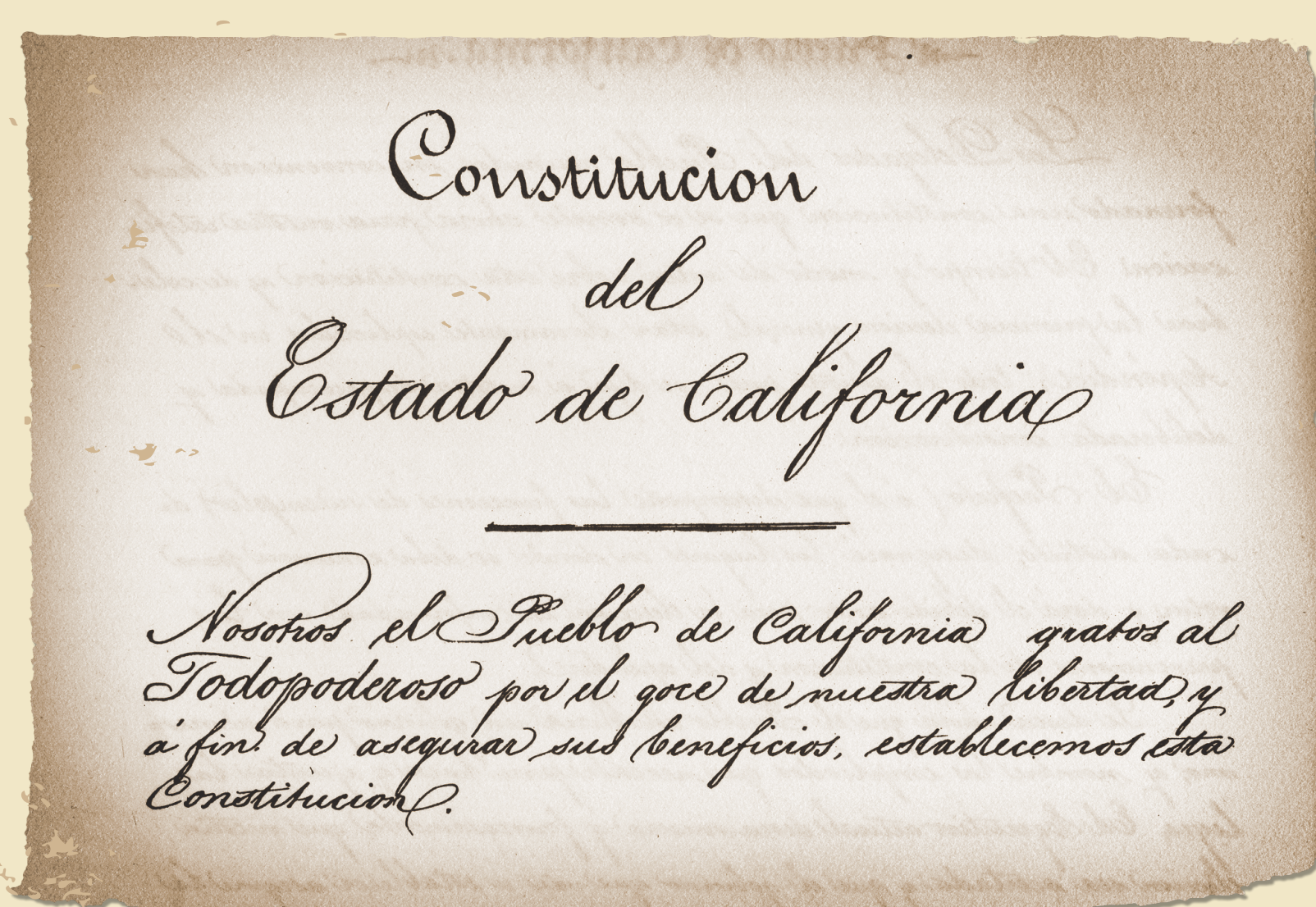


# WHERE DO OUR RIGHTS COME FROM?

**OUR RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES ARE  
DEFINED AND PROTECTED  
IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT WAYS:**



**CALIFORNIA'S FIRST CONSTITUTION  
WAS WRITTEN IN  
BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH.**

## **CONSTITUTIONS:**

The United States Constitution and state constitutions affirm rights and freedoms that the government cannot violate.

## **LEGISLATURES/COURTS:**

Congress and state legislatures, representing popular will, pass laws that grant and sometimes limit rights. Courts ensure that laws, whether approved by legislators or popular vote, do not infringe on fundamental rights outlined in state and federal constitutions.

## **INITIATIVES:**

Since 1911, Californians have had the right to create laws and amend the state constitution through a popular vote. Initiatives sometimes expand rights, as did the successful proposition to grant women the right to vote. But many initiatives have restricted or taken away rights of certain groups.

