



May 4, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20010

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt
Ranking Member Cole, Ranking Member Murray:

Civic education is an essential component of K-12 education and a subject whose importance is more critical, not less, in the wake of COVID-19. To ensure that civic education can survive the pressures placed on state and local governments, their fiscal resources, and operational systems, we request Congress take decisive action to ensure America's students continue to receive essential civic education.

As our nation's schools transition to virtual learning, in many cases instructional time has necessarily been cut significantly. Many schools are focusing on math, English, and to a lesser extent, science - doubling down on core subjects that are most widely tested. Civic education is a core function of the schools that had already been subjected to significant reductions in instructional time and resources and is in danger of a substantial further reduction. This comes at the same time that questions of public policy, governmental processes, media literacy – in other words, basic civics - loom large. Civic education has never been more important to the health of our constitutional democracy. Overstressed schools, teachers, and parents need help providing students with the essential civic knowledge and skills that help them develop a disposition to be civically engaged. The nonprofit supplemental civic education community stands ready to offer high quality, engaging, and effective curriculum but needs assistance to help parents and teachers successfully provide civic education in the virtual learning environment.

We respectfully request \$40,000,000 for one-time competitive grants to nonpartisan nonprofit civic education program providers with a track record of successfully providing effective civic education programming to schools to meet the remote teaching needs of K-12 schools and teachers, the homeschooling needs of parents and students, and for meaningful student-centered civic learning. Priority should be given to applicants proposing to meet the needs of historically underserved school populations - including, but not limited to, students in rural areas, urban

areas, immigrant students, and students with special needs, as well as those serving communities whose learners are predominantly students of color. Funding would be used to:

- Adapt current school-based lessons, projects, and materials for online use with instructions for teachers, students, and parents
- Develop new lessons and material for online use
- Offer online professional development for teachers in using civic education lessons, projects, and material in an online world
- Enhance and expand the capacity of existing remote learning infrastructure to meet the anticipated demand from parents, students, and teachers
- Replace funding lost due to the virus emergency (canceled fundraising events, lost grant revenue) so nonprofit organizations can maintain operations, retain staff, and support teachers, parents, and students.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic, there was a growing recognition among policymakers, media, and the public that the lack of attention and resources devoted to effective student-centered civic education had to end and that a renewed emphasis needed to be placed on civic learning. The great divides in our body politic and growing disillusionment about government and democracy itself - especially by those under 35 - have been major drivers of this renewed interest.

As young people work to engage on civic issues, they must be equipped with essential civic knowledge, vital civic skills, and important civic dispositions to make their voices heard on the looming issues of critical importance to their future. We must act to ensure all of our youth have the vital and necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions so they can be active civic participants in an informed and reasoned manner. Now is the time to strengthen our constitutional democracy through civic learning.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ABOTA Foundation

Alliance for Quality Education

America Forward

America SCORES

**American Association of University Women
Eugene-Lane Branch**

American Board of Trial Advocates

American Heritage Education Foundation

Anthem Reggae Band

Bites Media

California Council for the Social Studies

**California LAW
Leadership - Access - Workforce**

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

Campus Compact

Center for Civic Education

**Center for Educational Equity
at Teacher's College (CEE)**

**Center for Information & Research on Civic
Learning and Engagement at Tufts University
(CIRCLE)**

Children's Defense Fund - Texas

Citizen University

Citizenship Counts

Civic Education Center

Civic Learning Council

Civic Nebraska

Civics Unplugged

CivXNow

Classroom Law Project

ClimateMama

Composer

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**Constitutional Rights Foundation -
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Democracy Prep Public Schools

Earth Day Network

**Edward M. Kennedy
Institute for the United States Senate**

EqualityWorks, NW

Facing History and Ourselves

Fred T. Korematsu Institute

Generation Citizen

GenerationNation

Georgia Center for Civic Engagement

Gigantic Mechanic

Girl Scouts of the USA

Grateful American Foundation

iCivics

Iowa Council for the Social Studies

JNT Accounting

Kunhardt Film Foundation

KY YMCA Youth Association

League of Women Voters (Oklahoma League)

League of Women Voters (national)

Let's Fix This (Oklahoma)

Long Creek School (Oregon)

Lou Frey Institute

Mass Humanities

Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies

Mississippi Council for the Social Studies

National Constitution Center

National Council for History Education

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

National Youth Leadership Council

Nevada Succeeds

New Hampshire Institute for Civics Education

News Juicer Foundation

NYC Department of Education

Ohio YMCA Youth & Government

Oklahoma Humanities Council

Oregon Legal Guides

Participatory Budgeting Project

Population Connection

Project Citizen (Rhode Island)

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

Rock The Vote

Sacramento County Office of Education

Smith + Connors

South Carolina Council for the Social Studies

**Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program**

Street Law, Inc.

Student Voice

**Tennessee Center for
Civic Learning and Engagement**

Texas Civic Education Coalition

The Civics Center

The Croft School (Massachusetts)

**The Gilder Lehrman Institute
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The Learning Commons

The Opportunity Network

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