



The Franchise: A Special Message, And a Brief Survey, For Franchise Readers

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What you need to know about voting rights and democracy in America



Hello Franchise readers,

My name is Matt Shuham, I've been reporting for TPM since 2016, and I'm writing to ask for your help.

We started The Franchise earlier this year in order to thoroughly cover the attacks on voting rights that are ongoing throughout the country. We want to hold power to account and protect Americans' right to self government. And now, as a TPM reader, you can further our mission by [telling us](#) why voting rights matter to you, and how The Franchise can better serve its purpose.

TAKE THE SURVEY

But first, about me: I've spent the majority of my time as a professional journalist at TPM, where I've learned a great deal about the current state of American politics. Before I picked up the voting rights beat this past year, I was TPM's "extremism" guy, and have covered violent and anti-democratic movements and individuals across the country for years.

That beat, believe it or not, has prepared me to cover voting rights.

I'm thinking of a member of a "boogaloo" militia from New Hampshire (the term refers to armed groups that are preparing for a second Civil War) who I interviewed a couple years ago. I asked him why he was preparing for violent struggle, rather than engaging in the democratic process.

"The means of petition, protest and voting have been exhausted," he said.

A year later, Donald Trump offered a similar sentiment, cloaked in lies about voter fraud. We all know what happened next: a violent struggle to undo the will of the people.

Both instances illustrated a pattern. Those who had given up on democracy decided that the only path forward was violence.

That's why I care about The Franchise — because it's under attack, and because an informed, activated public is the only thing standing between us and illiberalism.

Why do you care about voting rights? We'd like to hear from you. We also want to know what stories you think deserve more attention — maybe even those in your own backyard.

TAKE THE SURVEY

Reader input has been central to TPM's coverage for 20 years. So, with the help of some enterprising NYU journalism students, we've put together a BRIEF survey that will help The Franchise focus on what readers want and need to know.

[You can read through that survey HERE.](#) And as always, thank you for reading.

Sincerely,

Matt Shuham

Reporter, Talking Points Memo

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👉 One more thing. Do you know someone who might enjoy

The Franchise? By forwarding this email you can help us spread the word about TPM. Thank you for reading!

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