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# Fiscal Note

State of Alaska  
2016 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	HCS CSSCR 1(EDC)
Fiscal Note Number:	3
(H) Publish Date:	3/18/2016

Identifier: SCR1-LEG-COU-03-16-16  
 Title: CIVICS EDUCATION TASK FORCE  
 Sponsor: STEVENS  
 Requester: HOUSE EDUCATION

Department: Alaska Legislature  
 Appropriation: Legislative Council  
 Allocation: Council and Subcommittees  
 OMB Component Number: 783

**Expenditures/Revenues**

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2017	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2017 Request	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>	<b>FY 2018</b>	<b>FY 2019</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY 2022</b>
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Fund Source (Operating Only)**

None							
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Positions**

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

<b>Change in Revenues</b>							
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**Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2016) cost:** 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*  
*(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)*

**Estimated CAPITAL (FY2017) cost:** 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*  
*(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)*

**ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS**

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency?  
 If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

**Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:**

The House Education Committee zeroed out this one page fiscal note and anticipate the travel cost can be absorbed.

**Senator Gary Stevens**  
**Alaska State Legislature**

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***SPONSOR STATEMENT***

***SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 1***

***"Relating to a Legislative Task Force on Civics Education."***

SCR 1 creates a task force to carefully examine and improve awareness of the importance of civics education in our state. What is the condition of civics education in Alaska? What are other states doing? Given Alaska's current budget climate, how can we improve our approach to civics education in Alaska without adding to the cost of delivering it? These are questions worth exploring.

While most Americans agree on the importance of preparing young people for citizenship in a democracy, civic education has received less and less attention in schools over the past couple of decades. During that time, schools have focused their attention first on preparing students for college and jobs, and more recently on responding to increasing accountability demands, primarily in mathematics, reading, and writing. Experts believe a decline in civic engagement, such as the decline in voting rates among young voters since 18-year-olds were given the right to vote in 1972, may be a direct result of the decrease in emphasis placed on civics.

In one response to this decline in civic engagement, most states developed content standards in civics or government in the 1990s and early 2000s to ensure that students acquired a basic understanding of how government works, of the documents on which American democracy is based, and of basic democratic values. Unlike state efforts to improve instruction in the core academic disciplines, however, most states have not established statewide assessments aligned with their civics standards. A number of states recently have established legislative committees or task forces to examine their civic education practices and make recommendations to the legislature, the state education agency, and their public schools.

While many individuals and organizations have sought to address the poor condition of civic education, the problem remains acute. Strong state policies are needed to establish and reinforce the fact that preparation for civic life is equally as important as, and important for, preparation for higher education and careers. In fact, preparation for active citizenship was a foundational principle of public education in America from its beginning, and it is a principle that must be reaffirmed by each generation.

By passing SCR 1, Alaska will join in with other states in an effort to restore attention to the importance of civics education in our schools.

I appreciate your consideration of this legislation.

SUMMARY OF CIVICS EDUCATION-RELATED ACTIVITY AMONG STATES

Number of Policies or Laws Enacted - 1995-2014

Type of Civics Education Promotion	2005-2014	1995-2004	Total
Increase or Change Course Curriculum, Graduation Requirements, or Civics Awareness in Schools; including Study of the Constitution, Bills of Rights, or Development of a 'Character Education' program	42	35	77
Create a Commission, Task Force, or Agency to Evaluate Civics Education	30	6	36
Promote or Require Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, or a Moment of Silence	3	21	24
Holiday Recognition or Principle Awareness, including establishing a 'Freedom Week', or observing holidays such as Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, 'Legislators Back-To-School' Day	7	9	16
Promote or Require U.S. Flag Display in Classrooms or Schools, including Flag Etiquette, or Display of the National Motto or Declaration of Independence	5	11	16
Encourage Community Service, Volunteerism, or Election Poll Working, including excused absences fro school for doing such work	8	6	14
Improve Voter Registration Programs or Awareness	9	4	13
Provide or Promote Leadship Programs, Internships, or Field Trips	5	1	6
Increase Professional Development of Teachers for Civics Education Instruction	3	0	3
Totals:	112	93	205

# PASS THE CIVICS PROFICIENCY INITIATIVE

The Civics Proficiency Initiative will set as a requirement for High School graduation that students must pass the United States Citizenship Civics Test. Passage of this test – *in English* – is required for all new American Citizens. A score of 60% or greater is required for passage.

As of December 2013, 92% of immigrants applying for United States citizenship passed the test.

