



P.O.V.

Discussion Guide

# Chisholm '72

## Unbought & Unbossed

A Film by Shola Lynch

Season

# 17



[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)



## Letter from the Filmmaker

NEW YORK, 2005

### Dear Colleague,

I got to know Shirley Chisholm through the making of *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed*. What I discovered is that Chisholm was not a great woman. She was an ordinary woman, who exercised the extraordinary in her by taking great risks. She started her professional life as a school teacher, who volunteered at the local Democratic Club and evolved through the years into a politician. She saw things in her community that she wanted addressed. Instead of complaining, she tried to do something about it. That attitude took her on many journeys throughout her life, including a run for the Democratic nomination for president.

While this documentary is about her bid, the main question I had was: why did she do it? I originally thought that her run was largely symbolic. Chisholm said so herself, “I ran for president, despite hopeless odds, to demonstrate the sheer will and refusal to accept the status quo.” She wanted to do this by drawing new voters into the political system. But there were also circumstances in 1972 that made this possible. Rather than a strong Democratic candidate leading the pack, Chisholm was one of thirteen Democrats who threw their hats, or as newscaster Walter Cronkite announced when Chisholm entered the race, “her bonnet,” into the presidential ring. Due to the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s, more African Americans were finding their voices in electoral politics. The newly implemented Twenty-Sixth Amendment, which changed the voting age from 21 to 18, was also going to infuse the political process with a predicted 10 million first time voters.

I began to see that behind her symbolic exercise was a political strategy with Vegas style odds. Mrs. Chisholm gambled that if she ran in enough primaries she would go to the Democratic National Convention with delegates and political leverage. Mrs. Chisholm ran in just over half of the 21 primaries held in 1972. She won 3%, 5%, and as much as 9% of the votes in those races, winning delegates. As Chisholm explained to some of her campaign workers, “Well, even if I am not able to achieve the nomination, to [the] extent that I go to that convention with delegate strength, delegate strength. Because that’s the name of the game. You can go to the convention, you can yell, ‘Woman power here I come!’ You can yell, ‘Black power, here I come!’ White power! Or, any kind of thing. The only thing those hard-nosed Washington types are going to understand at the convention: how many delegates you got?” In a close race between the two front-runners she understood that delegates might make the difference between winning the nomination for one of the other candidates. Rather than lobby for the issues, she would have political currency to leverage with nominees. It did not turn out that way, but no one knew that until the bitter end. The point is that she went all the way, taking a chance on making a change.

Like a scientist trying to make a discovery, or a civil rights protester, or anyone pushing the limits, believing in change or ideas that are not yet the norm, there are those who fail for others to succeed. Shirley Chisholm’s run for president is that kind of sacrifice play. Chisholm was a politician with courage and conviction, who stood on principle and with sound strategy. While you did not have to agree with her, you had to respect her. What I take away from her story, and what I see as her legacy, is her willingness to push the limits, and take calculated risks, without worrying about failing. She won some. She lost some. But, she always played the game.

Best,

**Shola Lynch**



Director/Producer Shola Lynch

Photo: Sandi Sissel



## Table of Contents

## Credits, Acknowledgements

- 4** Introduction
- 5** Potential Partners
- 5** Key Issues
- 6** Background Information
  - 6** People We Meet in *Chisholm '72–Unbought & Unbossed*
- 8** Historical Context
- 10** Using This Guide
  - 10** Planning an Event
  - 11** Facilitating a Discussion
  - 11** Finding a Facilitator
  - 11** Preparing Yourself
  - 12** Preparing the Group
- 13** General Discussion Questions
- 14** Discussion Prompts
- 18** Taking Action
- 19** Resources
- 21** How to Buy the Film

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## Introduction

In 1968, Shirley Chisholm became the first black woman elected to Congress. Just four years later, she would be the first black woman to run for president. *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed*, a feature length (90-minute) documentary, chronicles Chisholm's remarkable campaign.

