



"America250: Remembering the Experiment, Renewing the Promise"

Volume 1, Issue 7, July 2026

Democracy Chronicles

From our

President Luis Sanchez

The upcoming **Democracy Summit** is very much on my mind. It's now just around the corner: **Monday, July 13, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM (Pacific Daylight Time)**. Our keynote speaker will be **Congressman Ro Khanna**, whose outspoken challenges to President Trump have drawn significant national attention. Following his remarks, **California**

Assemblywoman Jacqui Irwin will offer her own reflections to help launch the Summit.

This virtual Summit, held via Zoom, is designed to advance the mission of **The Madison-Lincoln Initiative** — namely, to foster a far more robust civic education across the nation and to strengthen civic engagement from K–12 through college. The deeper purpose of this mission is to help future generations of voters withstand destructive forces such as the forces of polarization, declining civic trust, and the erosion of constructive public dialogue. In doing so, we hope to reinforce our fraying democratic republic and heed Jefferson’s reminder that a well-educated citizenry is essential to preserving our great experiment in self-governance.

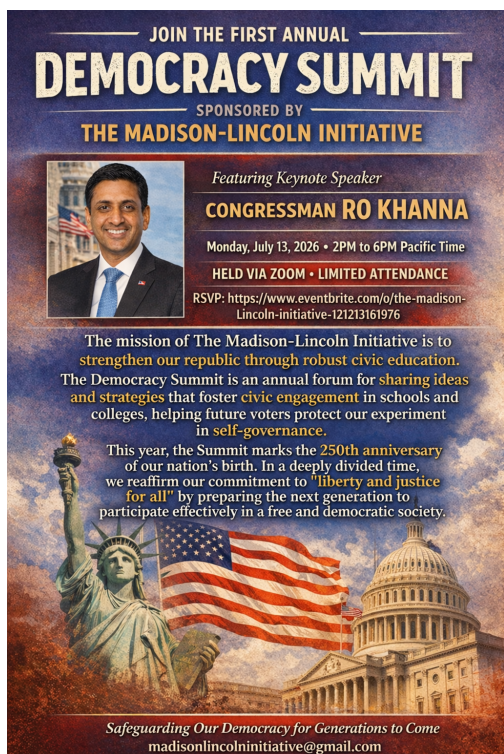
Because of our Zoom license, attendance is limited to the **first 300 registrants**. Registration remains open through The Madison-Lincoln Initiative website: <https://themadisonlincolninitiative.com/> or directly via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/democracy-summit-tickets-1986685476741?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

In addition to a broader conversation about the state of civic education in America (spoiler: it is dismal), the Summit will feature breakout sessions on cultivating the **five essential pillars of civic education**:

- **Critical reasoning**
- **Civil discourse**
- **Media literacy**
- **Constitutional literacy**
- **Democratic ethics**

While the Summit will be especially meaningful for educators, it is open to all concerned Americans. It offers a chance to celebrate our nation’s **250th birthday** by sharing ideas and strategies for sustaining our democracy for the next 250 years.

Registration is free, but because of attendance limits, I encourage you to sign up today. I hope to see you there.



Congressman Ro Khanna to Headline National Democracy Summit

The Madison-Lincoln Initiative is pleased to announce that **Congressman Ro Khanna**, who

represents California's 17th District in the heart of Silicon Valley, will serve as a featured speaker at the **Democracy Summit commemorating the 250th birthday of the United States**.

The free virtual event will be held on **July 13** and is open to the public. Participants from across California and the nation are invited to attend.

Registration is free and available at:

[Democracy Summit Registration](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/the-madison-lincoln-initiative-121213161976)

Congressman Khanna has become a prominent voice in Congress on issues including technology, manufacturing, and the future of democratic institutions. His leadership reflects a belief that democracy must be both **principled** and **practical**, delivering real opportunity for working families while preparing the nation for the next century.

A Vision for a Modern, Inclusive America

Khanna is nationally recognized for his work to ensure that the United States remains a **modern manufacturing and technology superpower**. He pairs this economic vision with a commitment to broad-based opportunity, including:

- **Medicare for All**
- **A \$17 minimum wage**
- **\$10-a-day childcare**
- **Free public college and trade school**

He describes himself as a **pro-growth progressive**, emphasizing that innovation and inclusion must advance together.

A Record of Public Service

Since first being elected in **2016**, Khanna has been re-elected **five times**, most recently with **67.7%** of the vote in one of the nation's most Democratic districts (**D +33.5%**). He is a member of the **Congressional Progressive Caucus** and has built a legislative record focused on the defining issues of the 21st century.

Top Issue Priorities

Economic Renewal

Khanna champions a national strategy to rebuild American manufacturing, strengthen supply chains, and create high-wage jobs. He supports higher wages, an expanded Child Tax Credit, and tax reforms aimed at ultra-high earners.

