

# OUR DEMOCRACY

## |Memphis|

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What does democracy look like?
- How have local communities and groups created their own “democracies,” where state and federal democracy have failed them?

**These materials have been created by educator and multimedia producer  
Lorraine A. Ustaris in partnership with the Pulitzer Center and Our Democracy**

# Participate in a Discussion about Democracy

Andrea Bruce and Lifeline members discussed democracy, community and the necessity for socio-cultural change. Watch their conversation and prepare for our own discussion.



# **Video Samples + Teaching Objectives**

Some of the generalized teaching and learning objectives you'll see in these videos are...

**Viewers and students will be able to interact with video to:**

- **Learn more about a character's story**
- **Make inferences about everyday democracy**
- **Listen and respond to local opinions about democracy**
- **Make text-to-text connections about democracy**

# Video Samples: Learning More about a Character's

## Story FALLON

Eight years ago, Fallon says she was in the “wrong place at the wrong time” and spent a year in a Memphis jail entangled in a crime investigation.

Now 29 years old, she struggles to support her three children and reconcile her past mistakes with herself and her community.

Watch these videos to learn more about her story and the support she receives at Lifeline.



### Guided Viewing Questions:

1. What are your initial feelings and reactions?
2. What do these videos reveal about Fallon's story?
  - What is her everyday life like?
  - What is her incarceration story?
  - What injustices has she suffered?
3. What does Lifeline give her that she wouldn't otherwise receive?
4. What additional questions do you have about Fallon's story?

# Video Samples: Making Inferences about Everyday Democracy



Lifeline member **Jim** (age 17) and his girlfriend **Jonsina** (age 19) are members of the Piru Street Family, a gang affiliated with the Bloods. In this clip, they describe gang life and compare Lifeline's Pastor John with their Piru leader, Big Homie.



**Fallon** explains why she believes Mr. Brown is “for the people.”

## Viewing Questions

1. What are advantages and disadvantages of gang life, according to Jonsina and Jim?
2. What might Fallon mean when she says Pastor Brown and Lifeline are “for the people?”
3. How might Fallon, Jim and Jonsina be benefiting from a sort of “democracy” within Lifeline and Piru? Identify some of the “democratic” benefits they are receiving from these groups, respectively.
4. Fallon begins to discuss the concept of “authority” and the role an authority figure might have within a system that is “for the people”. Democracies can be structured a number of ways. Discuss the differences between representative democracies and “true democracies.” Do you think democracies need to have leaders and presidents? According to Jim, Jonsina and Fallon what makes a good leader?

# Video Samples:

## Listening and Responding to Local Opinions about Democracy



According to William,  
democracy is a fallacy.



William asks: Why does the  
American government bite the  
hand that feeds it?



In this video, William discusses  
why self improvement and  
community building were delayed  
in Black America.



A digital solution for  
democracy--William's tax app.

## Video Sample: Making text-to-text Connections about Democracy



William says,  
“Music was my introduction  
to politics.” Watch these  
videos and prepare to draw  
connections between  
William’s, Tupac’s and  
Tocqueville’s beliefs about  
democracy in America.