Whereas, Democracy is most commonly defined as a system of government wherein the people exercise power either directly or indirectly through representatives who are periodically chosen in free and fair elections; and

Whereas, A 2019 study published in The Lancet found that “when enforced by free and fair elections, democracies are more likely than autocracies to lead to health gains for causes of mortality (e.g., cardiovascular diseases and transport injuries) that have not been heavily targeted by foreign aid and require health-care delivery”; and

Whereas, Multiple studies have shown a clear positive correlation between electoral integrity in democracies and improvements in indicators of population health, including infant mortality, mortality from cardiovascular disease and other communicable diseases, and tuberculosis; and

Whereas, A recent study including data from 168 countries from 1960 through 2010 found a positive association between democracy and life expectancy that remained even after controlling for potential confounders like gross domestic product (GDP) per capita; and

Whereas, An analysis of the shift to electronic voting in Brazil, which disproportionately enabled the poor and less well-educated to participate in elections, showed the change led to increases in health spending that increased utilization of prenatal care and decreased the number of children being born at low weight, suggesting that increasing access to meaningful elections can improve population health; and

Whereas, A 2018 analysis comparing different Indian states across core attributes of democracy showed that having higher voter turnout and more political parties were both significantly associated with reductions in infant mortality; and

Whereas, One study showed that the presence of competitive elections in autocracies was associated with better life expectancy and rates of infant mortality as compared to autocracies without competitive elections; and

Whereas, Studies have shown that democracies may enhance the beneficial effects of various societal transformations, including trade liberalization and foreign aid, on population health; and

Whereas, Studies have shown that democracies may suppress the harmful effects of a variety of negative economic indicators and disasters, including storms, floods, droughts, and other environmental disruptions, extreme price volatility, and excessive mining and mineral extraction, on overall population health; and
Whereas, An August 2021 analysis of 170 countries over the time period from 1990 to 2019 published in *Health Affairs* indicated that democratic quality and universal health coverage have a statistically significant positive association, with free and fair elections identified as having the strongest association with higher universal health coverage\(^{21}\); and

Whereas, A 2020 *BMJ* study of 17 countries found that decreases in democratic traits, including free and fair elections, freedom of expression, freedom of civil and political association, between 2000 and 2010 were associated with lower life expectancy, reduced progress toward universal health coverage, and increased out-of-pocket spending on healthcare\(^{22}\); and

Whereas, The annual Freedom House reports, which rate the political and civil rights of countries around the globe, have tracked a steady decline in multiple dimensions of democracy in the United States from 2010 to 2020\(^{23-25}\); and

Whereas, From November 2020 to January 2021, multiple key government officials attempted to subvert the results of the 2020 presidential election through a variety of mechanisms\(^{26-30}\); and

Whereas, During the counting of electoral votes on January 6-7, 2021, hundreds of Representatives and Senators in Congress voted to reject electoral votes from key states in an attempt which, if it had been successful, would have overturned the results of the 2020 presidential election\(^{31-33}\); and

Whereas, Multiple state legislatures have since passed laws that provide unprecedented control over state and local elections and could permit those legislatures to subvert election results\(^{34-37}\); and

Whereas, These antidemocratic trends in the United States directly threaten the ability of physicians and their patients to make their voices heard, thereby depriving them of a key avenue to maximize their health and well-being; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association unequivocally support the democratic process, wherein representatives are regularly chosen through free and fair elections, as essential for maximizing the health and well-being of all Americans (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA strongly oppose attempts to subvert the democratic process (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA assert that every candidate for political office and every officeholder in the public trust must support the democratic process and never take steps or support steps by others to subvert it. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 05/11/22

References:


**RELEVANT AMA POLICY**

**Political Action Committees and Contributions G-640.020**

Our AMA: (1) Believes that better-informed and more active citizens will result in better legislators, better government, and better health care;

(2) Encourages AMA members to participate personally in the campaign of their choice and strongly supports physician/family leadership in the campaign process;

(3) Opposes legislative initiatives that improperly limit individual and collective participation in the democratic process;

(4) Supports AMPAC’s policy to adhere to a no Rigid Litmus Test policy in its assessment and support of political candidates;

(5) Encourages AMPAC to continue to consider the legislative agenda of our AMA and the recommendations of state medical PACs in its decisions;

(6) Urges members of the House to reaffirm their commitment to the growth of AMPAC and the state medical PACs;

(7) Will continue to work through its constituent societies to achieve a 100 percent rate of contribution to AMPAC by members; and

(8) Calls upon all candidates for public office to refuse contributions from tobacco companies and their subsidiaries.


**Endorsements for Public Office G-605.035**

Our AMA requires that all of its endorsements of nominations of appointed officials for public office be considered and voted upon by our Board of Trustees prior to any public pronouncements of support.