An unapologetic advocate for economic justice, civil rights, and women's equality, Chisholm was shunned by the political establishment. But her progressive, populist approach attracted many people who had never before been involved in politics, including blacks, feminists, and young voters, some of whom saw this outspoken politician as the literal embodiment of their cause.

The film is a springboard for discussions on civic engagement. The campaign-trail adventures of Chisholm and her supporters provide a revealing portrait of how politics can both inspire and exclude. In the wake of the 2004 elections, her story reminds all Americans that, in Chisholm's words, "the institutions of this country belong to all of the people who inhabit it."

Many of the debates that dominated the 1972 presidential election continue to resonate for Americans today: U.S. engagement in a controversial war; "traditional" family values giving way to new ideas about gender; how to address the needs of those in poverty; and how best to achieve equality for all Americans. These issues make *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* a useful tool for learning about history as well as for exploring actions that people might take today.

In 1972, some of the divisions in the United States seemed irreparable. Today, as we again face a deeply divided nation, the example of Shirley Chisholm can help people explore the status, meaning, responsibilities, and limitations of democratic citizenship.





## Potential Partners

*Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and P.O.V. films relating to political process, including but not limited to *Bill's Run* and *Last Man Standing*.**
- **Women's groups**
- **Political organizations, political campaign staff and volunteers**
- **Voter registration groups**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities, community colleges, and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as P.O.V.'s national partners Elderhostel Learning in Retirement Centers, members of the Listen Up! Youth Media Network, or your local library.**

## Key Issues

*Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* is an excellent tool for discussion because it covers complex terrain, challenging viewers to stretch beyond simplistic interpretations. The film will be of special interest to people interested in exploring or working on the issues below:

- **African Americans**
- **Civics / Civic Engagement**
- **Civil Rights**
- **Class (Socioeconomic)**
- **Democratic Party**
- **Elections**
- **Feminism / Women's Rights**
- **Gender**
- **Politics / Political Strategy and Process**
- **Race and Racism**
- **U.S. History**



## Background Information

### Selected People Featured in *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed*



**Shirley Chisholm** – born Shirley Anita St. Hill, November 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, Kings County, N.Y.; elementary schooling in Barbados (her mother’s country of origin) and the New York City public schools; B.A. from Brooklyn College (1946) and M.A. from Columbia University in (1952); 1949, married Conrad Chisholm (divorced 1977); held several positions in early childhood education, including in the Division of Day Care, New York City, 1959-1964; elected to New York State Assembly, 1964-1968.

In 1969 she was the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress and was reelected six times until she retired from political office in 1983. During her first term in Congress, she hired an all-female staff. In Congress, she spoke out for civil rights and women’s rights, advocated for the poor and opposed the Vietnam

War. She ran for the Democratic Nomination for President in 1972.

She was active in the NAACP and cofounder of Unity Democratic Club in Brooklyn (instrumental in mobilizing black and Hispanic voters), the National Women’s Political Caucus, the National Political Congress of Black Women, and one of the early members of the National Organization for Women. She was inducted into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 1993.

Chisholm wrote the autobiographical works *Unbought and Unbossed* (1970) and *The Good Fight* (1973). **She died on January 1st, 2005.**

SOURCES: [HTTP://BIOGUIDE.CONGRESS.GOV](http://bioguide.congress.gov); [WWW.PAGEWISE.COM](http://www.pagewise.com); ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA



**Amiri Baraka** was a poet and activist in 1972. He still is.



**Susan Brownmiller** is a journalist and author who wrote a biography of Chisholm in 1970 and a feminist classic on rape, *Against Our Will*.



**Octavia Butler** is a science fiction writer and 1995 MacArthur Fellow “Genius Grant” award winner for her synthesis of African American culture into science fiction (previously a predominantly white genre).



## Background Information

### Selected People Featured in *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed*



**Ronald Dellums** was a Representative to Congress from California from 1971-1998.



**Reverend Walter Fauntroy** represented the District of Columbia in Congress from 1971-1990.



**Paula Giddings** was a journalist and editorial assistant at Random House in 1972. Currently, she is an author teaching in the Afro-American Studies Department at Smith College.



