

SCR

1

<TARGET><BILL>SCR 1</BILL><SUBJECT>SCR
1</SUBJECT><COMM>SFIN29</COMM></TARGET>

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/16/15

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 4/9/15

Finance Committee considered SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1

SCR 1 CIVICS EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Relating to a legislative task force on civics education.

and recommends:

- be replaced with CS _____ (_____) Same Title New Title
- adopt previous CS SCR 1 (EDC) Same Title New Title
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LWF
CED	LAW
CRT	LEG
EED	MVA
DEC	DNR
DFG	DPS
GOV	REV
DHS	DOT
AJS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
SFIN/LEG			✓	2

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	No REC	AMEND
	MICCICNE			✓	
	BISHOP	✓			
	DUNAWAY	✓			
	O'SOW			✓	
	FINNAN	✓			
CO-CHAIR:	KELLY	✓			
CO-CHAIR:	MACKINNON	✓			

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SPONSOR STATEMENT
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION I

“Relating to a Legislative Task Force on Civics Education.”

SCR I 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 I, 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.

Senate District R
Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

SCR1 - CIVICS Ed Task Force - Version P

March 17, 2015

Amendments – by Senator Stevens, adopted by the Senate Education Committee

Page 2, Line 22: The task force now has 12 members.

Page 2, Lines 23-26: The task force now has 3 representatives, and 3 senators, one each of which would be in the minority caucus.

Page 3, Line 1: The NEA member would be a teacher with significant teaching experience in the area of civics education or social studies

Page 3, Lines 4-6: A member representing the media was deleted and replaced with a student, specifically a junior appointed in May, whom would presumably be a senior during the work timeline of the TF, enrolled in a public high school, in good academic standing, and with interest in leadership and civics ed.

Page 3, Lines 7-8: Deleted was representation by a civics ed-related non-profit, and instead replaced by one member who would be a judge or otherwise representing the judicial branch of Alaska state government.

Deleted was representation by the Superintendents/Administrators (ACSA), since school board representation was maintained.

TF Composition with these changes would then be:

3@Representatives, one in the minority

3@Senators, one in the minority

1@DEED Commissioner

1@NEA, Civics Teacher

1@The School Boards (AASB)

1@A Student

1@A Judge

1@The UnivAK

(12 members)

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version: SCR 1
Fiscal Note Number: 2
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: SCR1-LEG-COU-04-9-15
Title: CIVICS EDUCATION TASK FORCE
Sponsor: STEVENS
Requester: Senate

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)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) 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:

This fiscal note is zeroed out with the intention that the \$5.9 in travel costs requested on the previous fiscal note will be absorbed.

Prepared By: Senator Kelly Phone: (907)465-3709
Senate Finance Committee Date: 04/09/2015
Senator MacKinnon
Senate Finance Committee

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SCR 1

Analysis

SCR 1 creates a 12 member task force on civics education within the legislative branch. The sponsor intends for the task force to have 5 meetings in Anchorage during the interim. Members appointed to the task force could reside in the Anchorage bowl area to help keep travel and lodging costs to a minimum. Any members appointed to the task force that reside outside of the Anchorage area could participate telephonically. Likewise, any guest speakers or other experts testifying before the task force could also do so telephonically. Other agency representatives appointed to the task force would be asked to contribute their own respective funds to accommodate any travel costs associated with participating on the task force. Teleconference and printing costs will be absorbed within existing budgets. The task force will utilize existing legislative staff to fulfill its reporting work.



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.

➤ STATE ◀

CIVIC EDUCATION

POLICY
FRAMEWORK



NOVEMBER 2014





KEY POLICY ELEMENTS

State policy is critically important to ensuring that every student in every school engages in high-quality civic learning as a part of a comprehensive P-20 educational experience. Effective state policies for civic education need to address the following key elements:

- ★ The *civic mission of schools* in a democratic society is to preserve and enhance democracy by cultivating students' care and concern for their communities and equipping students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to participate effectively in democratic life.
- ★ A revised paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is necessary to achieve the civic mission of schools.
- ★ A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements of instruction:
 - Standards and curricula for civic education at each grade level, P-20.
 - Inquiry-based instruction that results in informed action and demonstration of learning.
 - Integration of civic learning across all academic disciplines.
 - Teachers at all levels and in all courses who are well prepared to be civic educators.
- ★ A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements concerning continuous improvement and accountability:
 - Assessments of student progress toward civic learning outcomes used to measure student performance and inform instructional efforts.
 - Accountability indicators of teacher, school and district performance.
 - Measures of community impact.

A well-thought-out plan for developing and implementing these policy elements is critical for the success of civic education policymaking efforts.





SHIFTING THE PARADIGM

“All students — regardless of race or income, religion or political affiliation — must be prepared for informed, engaged participation in civic and democratic life. The challenges to reaching that ambitious goal are many but so are the rewards for our nation. Now is the crucible moment. Now is the time to advance civic learning and democratic engagement throughout American education.”⁷

A core purpose of education in our society is to preserve and enhance democracy by cultivating students' care and concern for their communities and equipping students with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in democratic life. The addition of *civic life* to student outcomes is a critical and necessary addition to contemporary education rhetoric and policy efforts. Indeed, education institutions will more completely fulfill their broad purposes when they focus on preparing students for college, career and civic life.

The prevailing paradigm for education, with its nearly exclusive focus on college and career readiness and accountability structures, however, is not well aligned with the civic mission of schools.⁸ A shift in this paradigm for education — and an associated realignment of education investments — is necessary to achieve this mission. ECS meeting participants outlined a set of shared beliefs that should undergird the educational system, its institutions, practices and outcomes. These shared beliefs include:

- ★ ***Equity for all:*** Regardless of background and social position, students have the right to an education that prepares them for full participation in democratic society.
- ★ ***Youth as a civic asset:*** Youth have critically important perspectives to offer to community improvement efforts. Youth are citizens with full rights and responsibilities and, as such, are expected to make positive contributions to their communities.
- ★ ***Schools as a civic asset:*** Schools contribute greatly to the long-term health of the community by preparing students to be productive citizens. Schools add value to the communities they serve.
- ★ ***Participatory institutional culture:*** Educational institutions ought to be models of the democratic societies — the “real world” — in which students are expected to participate.
- ★ ***Mutual and reciprocal responsibility for schooling:*** Schools, community members, government bodies, parents, families, students and businesses all share responsibility for schooling. Collaboration among these parties is essential for student success.
- ★ ***Fluidity between community and school:*** The doors of the 21st century schoolhouse are more open than in the past. The school and community both have assets that are valuable to each other, and each needs the other to fulfill obligations critical to their own success.
- ★ ***Preparation for democratic participation and development of deliberative character:*** A core purpose of education is to prepare students for participation in democratic processes and institutions through deliberation that is informed, civil, thoughtful, respectful and constructive.
- ★ ***Integration of civic learning throughout education:*** Regardless of subject, educators have an obligation to help students understand how they can apply their knowledge in ways that better serve their communities and their country.
- ★ ***Coordination across all educational levels:*** Standards and curricula should be coordinated across the entire P-20 continuum in order to fully support a pipeline that ensures all students are prepared for college, career and civic life.



Leaders from many levels, including policymakers, educators, students, parents and families, community members and businesses, can act upon these shared beliefs to implement effective policies, instructional strategies and programs for every level in the education continuum from early childhood through postsecondary.

The P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy (following page) represents this revised paradigm for education in which coordination across communities and the pre-K, K-12 and postsecondary systems provides students with the valuable, integrated civic learning opportunities that result in readiness for college, career and civic life for all students.

Built from the ground up, the P-20 Schoolhouse embodies this revised paradigm through a foundation of shared beliefs about an engaging and integrated approach to education that empowers youth. Built upon this foundation are:

- ★ Collaborative efforts by policymakers, community members, parents and families, and youth that help to shape instructional approaches and opportunities for civic learning.
- ★ Leadership that guides efforts to continuously strengthen and improve instruction and student and community outcomes.
- ★ Effective, integrated learning opportunities that prepare students for college, career and civic life and facilitate realization of the civic mission of schools.

The open doors of the P-20 Schoolhouse further reflect several guiding principles:

- ★ The entire P-20 system shares responsibility for implementing a seamless approach for students' civic learning.
- ★ Learning occurs both inside and outside of schools; the community is a valuable asset to student learning, and students are a valuable asset in supporting health and vibrancy of their communities.

Each floor of the P-20 Schoolhouse is critical in supporting the desired outcome of readiness for college, career and civic life. Like any building, the second floor can't exist without the first, just as strong instructional programs can't exist without a clear intention of engagement or the involvement of youth voice.

The following sections include descriptions of key elements that support the fulfillment of the P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy. These elements are grouped into three broad categories:

- ★ Instruction.
- ★ Continuous improvement and accountability.
- ★ Strategies for policy development and implementation.

