**Interviewer:**  **Jake Clements**

**Interviewee: Jessye Hale**

**Date of Interview: 04/04/2024**

**Location: University of Milwaukee, WI**

**Event: C21 Tabling Trust Event**

**List of Acronyms: JH: Jesse Jinju Hale, IN: Interviewer**

**File: Jessye\_Hale\_4.4.2024**

IN: Could you just start with your name, please?

JH: Yes. My name is Jesse Jinju Hale.

IN: All right. And do we have your consent to record this interview?

JH: Yes. You do.

IN: Alright, so when you think about the process of voting in the United States--we have the scale of the trust to distrust--you put yourself a little bit more towards the trusting end, thinking of all the way over here at trust that's going to be a one. A one is full trust. And over here on the distrust, it's going to be ten for complete distrust. What number would you give yourself? Sorry, what number would you say you put yourself at?

JH: So full trust is the one?

IN: Yeah.

JH: So probably around the three-range kind of mid-range on that trusting side.

IN: Gotcha. And can you share a story of why you picked that spot or why you feel that way?

JH: Yeah, absolutely. So, I now work with the civics group, and I think before that I would have been closer to that maybe eight range, because you know, as you say in the United States, right, I was living in Korea from 2019 to 2021. I remember getting my absentee ballot in the mail a day before it had to be back in the States and it was soaked and dried. And so you couldn't even open the envelope that you were supposed to use, and my immediate reaction was, like, “Conspiracy,” like, “They're trying to suppress my vote.” This was also going on at the time where they reduced the polling locations to five locations in Milwaukee from 150, I think they just said in the presentation. And so you know, there was definitely a phase where I was distrustful and I also wasn't really educated on, like, civic engagement and voting. And so a lot of that transition to trust has been with my work with the Turners being engaged in local government or being aware of what's happening with local government, being aware of how those systems work and being back in the US--I went to school here at UWM--and you know, at that point, you know, there's a lot going on. You’re a student. I did vote at that time. And so... but again, I was not focused on this and it definitely wasn't related to what I was doing for work... directly, I should say. So, that is kind of my scale. And again, the more that I work with civics groups, the more that I work in the community, the more that I promote voting itself, I am definitely trusting it more because I wouldn't be advocating for something that I don't trust can make a difference. I believe empowering people's voices can make a difference through voting.

IN: All right. And you talked a little bit about, kind of that civic engagement that you do. Can you talk about that a little bit more in specifics?

JH: Yeah, absolutely. So I work with Milwaukee Turners. I am a sound mind coordinator. This program talks about civic engagement in different ways. We have different trainings that we offer to community members through either nonprofits, other community groups, as well as in high schools and colleges.

IN: All right. Now, where would you like to see yourself on this scale? Would you push it all the way to one, or are you kind of comfortable at where you're at?

JH: So I think everything should be taken with a little bit of scrutiny. So, I think that to trust something 100%... I would love to be trusting the vote 100%, but I think constantly checking and seeing how these systems are in place--and again, we talked right before the interview about the vote itself, and then the voting process, right? Which involves a lot of other factors which involves, like, districts, and it involves some of these bigger picture pieces, which we have seen historically maybe aren't as fair as we'd like them to be. So again, you know constantly checking in and holding ourselves accountable for having a trustworthy system for our democracy.

IN: All right. Umm. Kind of answer that 4th question a little bit there, but is there anything else that you would like to add?

JH: I think that this is a great project. I think bringing attention, having a conversation around trusting the vote, especially... you know, I'm 26, so having this conversation with young people, with people who are in the workforce is a really good thing because, you know, we will be suppressed by not trusting each other. And so, talking about trusting the vote in a community sense is really important to do so I think it's good to bring this out as a conversation piece for people to discuss.

IN: All right. Thank you very much.