CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE KEY TO REPAIR TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

HOW TECHNOLOGY RESHAPED CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

THE CITIZENSHIP TEST: CAN YOU PASS?

WHAT STATES ARE DOING TO IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT

10 QUESTIONS WITH
GOV. KATE BROWN | Oregon
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Applications for the 2018 Toll Fellowship will open Jan. 8, 2018.

For more information, visit www.csg.org/TollFellows.
ON THE COVER
Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, CSG 2017 national president, has served in both chambers of the legislature and as secretary of state. Brown believes elected officials must engage young people in our system of government to ensure thriving states and communities.

Photo Courtesy Andie Petkus Photography

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Conversations about civic education and civic engagement have become more prevalent among teachers, legislators and others. Governors—such as Doug Ducey in Arizona, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell—have also voiced concern about the decline in civic knowledge.

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22 ELECTION PERFORMANCE IN THE STATES
When it comes to elections, comparing your state’s performance to other states can be difficult. That’s why The Pew Charitable Trusts released the Elections Performance Index, which offers policymakers the first comprehensive assessment of election administration across all 50 states.

24 10 QUESTIONS: OREGON GOV. KATE BROWN
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Technology, such as smartphones and social media platforms, is playing an increasingly significant role in how citizens receive information. According to the Pew Research Center, 69 percent of Americans use some type of social media. That’s up from just 5 percent in 2005.

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36 MEASURING DEMOCRACIES AROUND THE WORLD
Democracy around the world is on the decline, including in the United States, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit’s 2016 Democracy Index. The index downgraded the U.S. from a “full democracy” to a “flawed democracy,” citing concerns about trust in government and dynamics of political parties.

40 THE DO’S AND DON’TS OF FLAG ETIQUETTE
On June 14, 1923, the National Flag Code was adopted by representatives of the Army, Navy and other groups. In 1942, the National Flag Code became part of the U.S. Code, giving all individuals a public law and guide to flag etiquette.

42 FRESHMAN ORIENTATION
As the first flurry of legislative activity winds down, legislators are returning to their hometowns. In this CSG continuing series, we explore how our four freshman legislators will spend their summer and their reflections on the first few session months.

44 LEADERSHIP CORNER:
MOVING BEYOND CIVILITY TO UNDERSTANDING
In an age of increased polarization, many state leaders, political experts and constituents themselves are advocating for a return to civility. Civility at its core is the idea that people with opposing, and sometimes, radically different viewpoints can disagree with integrity; but civility alone is not enough.
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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CSG?

1. CSG Justice Center Develops Checklist to Help Identify Issues with Assessment Tools

The Council of State Governments Justice Center released an innovative Risk Assessment Quality Improvement, or RAQI, checklist to help state and local corrections agencies, community supervision agencies, and treatment/programming providers analyze how well their risk and needs assessment tool is working. The checklist helps identify potential problems with assessment tools quickly and efficiently. State agencies can then use this information to ensure that taxpayer dollars are targeted correctly and used effectively on supervision, programming and treatment. For more information visit, csgjusticecenter.org.

2. Kentucky Adopts Framework from CSG, NCSL Task Force

Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin announced in June the Kentucky Work Matters Task Force as an outgrowth to a report released in 2016 from the National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities. The national taskforce is a partnership between The Council of State Governments and the National Conference of State Legislators. The report provided a framework for states on workforce development for people with disabilities. The new 23-member task force will address barriers to employment and promote workforce inclusion among people with disabilities, foster children, disabled veterans, individuals with substance abuse issues and individuals with criminal records. Kentucky is the first state to adopt this framework.

3. CSG Joins Leading Organizations to Applaud Bipartisan Task Force

The Council of State Governments, the National Governors Association, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, International City/County Management Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures issued a statement of support for Speaker Paul Ryan’s and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi’s creation of the Speaker’s Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs. CSG and the other leading organizations that represent state and local governments at the federal level said the bipartisan task force is a significant step forward in strengthening the federal-state-local partnership.

4. CSG Testifies at Speaker’s Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs

The Speaker’s Task Force on Intergovernmental Affairs held its inaugural hearing on June 22. This task force, along with creation of a new House Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs, is an exciting development in CSG’s ongoing effort to raise the profile of state, tribal and local governments, and identify opportunities to improve the relationship between states and the federal government. The 2014 CSG national chair, Tennessee Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris, joined representatives from the National Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, and the National League of Cities for a wide-ranging discussion of the challenges and opportunities in federal, state and local government relations.