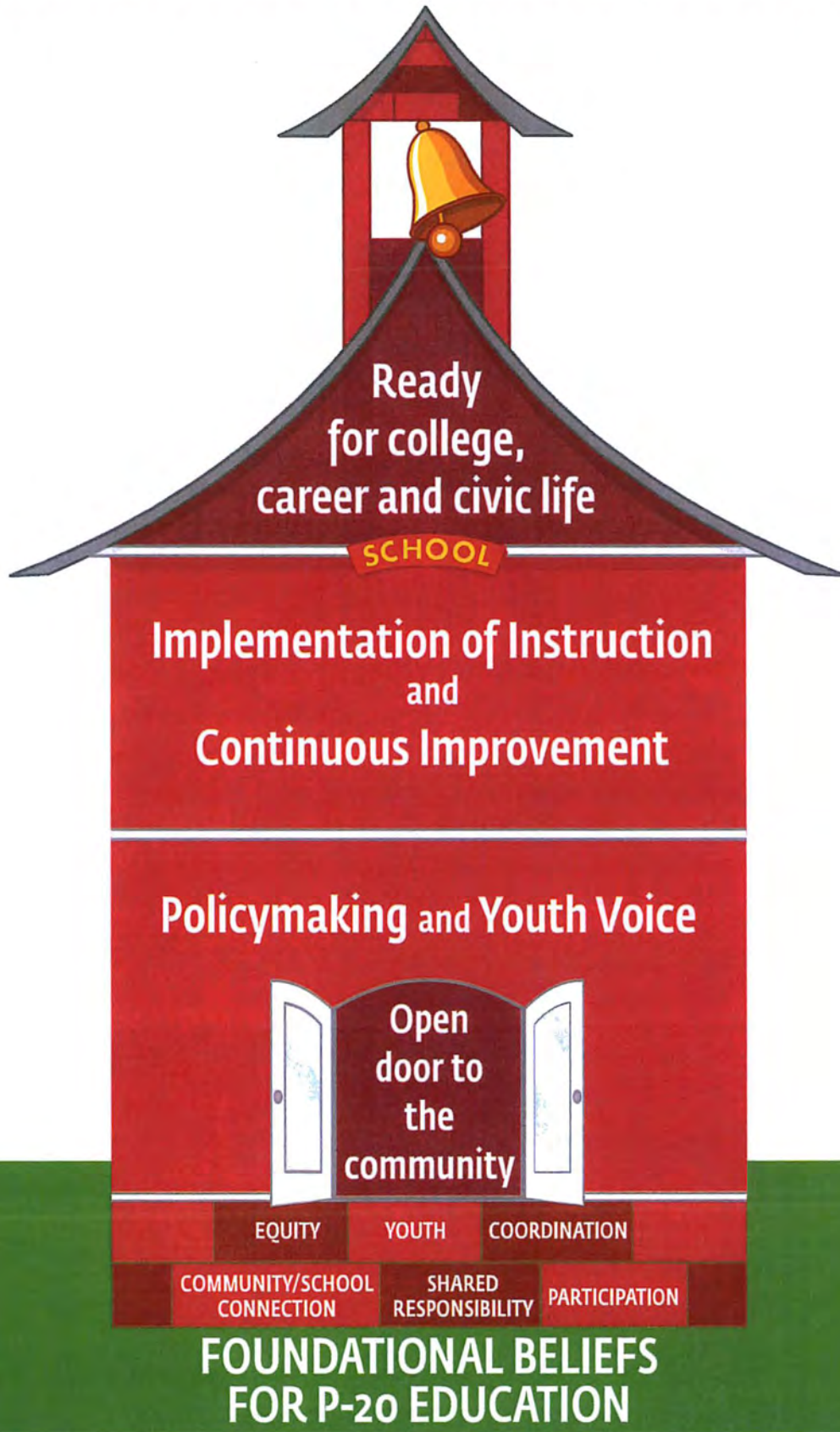
The guidelines provided in these sections represent the best ideas of civic education leaders and are informed by leading research on civic education. The Framework recommendations, therefore, are somewhat idealistic. Political realities and fiscal constraints in states likely will limit the extent to which any state may fully adopt the recommendations. The examples of policies included allow those who wish to use the Framework to see how some states have already made progress toward the ideals embodied here, as well as how they may be adopted in whole or in part and adapted to local circumstances.

“Indeed, education institutions will more completely fulfill their broad purposes when they focus on preparing students for college, career and civic life.”





P-20 Schoolhouse for 21st Century Democracy





INSTRUCTION

A comprehensive state civic education policy should address the following elements of instruction:

- ★ Standards and curricula for civic education at each grade level, P-20.
- ★ Inquiry-based instruction that results in demonstration of learning and informed action.
- ★ Integration of civic learning across all academic disciplines.
- ★ Teachers at all levels and in all subject areas who are well prepared to address civic learning in their classrooms.

Today's best practices for civic learning are far from the textbook-based high school civics classes that were dominant 25 years ago. Educators now have a better understanding that active civic learning — rather than just textbook learning — is essential to meeting the civic purposes of public education. Contemporary approaches to civic education, such as the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards (C3 Framework), which was developed by 15 professional organizations in the social studies field, call for consistent yet flexible student-centered and inquiry-based curricula and standards.⁹

POLICY GOAL

Research shows that one of the most significant ways that schools can foster youth civic engagement is by providing students with opportunities to engage in reflective civic action through their classes, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.¹⁰ As recommended in the C3 Framework, educators need training and professional development to provide resources for an engaging pedagogical model that includes:

- ★ Developing questions and planning inquiries.
- ★ Applying disciplinary tools and concepts.
- ★ Evaluating sources and using evidence.
- ★ Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.¹¹

This model is built on the recognition that, “Engagement in civic life requires knowledge and experience; children learn to be citizens by working individually and together as citizens.”¹² Such a model serves as a guide to improve teaching quality, an important factor to consider as states develop educator effectiveness policies.

RATIONALE

While states may acknowledge the importance of teacher effectiveness and civic learning in policy, in recent decades “civic education as a formal part of the curriculum that is translated into effective instruction just does not exist in many schools.”¹³ Short-term interventions are insufficient for developing quality instructional practices or preparing students for a lifetime of civic participation. Rather than a single course in civics during a student's senior year, educators must provide civic learning activities from preschool through college, informed by best practices that develop:

- ★ Civic knowledge, including knowledge of our systems of government and how it works.
- ★ Civic skills, including intellectual and participatory skills necessary for active civic life.
- ★ Civic dispositions and personal efficacy, including “interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues and behaviors.”¹⁴



Opportunities for students to engage in real-world learning activities can enhance the civic development of students and provide more authentic learning experiences. Research suggests that educators who base their pedagogy on providing these opportunities may better help students achieve greater levels of academic success and increased motivation.¹⁵ As suggested throughout this paper, states can help to ensure that schools provide such opportunities for all students through the standards they set and the assessments and accountability measures they choose.

FULFILLING THE GOAL

Civic learning is neither unidirectional (from teacher to student) nor is it tied to only one discipline or context; it must exist across a broad set of political and civic issues through active learning strategies. Successful implementation of engaging, student-centered curricula and standards requires well-prepared educators. Important components of professional development and teacher preparation that support the successful implementation of civics curricula include:

- ★ Mastering methods of engaged pedagogies and student-centered learning across academic disciplines.
- ★ Understanding how to use high-quality reflection and relevant assessment tools.
- ★ Fostering a tolerant educational climate.
- ★ Developing P-20 partnerships.
- ★ Leveraging community resources in support of civic engagement.

Teacher preparation and ongoing professional development embedded with the above elements builds a multi-faceted support network for students and enables student-centered learning throughout schools and in communities.





EXAMPLES

While state policy can drive instructional approaches, most states leave such decisions to school districts. Therefore, the following examples focus on the school and system level. They illustrate student-centered learning and engaged civic participation. Illinois' Democracy Schools demonstrate how local efforts can inspire state policy from the bottom up.

Democracy Schools, Illinois

<http://www.mccormickfoundation.org/page.aspx?pid=983>

Illinois' Democracy Schools promote and strengthen civic education through a systemwide initiative focused on secondary schools. The Illinois Civic Mission Coalition (ICMC) awards the distinction of "Democracy School" to schools that show a deep commitment to civic learning and the state's commitment to civic education is reflected by the increase in the number of Democracy Schools from four in 2006 to 22 in 2013.

Supported by the McCormick Foundation, Democracy Schools are part of a formalized network of teachers and administrators who, through sharing their experiences, strengthen their practices and help students better understand how civic education relates to the current challenges and controversies in their schools and beyond. To become a Democracy School, a team of faculty members and administrators must apply to ICMC. The application process includes a schoolwide civic assessment that shows evidence of how the school's courses, activities and policies offer high-quality civic learning opportunities. In addition to building a case for Democracy School recognition, prospective schools must identify gaps and articulate strategies to improve the quantity, quality and access to civic learning at the school. The McCormick Foundation civic program helps schools with the application by providing liaisons who can guide teams through the process.

While Democracy Schools were created without the directive of state law, they inspired a bottom-up approach to policy. Inspired by Democracy Schools, **Senate Resolution 149** (2011) encourages all Illinois' secondary schools to become Democracy Schools and requires that each district's report cards identify which schools are Democracy Schools and which are not.¹⁶

Constitution High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

<http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/schools/c/constitution>

Constitution High School is a citywide magnet school in Philadelphia. It employs an engaged pedagogy that teaches students active citizenship through participation and agency in school governance. A student house of representatives and faculty senate create and write laws, giving students a voice in their school and the power to affect change.¹⁷ The school's mission states that, "by engaging students with an appreciation for history and an understanding of the democratic principles embodied in the United States Constitution, this college preparatory high school will develop the next generation of engaged citizens and civic leaders in government, public policy and law."¹⁸



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

“Testing and accountability generally pose a dilemma for civic education. If we don’t test civic knowledge and skills, they become afterthoughts in education, especially in schools where lots of kids are at risk of failing the subjects that are tested.” ~ Peter Levine¹⁹

Thinkers’ Meeting participants identified the following elements of continuous improvement and accountability as critical components to a comprehensive state civic education policy:

- ★ Assessments of student progress toward civic learning outcomes used both for individual students and aggregated for subgroups of students that include some combination of the following:
 - Traditional standardized tests.
 - Alternative/authentic assessments (e.g., essays, projects, posters, presentations, etc.).
 - Experiential and project-based learning, including service-learning and action civics.
- ★ Accountability indicators of teachers, school and district performance, such as:
 - Student surveys (e.g., attitudes and dispositions, behaviors and practices, educator behaviors, school climate, etc.).
 - Educator surveys (e.g., regarding school climate, administrator supports, etc.).
 - Number and types of pre-service and in-service opportunities offered and taken.
 - Educator evaluations on indicators related to civic education (e.g., whether an educator supports open and respectful discourse in his/her classroom).
 - School-level measures (e.g., attendance, on-time graduation, bullying rates, etc.).
- ★ Measures of community involvement, including:
 - Community surveys (e.g., regarding student contributions to community, connection to the school, etc.).
 - Broader measures of community civic health (e.g., Civic Health Index).