**Barbara Lee** was a single-mother, Mills College student and Chisholm campaigner in 1972. Inspired by Chisholm and by Ronald Dellums, she ran for and won Dellums's vacant seat in Congress in 1998, a position she still holds. Lee was the only member of Congress to vote against the authorization giving broad powers to the president to go to war against terrorists following September 11.



**Victor Robles** was a Chisholm Congressional District Office Staffer in 1972. He is now the City Clerk and Clerk of the Council for the City of New York.



**Bobby Seale** was the Co-chair of the Black Panther Party in 1972.



## Background Information

### Historical Context

The following shaped the issues central to the 1972 Presidential Campaign

- Support was waning for the war in Viet Nam and candidates disagreed about how best to end the conflict or, at least, to end U.S. participation.
- The assassination of frontrunner Bobby Kennedy, in 1968, opened the field in the Democratic presidential primary. Shirley Chisholm was one of thirteen politicians competing for the nomination.
- For the first time, 18-20-year-olds would be permitted to vote. The right to vote had been granted as a response to the argument that if a person was old enough to be drafted and sent to war, they were old enough to vote.
- Nearly a decade of assassinations of Democratic, progressive, and radical leaders, including John F. Kennedy (1963), Malcolm X (1965), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1968), and Robert Kennedy (1968) meant that a controversial candidate like Shirley Chisholm was taking a significant personal risk just by running.
- The nation had experienced several years of race riots and violent protests against the war. Richard Nixon's "law and order" platform drew support from people who wanted to stop such protests.
- Although the Civil Rights Act had passed, discrimination against people of color was still rampant. Communities struggled over how best to achieve racial justice in concrete ways. In 1972 these conflicts played themselves out in ideas such as educational integration and the realities of busing children to achieve racial balance in schools. Within the black community, calls by radical groups for black power merged (and sometimes collided) with more mainstream political strategies advocated by civil rights groups like the NAACP.



- An emerging Women's Rights Movement resurrected calls for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, first proposed half a century earlier. Shirley Chisholm was one of the sponsors of the reintroduced bill and spoke eloquently on the floor of Congress for its passage. Many opponents saw the E.R.A. as a threat to gender relations and traditional family structures.
- President Johnson's War on Poverty had not yet delivered on its promises, and in urban areas poverty was often concentrated in government housing projects.
- Women had often been marginalized in the Civil Rights Movement and people of color had often been marginalized in the emerging feminist movement. Shirley Chisholm was in a position to speak directly to both of these causes.

### The Democratic Nomination

The 1968 Democratic National Convention had been marred by police violence against war protesters and by controversies over a candidate being nominated without a majority of delegate support. In an attempt to prevent similar disruptions in 1972, the Democratic party proposed reforms to its primary process.



## Background Information

Many states eliminated the winner-take-all primaries. A candidate like Chisholm could thus win delegates even with a small percentage of the vote.

This reform made it possible for a candidate like Shirley Chisholm, who never won a primary, to make it to the convention with enough delegates to influence outcomes. Since the race between the frontrunners was so close, Chisholm's delegates could potentially tip the balance for one candidate or another, ensuring that progressive issues like education, women's rights, and equal rights were recognized and not just given lip service. In particular, Chisholm wanted the nominee to appoint women and minorities to key government positions.



Chisholm's influence would increase if the vote could be pushed to a second ballot, because in a second ballot, delegates were not bound to any particular candidate, but rather were free to vote for whomever they wished. As a result, George McGovern pushed hard to win the nomination on the first ballot. To achieve a first-ballot victory, McGovern needed other candidates to release their delegates and pledge them to him, or claim that the entire California delegation should be pledged to him as the winner of that state's primary. The latter would eliminate proportional representation and strip Chisholm of delegates.

Chisholm's efforts did not fully achieve her goals, but they did result in her earning an unprecedented spot on the podium to address the entire convention.