5. CSG’s Compacts Center Welcomes New Leader

Dan Logsdon recently joined CSG to oversee the National Center for Interstate Compacts. Logsdon previously served on Kentucky’s Public Service Commission as one of three statewide commissioners regulating more than 1,500 utility providers. During his career, Logsdon has held several positions in the public and private sectors, including deputy chief of staff to former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, assistant state treasurer to former Kentucky Treasurer Jonathan Miller, and vice president of state government affairs for Windstream. “I’m excited and grateful to be joining the team at CSG and working with the National Center for Interstate Compacts. Interstate compacts are powerful, durable and adaptive tools that empower states and fulfill CSG’s core mission of championing excellence in state governments to advance the common good,” Logsdon said.
### Twitter Roundup

**Senator Janet Nguyen**
@SenJanetNguyen · May 26
Thank you to all the students of McGaugh Elementary school from #SealBeach for visiting us in the State Capitol! civicengagement

**Senator Mike Regan**
@SenatorReganPA · May 18
Great to see youth getting involved! I look forward to teaching them about the legislative process &civic engagement http://onlinenewsclips.pasen.gov/aircheck/051517-wgalTEENDRIVING.mp4 ...

**Eric Lesser**
@EricLesser · May 10
We are rethinking our needs in public education and civics is one of our needs

**IdeaBuzz**
@ideabuzzapp · Apr 7
AZ State Rep @IselaBlancAZ commends student for civic action, encourages students to get involved. civicengagement

**Elgie Sims**
@ElgieSims · May 2
“Civics Education is more than facts & dates, it has to be a key part of our College to Career readiness strategy” - Rep. Sims CivicSG

**Assemblmember Low**
@AsmEvanLow · May 26
#AB189 to support servicelearning in high schools heads to the Assembly floor. civicengagement

**Education Week**
@educationweek · May 11
Texas Latest State to Consider Requiring High School Civics Test http://edwk.it/2qwpHy0 curriculum

**Paul R. LePage**
@Governor_LePage · Apr 13
Pleased to meet with young Mainers attending @TeenPact. Encouraged to see civic involvement begin early. Stay involved! mepolitics

**Kimberly Yee**
@KimberlyYeeAZ · May 22
It was an honor to address the Board of Education @azedschools on the importance of civics education. icivics http://www.azsenaterepublicans.com/single-post/2017/05/22/Senate-Majority-Leader-speaks-to-State-Board-in-support-of-civics-education ...

**Nellie M. Gorbea**
@RISecState · Apr 18
Awesome discussion about civic engagement and our State House w/ @Teenpact RI & #RIETS students! CivicEngagement

**Sen. Lena C. Taylor**
@SenTaylor · Apr 24
Civic engagement is crucial for our government; get your start at town hall meetings & by calling your State Reps!
PRESS PROTECTION
Vermont Gov. Phil Scott recently signed a law that provides a legal protection for journalists who receive information from anonymous sources and off-the-record conversations. The protections also extend to government employees leaking confidential information. According to Vermont Public Radio, Scott said the law helps to protect reporters’ independence and allows sources to feel confident in speaking freely with the press.

CYBERSECURITY
New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie signed an executive order in June that moves authority over information technology from individual departments to the state’s appointed chief technology officer, David Weinstein. Newjersey.com reported that the decision came after the state spent $10 million over the last year increasing information technology security. Christie said the order is about protecting the personal data of New Jersey residents.

MEDICAID
The administration of Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has expanded Medicaid coverage to include treatment of hepatitis C. Philly.com reported that expanding Medicaid to cover hepatitis C would allow patients to be treated earlier. Currently, patients must wait until they show signs of liver damage before treatment is approved. Hepatitis C is often spread through the sharing of needles to inject heroin and other drugs.

MARIJUANA
The Maryland Medical Cannabis Commission has awarded the state’s first license to grow medicinal marijuana. The Washington Post reports that the Stage 2 license was awarded to ForwardGro LLC, which was chosen over many other applicants. There were 15 companies that were given preapproval licenses in August 2016. While the company will still need to put sales to approved patients on hold until dispensaries have been inspected and licensed, this license will allow ForwardGro LLC to put plants into the ground and begin to grow.

OVERDOSE PREVENTION
A bill is moving through the Maine statehouse that would allow the state to certify two facilities that provide a safe location for Maine residents to administer drugs. According to WMTW Portland ME, the locations are meant to prevent overdoses after an increase in deaths from fentanyl. Each location will have trained health care personnel and staff on site to provide any medical aid, as well as information about the dangers of drug use and referrals to treatment services.

