**HOST A FREE PUBLIC CONVERSATION**

**At Your School, College, Community or Organization**

**There are few subjects more crucial and timely these days than U.S. voter suppression in its many forms and the need for fair elections.** I offer virtual and in-person informed, non-partisan “conversations” (presentations with Q and A) on this issue — including its remedies.

A LIVING CASE STUDY IN VOTER SUPPRESSION

In 1965, immediately following passage of the Voting Rights Act, I served as a student photographer for various civil rights organizations and traveled with a group of Northern college students in an effort to help register Black voters in Walthall County, Mississippi. It was called Mississippi Freedom Christmas. The Act was highly successful in helping put an end to disenfranchisement of African Americans and people of color. In 2013 a key provision the Voting Rights Act was struck down, opening the floodgates to an even larger number of suppressive laws that now affect millions more Americans.

In early 2020, I came full circle, returning to the same county in Mississippi to see what had changed for Mississippi voters in 55 years. I made photographs and did interviews with voting rights elders and activists, county elders and others who shed light on present day voting rights and voter suppression challenges in their state. Mississippi is but one representative example, a case study of voting problems still facing many eligible voters nationwide.

Out of that backdrop *Does My Voice Count* was born. I began to realize that, in addition to offering a glimpse into the history of the struggle for civil and voting rights, *Does My Voice Count* serves as a public springboard for discussion about the present realities of voter suppression and the actual future of democracy.

PUBLIC CONVERSATIONS

***Does My Voice Count: Voter Suppression Then and Now*** is a free presentation that has been shared with diverse audiences in several states for about three years. I show the Mississippi photographs from 1965 and 2020 followed by a conversation about voter suppression before the Act and new nationwide challenges now, 55 years later.

Using personal stories and pictures, *Does My Voice Count* presentations stimulate passionate interest and discussions in schools, colleges and with the general public. These presentations are informative and fresh for students of nearly all ages. At every event I gently issue a call to action and make available printed discussions with resources, (*free downloads: THEN AND NOW and TAKE ACTION*).

I present neither official Republican or Democratic Party views — just *human* views. More than a political issue, voter suppression is a moral and ethical issue. I am not an expert in the field of voter law or history, but simply the voice of one person drawn by simple respect for basic human dignity and the need to help correct social injustices that are ever-present today.

Since these times require physical distancing, I am presently holding mainly virtual public conversations for schools, libraries and other venues anywhere. Presentations are free to all.

These events include:

**• a slide show and personal narrative of compelling photographs from 1965 Mississippi Freedom Christmas and present 2020 voting challenges**

**• an exploration of the strategies of voter suppression that have been implemented since the rollback of the Voting Rights Act in 2013**

**• an exploration of the motives of the many millions of Americans who *can* vote, but don’t**

**• sharing of relevant resources for action to oppose voter suppression: organizations, books, films, etc.**

SET UP A CONVERSATION

**Questions?** Contact me about setting up a time for an event. Presentations are adaptable and can easily fit the time requirements of any interested group —from a single class period or assembly up to two hours or more for large groups. I am glad to provide good quality historical images for publicity and flyer PDFs.

In addition, inquire about opportunities to mount an exhibit of these photos in educational settings and galleries, museums and other public spaces (*view them: GALLERY*).

Do you know of other persons or venues that might be interested in learning about voter suppression? Please forward this information to them.

Jim Lemkin, ND

[Contact Jim](https://doesmyvoicecount.org/contact-us/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self)