## Using This Guide

**This guide is designed to help you use *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* as the centerpiece of a community event. It contains suggestions for organizing an event as well as ideas for how to help participants think more deeply about the issues in the film. The discussion questions are designed for a very wide range of audiences. Rather than attempt to address them all, choose one or two that best meet the needs and interests of your group.**

### Planning an Event

In addition to showcasing documentary films as an art form, screenings of P.O.V. films can be used to present information, get people interested in taking action on an issue, provide opportunities for people from different groups or perspectives to exchange views, and/or create space for reflection. Using the questions below as a planning checklist will help ensure a high quality/high impact event.

- **Have you defined your goals?** With your partner(s), set realistic goals. Will you host a single event or engage in an ongoing project? Being clear about your goals will make it much easier to structure the event, target publicity, and evaluate results.
- **Does the way you are planning to structure the event fit your goals?** Do you need an outside facilitator, translator, or sign language interpreter? If your goal is to share information, are there local experts on the topic who should be present? How large an audience do you want? (Large groups are appropriate for information exchanges. Small groups allow for more intensive dialogue.)
- **Have you arranged to involve all stakeholders?** It is especially important that people be allowed to speak for themselves. If your group is planning to take action that affects people other than those present, how will you give voice to those not in the room?
- **Is the event being held in a space where all participants will feel equally comfortable?** Is it wheelchair accessible? Is it in a part of town that's easy to reach by various kinds of transportation? If you are bringing together different constituencies, is it neutral territory? Does the physical configuration allow for the kind of discussion you hope to have?
- **Will the room setup help you meet your goals?** Is it comfortable? If you intend to have a discussion, can people see one another? Are there spaces to use for small breakout groups? Can everyone easily see the screen and hear the film?
- **Have you scheduled time to plan for action?** Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even when the discussion has been difficult. Action steps are especially important for people who already have a good deal of experience talking about the issue(s) on the table. For those who are new to the issue(s), just engaging in public discussion serves as an action step.



## Using This Guide

### Facilitating a Discussion

**Controversial topics often make for excellent discussions. By their nature, those same topics also give rise to deep emotions and strongly held beliefs. As a facilitator, you can create an atmosphere where people feel safe, encouraged, and respected, making it more likely that they will be willing to share openly and honestly. Here's how:**

### Preparing Yourself

**Identify your own hot-button issues.** View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren't dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.

**Be knowledgeable.** You don't need to be an expert on Shirley Chisholm or U.S. politics in 1972, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. In addition to the Background Information section above, you may want to take a look at the suggested websites and books in the Resources section on p.19.

**Be clear about your role.** You may find yourself taking on several roles for an event, e.g., host, organizer, or even projectionist. If you are also planning to serve as facilitator, be sure that you can focus on that responsibility and avoid distractions during the discussion. Keep in mind that being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher's job is to convey specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, helping move along the discussion without imposing their views on the dialogue.

**Know your group.** Issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Is your group new to the issue or have they dealt with it before? Factors like geography, age, race, religion, and socioeconomic class, can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles, and prior knowledge. As the film makes clear, the African American community in the U.S. is not monolithic. Take care not to assume that all members of that community will share the same point of view. If you are bringing together different segments of your community, we strongly recommend hiring an experienced facilitator.

### Finding a Facilitator

Some university professors, human resource professionals, clergy, and youth leaders may be specially trained in facilitation skills. In addition to these local resources, groups such as the NCCJ ([www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org)) may be able to provide or help you locate skilled facilitators.



## Using This Guide

### Preparing the Group

**Consider how well group members know one another.** If you are bringing together people who have never met, you may want to devote some time at the beginning of the event for introductions.

**Agree to ground rules around language.** Involve the group in establishing some basic rules to ensure respect and aid clarity. Typically, such rules include no yelling or using slurs and asking people to speak in the first person (“I think ...”) rather than generalizing for others (“Everyone knows that ...”).

**Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.** Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion. If the group is large, are there plans to break into small groups or partners, or should attendance be limited?