But a study conducted in Arizona by the Goldwater Institute showed only 4% of High School students passing the test. In Oklahoma, a study conducted by the Oklahoma Council for Public Affairs showed less than 3% of High School students passing the test.

Shouldn't our High School graduates know as much about basic American civics as we require immigrants applying for United States citizenship to know about America?

Can you pass the test?

Take the test below and see how well you know basic American civics.

## United States Citizenship Civics Test

### 100 Questions in Three Parts

#### **PART ONE: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

##### **A: Principles of American Democracy**

1. What is the supreme law of the land?
2. What does the Constitution do?
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
4. What is an amendment?
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?
9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
10. What is freedom of religion?
11. What is the economic system in the United States?
12. What is the "rule of law"?

##### **B: System of Government**

13. Name one branch or part of the government.
14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?
16. Who makes federal laws?
17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?

18. How many U.S. Senators are there?
19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?
20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators now?
21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?
22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?
23. Name your U.S. Representative.
24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?
25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?
26. We elect a President for how many years?
27. In what month do we vote for President?
28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?
29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?
30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?
33. Who signs bills to become laws?
34. Who vetoes bills?
35. What does the President's Cabinet do?
36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?
37. What does the judicial branch do?
38. What is the highest court in the United States?
39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?
41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to

- the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?
42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?
  43. Who is the Governor of your state now?
  44. What is the capital of your state?
  45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?
  46. What is the political party of the President now?
  47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

**C: Rights and Responsibilities**

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.
49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?
50. Name one right only for United States citizens.
51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?
52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?
55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?
57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?

**PART TWO: AMERICAN HISTORY**

**A: Colonial Period and Independence**

58. What is one reason colonists came to America?
59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?
61. Why did the colonists fight the British?
62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
64. There were 13 original states. Name three.
65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
66. When was the Constitution written?
67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
68. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
69. Who is the "Father of Our Country?"
70. Who was the first President?

**B. The 1800's**

71. What territory did the United States buy from

- France in 1803?
72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.
73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.
74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.
75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?
76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

**C: Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information**

78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
79. Who was President during World War I?
80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?
86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?
87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

**PART THREE: INTEGRATED CIVICS**

**A: Geography**

88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.
89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
91. Name one U.S. territory.
92. Name one state that borders Canada.
93. Name one state that borders Mexico.
94. What is the capital of the United States?
95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

**B: Symbols**

96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?
98. What is the name of the national anthem?

**C: Holidays**

99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?
100. Name two national U.S. holidays.



CELEBRATING **20** YEARS

PROMOTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM & EXCELLENCE

## Americans' Limited Knowledge of the Roosevelts Shows Need for Colleges to Restore American History

39% of Americans Don't Know Franklin D. Roosevelt was President During World War II

September 17, 2014

### Only 18% of Colleges Require Even a Single Course in American History or Government

WASHINGTON, DC—As Ken Burns' documentary "The Roosevelts: An Intimate History" airs this week, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni today released [a survey](#) that shows how little Americans know about Theodore and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

According to the study, 39% of Americans don't know Franklin D. Roosevelt was president during World War II; 59% don't know Theodore Roosevelt had a role in the construction of the Panama Canal. College graduates didn't do much better on the survey. Nearly half didn't know Teddy Roosevelt had a major role in the Panama Canal; one-third didn't know FDR spearheaded the New Deal and almost three in five didn't know he was elected four times. Examine the full survey [here](#).

The survey underscores a problem of historical amnesia made worse by the weak curriculum of many American colleges and universities. According to the *What Will They Learn?*<sup>TM</sup> study, only 18% of institutions require students to take a course in American history or government.

This survey is the latest in a series conducted by GfK Custom Research. Previous studies have included [a 2014 survey](#) on D-Day that found that a quarter of Americans don't know D-Day occurred during World War II, and [a 2012 survey](#) that found only 57% of college graduates know John Roberts is the chief justice of the United States.

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## Facts About Civic & Political Literacy In America

How Informed Are American Citizens? -- What The Research Says –

Over the last ten years or so, numerous research studies and polls have produced very similar data about what Americans know about how government works, about the big issues of our time and the policies that address them, about where politicians stand on those issues and policies, and the historical knowledge needed to make wise judgments about these things. The results serve as indelible testimony to the depth of the civic and political literacy problem America faces.

In 2005, the Knight Foundation commissioned one of the largest studies -- a two year, million dollar research project. Summing up the results, then president Hodding Carter III said: "These results are not only disturbing; they are dangerous."

