

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

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

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 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.

Signatories: CivXNow Coalition members...