**Talk about the difference between dialogue and debate.** In a debate, participants try to convince others that they are right. In a dialogue, participants try to understand each other and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening to each other actively. Remind people that they are engaged in a dialogue. This will be especially important in preventing a discussion from dissolving into partisan political debate instead of an examination of political process, rural issues, and/or civic participation.

**Encourage active listening.** Ask the group to think of the event as being about listening, as well as discussing. Participants can be encouraged to listen for things that challenge as well as reinforce their own ideas. You may also consider asking people to practice formal “active listening,” where participants listen without interrupting the speaker, then re-phrase to see if they have heard correctly.

**Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of his or her own experience.** Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. So everyone in the group may have a different view about the content and meaning of the film they have just seen, and all of them may be accurate. It can help people to understand one another’s perspectives if people identify the evidence on which they base their opinion as well as share their views.

**Take care of yourself and group members.** If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. You might also consider providing a safe space to “vent,” perhaps with a partner or in a small group of familiar faces. If you anticipate that your topic may upset people, be prepared to refer them to local support agencies and/or have local professionals present. Think carefully about what you ask people to share publicly, and explain things like confidentiality and whether or not press will be present.



## General Discussion Questions

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you may want to pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question, such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would you ask and what would you ask them?**
- **Did anything in this film surprise you? If so, what? Why was it surprising?**
- **What insights, inspiration, or new knowledge did you gain from this film?**
- **Two months from now, what do you think you will remember from this film and why?**





## Discussion Prompts



### Political Process

- As we see in the film, many people, including leading feminists and members of the Congressional Black Caucus, supported Chisholm's ideas but did not endorse her candidacy because they believed she did not have a chance to win and they thought it was more important to defeat Richard Nixon than to support Chisholm. Do you think they made the right decision? Would you support a candidate who represented your views but who did not seem to be "elect-able"? Why or why not?
- Some Democrats argued that because Shirley Chisholm did not win any of the early primaries, she should drop out of the race. If you had been in Chisholm's shoes, would you have withdrawn? Why or why not? If you had been one of Chisholm's

Democratic colleagues, would you have asked her to withdraw? Why or why not?

- Because Chisholm was not a "frontrunner," media did not provide much coverage of her campaign or the issues she raised. What role does media coverage play in elections? If you could decide how your local news media covered elections, what would you tell them to do? Should the United States reinstate the Fairness Doctrine, requiring networks to provide equal time to all major candidates and points of view? What effect do you think the advent of the Internet has had on today's elections? Had the Internet existed in 1972, do you think it would have had a significant effect on Chisholm's campaign? Why or why not?

- As a candidate who had won only a small percentage of votes in early primaries, Chisholm had to sue to be included in televised debates. Do you think all declared candidates should be included in debates, or should events be restricted to those who are perceived as actually having a chance to win? What are the advantages and disadvantages of holding debates with more than 2-3 candidates?

### General

- What did you know about Shirley Chisholm before seeing this documentary? If you were familiar with Chisholm, did the film challenge or confirm your ideas about her? Explain. If you did not know about her before, why do you think that is? In traditional accounts of American history, what kinds of people tend to be remembered for their contributions and what kinds of people tend to be left out and why?
- What adjectives would you use to describe Shirley Chisholm? Would you consider her a good role model for children today? Why or why not?
- The film documents historical events from thirty-plus years ago. What lessons do you think those events have to teach us about politics or issues today?



## Discussion Prompts

- One critical issue in the 1972 Democratic Presidential Primary was whether all delegates from a state should be assigned to the top vote getter or whether the composition of a state's delegation should represent the percentage of votes each candidate won. Is winner-take-all a good system for party primaries, or should it be representational? How about in the final presidential election? Should the winner of a state get all its electoral votes, or should it be proportional according to the percentage of the popular vote each candidate wins? What are the benefits and weaknesses of each approach (winner-take-all versus proportional representation)?

- Chisholm notes that, "The U.S. Constitution stipulates that anyone that is thirty-five years of age or over and is a natural born citizen can run for the Presidency. All of us meet that criteria." So, would you run for president? Why or why not? Given the realities of running for president, is the ideal notion that any citizen can run plausible?

