

“It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority.”

– Benjamin Franklin

The very founding of our nation—The Declaration of Independence—was an act of protest, and so, of course, was the war that followed it. As the founders got busy creating an architecture for our democracy, they enshrined protest in the very first amendment to the constitution. That amendment guarantees a handful of rights that are fundamentally about lifting your voice in a public way to help make our democracy more perfect—the rights to free speech, peaceable assembly, and to petition the government about how it can do better. Protest is believing our nation can improve and become a better, more just place. Today let’s take a closer look at protest as an act of patriotism.

Choose One of Today's Challenges

#1: Protests have been an essential part of democracy since the beginning.

- Read one of these two op-eds from *The New York Times* on how [the Boston Tea Party was actually a riot](#) and why [protesting is patriotic](#).
- [Watch this short video](#) (2 min) about why protests matter.

- [Review a timeline of protests that have taken place in Washington DC going back to 1894.](#)

#2: Young people have been leading protests long before #NeverAgain became a hashtag.

- [Take a look at this interactive timeline](#) documenting American youth movements as far back as 1903. How many of these do we learn about in history class?
- [Read about Diane Nash](#) who was one of the founders of SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee)

#3: In the 1980s a different kind of community art project helped reflect the tremendous human cost of the AIDS epidemic.

- [Watch this short \(5 min\) video](#) to learn about the AIDS Quilt from its creator Cleve Jones.

#4: Whether it's in galleries, on the street, or on your playlist, artists have a way of demanding we pay attention.

- Watch a [History of protest songs](#) (7 min). Then help make a protest playlist, by sending your favorite protest song to fivedays@cityclub.org
- [Watch this short TEDx talk](#) (4 min) by Dread Scott, an artist who made the American flag the focal point of an art installation.

#5: When we talk about civil rights, some Americans automatically think of the 1960s. But there's no denying that civil rights movement continues today in the lifelong work of leaders like John Lewis and the symbolic solidarity of emerging leaders like Colin Kaepernick.

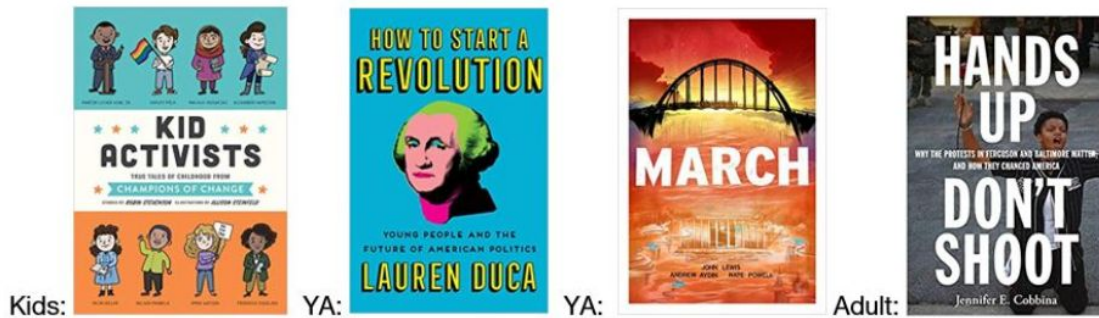
- [Listen to John Lewis'](#) speech (4 min) on the importance of getting into "good trouble."
- [Watch a Nightline story \(12 min\) about how Kaepernick went from athlete to activist.](#)

Want to do more?

- Planning a protest or planning to join one? [Be sure to know your rights.](#)
- [Check out a local art installation *Protest*](#) by Olalekan "Lek" Jeyifous at the Langston Hughes Branch of the Cleveland Public Library, 10200 Superior Ave.
- [Check out these ideas](#) for ways to encourage kids to protest safely from home.
- Visit the [Kent State University digital archive](#) to explore the legacy of the Kent State Shooting that took place on May 4th, 1970.

Recommended Reading

Here are few books you might like. For more, check out our 5 Days for Democracy [collection](#).



Related City Club Forums

Below you'll find a curated list of past City Club forums that touch on today's theme. For more, check out a more [extensive selection from our archives](#).

[Cesar Chavez](#): Founder of United Farm Workers on Workers' Rights

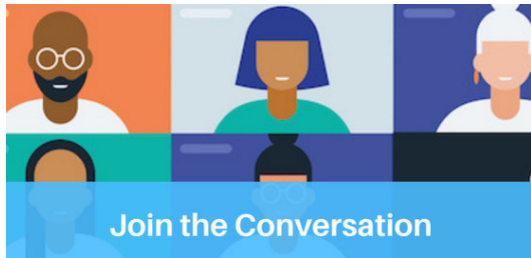
[Dorf Backderf](#): Cartoonist on his graphic novel Four Dead In Ohio

[Mary Beth Tinker](#): Plaintiff, 1969 Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District Supreme Court Case on Free Speech

[Wesley Lowery](#): Pulitzer Prize-Winning Journalist and Shaker Heights Grad on Racial Justice

We Want to Hear From You

Share your reflections about today's challenges on social media using **#5days4democracy**. **Send ideas** about what you would like to challenge people to learn about today's topic to fivedays@cityclub.org. **Join the 5 Days for Democracy Common Ground conversation** on Saturday, October 3 to connect with participants and continue the discussion.



Five Days for Democracy is a collaboration between The City Club of Cleveland, [Cleveland Public Library](#), [Cuyahoga County Public Library](#), [East Cleveland Public Library](#), [Euclid Public Library](#), [Heights Libraries](#), [Lakewood Public Library](#), [Rocky River Public Library](#), [Shaker Heights Public Library](#) and [Westlake Porter Public Library](#).

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