The above elements are necessary for a continuous feedback cycle that supports the improvement of civic education outcomes for all students. Accountability measures have become more and more important in recent years as pressure has increased from policymakers and parents to understand how well schools are supporting student progress. Changes in school accountability policy require education leaders — now more than ever — to analyze which measures best signal the quality of civic education and how that information is used to support student and school performance.

POLICY GOAL

Ideally, continuous improvement is the ultimate goal that drives accountability models to improve student learning and system effectiveness. Successful models require multiple measures from multiple perspectives, captured by the elements above. Robust data allow policymakers and school leaders to make well-informed decisions to improve student achievement and develop effective feedback cycles for continuous improvement efforts.



RATIONALE

Well-designed assessments that have academic consequences have the potential to increase students' political knowledge. Assessments of civic learning have been shown to have a bearing on gains in students' civic knowledge, particularly among African American, Hispanic and immigrant youth.²⁰ Although high-stakes assessments and accountability measures are contentious issues across the education sector, the inclusion of civic education in state accountability policies may help to ensure that all students develop necessary civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. Further, such policies likely send the message that "preparation for active, informed citizenship is the co-equal purpose of education along with preparation for higher education and career."²¹

While traditional standardized testing is concrete in nature and can provide an accurate assessment of civic knowledge, performance-based assessments and qualitative indicators provide an important supplement to measure higher-order thinking skills and provide a more complete understanding of students' progress toward developing civic skills and dispositions. Therefore, a variety of assessment tools that measure the above civic outcomes, as well as broader school and community outcomes, are extremely useful for establishing favorable precedent for civic education, recognizing pockets of excellent practice and developing programs geared toward continuous improvement.

FULFILLING THE GOAL

An ECS 50-state civics policy scan shows that while all states have some requirement for civic education, only about half of the states assess student progress in this area and even fewer hold schools accountable for such learning.²² While assessment tools may take different forms, valid metrics are necessary if policymakers are to implement meaningful feedback loops and school improvement plans that parents and others can trust.

Although some states have implemented teacher and principal evaluation systems, student surveys, school climate surveys and/or social studies assessments that are incorporated into school and accountability frameworks, gaps remain in tying these metrics together to capture the big picture of civic learning and engagement. Preparing educators and administrators to use assessments effectively is critical to continuous improvement and overall accountability efforts. School leaders and educators need clear, succinct resources on the impact and importance of accountability measures.





EXAMPLES

Utah

Utah requires all districts and charter schools to submit annual reports to the lieutenant governor and Commission on Civic and Character Education. These reports must summarize how civic and character education are achieved in the school districts or charter schools through an integrated school curriculum and in the regular course of schoolwork (Utah Code Ann. § 53A-13-109). Further, the state board of education is required to report annually on how schools in the state are preparing students to “become informed and responsible citizens through an integrated curriculum taught in connection with regular school work.” (Utah Code Ann. § 53A-13-109[6])

Florida

Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, Florida will administer the first statewide civics end-of-course assessment (EOC). The civics EOC will count as 30 percent of the student’s grade (Fla. Stat. § 1008.22(3)(c)(2)(b)). Assessment results are included in each school’s accountability indicator (Fla. Stat. §1008.34(3)(c)(1)). Practice tests can be viewed through the Florida Department of Education’s ePAT site. While the EOC is the only legislated civic assessment, districts and schools also may choose to add their own alternative assessments. As reported in a recent American Enterprise Institute study, well-designed civic assessments that have academic consequences have the greatest impact on increasing political knowledge.²³

Tennessee

As a result of Tennessee **House Bill 2114** (2011), beginning with the 2012-13 school year, all school districts were required to implement a project-based assessment in civics at least once in grades 4 through 8, and at least once in grades 9 through 12. (Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-1028[d]). Tennessee is the first state to use projects for statewide assessment of civic education, an important step toward a more comprehensive assessment.

Tennessee’s policy is a clear example of how an assessment policy can reinforce the instructional practices outlined in the previous section of this paper. Projects must be student-influenced and involve an inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions. They promote a hands-on, practical approach to learning. Students work to develop solutions to the issues they are studying. According to a report by the Tennessee comptroller, project-based civic assessments differ from other state-mandated assessments because they are not standardized tests developed by vendors, but instead are to be developed and implemented by school districts. The law allows the Tennessee Department of Education to seek assistance from appropriate outside entities, including the Tennessee Center for Civic Learning and Engagement, to assist with professional development on the use of project-based assessments of civic learning. The General Assembly appropriated a one-time allocation of \$100,000 to implement Public Chapter No. 1036.²⁴

A variety of assessments are available for states to use to measure students’ civic learning and engagement (see Appendix 5). While some measure political knowledge, others attempt to measure school environment and levels of civic participation.



STRATEGY FOR POLICY ENACTMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Most civic education initiatives begin with ambitious goals and good intentions. These goals are hard to accomplish without adequate time, resources and direction. Sustained engagement and targeted resources are critical in empowering marginalized groups who rarely have time to participate or to translate civic education into political, economic or social gains.²⁵

The Thinkers' Meeting brought together various stakeholders to develop suggestions for how states can drive improvement in civic learning outcomes for all students, P-20. The guidelines outlined in this report, either implemented gradually over time or with a few broad strokes, can help shift the culture of schools and communities to engage and empower individuals. Regardless of speed of adoption, a well-thought-out plan for policy enactment and implementation is critical to these tasks. With this in mind, meeting participants developed the following strategies for policy enactment and implementation:

- ★ **Frame the issue:** Clarify why the issue is important and be able to communicate to a variety of audiences: parents, families, students, the business community and policymakers.
- ★ **Develop a campaign plan:** Outline leadership and management structures, an outreach plan with clear timelines and accountability measures that identify evidence of success and areas of improvement.
- ★ **Build institutional supports:** Identify and secure an institutional “home” to operationalize the campaign. Key institutions may be: nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, state or jurisdictional departments of education, or governmental institutions.
- ★ **Recruit a bipartisan/nonpartisan coalition:** Engage a politically neutral but diverse coalition that reaches out to new constituencies.
- ★ **Find champions of civic education:** Consider high-profile advocates who are politically palatable, can build a constituency and can balance each other.
- ★ **Ongoing support and capacity building:** Create a plan for research, evaluation and continued support.

Historically, civic initiatives have not been considered a major priority in the greater landscape of education policy. Creating a hunger for civics is of great importance to achieving success. This hunger may come from a bottom-up approach, one that generates continuous dialogue with the public and presents a clear objective that is achievable, measurable and timely.



STATE EXAMPLES

The Florida College System Civics Literacy Initiative

Pointing to research that ties together academic performance and civic education, the Florida College System (FCS) Civics Literacy Initiative was inspired and championed by former Florida Gov. and U.S. Sen. Bob Graham. He gained the support of all 28 of the state's colleges, as well as stakeholders across the political spectrum.²⁶

The initiative is housed at the St. Petersburg College Institute for Strategic Policy Solutions and strives to:

- ★ Develop models to integrate civic literacy into cross-curriculum coursework.
- ★ Survey the FCS for best practices and establish an on-going clearinghouse to measure progress and share successes.
- ★ Embed civic literacy in the mission statements of the colleges in the FCS.
- ★ Develop a FCS Model Legislature.
- ★ Develop strategies to promote civic engagement among domestic and international immigrants and other special populations.²⁷

The initiative has been well received, and the college presidents continue to move forward in implementing its goals.

The Massachusetts Commission on Civic Learning and Engagement

As mandated by Senate Resolve 222 (2011), the Massachusetts Commission on Civic Learning and Engagement examined ways to improve civic learning in elementary and secondary education, higher education and adult education.²⁸ The final report advanced the state's civic mission by framing the issue, analyzing current civic initiatives and providing the legislature with recommendations for civic education frameworks. This commitment has been transformed into actionable policies, including the nation's first statewide civic learning outcomes for public institutions of higher education.²⁹

The Virginia Commission on Civics Education

Virginia approved its Commission on Civics Education (H.B. 364) in March 2014. Goals include educating students on the "importance of citizen involvement in a constitutional republic" and generally promoting the study of state and local government. The commission will submit an annual report to the governor and the General Assembly in addition to a review of its analysis and recommendations.



CONCLUSION

Far too often, civic education opportunities are minimized as schools prepare their students for math and reading standardized exams. One of the goals of this project was to foster a re-imagining of the structure of our education system so that civic education emerges as a priority, equally as important as college and career readiness. As *A Crucible Moment* declares, "It is time to bring two national priorities — career preparation and increased access and completion rates — together in a more comprehensive vision with a third national priority: fostering informed, engaged, responsible citizens."³⁰

To this end, NCLCE will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to:

- ★ Share the research and data critical to improving civic education from pre-K to postsecondary.
- ★ Identify policies that support civic education.
- ★ Offer technical assistance to states.