- At the end of the film, Chisholm says, "Democracy is not carried out in the real sense of the word." What do you think she meant? Do you agree with her? What is the difference between simply participating in the political process and making sure that the process embodies democratic principles?

- At the end of the convention, as Chisholm exhorts her supporters to remain enthusiastic, she says, "We have learned from our errors." What errors do you think Chisholm and her supporters made? What lessons do you think might be learned from those mistakes?

- Part of Chisholm's message was that the "government has not been responsive to certain segments of the population." In your view, is that still true today? Do you think that the



government now effectively represents everyone? If not, who is left out and what might you do to ensure their inclusion?

- As part of her candidacy, Chisholm emphasized the fact that she was a black woman and that she could represent people's interests in a way that her white-male competitors could not. How important is it to you to have someone who shares your socioeconomic class, gender, race, or ethnicity represent you in Congress? In a representative democracy like the United States, can an all-white or all-male elected body adequately represent everyone in the nation? Why or why not?

- Journalist Jules Witcover says that in business, being black and female is a "twofer," i.e., a good value. But he goes on to point out that in politics, being black and female was a "double whammy." What do you think he meant? Do you agree? Do you think a woman could be elected president today? How about a black man? A black woman? Why or why not?

- What is the significance of the phrase Chisholm used in the title of her autobiography, and which was used in the title of the film: "Unbought and Unbossed"?



## Discussion Prompts

- By running for public office, Chisholm was trying to change the system from the inside. At the time, others who shared her views on key issues believed that the only way to bring change was to oppose or reject the system altogether. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? Which have you chosen and why?

- Dellums also observed, “Shirley’s candidacy said ‘I’m not demanding to get in; I’m asserting my right to be here.’ That’s powerful no matter what percentage of the national vote she got.” What is the difference between asking for inclusion and asserting a right to be included? Why did people like Dellums experience Chisholm’s assertion of rights as empowering?

- Author Octavia Butler challenges the notion that people take action because they are fearless. Rather, “It’s more important to recognize that they’re terrified and they’re still taking action that they know exactly what they’re risking and they still risk it.” What did Chisholm risk? Who was scared by her courage and who was inspired by it? Did you see anything in the film that you could identify as a source of Chisholm’s courage?

- Chisholm recognized that sexism was the source of some resistance to her candidacy. What has your experience with sexism been? How is it similar to or different from what Shirley Chisholm experienced?

- Chisholm also recognized that racism was the source of some resistance to her candidacy. What has your experience with racism been? How is it similar to or different from what Shirley Chisholm experienced?

### The Woman, the Candidate, and the Issues

- Sandra Gaines says that when she first heard that Shirley Chisholm was running for president of the United States she thought Chisholm was crazy. Why were people surprised by Chisholm’s candidacy?

- Former Rep. Ron Dellums recalls that Chisholm challenged the country to deal with her seriously. How did Chisholm’s demand to be taken seriously challenge racism and sexism?

- Former Rep. Ron Dellums asks: “What made Shirley Chisholm frightening?” How would you answer his question?

- Chisholm did not let her detractors deter her from her goal. Do you think it was worth it? What are you passionate enough about to fight that hard for?

- The Black Panthers, a controversial organization, endorsed Chisholm. If you were the candidate, would you welcome such support, denounce it, or simply ignore it? Chisholm’s response to those who questioned the value of the endorsement was: “Ask yourselves, why did you have the development of such a group as the Black Panthers in this country? Ask yourselves why they came into existence in the first place in this country?” In your view, would this response satisfy critics? Why or why not? How might Chisholm’s response help people think more deeply about issues of racial and economic justice?



## Discussion Prompts

- Chisholm often quoted from a Frederick Douglass speech originally delivered in Canandaigua, New York, in 1857: “Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will.” The full context of that quote is:

*“This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. In the light of these ideas, Negroes will be hunted at the North, and held and flogged at the South so long as they submit to those devilish outrages, and make no resistance, either moral or physical. Men may not get all they pay for in this world; but they must certainly pay for all they get. If we ever get free from the oppressions and wrongs heaped upon us, we must pay for their removal. We must do this by labor, by suffering, by sacrifice, and if needs be, by our lives and the lives of others.”*



- a winner? What lessons did you take away from Chisholm’s campaign?