Technology & Privacy

Representing Silicon Valley, he is a leading voice on **data privacy**, **AI safety**, **antitrust enforcement**, and a **Digital Bill of Rights** to protect Americans in the digital age.

Housing & Cost of Living

Khanna supports federal housing construction incentives, zoning reform near transit, rental assistance, and programs to help first-time homebuyers—policies aimed at easing California's affordability crisis.

Climate & Clean Energy

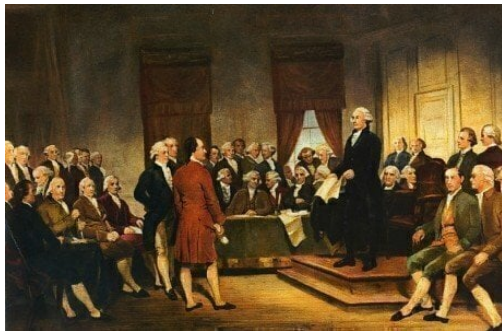
He advocates for clean-energy manufacturing, electrification of transportation, wildfire mitigation, and environmental justice investments.

Constitutional War Powers

Khanna is one of Congress's strongest voices for restoring the constitutional balance of war powers, ending unauthorized military engagements, and promoting diplomacy-first foreign policy.

A Fitting Voice for America's 250th Birthday

As the nation reflects on 250 years of democratic self-government, Congressman Khanna offers a rare combination of **economic vision**, **technological expertise**, and **constitutional seriousness**. His work speaks directly to the Summit's mission: ensuring that American democracy remains **strong, innovative, and inclusive** for the next generation.



The Summer That Saved a Nation: What the Constitutional Convention Can Teach Us at 250

As America approaches its 250th birthday, the lessons of

Philadelphia in 1787 may be more important than ever.

In the summer of 1787, the United States faced a crisis of survival.

The Revolution had been won. Independence had been declared. But the young nation created by the Articles of Confederation was struggling under the weight of economic instability, political disagreements, and growing tensions among the states. The promise of self-government was in danger—not because Americans had stopped believing in democracy, but because they had not yet learned how to make democracy work.

From May to September 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia for what became one of the most consequential experiments in democratic history: the Constitutional Convention.

What they created was not born from agreement. It was born from disagreement.

The delegates arrived with competing visions of government, conflicting regional interests, and deeply different

ideas about the future of the republic. Yet through debate, compromise, and a remarkable willingness to reconsider their own positions, they produced a Constitution that has endured for nearly two and a half centuries.

Their achievement offers an important lesson for our own time: **democracy does not depend on the absence of conflict. It depends on the ability to transform conflict into constructive action.**

Democracy Requires More Than Opinions—It Requires Skills

The delegates who gathered in Philadelphia brought something more than strong opinions. They brought intellectual preparation, historical knowledge, and a willingness to reason together.

They studied the successes and failures of earlier republics—from ancient Greece and Rome to European political traditions. They debated the ideas of thinkers such as John Locke and Montesquieu. They examined history not as a collection of stories, but as a source of evidence.

In many ways, the Convention demonstrated five essential civic capacities that remain necessary today:

Critical Reasoning.

The delegates were willing to change their minds when arguments and evidence demanded it. James Madison arrived with a strong commitment to the Virginia Plan, but accepted compromises when the Convention's debates revealed better solutions. They understood the difference between what might be ideal in theory and what could actually succeed in practice.

Civil Discourse.

The Convention was not polite because everyone agreed. It was productive because disagreement was structured. Delegates challenged ideas rather than simply attacking individuals. They created space where positions could evolve without humiliation.

Civil discourse did not eliminate conflict. It made resolution possible.

Media Literacy.

The founders understood the power—and danger—of public persuasion. They carefully

considered how ideas would be communicated to citizens. The Federalist Papers became one of history's greatest examples of explaining complex political ideas to a broad audience.

They recognized that a healthy republic requires citizens who can evaluate arguments, understand competing perspectives, and distinguish reasoned debate from manipulation.

Constitutional Literacy.

The delegates understood that good government depends on good structures. They did not assume that leaders would always be wise or virtuous. Instead, they designed a system built around accountability, checks and balances, and the limitation of power.

As Madison famously argued, ambition must be made to counteract ambition.

Democratic Ethics.

Perhaps most importantly, the Convention was built around the idea that government derives legitimacy from the consent of the governed. The delegates understood that no person or faction should possess unlimited power.

They also understood that democracy requires humility—the recognition that no generation has a perfect understanding of justice and that institutions must allow future generations to improve upon them.

The Great Compromise—and the Great Contradiction

The Convention's achievements were extraordinary, but they were not perfect.