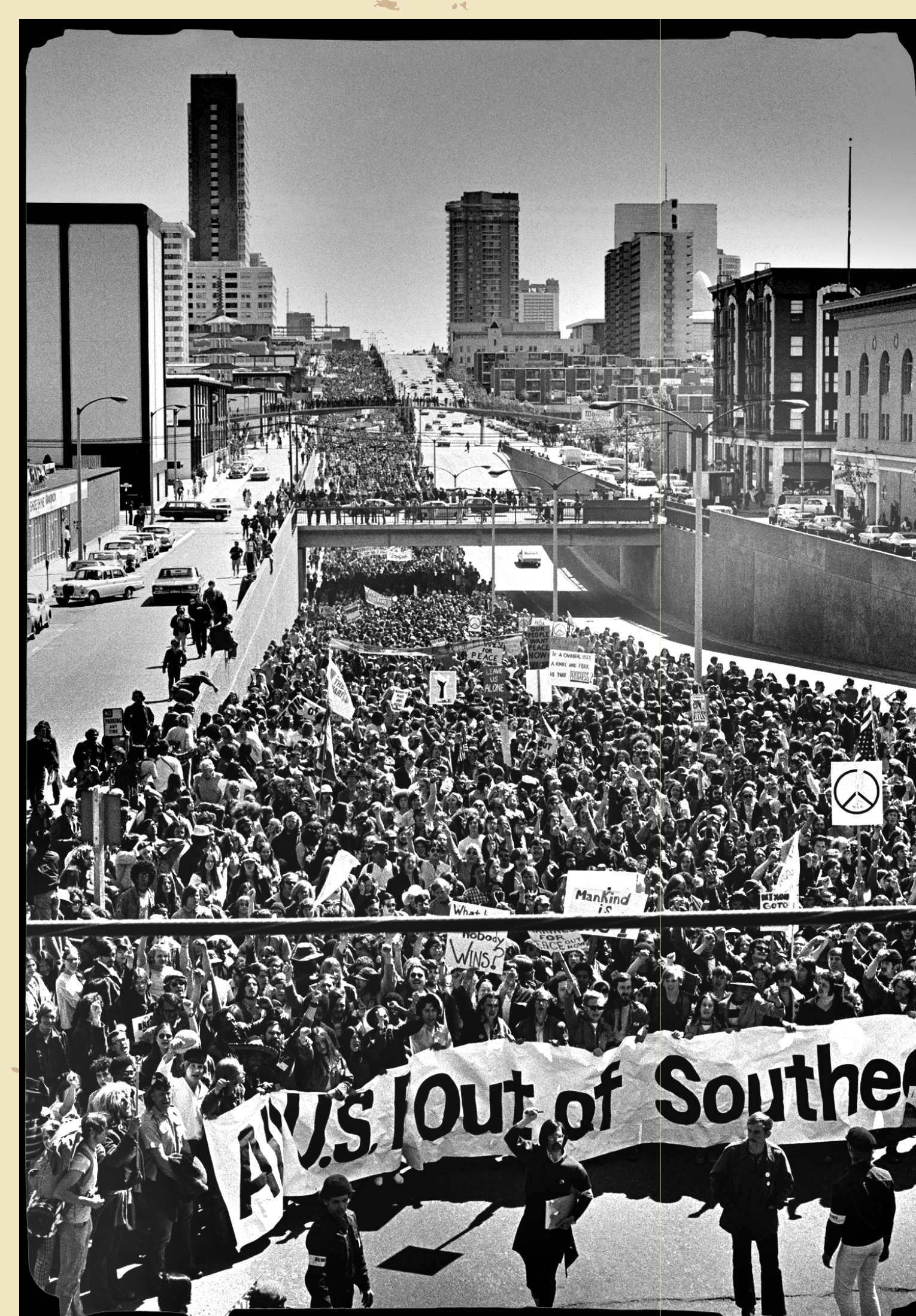
## **ADVOCACY:**

Individuals and groups can advocate for the legislature and Congress to change or create laws, bring lawsuits to challenge policies that are unfair, and organize social movements to draw public attention to injustices.



**ALL PEOPLE ARE BY NATURE FREE AND  
INDEPENDENT AND HAVE INALIENABLE RIGHTS.**

**- CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION**



**PROTESTS, LIKE THIS MASSIVE MARCH IN  
SAN FRANCISCO AGAINST THE VIETNAM  
WAR, HELP SHAPE PUBLIC OPINION  
AND CHANGE GOVERNMENT POLICY.**

**State Constitution:** Courtesy of California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento  
**Demonstration Photo:** Courtesy of Stephen Rees; Copyright Stephen Rees