Why might Chisholm have chosen to cite this particular quote? Do you agree with her congressional staffer Victor Robles’s assessment that Chisholm’s motive was as much to engage people in the struggle as it was to actually win the presidency?

- Congresswoman Barbara Lee says that one of the things she learned from Shirley Chisholm was that “even with attacks and even with hassles, especially for African Americans and for women and for people of color, if you stay the course, you stand on principle, if you stick with what you believe in, if you do the right thing, you’re a winner.” What do you think makes someone



## Taking Action



- Chisholm ends the film by saying: “When I die, I want to be remembered as a catalyst for change.” How do you want to be remembered when you die? What kinds of changes do you want to make or help others make? Think of one thing you could do that would begin to make the change you envision.
- Barbara Lee says that the first thing Chisholm told her to do was to register to vote. Run a voter registration campaign in your community. Brainstorm ways to involve people who are eligible but who have never voted before.
- Many people in the U.S. today do not know who Shirley Chisholm was. Create a forum to publicize unsung heroes in your community.
- Chisholm tried to forge a coalition in the face of resistance: “The women didn’t want me to discuss what the black people were talking about, the black people didn’t want any of the women’s program. And I was trying to bring everybody together. It was a hell of a position to be in.” Forge a coalition in your community.
- As an underdog candidate, Chisholm was excluded from debates. Host a debate with all candidates for a local, state, or national office.
- Chisholm found that it could be hard for a challenger to get media coverage. Meet with TV news directors and newspaper editors in your community to let them know what kind of coverage you want.
- In the film, author Octavia Butler says, “Power is really just a tool and it’s what you do with it that matters . . . So it’s important to think about what might be done with it that might be a good thing.” If you had power, what would you do with it? Generate a list of all your ideas. Share at least one of the ideas on the list with your elected officials and work with them to transform the idea into a reality.
- After the convention, Chisholm said to her supporters, “Don’t let the spirit die. Don’t let the enthusiasm die.” Brainstorm ways that you might carry on Shirley Chisholm’s spirit.



## Resources

### Websites

#### The film

##### **P.O.V.'s Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed Website**

**[www.pbs.org/pov/chisholm](http://www.pbs.org/pov/chisholm)**

Visit P.O.V.'s Web site for a full description of the film and the events surrounding Chisholm's 1972 run for president, a short bio, a primer on political conventions past and present, a Q&A with filmmaker Shola Lynch, and links to resources elsewhere on the Internet. P.O.V.'s pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/-pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/-pressroom), contains press information and downloadable photos.

##### **[www.chisholm72.net](http://www.chisholm72.net)**

Visit the filmmaker's website for a listing of upcoming screenings and historical information, and to purchase Chisholm gear like T-shirts!

#### Politics:

##### **[www.presidency.ucsb.edu](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu)**

For more information on the presidency, see the collection of documents at the American Presidency Project of the University of California at Santa Barbara.

##### **[www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/multimedia/AfricanAm.html](http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/multimedia/AfricanAm.html)**

For a comparison of demographic statistics on African Americans between 1950 and 2000.

##### **[www.house.gov/cummings/cbc/cbchome.htm](http://www.house.gov/cummings/cbc/cbchome.htm)**

The official website of the Congressional Black Caucus provides information on the history and current policies of the group.

### What's Your P.O.V.?

*P.O.V.'s online Talking Back Tapestry is a colorful, interactive representation of your feelings about **Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed**.*

*Listen to other P.O.V. viewers talk about the film and add your thoughts by calling 1-800-688-4768. [www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html](http://www.pbs.org/pov/talkingback.html)*

### Issues:

##### **[www.blackpanther.org/](http://www.blackpanther.org/)**

The website of the Black Panther party succinctly summarizes the Black Power philosophy that provided important context for Chisholm's candidacy. For a history of the party, you might also want to visit [www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/](http://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/).