NCLCE recognizes a profound opportunity to work together with partner organizations to improve civic education in ways that will resonate for years. NCLCE's network is built on mutual trust and a clear vision of creating positive changes together so that all students, pre-K through postsecondary, have the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to participate effectively in democratic life and contribute to their communities.

The appendices to this paper include numerous resources aimed at reinvigorating the civic mission of schools. We invite you to contact our center, as well, for support with civic education policymaking in your state.



APPENDIX 1

CIVIC EDUCATION DEFINED

The term *civic learning* is used to emphasize the civic significance of preparing students with knowledge and for action. Today's education for democracy needs to be informed by deep engagement with the values of liberty, equality, individual worth, open-mindedness and the willingness to collaborate with people of differing views and backgrounds toward common solutions for the public good.³¹ These qualities are not automatically transmitted to the next generation — they must be passed down through schools. Ultimately, schools are the guardians of democracy.³²

CIVIC COMPETENCIES

Civic competency includes not only civic knowledge, but also civic skills and dispositions.

- ★ **Civic Content Knowledge:** Civic content includes both core knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge to different circumstances and settings.
- ★ **Civic Skills – Intellectual:** Intellectual civic skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze and explain matters of concern in civic life.
- ★ **Civic Skills – Participatory:** Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to cope in groups and organizational settings, interface with elected officials and community representatives, communicate perspectives and arguments, and plan strategically for civic change.
- ★ **Civic Dispositions:** Civic dispositions encompass interpersonal and intrapersonal values, virtues and behaviors (respect for others, commitment to equality, capacity for listening, capacity to communicate in ways accessible to others, etc.).³³

THE SIX PROVEN PRACTICES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

- ★ **Classroom instruction:** Schools should provide instruction in government, history, economics, law and democracy.
- ★ **Discussion of current events and controversial issues:** Schools should incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
- ★ **Service-learning:** Schools should design and implement programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
- ★ **Extracurricular activities:** Schools should offer opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom.
- ★ **School governance:** Schools should encourage student participation in school governance.
- ★ **Simulations of democratic processes:** Schools should encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.³⁴



APPENDIX 2

CIVIC ASSESSMENT DATA

Results from NAEP show students across all grade levels have a less-than-adequate grasp of the skills and knowledge necessary to engage as citizens. For example:

- ★ Only one-third of Americans could name all three branches of government; one-third couldn't name any.
- ★ Just over a third thought that it was the intention of the Founding Fathers to have each branch hold a lot of power, but the president has the final say.
- ★ Just under half of Americans (47 percent) knew that a 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court carries the same legal weight as a 9-0 ruling.
- ★ Almost a third mistakenly believed that a U.S. Supreme Court ruling could be appealed.
- ★ When the Supreme Court divides 5-4, roughly one in four (23 percent) believed the decision was referred to Congress for resolution; 16 percent thought it needed to be sent back to the lower courts.³⁵

APPENDIX 3

CIVIC EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE STATES

State Policy	Number of States
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state standards	All states and the District of Columbia
Civics or citizenship education included in curriculum frameworks	44 states and the District of Columbia
Civics or citizenship education included as high school graduation requirement	All states and the District of Columbia
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in other state statutes	48 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state administrative codes	24 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state assessments	33 states
Social studies included as a required state assessment	23 states
Social studies included as a test students are required to pass in order to graduate high school	10 states
Civics, citizenship education, or social studies included in state accountability system	24 states

Source: Molly Ryan and Paul Baumann, *Legislative Updates*, Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2013), <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/08/99/10899.pdf> (accessed September 19, 2014), 1-2.



APPENDIX 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS FROM THE *CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS REPORT*³⁶

- ★ Send a strong message that preparation for active, informed citizenship is the co-equal purpose of education along with preparation for higher education and career (as is stated in most states' constitutions or education establishment codes). State policies should be aligned accordingly.
- ★ Work together to develop common state standards and assessments in the social studies through a state-led effort.
- ★ Hold schools and districts accountable for student civic learning achievement by including civic learning in state assessments and accountability measures.
- ★ Combat the narrowing of the curriculum that reduces civic learning, especially in low-performing schools.
- ★ Include civic learning in broader education reform efforts.
- ★ Review existing standards in social studies to ensure they are meaningful, focused, realistic and reflect thoughtful priorities for civic learning.
- ★ Ensure the inclusion of the proven practices in this report in all schools in the state.
- ★ Identify and include indicators/metrics for state longitudinal data systems specific to civic learning.
- ★ Include social studies/civic learning in district and school "report cards" and other public reports of school achievement.
- ★ Strengthen pre-service and licensure/accreditation requirements for social studies/civic learning teachers to ensure mastery of subject matter and confidence in use of the proven practices in this report.
- ★ Require and support high-quality ongoing professional development for all social studies/civic learning teachers.
- ★ Ensure that civic learning is taught at each grade level, utilizing an interdisciplinary approach.
- ★ Fully fund civic learning, even if that means reallocating other resources if necessary to meet the essential civic mission of schools.



APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE ASSESSMENTS

- ★ *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)*: Measures multiple elements, including an orderly school environment parent/community involvement, collaboration within the school and instructional practices. <http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php>
- ★ *California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)*: Assesses school connectedness, opportunities for meaningful participation and perceptions of safety across elementary, middle and high school. <http://chks.wested.org>
- ★ *Communities That Care Youth Survey*: Gathers data on school, community, family, and peer risk and protective factors related to perceptions of school climate. <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/CTC020/CTC020.pdf>
- ★ *Colorado's social studies assessments*: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/newassess-sum>
- ★ *NCLCE Civic Assessment Database*: The database contains questions categorized by national civics standards that have been juried by civic learning experts for their clarity and meaningfulness in relation to the competencies of civic knowledge, skills and dispositions. http://www.ecs.org/Qna/splash_new.asp





APPENDIX 6

THINKERS' MEETING ATTENDEES

August 11-13, 2014 | Denver, Colorado

Susan Abravanel

President, Susan Abravanel Consulting, LLC

Kelita Svoboda Bak

CEO, National Youth Leadership Council

Lisa Bardwell

President & CEO, Earth Force

Lyla Berg

Founder, Kids Voting Hawaii

John Bonaiuto

Former Director, Nebraska Association of School Boards

Mary Ellen Daneels

Teacher, West Chicago Community High School

James Dillard

Virginia State Board of Education, Chair, Virginia Commission on Civic Education

Doug Dobson

Executive Director, The Lou Frey Institute

Barbara Ferman

Professor of Political Science, Director, University Community Collaborative, Temple University

Bill Fulton

Founder and Executive Director, The Civic Canopy

Karen Gross

President, Southern Vermont College

Shawn Healy

Civic Learning and Engagement Scholar, Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Michelle Herczog

President, National Council for the Social Studies

Deion Jordan

Student, Connecticut College

Andrew Kerr

Senator, State of Colorado

John McCarthy

Executive Director, Future Civic Leaders

Les Francis

Chair, Federal Policy Task Force, Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

Barbara Miller

Executive Director, Center for Education in Law and Democracy

Connor Pfeiffer

Student, Princeton University

David Skaggs

Former U.S. Congressman

Stephanie Schooley

Executive Director, Campus Compact of the Mountain West

Andrew Seligsohn

President, Campus Compact

Britt Wilkenfeld

Strategic Data Fellow, Colorado Department of Education

Paul Baumann

Director, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States

Brady Delander

Communications Specialist, Education Commission of the States

Lisa Guilfoile

Project Specialist, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States

Maria Millard

Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States

Leslie Hamdorf

Intern, National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, Education Commission of the States



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Education Commission
of the States

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

STATES ENACTING LAWS OR POLICIES PROMOTING CIVICS EDUCATION

	STATE	ABBR	2005 - 1995 -		TOTAL		STATE	ABBR	2005 - 1995 -		TOTAL
			2014	2004					2014	2004	
1	<u>Virginia</u>	VA	8	7	15	26	<u>Hawaii</u>	HI	3	0	3
2	<u>Utah</u>	UT	9	5	14	27	<u>North Carolina</u>	NC	3	0	3
3	<u>Illinois</u>	IL	9	2	11	28	<u>Georgia</u>	GA	1	2	3
4	<u>Arizona</u>	AZ	7	4	11	29	<u>New Hampshire</u>	NH	1	2	3
5	<u>California</u>	CA	7	4	11	30	<u>Montana</u>	MT	2	0	2
6	<u>Colorado</u>	CO	3	6	9	31	<u>Indiana</u>	IN	1	1	2
7	<u>Kentucky</u>	KY	3	6	9	32	<u>Kansas</u>	KS	1	1	2
8	<u>Louisiana</u>	LA	6	2	8	33	<u>South Dakota</u>	SD	1	1	2
9	<u>Tennessee</u>	TN	6	2	8	34	<u>West Virginia</u>	WV	1	1	2
10	<u>Iowa</u>	IA	2	5	7	35	<u>Idaho</u>	ID	0	2	2
11	<u>Texas</u>	TX	1	6	7	36	<u>Missouri</u>	MO	0	2	2
12	<u>Arkansas</u>	AR	0	7	7	37	<u>Massachusetts</u>	MA	1	0	1
13	<u>Maryland</u>	MD	4	2	6	38	<u>New Jersey</u>	NJ	1	0	1
14	<u>Washington</u>	WA	5	0	5	39	<u>New Mexico</u>	NM	1	0	1
15	<u>Oklahoma</u>	OK	3	2	5	40	<u>New York</u>	NY	1	0	1
16	<u>Rhode Island</u>	RI	3	2	5	41	<u>North Dakota</u>	ND	1	0	1
17	<u>Florida</u>	FL	1	4	5	42	<u>South Carolina</u>	SC	1	0	1
18	<u>Alabama</u>	AL	0	5	5	43	<u>Vermont</u>	VT	1	0	1
19	<u>Nevada</u>	NV	4	0	4	44	<u>Wisconsin</u>	WI	1	0	1
20	<u>Oregon</u>	OR	4	0	4	45	<u>Alaska</u>	AK	0	1	1
21	<u>Minnesota</u>	MN	2	2	4	46	<u>Delaware</u>	DE	0	1	1
22	<u>Ohio</u>	OH	2	2	4	47	<u>Pennsylvania</u>	PA	0	1	1
23	<u>Connecticut</u>	CT	1	3	4	48	<u>Michigan</u>	MI	0	0	0
24	<u>Maine</u>	ME	1	3	4	49	<u>Nebraska</u>	NE	0	0	0
25	<u>Mississippi</u>	MS	0	4	4	50	<u>Wyoming</u>	WY	0	0	0

