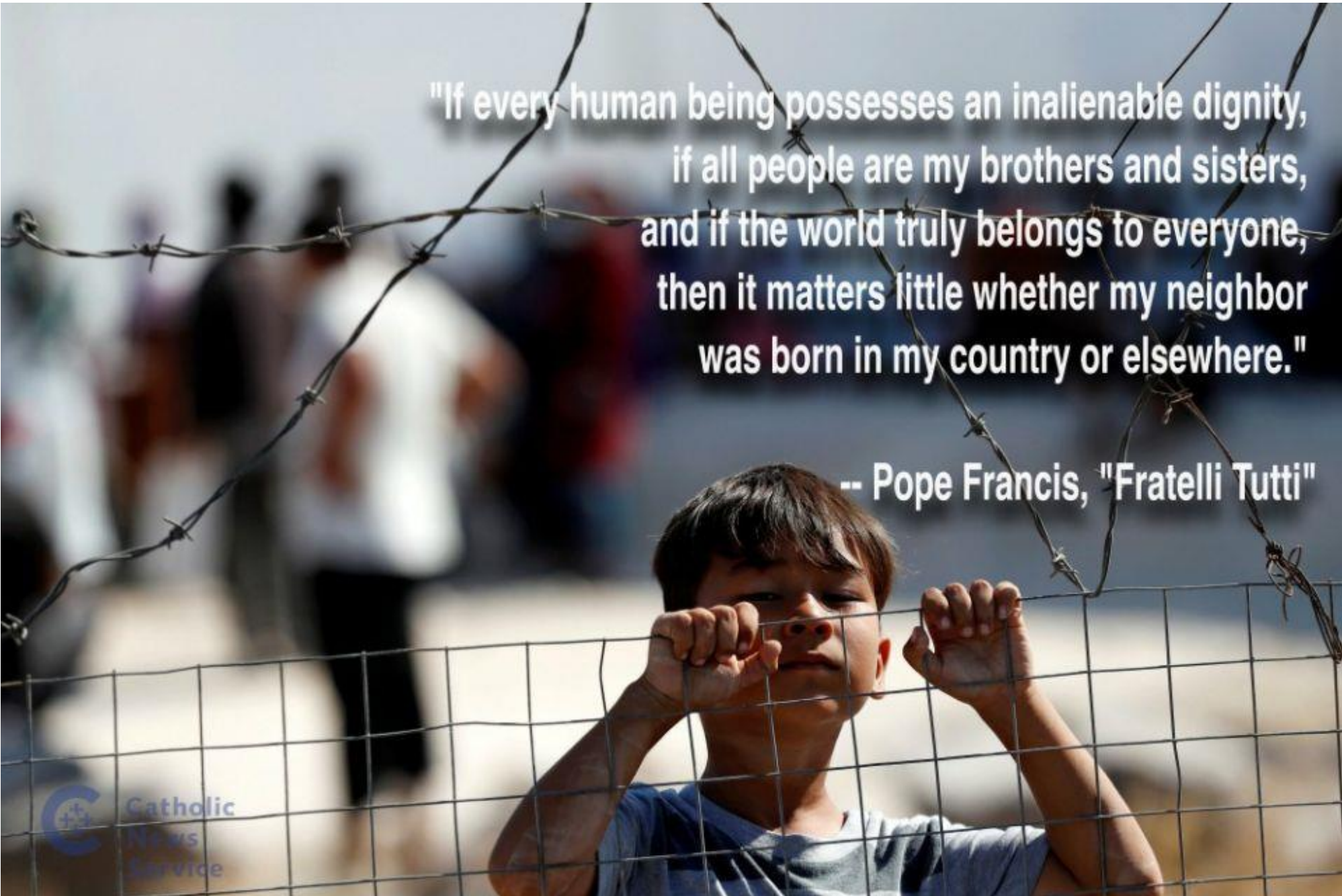


Faithful Citizenship: Voting to Ensure the Common Good for All Our Brothers and Sisters

NYC FRANCISCAN SOLIDARITY TABLE

OCTOBER 6, 2020





"If every human being possesses an inalienable dignity,
if all people are my brothers and sisters,
and if the world truly belongs to everyone,
then it matters little whether my neighbor
was born in my country or elsewhere."

-- Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti"

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer

**O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,
in his family of Nazareth,
and in the early Christian community.
Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.
Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.**



(pixabay.com/photos/urban-people-crowd-citizens)

Overview

Faithful Citizenship

Current examples of marginalization

Voter suppression

Fratelli Tutti: New encyclical from Pope Francis

Action

“We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern.” -- Pope Francis

“The Catholic call to faithful citizenship affirms the importance of political participation and insists that public service is a worthy vocation.” -- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops





Franciscan Action Network Values

Care of Creation

Dignity of the Human Person

Consistent ethic of life

Genuine love and respect for the poor and vulnerable

Peace and reconciliation

Right Relationship of Justice

Transformational, following the example of Saints Francis and Clare

Agents of change in the larger community





Photo by Michael Fleshman

Episcopalian Call for Civic Engagement



The Most Reverend Michael C. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate of The Episcopal Church

The Church **can not** endorse, support, or oppose political candidates.

The Church **can (and should, maybe must)** engage in voter education, voter registration, helping people to get out of the polls to vote, and advocating for issues of public policy respective to the tenants of our faith.

An election for public office is **not a popularity contest**. It's a contest of ideas about **how to shape the future of a community**, nation and maybe even a world.

On COVID-19

1

Become a poll worker.

2

Monitor and publicize New State Procedures.

3

Equip yourself against disinformation.



Register

1. <https://vote.gov/>
2. Talk to people about registering to vote.
3. Host a voter registration drive.

Mobilize your community

01

Give rides to the polls*.

02

Provide childcare service during election hours*.

03

Make sure your community members know how to vote.

01

Announce election
day in your church
bulletin.

02

Put up signs.

03

Engage on social
media.

Communicate

Advocate

Educate

Educate yourself.

Call on

Call on your local,
state, and federal
representatives.

Vote

Vote faithfully
Sunday.

Marginalization in the U.S.

Food Insecurity



Source: <https://catholiccharitiesny.org/news/we-all-need-food-and-shelter-eviction-makes-difficult>

Essential Workers' Access to Healthcare



Immigrant Detention Centers



Police Brutality

Black people are most likely to be killed by police

3X more likely to be killed by police than white people.



