Civility & Politics

Analyzing a Political Cartoon

Participants will analyze a political cartoon, discuss its meaning and have a conversation on the relationship between politics and civility in American society.

Refer participants to the cartoon above
What do you see in the cartoon?

Possible response: The word politics on a wrecking ball attached to a crane bulldozing the large structure spelling out the word civility.

Ask participants
Why do you think the cartoonist chose to represent civility in stone or concrete?

Possible responses: It resembles a monument which could represent the history and importance of civility and its long standing relationship to our democratic society. It could also be seen as old or outdated and in need of being redefined or remodeled.

What do you think of when you hear the word civility?
Possible response: having or showing respect

What is the relationship between politics and civility depicted in this cartoon?
Possible response: Civility is being torn down by politics.
Do you think that politics have become more uncivil? If so, why?

Possible responses:

Yes, politics have become more polarized, compromise is viewed as weak, more targeted media outlets allows for the public to choose information tailored to their views so there is also less moderate views in voting electorate.

No, there has been incivility in politics throughout American history media coverage and social media has sensationalized this.

How might people in society change or influence politics to become more civil?