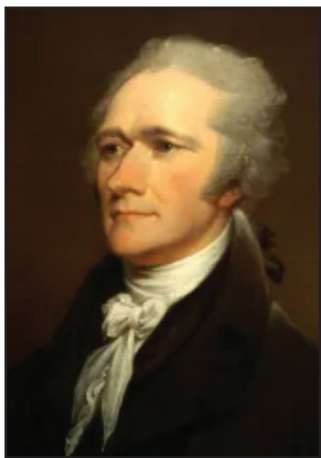


“... A share in the sovereignty of the state, which is exercised by the citizens at large, in voting at elections is one of the most important rights ...”



Source: National Portrait Gallery

Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the Treasury under President George Washington, from a letter written in April 1784

The ideas of representative and self-government were so vital to our colonial forefathers that they helped fuel the American Revolution. However, once our independence was won, enfranchisement was not granted to all.

In establishing our democratic republic, Article I of the Constitution gave states the responsibility of overseeing state and federal elections. And at the time of its ratification, this meant that many people — including almost all women, African Americans, Native Americans and white men without property — could not vote.

Since that time, individuals and groups have spoken up, fought for and won their right to vote. In this way, we the people ensure that our government continues to become a more perfect union.

Hamilton wrote many pamphlets advocating for revolution and colonist’s rights.

Look through the news for modern examples of people speaking up for the rights, justice, and dignity of others. Are any in the form of a news editorial or a letter to the editor?

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