"Americans Fail The Test Of Civic Literacy" screamed the headline of a 2008 report from the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. "It can truly be said we are suffering from an epidemic of civic ignorance," sums up Lt. General Josiah Bunting III, chairman of the group's National Civic Literacy Board. ISI is a conservative-leaning organization, but their study is comprehensive and objective. Regardless, the results are the same whether the source leans left, right, or otherwise.

Here are some bullet points from various studies in recent years. Links to the full reports are below.

- 64% of Americans can't name the three branches of government, or describe what they do.
- most of us don't know which party controls Congress at any given time.
- half can't describe the difference between liberals and conservatives
- most can't name their own members or Congress or their US Senators
- nearly half don't know that states have 2 Senators
- 54% cannot name a single Supreme Court Justice
- 41% cannot identify the Speaker of the House -- even in a multiple-choice question.
- only a bare majority can name even one basic purpose of the Constitution
- more citizens can name "American Idol" judges than can name the 1st Amendment rights
- 39% of us cannot name any of the freedoms in the 1st Amendment
- only one in 1000 can name all five rights in the 1st Amendment
- 35% feel the First Amendment goes too far. An additional 21% are unsure
- almost half think the president has the authority to suspend the U.S. Constitution
- 60% believe he can appoint judges to the federal courts without the approval of the Senate
- 50% feel newspapers should not be allowed to publish stories without government approval
- only 34% know that it's Congress that declares war
- only 35% know that Congress can override a presidential veto
- for those under age 40, the number rises to 54%

Report cards like these are just incredible in a nation that claims to value education so highly. And these are just civics-101 questions. It only gets worse when measuring knowledge levels about actual issues and public policies that affect not only the nation, but the quality of our own individual lives, and the lives of our families.

Here are just a few more tip of the iceberg tidbits regarding our grasp of issues, current events, and relevant history:

- 40% of us cannot name a single fossil fuel
- nearly half can't name a renewable energy source
- 55% believe that the Constitution establishes a Christian nation
- 30% cannot identify the Holocaust
- only one in seven young people can find Iraq on a map
- as late as 2007, 41% still believed Saddam Hussein was directly involved in 9/11
- 62% believe that the making up of stories is a widespread problem in the news media

And in foreign affairs, our knowledge levels drop even further through the floor. The Strategic Task Force on Education Abroad found that "America's ignorance of the world is a national liability." Others consider it an outright national security threat.

The bottom line is the stark reality that the vast majority of Americans are willfully ignorant about the issues, policies, politicians, history, and structure of government needed for informed participation in democracy. And this is a problem that is even more critical today, when American democracy needs all the wisdom we can get.

The good news is that, for most of us, our ignorance is by choice -- we have chosen not to stay informed. Meaning that, in theory, there's a simple remedy -- make a different choice.

This point can't be emphasized enough. We are not a stupid people. Far from it. We're actually more educated than any generation in history. But we simply haven't been paying attention as citizens. And that's true no matter our party identification, or age, or race, or gender, or economic status. In an era when nearly every major newspaper and newsmagazine and political website is available online for free – it's hard to argue there's any excuse anymore. We all lead busy lives, but life's about setting priorities. Let's hope more of us re-set our civic priorities in the years ahead.

"Song Of A Citizen" will be making that case over the next few years. We need your help to ensure that America is listening.

For more info about the state of the American political mind, check out the following:

## Political Knowledge Research Studies and Polls -- 1997 to 2011

(in descending chronological order)

