

# Rep. Hebl: The preciousness of Democracy

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The escalation of war against Ukraine by Russia brings a stark reality to the forefront: how truly precious democracy is. Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine shows the dangers of autocratic rule. One man, in a deranged pursuit of evermore power, is causing immeasurable death and destruction to satisfy his own ego.

In Russia, the only ones who wield any power right now are billionaire oligarchs. Elections are a sham, a show put on to pretend as if democracy is alive in Putin's Russia. The lack of accountability makes it much easier for a strongman to do whatever he wants, which has led to the Russian attack on Georgia, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and now the invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine puts the spotlight on anti-democratic measures in the United States. Democracy is not a spectator sport. To live freely, we must ensure that the people have a voice. We can no longer accept anti-democratic actions and allow authoritarianism to creep into our politics. Measures making it harder to vote, laws that lock one party or another into majorities no matter which way the political winds blow, and lack of accountability for powerful people are a threat to democracy and the American way of life.

Unfortunately, both everyday Russians and Ukrainians are now seeing the effects of Russia's backslide into authoritarianism and oligarchy. The utter abandonment of anything resembling democracy has led to death, destruction, and has completely altered the lives of untold people.

At home and abroad, we have seen lately how precious democracy is. It is not something we can take for granted. It must be fought for every day. Ukrainians are bravely fighting for democracy in the streets. As Americans, we are lucky that we do

not face such an imminent threat. Nevertheless, we must fight to protect our democracy.

It starts with you. Have your voice heard at a local board meeting. Attend any listening sessions a state representative, state senator, or Congressperson might have. Keep yourself informed. And, perhaps most importantly, vote. To check your voter registration, register to vote, or see what's coming up on your ballot, visit [myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov). Use your voice. It's the best weapon we have in saving democracy.