
10 Ways the United States Violates the OAS Democratic Charter

01/06/2016



In light of the head of the Organization of American States' [invoking of the Democratic Charter](#) against Venezuela, teleSUR examines the ways in which another member state—the United States—has violated at least 10 of the charter's 28 articles. Ironically, the United States is one of the main drafters of the charter and chief funders of the organization, which is based in Washington, DC.

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Article 2

"The effective exercise of **representative democracy** is the basis for the rule of law and of the constitutional regimes of the member states of the Organization of American States. Representative democracy is strengthened and deepened by permanent, ethical, and responsible participation of the citizenry within a legal framework conforming to the respective constitutional order."

The form of representative democracy that the United States practices has little representative about it. Bernie Sanders' campaign has been the most recent example of how an underdog, no matter how popular he becomes, is still at a significant disadvantage because of the way the tables are turned from the beginning.

READ: [Super PAC Battles Undemocratic Superdelegate System on Sanders' Behalf](#)

Article 4

"**Transparency** in government activities, probity, responsible public administration on the part of governments, respect for social rights, and freedom of expression and of the press are essential components of the exercise of democracy."

The constitutional subordination of all state institutions to the legally constituted civilian authority and respect for the rule of law on the part of all institutions and sectors of society are equally essential to democracy."

Heralding transparency around the world, the United States decides to hide vital documents when convenient, often under the excuse of protecting national security. Guantanamo and the NSA leaks are only the most high-profile examples.

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Article 5

"The strengthening of political parties and other political organizations is a priority for democracy. Special attention will be paid to the problems associated with the high cost of election campaigns and the establishment of a **balanced and transparent system for their financing.**"

Campaign finance reform has notoriously allowed large corporations to fund candidates without check. Candidates supporting corporate interests, then, are at a critical advantage when it comes to resources.

READ: [Money and the 2016 US Presidential Elections: The \\$10 Billion Contest](#)

Article 9

"The elimination of all forms of **discrimination**, especially gender, ethnic and race discrimination, as well as diverse forms of intolerance, the promotion and protection of human rights of indigenous peoples and migrants, and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in the Americas contribute to strengthening democracy and citizen participation."

The United States is not post-racist. The continual shootings of Black people and the impunity of the guilty cops is only one example of innumerable to count.

READ: [Black Lives Matter and 21st Century Abolition](#)

Article 10

"The promotion and strengthening of democracy requires the full and effective exercise of workers' rights and the application of **core labor standards**, as recognized in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and its Follow-up, adopted in 1998, as well as other related fundamental ILO conventions. Democracy is strengthened by improving standards in the workplace and enhancing the quality of life for workers in the Hemisphere."

The state of labor rights and protections are among the weakest in the United States, with unions only recently making a comeback with the popular Fight for 15 campaign. Free trade agreements and deregulation are only two ways in which the government has clearly taken the side of multinationals, which have blossomed over the past decades.

READ: [The Fight Against TPP Proves US Is Not a Corporatocracy](#)

WATCH: [Lola Smallwood-Cuevas w Domestic Workers United: Race, Gender & Work](#)

Article 11

"Democracy and **social and economic development** are interdependent and are mutually reinforcing."

Inequality is the new buzzword in the United States, because it is so stark. Multiple studies show that this level of income inequality is bad for democracy — and we are already seeing the country suffer from it, seen in the popularity of the Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump campaigns.

READ: [US: Income Inequality Divides the Country](#)

WATCH: [John Schmitt discusses income inequality in the U.S.](#)

Article 12

"Poverty, illiteracy, and low levels of human development are factors that adversely affect the consolidation of democracy. The OAS member states are committed to adopting and implementing all those actions required to generate productive employment, reduce poverty, and **eradicate extreme poverty**, taking into account the different economic realities and conditions of the countries of the Hemisphere. This shared commitment regarding the problems associated with development and poverty also underscores the importance of maintaining macroeconomic equilibria and the obligation to strengthen social cohesion and democracy."

It's a myth that the United States is rich. Some are rich, but more and more people are getting poorer. The financial crisis of 2008 also unproportionately affected communities of color, whose recovery has not been as quick as that of white middle class.

READ: [Everyone in the United States Is Getting Poorer, Says New Study](#)

Article 15

"The exercise of democracy promotes the preservation and good stewardship of the **environment**. It is essential that the states of the Hemisphere implement policies and strategies to protect the environment, including application of various treaties and conventions, to achieve sustainable development for the benefit of future generations."

While President Barack Obama promised significant moves to slow down the pace of climate change, activists are not impressed. Despite the signing of a major climate change deal agreed to in Paris, goals are low and can easily be toyed around with to keep destructive companies reaping in profits while polluting unabated.

READ: [Court Victory for Coal Threatens US Promises on Climate Change](#)

WATCH: [U.S. Lobbying COP21 to Not Include Climate Justice Clause](#)

Article 16

"**Education** is key to strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the development of human potential, and alleviating poverty and fostering greater understanding among our peoples. To achieve these ends, it is essential that a quality education be available to all, including girls and women, rural inhabitants, and minorities."

Education is increasingly privatized and corporatized in the United States, with billionaires leading reform and monopolizing the debate. Meanwhile, university education is at unaffordable highs, and students are finding it impossible to swim their way out of oceans of debt.

READ: [Student Loan Debt in US Tops \\$1.3 Trillion](#)

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Article 28

"States shall promote the **full and equal participation of women** in the political structures of their countries as a fundamental element in the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture."

Women's equality is far from here. Despite strong feminist movements in the United States, women still struggle when it comes to wage equality and gender-based violence, to name the most high-profile fights. Political participation also pales in comparison to other countries, as seen with the excitement behind Hillary Clinton's campaign. Of course, white women tend to do better than women of color when it comes to achieving full equality.

READ: [The Gender-Wage Gap is Holding US Women Back](#)