##### **[www.now.org](http://www.now.org)**

Shirley Chisholm was an early member of the National Organization for Women. The organization's website summarizes feminist positions on current issues.



## Resources

### Books

**Susan Brownmiller.** *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution* (Delta, 2000) – A narrative account of the rise of feminism in the Sixties and Seventies by one of the journalists featured in the film.

**Shirley Chisholm.** *Unbought and Unbossed* (Houghton Mifflin, 1970) – Chisholm's political vision as a member of Congress.

**Shirley Chisholm.** *The Good Fight* (Harper Collins, 1975) – Chisholm's autobiography, including her goals for and reflections on her presidential bid.

**Paula Giddings.** *When and Where I Enter : The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (orig. 1984, reprint Amistad, 2001)

**Bruce Ragsdale and Joel Treese.** *Black Americans in Congress, 1870-1989* (Diane Publishing, 1990) – Includes profiles of Chisholm and other members of Congress featured in the film.





## How to Buy the Film

For information on purchasing *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* please go to the filmmaker's website:  
[www.chisholm72.net](http://www.chisholm72.net)

All photos are courtesy of REALside productions.

Front cover photo: Courtesy of Arlie Scott

*Shirley Chisholm campaigning for president in 1972*



Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web, and the weekly series Independent Lens on PBS. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue, and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have helped revitalize the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting [www.itvs.org](http://www.itvs.org). ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. *Chisholm '72 – Unbought & Unbossed* was produced in association with the Independent Television Service.



NBPC is a nonprofit media-service organization devoted to the production, distribution, and promotion of diverse films and videos about African Americans and the experiences of the African Diaspora. NBPC funds, commissions, acquires, and awards talented makers of quality African American film and video projects. Selected programs reflect a variety of subjects and production styles. Projects unlikely to appear on the big Hollywood screen are encouraged, especially those that offer a more realistic, historically accurate, diverse, and nonstereotypical picture of the black world. NBPC funds every phase of the production process—i.e., research and development, production, post-production, and outreach. Film and video projects that are selected present black people in primary roles, in front of and/or behind the camera. Since 1979, NBPC has provided more than five million dollars in grants to both independent and station-based producers.



The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private, nonprofit corporation created by Congress in 1967, develops educational public radio, television, and online services for the American people. The Corporation is the industry's largest single source of funds for national public television and radio program development and production. CPB, a grant-making organization, funds more than 1,000 public radio and television stations.



Now in its 17th season on PBS, P.O.V. is the first and longest-running series on television to feature the work of America's most innovative documentary storytellers. Bringing over 200 award-winning films to millions nationwide, and now a new Web-only series, P.O.V.'s Borders, P.O.V. has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues.

Major funding for P.O.V. is provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the Educational Foundation of America, PBS and public television viewers. Funding for *P.O.V.'s Borders* ([www.pbs.org/pov/borders](http://www.pbs.org/pov/borders)) is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Support for P.O.V. is provided by Starbucks Coffee Company. P.O.V. is presented by a consortium of public television stations including KCET/Los Angeles, WGBH/Boston, and WNET/New York. Cara Mertes is executive director of P.O.V., which is a division of American Documentary, Inc.

### P.O.V. Interactive

[www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov)

P.O.V.'s award-winning Web department produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *P.O.V.'s Borders*. It also produces a website for every P.O.V. presentation, extending the life of P.O.V. films through community-based and educational applications, focusing on involving viewers in activities, information and feedback on the issues. In addition, [www.pbs.org/pov](http://www.pbs.org/pov) houses our unique Talking Back feature, filmmaker interviews and viewer resources, and information on the P.O.V. archives as well as myriad special sites for previous P.O.V. broadcasts.

### American Documentary, Inc.

[www.americandocumentary.org](http://www.americandocumentary.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. Through two divisions, P.O.V. and Active Voice, AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

