

Christopher Columbus Day or
Indigenous People's Day?



You Decide.

**ILLEGAL
IMMIGRATION
BEGAN IN
1492**



**MILE HIGH
SHOWDOWN**
October 24th - October 29th



Enforcing Civil Rights at the Local Level: A Community-Based Approach

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CAMBIO DE COLORES
ST. LOUIS 2017

**CONFRONTING THE NEW
ASSAULT ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

**HOW COMMUNITIES FIGHT
BACK**

AT-RISK

- **Immigration Reform**
- **Health Care**
- **Education**
- **Workers Rights**
- **Voting Rights**
- **Environment**
- **Civil Rights Protections**
- **Criminal Justice Reform**
- **Humanities and the Arts**
- **Research and Science**
- **Electronic Privacy**
- **Social Safety Network**
- **Consumer Protections**
- **Public Lands/Sacred Sites**

RESIST

- **Move On**
- **Indivisible**
- **OFA**
- **CREDO**
- **Daily Kos**
- **Common Dreams**
- **Traditional Civil**

**Rights/Legal Defense
Organizations**

REMEDIES

- **Judicial Review (selective)**
- **Tenth Amendment (States Rights)**
- **Focus on Local Level Elections and Policies**
- **Organizing and Direct Political Action**

QUESTIONS

????????

- **Can our Institutions Save Us?**
- **Will Citizens United Destroy Our Democracy?**
- **Do We Need To Fix The System?**
- **Is It Already Fixed?**
- **Is Civil Disobedience An Option?**

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT



**Achieving change through collective action by
altering the balance of power**

Examples:

**civil rights, labor and anti-war movements,
equal rights for LGBT community**

ISSUES OF DISCRIMINATION

- Denial of Rights for immigrants and Indigenous Peoples
- Culture and Language Discrimination
- Employment Discrimination
- Access to Equal Education
- Access to Health Care (including mental health)
- Disability Rights
- Public Accommodations
- Housing Discrimination
- Environmental Justice
- Economic and Consumer Discrimination, including lending practices
- Denial of Voting Rights
- Racial Profiling/ Law Enforcement and Justice System
- Gender and Sexual Orientation/ Hate Crimes/Religious Discrimination
- Violence Against Women

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

- **Identify the Problem(s)**
- **Define realistic and achievable goals**
- **Develop concise, coherent, and positive message**
- **Do your research, know your facts-become an expert**
- **Collaborate and partner with other organizations**
- **Build Coalitions/be inclusive**
- **Use existing good will; expect positive response**
- **Build leadership, community support and broad-based constituency**
- **Engage elected officials and institutional leaders**
- **Sponsor public forums and participate in legislative and political process**
- **Bring public pressure – be persistent**

USE EXISTING LAWS

- **Freedom of Information Act/Open Records/Open Meetings/Government in Sunshine**
- **Civil Rights statutes**
- **Conditions and requirements governing grants/contracts**
- **Study available information: budgets, proposals, policies, reports and other documents**
- **Conduct community-based compliance reviews**
- **Make institutions play by their own rules**
- **File substantive complaints of discrimination**
- **Use congressional, legal and advocacy resources to increase clout**
- **Testify at legislative hearings – engage oversight committees**
- **Participate in regulatory rule-making process**

SOME CAUTIONS

- **Never rely on one approach/ be flexible**
- **Accommodation and compromise are often necessary**
- **Work within the parameters of what is possible within your community...but always try to push to expand those boundaries**
- **Don't alienate your allies**
- **Do not let single issue politics fracture coalitions**
- **Be reasonable in demands and expectations**
- **Avoid Anger – Maintain Civility**
- **Seek success - not martyrdom**

Qualities of Effective Organizations

Authenticity
Advocacy
Credibility
Visibility
Constituency
Clout



CREATE A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (Governmental or Private)

- **Select broad cross-section of community leaders**
- **Provide guidance/ help people navigate the bureaucratic maze and access the system**
- **Serve as public advocate**
- **Provide public forums for airing of issues; conduct fact-finding, research and surveys**
- **Provide mediation, conciliation, conflict resolution**
- **Set up Crisis Intervention Teams**
- **Advise elected officials on Human Rights Issues**

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS



- Traditional: newspapers/radio/television
- News releases/press conferences/letters to editor/editorial boards
- Social Media: Face Book, Twitter, Instagram etc.
- Websites/email blasts/blogs/YouTube
- Webinars
- Conferences, other public events
- **BE DISCIPLINED AND STAY ON MESSAGE**

FEDERAL VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The most effective civil rights law ever enacted

- **Section 2: Nationwide prohibition against voting practices that discriminate; prohibits both intentional discrimination and practices that are shown to have a racially discriminatory impact**
- **Sections 4 and 5: Pre Clearance Requirements (suspended by U.S. Supreme Court)**
- **All jurisdictions must assist disabled voters**
- **Other provisions require certain jurisdictions to provide bilingual materials and other assistance to language minority voters**



WHAT TO DO?



- Examine election structures and voting systems
- Do they discriminate or dilute minority voting?
- Is there evidence of racially-polarized voting?
- Challenge at-large election systems
- Identify, Nurture and Support Minorities and women for Public Office
- Take Direct Political Action
 - Encourage citizens to register and VOTE!



Voter Suppression

5+ million eligible voters may not be allowed to vote

- Requirement for government-issued photo I.D.
- Closure of state DMV offices
- Requirement for Proof of Citizenship
- Purges of Voter Registration rolls
- Restrictive rules for voter registration drives
- Shortening early voting periods
- Restrictive Rules for Student Voting
- Disenfranchisement of ex-felons
- Disinformation about voting process
- Reduction of polling places

VOTER EXPANSION

- Automatic Voter Registration
- On-Line voter Registration
- Vote by Mail
- Voting Rights Restoration

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