Prepared by the Office of Senator Gary Stevens

Source: Education Commission of the States



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NEWS

Polling Demonstrates Inconsistent Public Knowledge About Election Policy

January 15, 2014

Election Initiatives

[Return to Election Data Dispatches](#)

Polling conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and the Mellman Group for The Pew Charitable Trusts indicates that many voters are not well-informed about election policies. Early voting is the area in which survey respondents demonstrated the most accurate knowledge. Of particular note, voters in states that allow Election Day registration knew more about their registration options than those in states that do not allow it.

Among registered voters living in states with early voting:

- 11 percent did not realize that their state offered the option of voting early.
- 11 percent were unsure whether early voting was available in their state.

Among registered voters living in states where no excuse is necessary to request an absentee ballot:

- 10 percent believed that they would need to provide an excuse to vote absentee.

- 30 percent did not know whether no-excuse absentee voting was allowed in their state.

In states that allow citizens to register and vote at the polls on Election Day:

- 16 percent believed their state did not allow Election Day registration.
- 14 percent did not know whether Election Day registration was offered in their state.

In states that do not allow voters to register on Election Day:

- 26 percent thought that they could register and vote on Election Day.
- 30 percent did not know whether Election Day registration was allowed.

These data come from a national sample of 1,001 registered voters contacted Sept. 18-26, 2013. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.10 percentage points.

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TOPICS

Election Administration, Governing

PROJECTS

Election Initiatives

1-in-10 Americans don't give a hoot about politics

July 7, 2014 By [George Gao](#)

As Republicans and Democrats gear up for midterm elections this November, there's one group of Americans that is paying very little, if any, attention to the whole ordeal.

Overall, 10% of Americans are what we call Bystanders, or the politically disengaged, according to Pew Research Center's [Political Typology report](#). None of this cohort say they're registered to vote, and none say they follow government and public affairs most of the time (this compares with 48% of Americans overall). Virtually all of this group (96%) say they've never contributed money to a candidate running for public office.

In our typology, we [categorized Americans](#) into eight groups—among them, Solid Liberals and Steadfast Conservatives—using [23 questions](#) about a wide range of political values. Most of the analysis is focused on seven main groups in the political typology that are defined by these political values. But the Bystanders, defined by their lack of political engagement, give a glimpse of the views of those on the political sidelines. (Note: For that reason, it is not possible in our [online quiz](#) to be categorized as a Bystander.)

Who are the political typology groups?

While Bystanders view the Democratic Party more favorably than the GOP, they have a mix of liberal and conservative attitudes. They are sympathetic to the plight of the poor, but as many say that government aid to the poor does more harm than good as vice versa. They express fairly liberal views on homosexuality and same-sex marriage, but 54% say abortion should be illegal in all or most cases.

Bystanders are young (38% are under 30), and nearly a third (32%) are Hispanic. A third of Bystanders are foreign born, a higher share than any of the other typology groups, including 29% total who are not citizens.

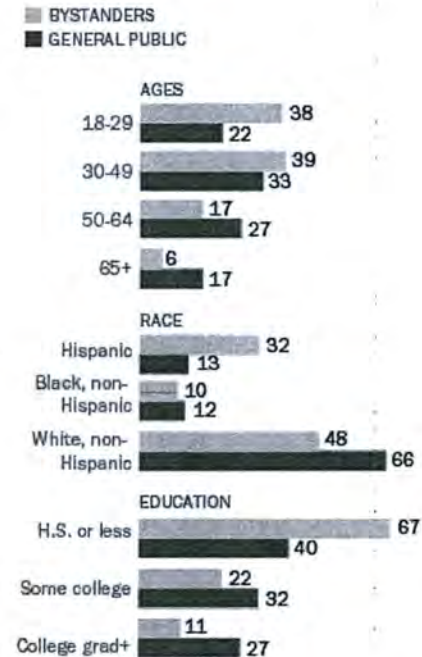
Asked about their interest in a number of topics, 73% of Bystanders say they have no interest in government and politics, and two-thirds (66%) say they are not interested in business and finance. So what topics do interest them? Health, science and celebrities: 64% of Bystanders are interested in celebrities and entertainment (vs. 46% of the public). And, in a sign of their youth, they are drawn to video games: 35% call themselves a “video or computer gamer” (vs. 21% of the public).

In our survey, Bystanders were often more likely than other political cohorts to answer “don't know,” to say they've “never heard of” the topic in question or to refuse to answer questions altogether.

What's your political typology? Take [our quiz](#) to find out.

A Profile of Political Bystanders

Percent who are...



Note: Bystanders are not registered to vote, say they seldom or never vote and do not follow government and public affairs most of the time. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding. Don't know responses not shown. Other/Mixed race not shown.

Source: 2014 Political Typology
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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.

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/>

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 - Dunce-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"

Students, Citizens and Our Nation's Future

Alaska State Senate Finance Committee
Hearing on SCR1
March 25, 2015

Michael Poliakoff

American Council of Trustees and Alumni



ACTA
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF
TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI

James Madison 1822

Learned Institutions ought to be favorite objects with every free people. They throw that light over the public mind which is the best security against crafty & dangerous encroachments on the public liberty. ...

What spectacle can be more edifying or more seasonable, than that of Liberty & Learning, each leaning on the other for their mutual & surest support?

National Perspectives on Historical Illiteracy
ACTA, *Losing America's Memory* (February 2000)

Survey of 556 college seniors at the “Top 25” National Universities and the “Top 25” National Liberal Arts Colleges.

- Beavis and Butthead 99% identified correctly
- Snoop Doggy Dog 98% identified correctly
- George Washington as general at Yorktown 34% identified correctly
- James Madison as Father of the Constitution 23% identified correctly
- Abraham Lincoln as author of the words:
“Government of the people, by the people,
for the people” 22% identified correctly

It Gets Worse

● Results of a 2012 survey of recent college graduates
(GfK Custom Research North America)

How Long Are Terms for Members of Congress?
38.4% identified correctly

● **Who is Lady Gaga?** **96.2% identified correctly**

Cause and Effect ...

ACTA'S Study of the Core Curriculum:
What Will They Learn? TM

82% of four-year colleges and universities do **not** require foundational study of American history or government



CELEBRATING **20** YEARS
PROMOTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM & EXCELLENCE

To be ignorant of history, wrote Cicero, is to be a child forever. Centuries later, Thomas Jefferson admonished our young republic that freedom and ignorance can never exist together.

American higher education has generally abandoned its obligation to prepare graduates who have the knowledge and understanding to take up meaningful roles in our free society. ACTA is working hard to change that.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

Understanding the Problem

Our first task is to help the American public and higher education trustees and policymakers understand the extent of the problem. In 1999 ACTA commissioned the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut to survey seniors at the nation's 55 most prestigious colleges and universities to see if they could answer basic questions on the nation's history. These questions were typical of a standard high school curriculum, many of them replicating questions from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The shocking results—81% of these seniors from elite institutions received the equivalent of a “D” or “F”—would soon reverberate through the U.S. Capitol itself.

"History is a discipline in decline. There is a profound ignorance not only among students but among their teachers as well. This study confirms that."

— **Oscar Handlin, University Professor Emeritus at Harvard University**

On President's Day, February 21, 2000, ACTA reported the findings in its report, *Losing America's Memory. Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century.* with the endorsement of historian David McCullough. Congress moved quickly. On June 30 of that year, Concurrent Resolution 129, introduced by Senator Joseph Lieberman on behalf of Senators Gorton, Smith, Cleland, Byrd, Conrad, Bennett, and Grams, and unanimously adopted, took note of ACTA's survey. The Concurrent Resolution called for boards of trustees and college administrators, as well as state officials responsible for public higher education, to review their standards and add requirements for the study of United States history.