Black Hispanic White

Police Killings per 1 million population

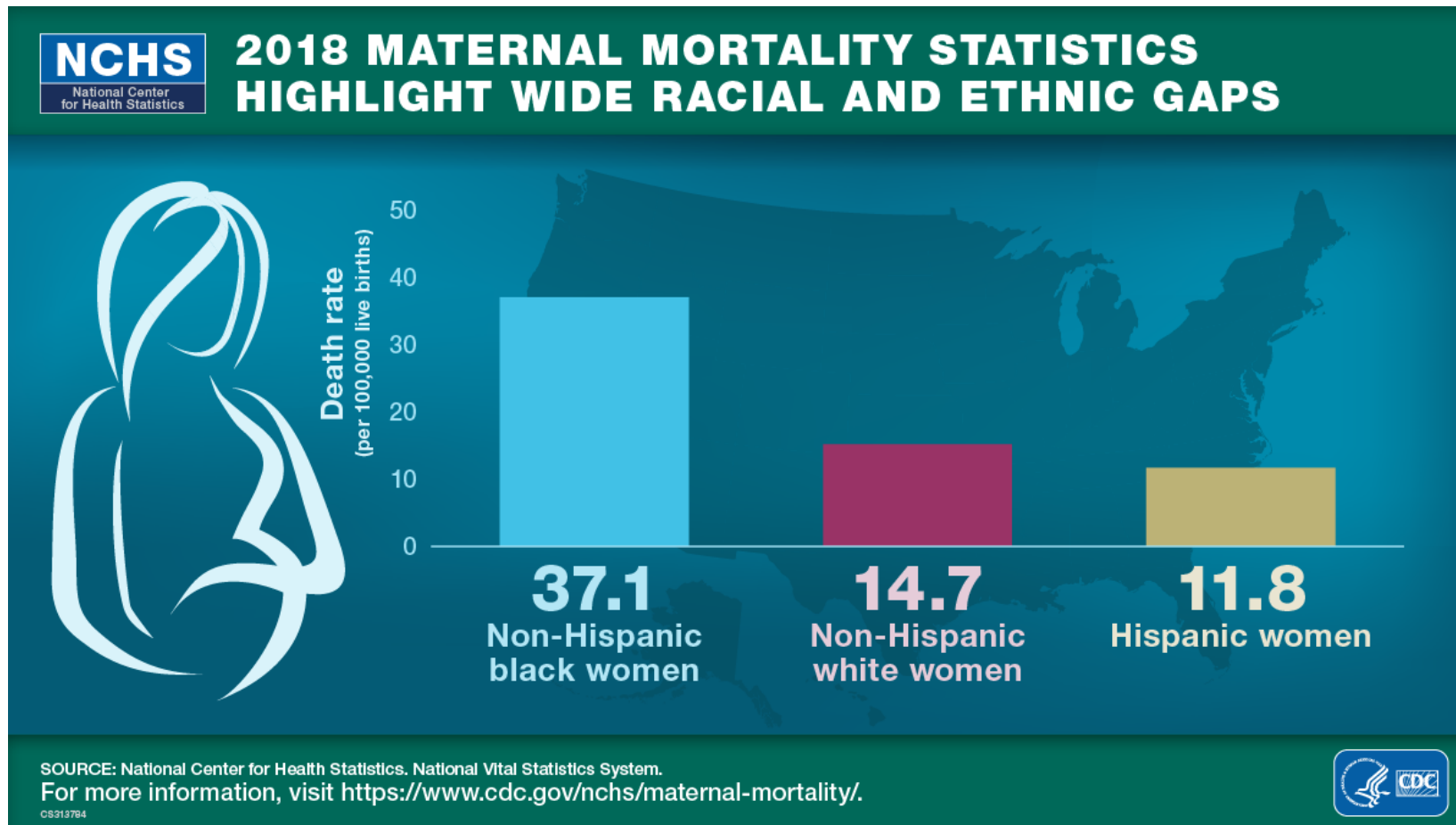
1.3X more likely to be unarmed compared to white people.