The delegates solved enormous challenges: representation between large and small states, executive power, commerce, and the creation of a workable national government.

But the Convention also confronted—and failed to resolve—the nation's greatest moral contradiction: slavery.

Compromises over representation, the slave trade, and fugitive slaves preserved the Union but postponed a crisis that would eventually lead to civil war.

The lesson is not that the founders created a perfect system. They did not.

The lesson is that they created a system capable of confronting its own failures.

The Constitution contained mechanisms for amendment, expansion of rights, and democratic correction. Over time, Americans used those mechanisms—through struggle, sacrifice, and reform—to broaden the meaning of liberty and citizenship.

A Lesson for America at 250

As Americans prepare to celebrate the nation's 250th birthday, we face a question similar to the one confronted by the founders:

Can citizens with deeply different views still find common ground in service to the republic?

The answer will not come from eliminating disagreement. Democracy has never required that.

The answer comes from rebuilding the habits that made Philadelphia possible:

- listening before dismissing,
- debating ideas rather than attacking people,

- seeking evidence rather than accepting misinformation,
- understanding our Constitution,
- and remembering that self-government requires participation from every generation.

The Constitutional Convention succeeded because imperfect people committed themselves to a process greater than their own interests.

That may be the enduring lesson of 1787:

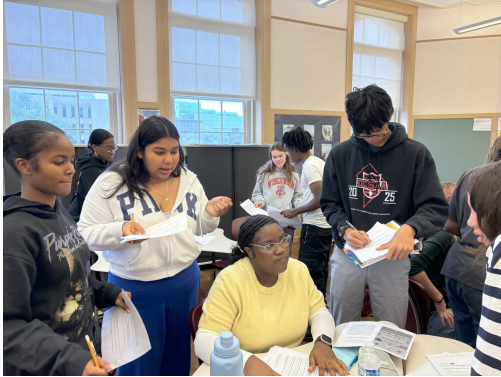
A democracy survives not because its citizens always agree, but because they remain committed to working through disagreement together.

This July, the Madison-Lincoln Initiative's Democracy Summit continues that conversation by asking a question as important today as it was in Philadelphia:

Can Americans with different perspectives still find common ground and renew the promise of self-government?

The future of democracy depends on the answer.

We the People: Civic Education Training for NH Middle & High School Teacher Program Overview



We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution is a nationally recognized civics program designed to strengthen constitutional literacy and civic engagement. With three levels of text, it offers a flexible, rigorous

curriculum on the U.S. Constitution. Teachers who choose may culminate the course with a **state-level mock congressional hearing**, where students analyze and defend positions on six constitutional topics before volunteer lawyers and judges.

This two-day professional development session introduces teachers to the curriculum and the powerful pedagogy behind the mock hearing model.

Training Details

Dates & Times

- **Tuesday, August 4** — 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
- **Wednesday, August 5** — 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Location Osher Lifelong Learning Institute One Court Street, Suite 380
Lebanon, NH

Who's Leading the Training

Learn from experienced **teacher mentors**:

- David Alcox
- Thomas Lundstedt
- Trevor Duval
- Jenn Tifft

And from **We the People scholars**:

- Dr. Lester Brooks
- Dr. Francene Engel

What Participants Will Gain

- **Enhanced content knowledge** through sessions with Dr. Brooks and Dr. Engel
- **Networking opportunities** with mentor teachers and fellow NH educators
- **Instructional resources** including a textbook
- **Professional development hours**
- **\$100 stipend** for full participation

Learn More & Register

More information: <https://lnkd.in/edycGbBh>

Registration link: (Your pasted link appears to be a browser extension preview. You may want to replace it with the direct URL.) If you have the correct Eventbrite or registration link, I can format it cleanly.



Smithsonian National Education Summit 2026

When: July 14–17, 2026

Format: Online

Theme: "Together

We Thrive:

Towards a More

Perfect Union"

Tracks include:

- Cultivating the Power of Dialogue
- History in Context
- Civic challenges



Facing History — Teaching Democracy and Freedom Summer Seminar

When: July 21–23, 2026

Format: Virtual

Focus: Teaching

democracy,

freedom,

historical inquiry,

civic agency

Cost: \$25

Registration:

[Teaching](#)

[Democracy and](#)

[Freedom Summer](#)

[2026 Seminar](#)

and
solutions

- Arts as civic
voice

Registration:

[Smithsonian](#)

[National](#)

[Education Summit](#)

[Registration](#)



**National Summit
on Civics in
Catholic
Education**

When: July 26–28,
2026

Location:

Benedictine College

Focus: Civic

formation,
citizenship, schools,
democratic
responsibility

Information:

[National Summit on
Civics in Catholic
Education](#)