What Will They Learn?™ Project

ACTA continues to monitor the state of historical knowledge among college students. The What Will They Learn?™ project takes note of which schools require American history or government and which do not. In 2012, we commissioned Gfk Roper OmniTel to [survey college graduates](#) again. Unfortunately, the findings were as dismal as the initial survey. Only 17% of college graduates could identify Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as the source of the phrase, "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." Only 20% could identify James Madison as the "Father of the Constitution." Nearly two-thirds were unaware that the term of a U.S. Senator is six years, and 43% could not even identify the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Engaging the Public, Trustees, and Policymakers

In 2012, ACTA testified before the U.S. Congress, endorsing the restoration of a day of commemoration on George Washington's actual birthday. In 2008, ACTA coordinated the publication and release of *E Pluribus Unum*, a report by The Bradley Project designed to start a conversation about America's National Identity. The product of a two-year study involving a number of our nation's leading academics, public figures, journalists, educators and policy experts, it has attracted hundreds of thousands of viewers to its [website](#). In 2003, with support from the Daniels Foundation, ACTA quickly responded to a call from civic leaders and scholars at the White House Forum on American History, Civics, and Service and issued [*We the People, A Resource Guide to Promoting Historical Literacy for Governors, Legislators, Teachers, and Citizens*](#). Through op-eds and newspaper opinion pieces, ACTA reminds the public of all that our nation loses if it forgets its past. We are in constant contact with trustees, making them aware of the need to ensure a general education requirement for all students that ensures their basic understanding of this nation and its free institutions. And little by little, colleges and universities are rising to the challenge.



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?*TM 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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JOE FOSS INSTITUTE



CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

Restoring civics education and
ensuring that all High School graduates
are ready for active, engaged citizenship.

The Goal: Preparing for Active & Engaged Citizenship

The Strategy: The Civics Education Initiative



CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

The Joe Foss Institute was established:

To educate our youth on the importance of America's unique freedoms, and
To to inspire them to public service.

The Civics Education Initiative is a project of the Joe Foss Institute, with the goal of passing legislation in all 50 states by September 17, 2017 – the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires high school students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of US history and civics, from the United States Citizenship Civics Test – *the test all new US citizens must pass*.

The Civics Education Initiative is a first step to ensure all students are taught basic civics about how our government works, and who we are as a nation...things every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship.

Nationwide Voter Survey

Polling Methodology



The Joe Foss Institute commissioned a nationwide survey conducted by Wilson Perkins Allen Opinion Research (WPA)

- Fielded April 22-24, 2014
- N= 804 Likely Voters
- MoE=+/- 3.5% in 95 out of 100 cases.

WPA selected a random sample of likely voters nationwide using Random Digit Dialing. The sample for this survey was stratified based on geography, age, gender, ethnicity, and education.

The exact language for the two questions highlighted in this presentation were:

“Some have proposed that high school students must pass a civics test in order to graduate. Would you vote yes or no on an initiative to require high school students to pass the same civics exam that all immigrants must pass to become US citizens, in order to graduate?”

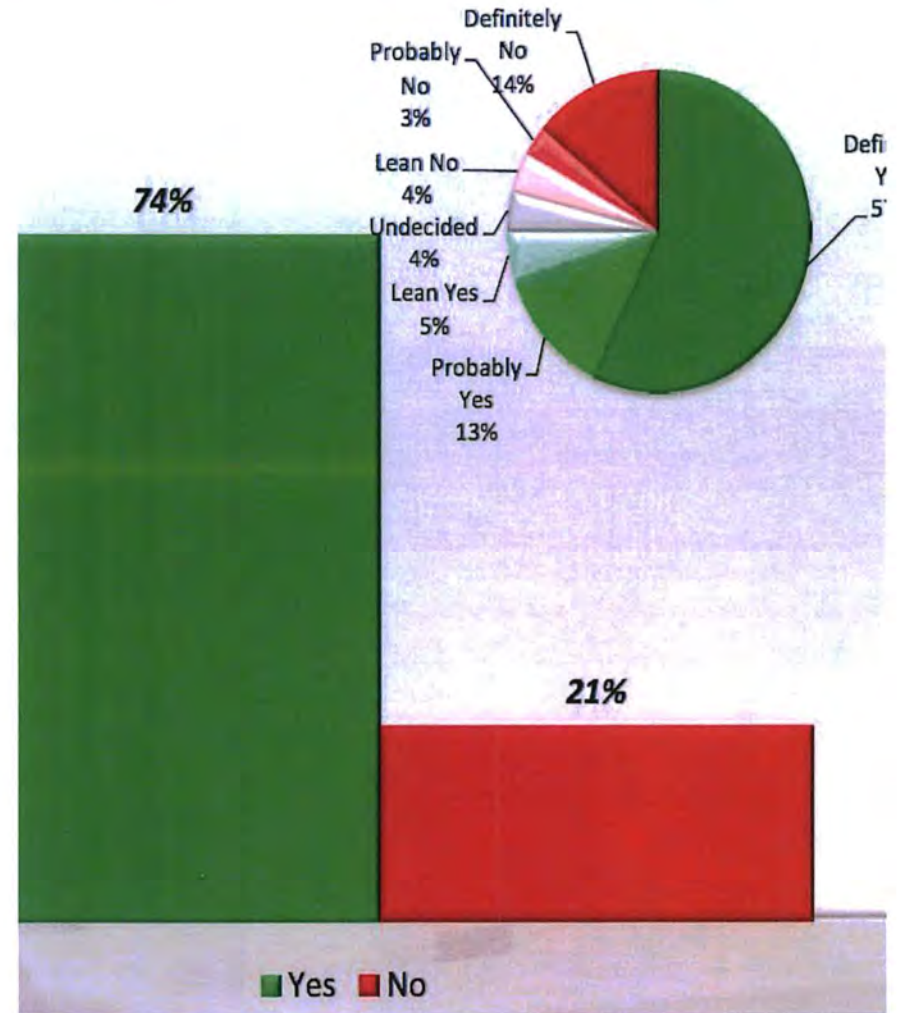
“If you knew that a legislator from your state supported a proposal like this, would you be ROTATE more likely or less likely to vote for them?”

The Civics Education Initiative

Overwhelmingly Supported by Voters

Overall 74% of voters support the Civics Education Initiative. Every demographic group tested shows support at or above 60%, with 57% of all voters saying "Definitely Yes." Yes/No differential is +53!

	YES	NO	Diff
All	74%	21%	+53
Men	78%	19%	+59
Women	71%	24%	+47
Republican	84%	13%	+71
Independent	75%	21%	+54
Democrat	68%	27%	+41
Romney Voters	81%	16%	+65
Obama Voters	69%	25%	+44
White	76%	20%	+56
Hispanic	76%	22%	+54
African American	60%	32%	+28
West	81%	14%	+67
South	73%	22%	+51
Midwest	74%	22%	+52
North East	68%	28%	+40

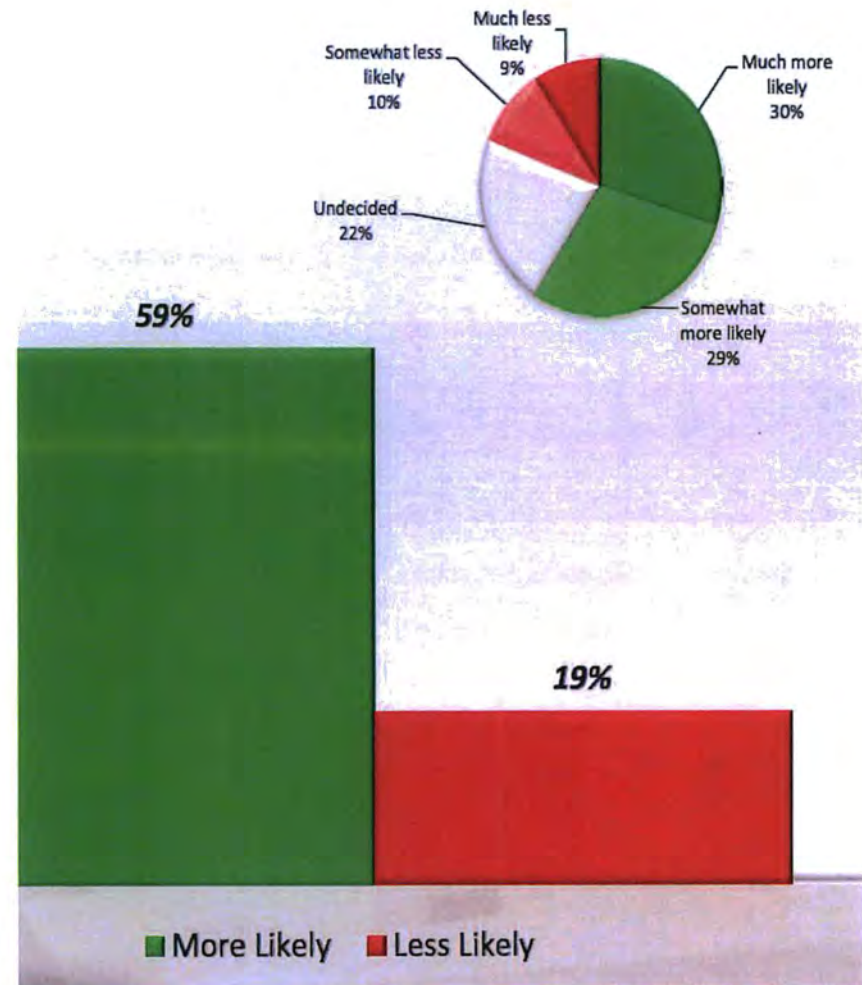


The Civics Education Initiative

Voters Much More Likely to Vote for Supportive Legislators

Voters are overwhelmingly much more likely to support a Legislator that backs the Civics Education Initiative. Overall, the support/oppose factor is nearly 4-to-1.

