

Core Democratic Values of American Constitutional Democracy

Core Democratic Values are the fundamental beliefs and constitutional principles of American society which unite all Americans. These values are expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and other significant documents, speeches, and writings of the nation. Below is definition of some core democratic values.

Fundamental Beliefs

Life

The individual's right to life should be considered sacred except in certain highly restricted and extreme circumstances, such as the use of deadly force to protect one's own or others' lives.

Liberty

The right to liberty is considered an unchangeable part of human life.

At the heart of this idea is the understanding that no one can be blamed or held accountable for personal or political obligations of family or ancestors that came before them. The right to liberty includes: personal freedom - each person is free to act, think and believe as they choose without interference from the government; political freedom - the right to participate in the political process, choose and remove public officials, to be governed under a rule of law; the right to information and assembly; economic freedom - the right to make money, own property, seek employment where one chooses, to change employment, and participate in any legal economic activity.

The Pursuit of Happiness

The right of each person to attempt to find happiness in their own way, so long as they do not infringe upon rights of others.

Common Good

Individuals must accept their obligation to promote the well being of the community and work with others for the greater benefit of all.

Justice

All people should be treated fairly and equally in regards to receiving the benefits and burdens of society, the correction of wrongs and injuries, and in the gathering of information and making of decisions.

Equality

All people have: political equality - and are not denied these rights unless by due process of law; legal equality - and are treated as equals before the law; social equality - and there should be no class system sanctioned by law; economic equality - which tends to strengthen political and social equality.

Diversity

Variety in culture and ethnic background, race, lifestyle, and belief is not only permissible but desirable and beneficial in a pluralistic society.

Truth

Citizens can demand that truth-telling by their government be the rule, since trust in their government is an essential part of the bond between the government and the governed.

Popular Sovereignty

The people as a whole have ultimate authority over the state and holds that authority over public officials and their policies.

Patriotism

Virtuous citizens display a devotion to their country, including devotion to the fundamental values and principles upon which it depends.