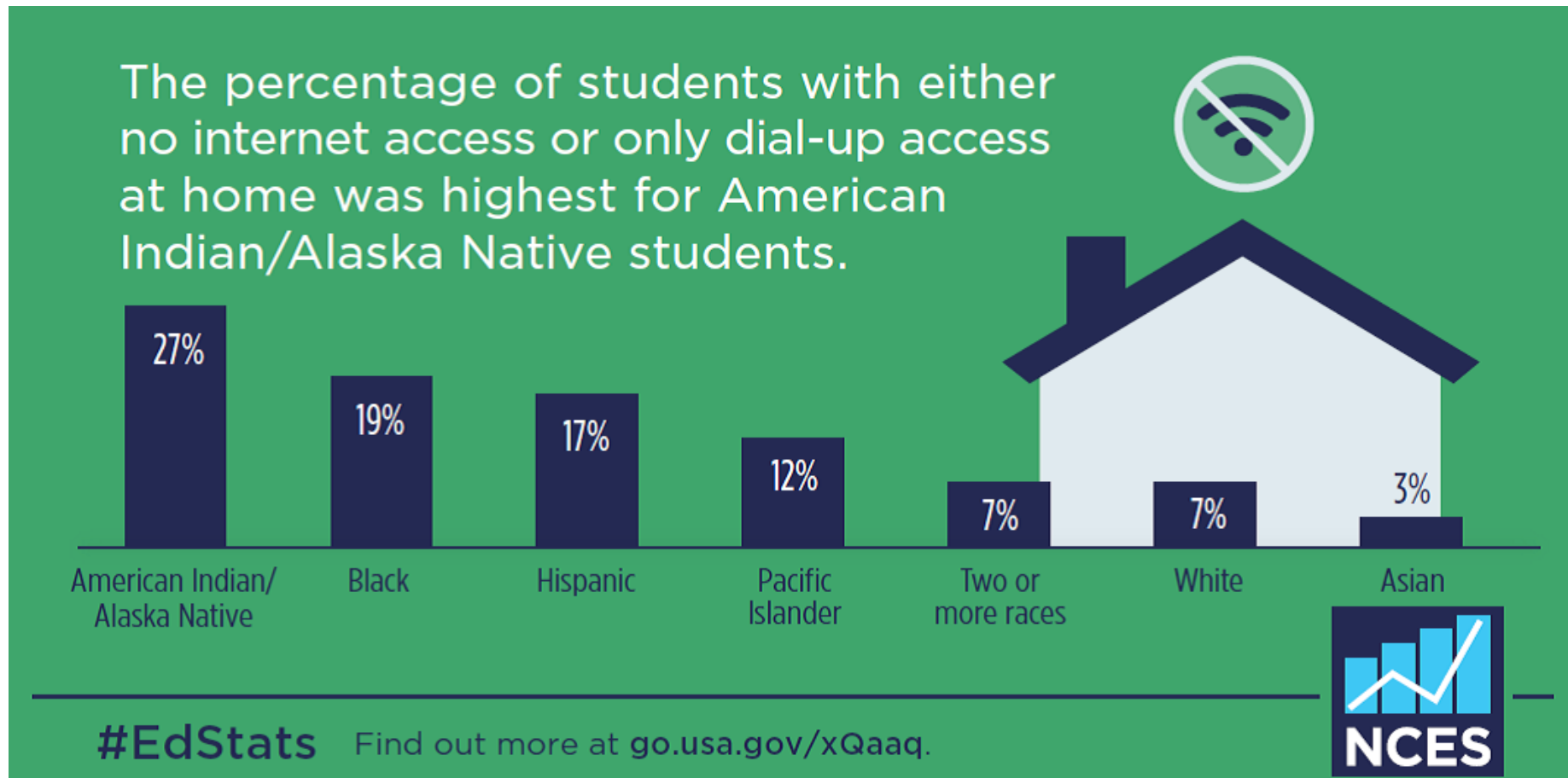
White Hispanic Black

% Killed by Police Unarmed, 2013-2020

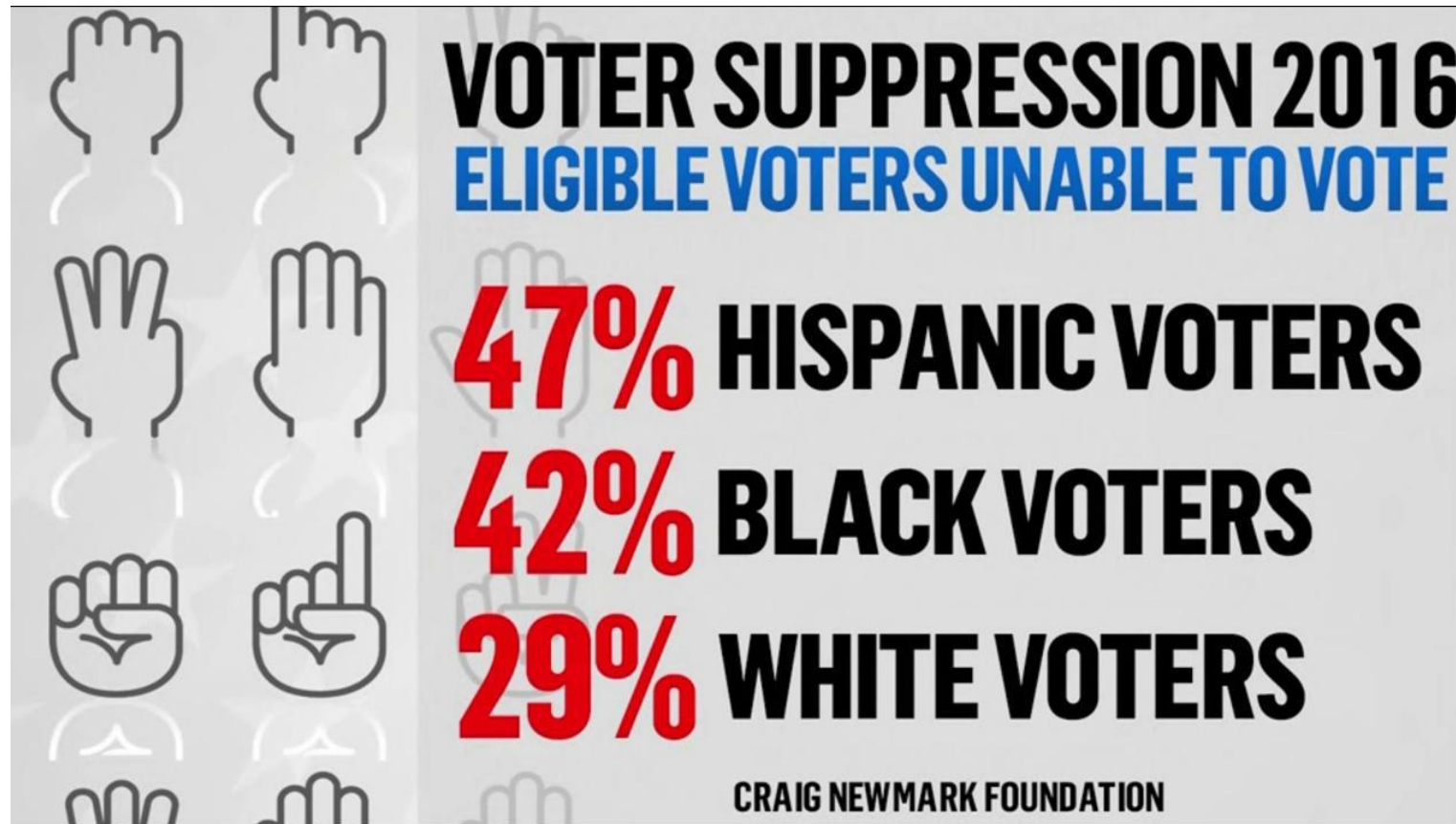
Maternal and Infant Mortality Disparities



Digital Divide & Remote Learning



Voter Suppression



Franciscan Moment: Compassion



franciscanaction.org

VOTER SUPPRESSION IS A THEOLOGICAL ISSUE

Formation of “2020 Souls to the Polls”

All human beings are made in the ‘*Imago Dei*’, the image and likeness of God.

Therefore, any strategy to negate people’s votes because of their skin color is a denial of their ‘Imago Dei’...and is a Theological, Biblical, and Spiritual offense to God.

Protecting the right to vote affirms the divine imprint and inherent value of all God’s people.

Recent intensity of Voter Suppression

In 2013, The Supreme Court voted to diminish voter protections which had been won under the Voting Rights Act of 1965

Voting rights are no longer protected in areas where voting discrimination was most prominent

Since 2018, 33 states have added new voter restrictions

Voter Suppression and What Can We Do About it?

If we are committed to Justice, we must make every effort to protect this most basic of rights for all our sisters and brothers

This effort is rooted in seeing every citizen as made in God's image and likeness

from: "Voter Suppression is a Theological Issue"

Rev. Jim Wallis, Rev. Barbara Williams-Skinner

Sojourners Magazine, May 14, 2020



Common Types of Voter Suppression

Obstacles to Voter Registration

Strict voter identification requirements

Mass purges of voter rolls

Eliminating polling places or moving them to less accessible locations

Cutbacks on early voting/Sunday voting and/or reducing poll hours

Populations impacted: People of color, Native Americans, the elderly, students, people with disabilities

Voter intimidation/harassment at the polls

Gerrymandering (drawing boundaries of congressional districts in a manner that unfairly favors the political party in power)

Voter Registration and Poll Purges

Documents required to prove ID vary widely from state to state

Tight Voter Registration deadlines prior to election

States purge voter polls due to change of address, death, or failure to vote in recent elections and in some instances with inaccurate data

Disenfranchisement

Felony (or in some states a misdemeanor) disqualifies a person to register to vote either during incarceration or **for life** depending upon the state

