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We The People

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### Unit 3, Question 3

In the Constitution's Preamble, the Framers imply the concepts of consent of the governed and popular sovereignty. "We the People of the United States..." shows that the people chose to establish the government. The Preamble indicates that the people have the right to change and choose the kind of government. Voting is how people decide the changes and it allows them to choose who to represent them and their agenda.

Representative government is based on a natural rights principle that the people have a say on who governs them. Natural rights theorists believe government derives authority through people's agreement and have to reflect the needs of the society. Early state constitutions included the concept of social contract in their constitutions to show that their government protects their citizen's natural rights. They also echoed popular sovereignty which allowed the people to delegate authority to the government in order for it to govern in accordance with constitutional requirements. Because of these principles, all state governments included representation and the right to vote, letting officials be elected by qualified voters.

During the Constitutional Convention, the Virginia plan was proposed and stated the House should be based on the number of people it represents. The reason Madison and others supported this plan was because they believed people should have equal voting power with a

government acts on and represents them. Article 2, Section 2 of the Constitution stated “The House of Representatives shall be composed of members... chosen by the People of the states,” implying that the states can establish who can vote and how. Article two supports the principles of popular sovereignty and thus, makes voting an implied right.

Voting has been on a slow decline in the last few decades. However, 93% of Americans believe that periodic elections make the government pay attention to the people’s needs showing that majority of Americans still believe in popular sovereignty. In the 2008 general election, 61% of the population voted. But for Congressional elections in between, there are significantly less voters, about 40% percent. Our turnout is significantly lower than other countries. Australia has a 95% voter turnout and Austria, Belgium and Italy’s are in the 90%s. Americans have higher confidence in their government compared to European counterparts but our voter turnout is still lower.

There have been many suggestions on how to increase voting in Americans. One example would be starting government classes at a younger age. Introducing how the government works and other topics will foster political development and give the newer generation interest in the long run. Another way to increase voter participation is by making it easier for people to get to the stands. Strategies may differ from state to state. In a state like Nevada, we can open 24 hour voting booths. We can increase voting convenience further by making election days national holidays.

Voting is an important right that Americans have started to take for granted. Generations of people struggle for this right, a right that plays a part in how we are represented, a right that lets people choose who they want making decisions that could affect them and the community.

Voting gives the people the power to ultimately choose the direction they want our country to go.

We, the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union should participate in our government, because it is created for and by us, for our life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.