**Dr. Tamika Lamb-Sanders** (00:00): I remember the very first time, I think we were in middle school, and we did a practice election at our school for the governor's election here with Terry Goddard and Fife Symington, they were running. And I remember being so excited because we were learning about democracy, and what the governor does, and how that affects us and the community. And I remember being so excited because I would go home, every day I learned something like, "Mom, mom, when you go to the polls, don't forget this, and remember this, and remember this." And I was doing exactly what they wanted us to do. When they teach you about the voting process and elections and what they do, they want the kids to go home and tell their parents because they are the ones that actually vote.

(00:41): And I remember being so sad that in our school, the popular vote, Terry Goddard won. And then, when it came out to the actual election, it was Fife Symington won. And I remember all of us being so sad and literally holding up our signs and stating all the facts of why Terry Goddard would've been better. And it was very memorable.

(01:01): And then, my other one was, of course, just Barack Obama, 2008. That was amazing and memorable because I was on the college campus. Barack Obama actually came to ASU and came to our school and actually came to talk. And I just remember, I never remember a president coming onto our campus and I could just see all of the energy and the passion. And for the first time, he gave so many of us as youth just hope that, "Okay, yes, we can. We make a difference. Just because we're young doesn't mean that we don't have a voice. We have other ways in which we can push movements forward." So there were a lot of grassroot campaigns.

(01:42): And so, when he got elected that night, it meant so much, not only to just me, but lots of little Black and Brown girls, because I remember in school, teachers asking us, what do you want to be when you grow up? And I remember several little Black, Hispanic, and Latino boys and girls raising their hand to say, "I want to be president." And the teacher just kind of looking at them like, "You know what? That's a good dream." But that day when that happened, I was like, "It is possible." No longer can a little Black, Hispanic, or Latino boy say... They can say and have an example and say, "Hey, I can do this." And now just got to get our next woman in there.

(02:21): So, the reason why I vote, and that passion I have, it stems back from the teachers who taught us about the process. And they made us really understand that democracy and the ideal of democracy, if we want it to truly be a democratic kind of place and country that we live in, everybody has to vote. And if we don't, then we are giving up that right. And we also got to talk about all of the amazing people that came before us that fought to get the right to vote for women, for Black people, for all of these just votes. And every time I think about an election, I think about one, all the people that fought and died to allow us the right to vote because they knew what it meant. They knew what it meant for schools, for communities.

(03:06): And so, that's one of the reasons why I vote, is because I understand how important it is. And I get to go into schools and teach you thinking about your democratic, your republic, just the election process. You've got your three bodies of government, you've got your, what do I say, executive. You've got your judicial and you've got your legislative branch. And I always tell people, "You may not think that your vote for president matters, but even if you, let's say you don't vote for president, but you don't at least vote in the legislative one, that's where you're going to see the change. If you don't like the laws that are in your schools, the curriculum, the policies that are getting made, how schools are funded, that's they're making the laws. If you don't like stand your ground laws that are getting people shot, this is the place where it starts."

(03:56): And so, that passion helps me being an activist, an artist, an organizer. It gives me that power. Even when I think my vote doesn't count, I have to go back and remember. It might not matter in that bigger scale, but on my small scale in my neighborhood, who my mayor is, who my school boards are. I'm going to see that turnover and those changes a lot faster than I'm going to see it from the president. That matters. But it trickles down later. But you feel it locally so much faster and it's so much more important.

(04:26): And Congress, every two years, you get a chance to vote for them and switch them over versus four, for the president, so that's why I'm passionate. It's like there's real change. It can happen. And I get motivated to let people know you make a difference. And if you want change, you've got to go out there and do it. Otherwise, you can't complain about it.

(04:45): This morning, we went to Phoenix College, does a very huge MLK celebration, but they also do a big voting kind of advocacy for youth and teenagers, high schools, and college students as well. Just, again, teaching them about what is your vote mean, getting people registered, educating them about the different points. And so, that's a lot of times how people learn. They're not always learning from their parents, unfortunately, because sometimes parents are busy. I didn't learn a lot from my parents growing up besides getting go to the poll with them and saying, "Okay, we're standing in line. We know we're doing something important." But I didn't understand always what was on the ballot because I wasn't the one voting at the time.

(05:25): But our kids right now, they are learning about all of these great things and the systems and the process from our schools and our local community members. So, it's up to us to make sure that we are passing that torch, creating that passion, and really informing them that no matter how hard and how tough and how meaningless you feel like your vote is, it does matter. Because if everybody feels like you, then guess what? No one's going to vote, and we definitely will not have the change that we want.