U.S. Congress despite the fact that they fulfill all of the same responsibilities of citizenship shared by Americans living in states and despite Congress having the final say over all local matters.
- Only four U.S. House incumbents lost to non-incumbent challengers in 2002 -- the fewest ever. State legislative elections are often even less competitive, with fully 40 percent of state legislative races since 1996 not even being contested by both major parties.
- Although the 2000 election debacle led to federal and state action to improve the infrastructure of our elections, many states are making it harder to vote, not easier.
- Despite the passage of federal campaign finance reform legislation in 2002, money spent in campaigns and on lobbying at federal, state and local levels continues to have an excessively powerful impact on electoral politics and policy-making.

**For more information contact:** The Center for Voting and Democracy at 301 270 4616 or [democracy@fairvote.org](mailto:democracy@fairvote.org)

**Invited speakers** include former Vice-President Al Gore, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, Texas state senator Rodney Ellis (of "the Texas 11"), cartoonist Aaron McGruder and many more, including leaders from the many organizations sponsoring the conference."

The organizations listed below support the goal of bringing together a diverse range of scholars, elected officials and national, state and local reformers and activists to focus attention on the need to strengthen the power of our right to vote and to build a broad pro-democracy movement. Leaders from many of these groups will address the conference.

Advancement Project Alliance for Better Campaigns American Association of People with Disabilities Appleseed Electoral Reform Project Assoc of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) Ballot Initiative Strategy Center BostonVOTE Brennan Center for Justice Campaign for America's Future Center for Constitutional Rights Center for Voting and Democracy Citizen Works Common Cause Commonwealth Coalition (Mass.) DC Vote Democracy Action Project Democracy Matters	Democracy South Democracy Works Demos: A Network for Ideas and Action Fannie Lou Hamer Project Fund for Constitutional Government Georgia Rural Urban Summit Greenlining Institute Independent Progressive Politics Network Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) League of Women Voter of US MassVOTE Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) Midwest Democracy Center NAACP National Voter Fund National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC)	National Campaign to Restore Voting Rights National Civic League National Coalition on Black Civic Participation National Council of La Raza National Urban League National Voting Rights Institute National Womens Alliance New Democracy Project Northeast Action Ohio Citizen Action Open Debates People for the American Way Progressive Challenge, Institute for Policy Studies Progressive Populist Progressive Review Project Vote	Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) Public Campaign Public Citizen Rainbow/PUSH Coalition ReclaimDemocracy.Org Rock the Vote Southwest Voter Research and Education Project White House Project Willie C. Velazquez Institute WomenVote WomenAssets USAction U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) United States Student Association (USSA) Yes I Will
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### The event will also include

Screenings of documentaries, social and networking time and youth focused events.

## Claim Democracy Conference Registration

### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State- Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Any special needs we can help accommodate? \_\_\_\_\_  
In order to approximate attendance for workshops, please indicate which track you are most interested in:  Youth  Activist  Law/Democracy

### Registration Type

- \$40 – Early-Bird Discount (Before October 31st)  \$65 – General Registration  \$25 – Student/Low Income Registration  
 \$100 – Saturday evening dinner with Common Cause and Center for Voting and Democracy

### Scholarship/Areas of Interest

To improve the content of the conference, the space below is for participants to provide any information regarding areas of the pro democracy movement they would like to see covered. We are also offering a number of registration fee scholarships to deserving applicants. To apply for the scholarship, please use the space provided to write a brief description of your circumstances and why you are interested in attending the 2003 Claim Democracy Conference.

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### Payment Information

Please mail this form along with your registration fee to:  
The Center for Voting & Democracy  
6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610, Takoma Park, MD 20912  
For more information you can contact us at: (301) 270-4616 or visit [www.DemocracyUSA.org](http://www.DemocracyUSA.org)

Are you over 17?

yes  no

### The Center for Voting & Democracy

6930 Carroll Avenue, Suite 610  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

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