

Public Square Conversation: Pillars of Democracy

March 27th, 2025 - Notes

What Strengthens a Democracy:

- Ensuring that people are well fed, housed, and educated
- Ensuring that voices are allowed to be heard, having a place to share ideas
- Teaching critical thinking
- Showing up
- Doing 2-3 hours per week to organize
- Staying healthy and resilient while resisting
- Having fun and making connections outside of politics
- Building community with a monthly Soup Night to re-energize
- Canvassing to have more conversations, even with people we disagree with
- Having secure and fair elections, high voter turnout
- Tending the garden of democracy
- Acknowledging that democracy means different things to different people

What Weakens a Democracy:

- Economic inequality
- Systemic racism, poverty, and anti-working class policies
- Politically polarized climate
- Corporations being considered people
- ALEC (American Legislative Exchange Council) setting harmful policies
- Suppression of universities, media, and law firms
- Suppression of popular candidates and of third parties
- Filibusters and tyranny of the minority
- Gerrymandering
- U.S. Senate having two senators from each state regardless of population
- The difficulty of agreeing on "truth" in public discourse