Black people's voting rights are disproportionately impacted often due to harsher sentences than white people for the same offenses

Some states have enacted **voter restoration** by changing their laws permitting people on probation or parole or who are no longer incarcerated or convicted of certain offenses to vote

Native Americans

Only 66% of Native Americans are registered to vote and some state's election laws make it more difficult to vote:

- Geographic isolation
- Technological barriers and the digital divide
- Lack of pre-election information and outreach
- Homelessness and housing insecurity
- Mailing issues and ballot collection bans
- Population thresholds for polling places
- Absence of Language and in-person voting assistance with vote by mail
- Lack of information about status and inability to correct errors

Additional Impacts

People with Disabilities

In the USA, counties with large minority populations have fewer polling sites and poll workers per voter

Student voter registration restrictions

Mail-in and Absentee Ballot issues

COVID-19 Impact

Franciscan Moment: Morality in Government



franciscanaction.org

Fratelli Tutti – Brothers and Sisters All

We have social, political and economic obligations that flow from the belief that all people are children of God, brothers and sisters to each other.

Chapter 5 – A Better Kind of Politics

- Common and Universal Good
- Development of a global community of fraternity
- Politics that puts human dignity back at the center
- In difficulties, we uphold high principals and think of the common good
- Politicians are called to tend to the needs of individuals and peoples.

Fratelli Tutti

Chapter 6 – Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Dialogue is respectful, strives for consensus, and seeks the truth

Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and finding the common ground – summed up in one word, “dialogue”

A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs

Learn more during Fordham University webinar on Oct. 7, 11am-12pm ET:

<https://news.fordham.edu/event/solidarity-catholicism-and-our-post-pandemic-future-pope-franciss-new-call-for-a-radical-reordering-of-societys-priorities/>

How Can You Promote and Protect Voting Rights?

In 2019, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, renamed the ***John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2020***, was passed in the House of Representatives; It has yet to be presented before the Senate for a vote. (HR4. S.4263).The passage of this Act would return the 1965 Voting Rights Act to its full strength, and even improve upon this crucial law

The ***For the People Act of 2019*** passed by the House of Representatives addresses voter access, election integrity, political spending and ethics for three branches of government, specifically expanding voter registration and voting access and limiting removal of voters from voter rolls and reforming campaign finance law (HR1; still not passed by the Senate)

CONTACT YOUR SENATORS ABOUT THESE BILLS

Ways to Promote Access to the Ballot

Organize parish/community Voter Registration and Get Out the Vote Campaigns

Know your rights about voter registration and voting

- Go to [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) to find voter registration options
- Go to gttp.votinginfo.org to learn where to vote and what is on the ballot
- Learn about accommodations for language and disabilities [eac.gov](https://www.eac.gov)
- Info for voting in each state: <https://www.damemagazine.com/2020-voter-info/>

Additional Resources

- Native American Rights Fund: [narf.org](https://www.narf.org)
- American Civil Liberties Union: [aclu.org](https://www.aclu.org)
- Black Voters Matter Fund: [blackvotersmatterfund.org](https://www.blackvotersmatterfund.org)
- Voto Latino: [votolatino.org](https://www.votolatino.org)

Voting is an act of faith

Discernment – Some resources to consider:

- Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns: <https://maryknollogc.org>
- Interfaith Power and Light: interfaithpowerandlight.org
- Franciscans for Justice www.franciscansforjustice.org
- Leadership Conference of Women Religious www.lcwr.org

Learn about the candidates' viewpoints

- Check local, state, and national candidates' websites
- <https://networkadvocates.org/2020election/scorecard/>

PRAY AND VOTE YOUR CONSCIENCE !!

Questions?

Officiant: The Lord be with you
People: **and with thy spirit.**
Officiant: Let us pray.

A moment of silence is observed

Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges: Guide the people of the United States in the election of officials and representatives; that, by faithful administration and wise laws, the rights of all may be protected and our nation be enabled to fulfill your purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Book of Common Prayer, 882

Thank You!

<https://franciscanaction.org/join-fst/>

<https://www.facebook.com/nycfranciscansolidaritytable>