	More Likely	Less Likely	Diff
All	60%	16%	+44
Men	62%	15%	+47
Women	59%	18%	+41
Republican	71%	8%	+63
Independent	62%	17%	+45
Democrat	53%	21%	+32
Romney Voters	68%	12%	+56
Obama Voters	55%	19%	+36
White	64%	15%	+49
Hispanic	57%	16%	+41
African American	49%	28%	+21
West	60%	12%	+48
South	64%	17%	+47
Midwest	57%	17%	+40
North East	59%	19%	+40



The Civics Education Initiative

Targeting 15 States, with a Goal of Passage in 10 in 2015

- Our goal is passage in all 50 States by September 17, 2017 – the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

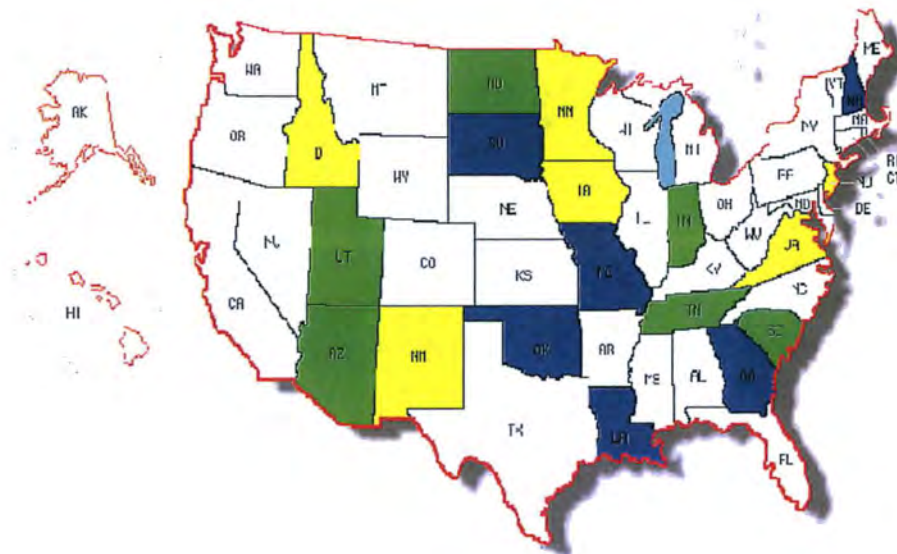
For 2015, we will target 15 states with the goal of passage in 10 states by legislative enactment.

- For 2016, we will target 25 states with the goal of passage in 20 states, including passage at the ballot box in at least one state, by initiative or legislative referral.

For 2017, we will target the remaining states for legislative enactment.

Civics Education Initiative 2015

- - Ballot (6)
- - Good (6)
- - Referral (3)



Source: dynamis (C)



JOE FOSS INSTITUTE



CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

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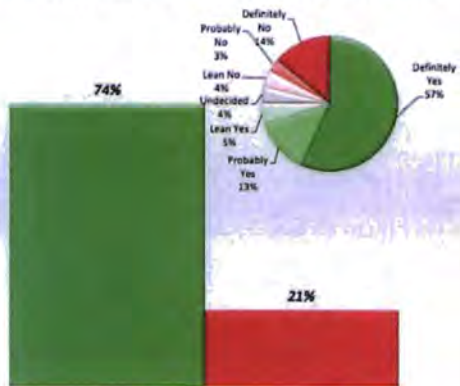
CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

Restoring civics education and ensuring that all High School graduates are ready for active, engaged citizenship.

The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires High School students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of U.S. history and civics taken from the United States Citizenship Civics Test – ***the test all immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship must pass.*** Yet, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 24 percent of U.S. high school students are proficient in civics, and studies by the Annenberg Foundation show that a third of U.S. citizens can't name even one branch of our federal government. That's why the **Joe Foss Institute** created **The Civics Education Initiative**.

The Civics Education Initiative legislation allows individual schools to administer the test in a way the school deems as adequate to ensure the requirements are followed. Students may take the test any time during their high school careers and may take the test as many times as necessary to pass. By using this well---established test and the study materials that are already easily available online and for free, CEI legislation has next to no implementation costs.



Overall, 74% of voters support the **Civics Education Initiative**. Every demographic group tested shows support at or above 60%, with 57% of all voters saying "Definitely Yes!"

	YES	NO	+/- Difference
All	74%	21%	+53
Men	78%	19%	+59
Women	71%	24%	+47
Republican	84%	13%	+71
Independent	75%	21%	+54
Democrat	68%	27%	+41
White	76%	20%	+56
Hispanic	76%	22%	+54
African American	60%	32%	+28

The Civics Education Initiative is a first step to ensure all students are taught basic civics about how our government works, and who we are as a nation...things every student should know to be ready for active, engaged citizenship.



The Civics Education Initiative National Board of Advisors includes former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Pulitzer winning journalist Carl Bernstein and award winning actor Joe Mantegna.

The Civics Education Initiative is a project of the Joe Foss Institute, with the goal of passing legislation in all 50 states by September 17, 2017 – the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

For further information please contact:

Executive Director Sam Stone at 480-745-8237 or Sam@CivicsEducationInitiative.com

www.CivicsEducationInitiative.com



CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What problem is addressed by the Civics Education Initiative?

A. *Too few citizens know and understand basic American civics - how our government works and who we are as a nation. By example, according to the Pew Research Center, only about one-third of Americans can name the three branches of government, much less say what each does.*

Q. What is the impact of this lack of civics knowledge?

A. *If you don't know how our government works, you're not likely to be an active and engaged citizen. It's no wonder so few citizens vote, given this lack of basic civics knowledge.*

Q. Why isn't civics being better taught in our schools today?

A. *Education funding is increasingly tied to high-stakes testing on reading, math and science, with a particular focus on STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering, math. While important, this emphasis is leaving civics as a secondary subject or in some cases, not being taught all together.*

Q. How does the Civics Education Initiative address this problem?

A. *The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires High School students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of US history and civics taken from the United States Citizenship Civics Test – the test all immigrants applying for US citizenship must pass.*

Q. How do immigrants taking the test compare to our own High School students?

A. *According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), 92% of immigrants who take the required civics test for citizenship pass. Yet studies by the Annenberg Foundation show that a third of all U.S. citizens can't name even one branch of our federal government.*

Q. Why use this specific USCIS US Citizenship Civics test?

A. *We already require by Federal law that new citizens must learn these 100 facts so they can be prepared to be active and engaged citizens. By using this well-established test, there is no cost to develop a new test, next to no cost involved to administer the test, and a myriad of study materials for this test already exist.*

Q. What does the Civics Education Initiative legislative language specifically say?

A. *All (State) High School students, attending any public or charter school, or a student seeking a general educational development (GED) equivalency, shall, as a condition of High School graduation or its equivalency, take and receive a passing grade on the United States Citizenship Civics Test, produced by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The test shall be the specific 100-questions used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and administered to all applicants for US citizenship. High School students shall be tested on all 100 questions, with a minimum score of 60% being required for passage. High School Students may take the test as many times as necessary for passage, but must pass the test prior to receiving a certificate of High School graduation or a GED equivalency. All (State) schools shall certify that a student has taken the test and received a passing grade on the test, in a way it deems as adequate to ensure the requirements of this Act are followed.*

Q. Is the Civics Education Initiative a popular idea?

A. *Overwhelmingly so! A recent national survey showed 74 percent of likely voters support or strongly support the Civics Education Initiative, including overwhelming support among Men – 78%, Women – 71%, Republicans – 84%, Independents – 75%, Democrats – 68%, Anglos – 76%, Hispanics – 76%, and African American – 60%.*

Q. Who is promoting the Civics Education Initiative effort?

A. *The Civics Initiative www.CivicsEducationInitiative.com is project of the Joe Foss Institute www.JoeFossInstitute.org as part of its continuing efforts to promote an appreciation for America's freedoms, public service, patriotism and integrity. The Civics Education Initiative National Board of Advisors includes former US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Pulitzer winning journalist Carl Bernstein and award winning actor Joe Mantegna.*

Q. What are the goals and timing of the Civics Education Initiative?

A. *The Civics Education Initiative has as its goal the enactment of legislation in all 50 states by September 17th 2017 – the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.*



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.

I salute the chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee. I am Stuart Thompson—an Alaska citizen living in Senator Huggins district—acting on behalf of myself and posterity in support of Senator Stevens SCR 1. I have carefully prepared 3 minute testimony that succinctly supplements what I've already communicated. Start of my testimony.

My previous testimony on record covered clear justification for launching a legislative task force on civics education, and suggested amendments that would strengthen results from that task force. Some of these amendments apparently have already found favor with Senator Stevens. I am happy to contribute.

There are two matters I shall cover today. One is why I apparently come across as a mad-dog before you. The other is arming you against intimidation from Alaska's apparent fiscal troubles in the pursuit of your duties under Article 7 of the Alaska Constitution.

First why do I seem to come across as a mad-dog? There are two well-evidenced principles about all government that clarify matters. To save time, consider the simplest one

Currently, citizens are expected to just voice their concerns and mere opinions about bills—easily accomplished in three minutes. So who am I to try to take time to testify on relevant facts, law, history, and bill improvements as if I was one of those so-called experts—who are allowed an hour or more for “presentations”? I testify the way I do because history teaches that multiple minds—organized even incrementally—do a better job of piecing together solutions than even a couple geniuses given the same task.. If it wasn't for this, democracies and republics like ours wouldn't ever have reason to come into existence! We'd all be living under Plato's philosopher kings, as advised by councils of investigators.

