LEsson fouR: VOTEr SUPPRESSION

Level: High School

Purpose: Many states have recently passed or revised their voting laws. These laws have been met with support by those that feel they prevent voter fraud. Others view these laws as new forms of voter suppression. This lesson asks students to analyze a political cartoon that highlights the topic of voter suppression and voter fraud, consider multiple perspectives, and form their own opinion on the issue.

A handout-ready version of the cartoon is available below as well as an online version in the PowerPoint presentation that accompanies this lesson at www.lawday.org
Objectives:

Students will:

• Analyze the use of images and words within a political cartoon to determine the intended message for the audience.


• Consider the cartoonist’s intentions for including historical references within cartoon.

• Examine the inferences made by the cartoonist on new voting laws and their relationship to voter fraud.

Grades: High School

Duration: 60–minute class period

Materials:

Computer and projector to display Analyzing Political Cartoon PowerPoint at www.lawday.org

Procedure:

Project or distribute copies of the cartoon to students. Ask students to describe what they see in the cartoon. Note to teacher/lawyer in the classroom: Depending on the students’ background, an explanation that this is a political cartoon, which is meant to convey an idea rather than provide humor or amusement, might be appropriate.

After students have had a few minutes to describe the literal images that they see, move on to the following questions.
Ask students:

What is the first thing that grabs your attention when you look at this cartoon? Why?

Where does it take place? What is the significance of this setting?

What was the March on Washington?

Describe what you see in the political cartoon.

Once students have had an opportunity to share their thoughts on the March on Washington, share the following background information with them (included in PowerPoint at www.lawday.org).

**Historical Background on the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom**

On August 28, 1963, more than 200,000 people came to Washington, D.C., from across the country to highlight the civil rights struggles of African Americans and to call for a passage of the Civil Rights Act in Congress. The march culminated on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial with Martin Luther King Jr. delivering his now famous “I Have a Dream” speech as he looked out at the crowds surrounding the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool.

What are the objects that the reflecting pool is filled with? What are they supposed to represent?

What do the objects in the reflecting pool represent?

If you were to change the labels on the obstacles to reflect the voting laws in 1963, what would you include? Note to lawyer/teacher in the classroom. If students need additional information share the PowerPoint slide on voting rights in 1963.

How has voting changed for people in our country since 1963?

Why do you think the March on Washington was a focal point for this cartoon?

What point do you think the cartoonist is trying to make?

Can you write a caption for the cartoon that you think best expresses its message?
WOMAN SUFFRAGE
HEADQUARTERS.
MEN OF OHIO!
GIVE THE WOMEN A SQUARE DEAL
Vote For Amendment No. 23 On September 3-1912.

COME IN AND LEARN
WHY WOMEN
ought to Vote.