

Topic 2.1: Your Money, Your Voice

We've already talked about how to make a few changes that can up your financial awareness factor — things like checking to see where your bank or lending agencies invest their (ie, your!) money. Now we're shifting over to the bigger picture: what banks do with all of that money, where the money that gets collected in taxes goes, and what you can do about it. Even when we're struggling to pay rent, we can and should still have an opinion about how our cities and states (and country!) use cash.

First Up: Get close with the term “Divestment”

Definition: ‘The action or process of selling off subsidiary business interests or investments.’

We have to ability to divest our interests (money) based on our **interests**. But in order to do so, we need to get more invested in how and where our money is used. You laid the groundwork for this already if you checked out some of the suggestions in Topic 2.0. If you've already looked into where your bank or your city invests, it's time to take action! Ways to make an impact:

Individual Action

Pull your money out if you don't dig how your bank uses the money they make off of you! Credit unions are a great option for checking and savings accounts. They also tend to support marginalized groups, including women, minorities, and students, which means *you can be more supported by your bank*.

Collective Action

The good news is, you don't even have to have money to make an impact! Taking the time to research and reflect on how your city or town banks means that you get a say. Look into how they do their banking and with whom!

Great examples of communities who held their leaders accountable: Citizens from Seattle, WA and Davis, CA pressed their mayors and city councils to divest their money (i.e. your tax money) from banks in bed with bad business - you can too! Get inspired by reading more [HERE](#).

Recommended Resources:

The Broke Millennial: Get your financial life together!
<http://brokemillennial.com/blog/>

Ellevest: Investment tools by women, for women.
<https://www.ellevest.com/>

Next: Look into loan consolidation

Definition: ‘an act or instance of consolidating; the state of being consolidated; unification.’

If you have a lot of separate loans or credit cards, consolidating can be a good way to start chipping away at your debt. There are companies that you can use to consolidate your debt who are using their money in a way you believe in. Like we mentioned above, look into credit unions or other alternatives to big banks. This is a way you can start knocking down your debt and making choices that will positively impact your community.