

A Policy Agenda



Restoring Civic Education for Civic Strength

We are confronted today with disabling partisan polarization infected by misinformation. These conditions put our country's very foundation – our constitutional democracy – at risk in ways not seen in generations. The current situation poses threats to national security.

Post-World War II concerns about security and economic competitiveness prompted decades of major national investment in STEM education. Meanwhile, we disinvested in history and civic education. For every federal dollar spent on the STEM fields, civics and history get less than a tenth of a penny. Our country's civic strength needs and deserves better.



This is the moment to rebuild the nation's civic strength. We need to invest in civic education.

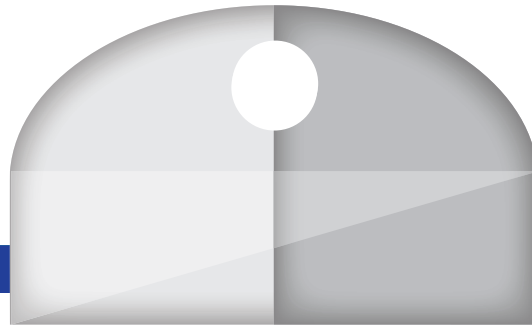
A healthy constitutional democracy requires an electorate with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for participation in self-government. Excellent in-school

K-12 history and civic learning is foundational to civic strength. Particularly challenging for our country is the inequitable distribution of access to civic education. Growing and bipartisan consensus recognizes that civic education, equitably delivered, is a critical component of rebuilding the civic strength of our country.

The federal government cannot and should not mandate school curricula, but it can use its authorities and resources to support the nation's schools in preparing young people for our system of government. This document presents a roadmap for federal commitment to civic education.



Frank Luntz – in a poll for CivXNow – found that a representative sample of the American electorate chose civic education as the #1 solution to the polarization that ails our country among seven solutions that included “a year of national service” and “less money in politics”. What's more is that civics was preferred equally by Republicans and Democrats.



The CivXNow policy agenda stipulates that change at the local level, linked to commitment to equity, is the key lever for better civic education, and that the federal government can activate and support this change by delivering:

- ✓ 1. The national bully pulpit to promote civic education, specifically rigorous and in-depth standards, such as the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap.
- ✓ 2. A mission for the U.S. Department of Education that includes civic readiness and acknowledgement of respect for state leadership toward civic readiness, as committed by state constitutions.
- ✓ 3. Support for the passage of the Educating for Democracy Act of 2020.
- ✓ 4. Support for the implementation of the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap.
- ✓ 5. Better data infrastructure to support innovation in civic learning at the state level, including an updated NAEP framework aligned to the Educating for American Democracy Roadmap, metrics that focus on availability of learning opportunities and their equitable provision, and a Civic Excellence rubric for measuring state progress with regards to student achievement, equity, educator preparation, and real-world civic learning opportunities.
- ✓ 6. Investment in educator preparation in history and civics and diversification of the history and civics teaching corps, including development of an educator competency rubric and certification program to ensure that educators are recognized for achievement and supported in developing the skills required to teach history and civics, and a Prince Hall Fellowship modeled after the James Madison Fellowship program.
- ✓ 7. Prioritization in federal education funding for history and civic education, specifically targeted at innovation and research.
- ✓ 8. A requirement for a K-12 educational outreach component as part of every grant from any federal agency to a higher education institution made in the disciplines of history, political science, law, economics, sociology, psychology, communications, media, or civics.

CivXNow Coalition was the driving force behind the September 17, 2020 introduction of the bipartisan “ Educating for Democracy Act ” (HR8295), which will dramatically increase Federal investments (through grants to states and local school districts) in civic and history education innovation and equity and will require public release of state level data from the National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics and History.

The Educating for American Democracy Roadmap is a major cross-partisan effort to issue guidance about how to teach history and civics that builds civic agency.

Prince Hall was an abolitionist leader in the free Black community in Boston in the 18th century. He lobbied for education rights for Black children.