- Department of Education - May 2011 "What young Americans know about Civics "  
How Dumb Are We? - March 2011 - Newsweek – "The Country's Future Is Imperiled By Our Ignorance"  
Political Knowledge Update - March, 2011 – "Pew Research Center for the People & The Press"  
Enlightened Citizenship – 2011 – "Intercollegiate Studies Institute"  
Pew Research Center -- January 2010 – "Political News IQ Update"  
The Shaping of the American Mind – 2010 – "Intercollegiate Studies Institute"  
First Amendment Center – 2009 – "State of the First Amendment "  
Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs -- Sept. 2009 – "75% of Oklahoma High School Students Can't Name the First President of the U.S."  
Public Agenda -- Aug. '09 – "What The Public Knows About Energy"  
Penn. Schoen and Berland Associates -- June 2009 – "C-SPAN Supreme Court Survey about citizen knowledge of the Supreme Court"  
Intercollegiate Studies Institute -- American Civic Literacy Program – 2008 – "Americans Fail The Test Of Civic Literacy"  
National Endowment for the Arts -- Nov. 2007 – "Study links declines in reading with poorer academic and social outcomes"  
Annenberg Public Policy Center -- Oct. 2007 – "Study on Judicial Elections reveal facts about low public knowledge of Supreme Court"  
Newsweek -- Sept. 2007 – Dunces-Cap Nation survey called "What Do We Know?"  
Pew Research Center for the People & The Press -- April 2007 – "Public Knowledge of Current Affairs Little Changed by News & Information Revolutions"  
Knight Foundation -- Future Of The First Amendment "Survey Finds First Amendment Is Being Left Behind in U.S. High Schools"  
First Amendment Center – 2007 – "Americans' Views Mixed on Basic Freedoms"  
Drum Major Institute -- Sept. 2006 – "How Civic Education Died -- and why we need it back"  
Zogby International -- Aug. 2006 – "More Americans Know Snow White's Dwarfs Than Supreme Court Judges"  
McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum -- March 2006 – "Americans' Awareness of First Amendment Freedoms"  
National Assessment of Educational Progress – 2006 – "Reports on what students know about civics"  
The Nation's Civic Report Card – 2006 –  
Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) -- Oct. 2003 – "Misperceptions, The Media, and the Iraq War"  
Columbia University Law School study -- May, 2002 – "What Americans Don't Know About Our Constitution--and Why It Matters"  
National Constitution Center – 1997 – "Startling Lack of Constitutional Knowledge"

From: The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

## **Americans know surprisingly little about their government, survey finds**

*Wednesday, September 17th, 2014*

PHILADELPHIA – Americans show great uncertainty when it comes to answering basic questions about how their government works, a national survey conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania has found.

The survey of 1,416 adults, released for Constitution Day (Sept. 17) in conjunction with the launch of the Civics Renewal Network, found that:

- While little more than a third of respondents (36 percent) could name all three branches of the U.S. government, just as many (35 percent) could not name a single one.
- Just over a quarter of Americans (27 percent) know it takes a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate to override a presidential veto.
- One in five Americans (21 percent) incorrectly thinks that a 5-4 Supreme Court decision is sent back to Congress for reconsideration.

“Although surveys reflect disapproval of the way Congress, the President and the Supreme Court are conducting their affairs, the Annenberg survey demonstrates that many know surprisingly little about these branches of government,” said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC). “This survey offers dramatic evidence of the need for more and better civics education.”

### **The Civics Renewal Network**

To address the problem, APPC and 25 other nonpartisan organizations, including the Library of Congress, the National Constitution Center, the U.S. Courts, the National Archives, and the Newseum, announced the launch of the Civics Renewal Network, a unique partnership among some of the nation’s leaders in civics education. The network offers free, high-quality resources for teachers through the one-stop website [www.civicsrenewalnetwork.org](http://www.civicsrenewalnetwork.org).

The Civics Renewal Network is celebrating Constitution Day with coast-to-coast activities and running public service ads in some major television markets encouraging viewers to learn about the Constitution. The ads can be seen on YouTube [here](#) and [here](#).

In a first, the U.S. Courts are holding 27 naturalization ceremonies at iconic sites from Maine to Alaska. Students at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia and more than 550 schools nationwide will take the “Preamble Challenge.” reciting the 52-word Preamble to the Constitution. An American Academy of Arts & Sciences symposium at the Newseum’s Knight Conference Center in Washington, D.C., will examine the role of civics in American life, followed by a keynote address from new National Endowment for the Humanities chairman William “Bro” Adams. Those events will be video-streamed by the Academy here. The full day’s schedule can be found on the APPC site here. A 10:30 a.m. news conference by the Civics Renewal Network also will be video-streamed on its site.

### **Most Americans do not know which parties control the House and Senate**

The study also found that more than half of Americans do not know which party controls the House and Senate:

- Asked which party has the most members in the House of Representatives, 38 percent said they knew the Republicans are the majority, but 17 percent responded the Democrats, and 44 percent reported that they did not know (up from 27 percent who said they did not know in 2011).
- Asked which party controls the Senate, 38 percent correctly said the Democrats, 20 percent said the Republicans, and 42 percent said they did not know (also up from 27 percent who said they did not know in 2011).

For the complete release on the survey, [click here](#). For additional information on methodology and data, [click here](#).

Link: <http://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-know-surprisingly-little-about-their-government-survey-finds/>



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