**Civic Learning
Institute — “Using
Thinking Routines
to Deepen Civic
Learning”**

When: July 29, 2026

Time: 1:00–2:30 PM
ET

Format: Zoom

Focus: Helping
students think
critically about civic
concepts and
engagement

Registration: [Civic
Learning Institute
Workshops](#)



**Civic Learning
Institute —
Managing
Difficult
Conversations
(Grades 6–12)**

When: August 4,
2026

Time: 7:30–9:00 PM
ET

Format: Online

Focus: Classroom
dialogue,
disagreement, civic
discussion skills

Registration: [Civic
Learning Institute
Workshops](#)

1. Thomas Paine published *Common Sense* and changed the political conversation

What he did (January 1776):

Paine published *Common Sense*, a short pamphlet arguing that independence from Britain was not only possible but necessary. It sold in enormous numbers for the time and helped persuade ordinary colonists—not just political elites—to support breaking from the monarchy.

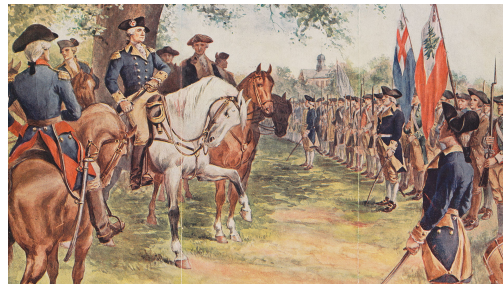
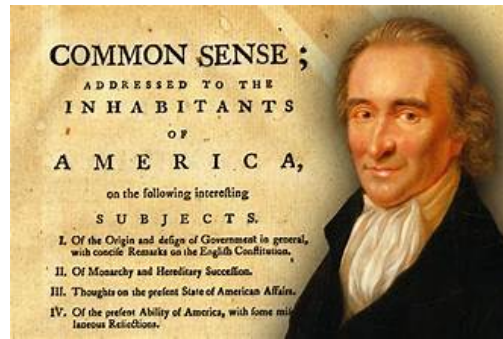
Why it mattered:

Before Paine, many colonists wanted reconciliation. After *Common Sense*, independence became a mainstream political demand.

2. George Washington transformed a colonial army into a national force

What he did (1776):

As commander of the Continental Army, Washington led American forces through the difficult New York campaign after the Declaration of Independence. Despite major defeats, he kept the army together and restored morale with the surprise victories at



Battle of Trenton and Battle of Princeton in January 1777.

Why it mattered:

A declaration alone could not create a nation; Washington helped prove the revolution could survive militarily.

3. Thomas Jefferson drafted a statement of national purpose

What he did (1776):

Jefferson wrote the first major draft of the Declaration of Independence, articulating principles of equality, natural rights, and government by consent.

Why it mattered:

He helped define not only why Americans were separating from Britain but what kind of nation they hoped to create.

4. John Adams pushed Congress toward independence

What he did (1776):

Adams became one of the strongest advocates in the Continental Congress for declaring independence. He helped persuade hesitant delegates and later worked on the committee developing the framework for the new government.

Why it mattered:

Independence required political persuasion, compromise, and coalition-building.

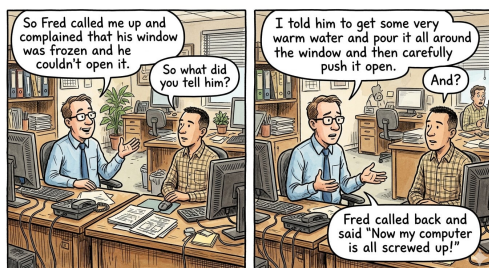
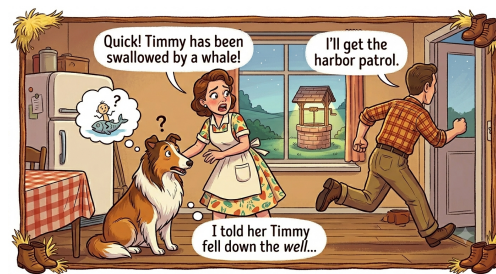
5. George Rogers Clark expanded the idea of an American nation beyond the original colonies**What he did (1776):**

Clark began organizing frontier resistance in 1776, laying groundwork for later American campaigns in the Ohio Valley.

Why it mattered:

The revolution was not only about thirteen coastal colonies—it was also about imagining the geographic future of the new nation.

A Little Humor

**"The Dangers of Taking Computer Advice Literally"****Lost in Translation**



Your Help is Needed

Volunteer with
MLI, join the
Council of Civic Champions, or
nominate a teacher.
Your support
strengthens civics

Madison-Lincoln Initiative

Donate to
support our
work



In Partnership With Our Friends

Your support
strengthens civics education
across
California. Every
contribution
makes a
difference.

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