Second, if you think favorably of Senator Steven's SCR1, but are discouraged because of Alaska's fiscal troubles, take heart. I have five stand-alone solutions for financing SCR1's task force and even its eventual recommendations—all arising from our political heritage. None depend on “stealing from Peter to pay Paul”. Naturally, I don't have sufficient time to elaborate here and now, and finance is not under this committee's jurisdiction. But since past Legislatures have been weak in their fiduciary duties—thereby creating Alaska's current fiscal troubles—you senators should jointly urge Finance to show some humility and consider some outside-of-the box thinking.

So all I ask of this committee—beyond passing this bill out—is for its members to contrive making the Finance Committee give me 9 minutes to present my ideas for financing SCR1 and its inevitable task force recommendations. Senator Dunleavy, you might remind fellow Finance Committee members that the time-honored maxim for handling fiscal problems is creating additional income streams while concurrently cutting expenditures. And ask how they can deny my 9 minutes on that basis. Consequently if they balk or get egotistical, Senator Huggins can legitimately execute a maneuver as Rules Committee Chairman. He can threaten to bring this bill and my fiscal testimony to a Committee of the Whole—due to Finance Committee negligence.

As usual, I am faxing this testimony to the Committee, and as a courtesy I'll fax the prepared testimony I want to give to the Finance Committee as well. It doesn't matter which of my solutions to financing SCR1 gets utilized — they all achieve the same result. But what is criminal—I repeat criminal—is rejecting any and all solutions to a problem that I have drastically proven is inherently solvable. Good luck on your deliberations.

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I salute the chairman and members of the Senate Education Committee. I am Stuart Thompson—an Alaska citizen living in Senator Huggins district—acting on behalf of myself in support of Senator Stevens SCR 1. I have carefully prepared testimony that takes approximately 10 minutes to deliver. Senator Huggins can personally vouch for my communication discipline on the subject of civics. Mr. Chairman, may I proceed? Thank you.

Senator Stevens has provided a Sponsor Statement that explains the civics education problem and its initial legislative solution fairly well. However, as an informed citizen, I can be more forthcoming and explicit about rationale; and, lastly, needed amendments to SCR1 to achieve true results.

Throughout my testimony, I ask that listeners keep three education fundamentals in mind. They are 1) Education is not indoctrination, if citizen judgment and action is desired; 2) the greatest barrier to education is a student believing he already knows all he needs to know about what's being taught (covert in young people and overt in adults); and 3) government has a tendency to encourage ignorance in people. Founder Father Thomas Paine can elaborate on fundamental #3: "Reason and ignorance influence the bulk of mankind. If either of these can rendered sufficiently extensive in a country, the machinery of government goes easily on. Reason obeys itself; and Ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it."

First, let me assert the following: **The volume of true citizen participation in government of, for, and by the People is probably the most reliable test for the effectiveness of public education that could ever be.** Let me unpack that a bit. It's simple arithmetic that multiple minds coordinated to research and address problems will create better solutions than even a genius set to the same task. In other words, centralized power is more efficient at handling emergencies, while decentralized power, taking longer, is better at predicating and preventing those emergencies. This is part of the founder rationale behind American separation of powers. So, if you agree that education empowers problem solving and enhancing individual and social quality of life, the chronic problems and declining economic prosperity of our state and nation is proof positive that people are being under-educated in civics. This has naturally resulted in gradual abandonment of the practices of a constitutional republic— like even voting.

Second, let me expose a cold hard fact. The two forms of government that almost all Americans have the most instruction, experience, and practice at are monarchy and feudalism. As observed by Aristotle in his "Politics", the family is a natural monarchy—ranging from benevolent to tyrannical. So goes much of the workplace. For twelve years in school, every new citizen endures feudalism in its classic form. Whereas school should be a perfect place for hands-on learning about the responsibilities of freedom (and how to participate in the justice and methods of government that channels it), docility and will-less obedience is rewarded. Between monarchy in the home and feudalism in school, it's a wonder you get anybody to take civics seriously— despite the sincerity of civics teachers.

Third, the texts and social engineering that teachers are expected to adhere to completely sabotage making real sense of how to practice civics and to utilize our political heritage. Let me give a spectacular example. Contrary to the propagandized portrayal of America having government of, for and by the people, what actually gets conducted now is benevolent elected aristocracy (government by an elite). This is well revealed by the chronic vulnerability of American politicians to lobbyists and campaign donation blackmailing — typical of highly centralized forms of government. Naturally, politicians think it's best to make the hard decisions, as elected agents or officials, on behalf of everyone. This political definition of "represent" is supported by being in modern college-level dictionaries.

But there lies the problem. This definition of “represent” isn’t the one that was used by US founding fathers! Nor does it align with the Alaska Constitution’s Article I sections 1 & 2! The proof is simple. There were no English dictionaries available to people in America’s formative years. Educated people then were also conversant with Latin and Greek. Therefore, their understanding of English words for use in important writings arose from the Latin or Greek derivations of those words. So what is the true meaning of “represent” on that basis? It is to “show or put forth again”. If you represent people that way, politicians are supposed to relay the fruits of their constituent’s minds. That means elected officials are duty-bound to actually lead their constituents so they supply an organized body of comprehensive viewpoints for legislative use. That also means a political leader has to handle constituent laziness or ignorance or immaturity or the human character obstacle of, as Aristotle put it in his “Politics”, that some people are natural slaves. This is so he can represent something.

Not knowing true representative government methodology well—easily a consequence of not understanding the basic word underlying all of our political heritage—makes politicians and citizens alike reach for the methodologies of other forms of government. This is, of course, inadvertent repudiation of pledges of allegiance and oaths of office. For example, how most elected officials now treat constituent concerns, and how constituents now approach elected officials, is quite similar to the political relationship of nobles & peasants in the Middle Ages. Research the word assizes—the town hall meeting/public hearing of that era.

There are those who whine about it not being possible to really represent 15,000 or 30,000 people, and that it’s more practical to rule through a step-echelon aristocracy like the military. This is simply more evidence of the necessity to investigate the state of civics education in this state. Even our native culture has a practical solution to that representative government problem from its pre-Alaska purchase history. Is it taught? No — we just get this feel-good course in Alaska native culture. Then there’s Juneau’s neighborhood association concept—its civics orthodoxy and power ignored due to clear citizen ignorance of what ‘represent’ means.

I’d like to note that elected officialdom is the only American profession that doesn’t compel continuing education. Some years ago, following legislative rules, I tried to get a hearing before the House and Senate Rules Committee to get legislator continuing education about government made into a legislative rule. I was completely refused except for an effort by the Senate Rules Committee Chairman at the time—Senator Gary Stevens. He listened to me and while agreeing with the need, he didn’t see a way around the intellectual arrogance of his fellows. He wasn’t nearly so harsh, but I can be.

I believe I have now presented overwhelming justification for a legislative task force as envisioned by SCR1. However, there are amendments to be made to truly accomplish its purpose.

Under the authority vested in me by Alaska Constitution Article I Section 1 and particularly Section 2, I advance several amendments to SCR1 into your deliberations. The main thrust of these amendments is to minimize the influence of the very entities that are obviously complicit in or accountable for the current state of civics education.

- 1) On Page 2 Line 8, INSERT the words “, including texts and presentation,” after the word “education” and before the word “in”. Rationale: manipulating presentation is the easiest way to pervert any subject.
- 2) On Page 2 Line 22 REPLACE the number 11 with “15”. Rationale: number agreement and consistency.

- 3) On Page 2 Line 30 DELETE “(A) one member of the National Education Association”. Rationale: any valid input from this lobbying group can be through generous presentation time before the task force. The policies of this lobbying group inserted into Alaska government makes them complicit in the current state of civics education.
- 4) On Page 2 Line 30 INSERT “(A) one member from serving Alaska Civics teachers” Rationale: Participation from someone who has been affected by education presentations and texts set by policy makers and superiors, and has direct experience trying to convey civics to students, is critical to ensure realistic output from the task force.
- 5) On Page 3 between lines 6 & 7: INSERT “(G) one member from the current population of State high school juniors and seniors, supported by statewide high school committees of correspondence”. Rationale: If you are going to talk the talk of civic participation, walk the walk. Treating young adults as unruly ignoramuses, when they probably have the greatest appreciation of the problems of getting educated on civics, is philosophical treason. Remember that Alexander the Great started world conquest at 16 and Cleopatra began making one of history’s world superpowers dance to her tune at 17. In my opinion, student input is more valuable than anything that can be offered by nearly all the adults named to the task force.
- 6) On Page 3 between lines 6 & 7: INSERT “(H) two members of the Alaska voting public registered as Non-partisan or Undeclared, supported by statewide committees of correspondence containing members of all political parties”. Rationale: as this is the major political affiliation of Alaska by far, the political will of the People of Alaska should be respected in creating capable citizens. Having a member from each active Alaska political party would be better, but it would make the task force too unwieldy. Also under-education in civics—particularly Federalist Paper #10 on factions—makes unproductive bickering too likely.
- 7) On Page 3 between lines 6 & 7: INSERT “(I) one member from the Alaska judiciary”. Rationale: education on the administration of justice is a part of civics that has been so woefully neglected, that most people believe getting justice means getting a good lawyer. Granting the legal profession a virtual monopoly on what makes organized freedom possible is de-facto slavery.

I conclude with this question: Do you believe in helping to realize the potential of people to successfully engage in life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, without managing and protecting them like the serfs and peasants of old? If you do, then the cost of ramping up civics education almost does not matter. Many concerned citizens would even help teach civics for free. I would.

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