CONNECTICUT APPOINTS ADVOCATES FOR ABUSED ANIMALS
Connecticut has become the first state in the country to pass a law creating court-appointed animal abuse advocates. The law is similar to laws that provide victims and children with court-appointed advocates. While judges can decide to appoint an animal abuse advocate to a case, prosecutors and defense attorneys may request them as well.

Law students who act as advocates are part of the growing field of animal law. NPR reported that, according to the Animal Legal Defense Fund, nine law schools offered courses in animal law in 2000, but by 2015 that number had jumped to 151.

In early June, Taylor Hansen, a University of Connecticut law student, was the first advocate to testify in court. The case involved three pit bulls that were found in a home with extreme signs of neglect and dogfighting. Under the supervision of law professor Jessica Rubin, Hansen argued that the man charged in the case should not be allowed to participate in a first-time offender program that would eventually clear his record.

Although the argument was unsuccessful, Hansen said the advocate process “showed the animals do have a voice. We are able to have an impact on the proceedings.”
EARTHQUAKE DASHBOARD STREAMLINES OKLAHOMA REGULATORY RESPONSE

The Oklahoma Groundwater Protection Council, or GPC, with the help of other organizations, has developed a visual earthquake dashboard, The Oklahoman reported. The GPC, in coordination with researchers and oil and gas companies, uses the software to collect publicly available data from earthquake repositories, faults and updated information about wastewater injected into deep disposal wells. The information is then combined with mapping software to provide regulators with a look at the factors that researchers believe have led to a rise in earthquakes in the state. The software, which took approximately three months to develop at a cost of $130,000, enables researchers and operators to respond to seismic events in an extremely efficient manner.

“The bottom line is that it has enabled us to do in minutes what literally took us weeks,” Matt Skinner, spokesman for the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, told The Oklahoman.

The dashboard has officially been in use for nearly a year; however, its worth was not fully appreciated until a magnitude-5.8 earthquake hit Pawnee, Oklahoma, in September 2016. The earthquake hit the area on a Saturday morning; by the afternoon, regulators had a plan in place that directed operators to curtail their disposal well volumes. Before the creation of the dashboard, that process would have taken at least two days to accomplish.

There have been preliminary discussions with regulators in other states about adopting the dashboard, including some that have not been significantly affected by seismic activity. The underlying code powering the dashboard, regulators assert, also may be applicable for related activities, such as well management.

TUITION PROGRAM

The Tennessee General Assembly passed a bill allowing older adults without a college degree or certification to attend community college free of charge, the Associated Press reported. Experts and school administrators say the bill, part of Gov. Bill Haslam’s “Drive to 55” campaign to boost the number of Tennesseans with higher education degrees to 55 percent, will serve as a model for other states to follow. The program is projected to cost $11 million annually, paid for by the state’s lottery proceeds. Both full- and part-time students will be eligible to participate beginning in the fall of 2018.

RIDE-HAILING REGULATIONS

Texas lawmakers approved legislation that establishes statewide regulations for ride-hailing companies, such as Uber and Lyft, Reuters reported. The legislation, House Bill 100, overrides local ordinances regulating such companies, allowing them to re-enter large Texas markets, including Houston, Austin, Corpus Christi and Galveston. Uber and Lyft exited several Texas markets in recent years after cities passed ordinances that the companies said were burdensome and unnecessary. More than 40 states have created statewide regulatory systems for ride-hailing companies.

PUBLIC PENSION REFORM

Lawmakers in South Carolina passed a measure to stabilize the state’s public pension system, according to The State. Starting July 1, more than 200,000 public sector employees will be required to contribute 9 percent of their salaries into the retirement system, up from the current 8.7 percent. Meanwhile, agencies, cities, counties and school districts that employ state workers will pay more into the system, beginning with a 2 percent hike on July 1, followed by an additional 1 percent increase each year until 2022.

WATER TREATMENT

Florida Gov. Rick Scott signed into law a plan to build reservoirs south of Lake Okeechobee to treat polluted water before it flows downstream, according to the Associated Press. The bill, one of the biggest issues during this year’s legislative session, proposes a 240,000-acre-feet reservoir system to treat nutrients from farms, yard fertilizers and septic systems, which have increased phosphorus levels in the lake. The nutrients create algae blooms that have been harmful to the environment and tourism by sucking oxygen out of the water and harming wildlife.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards and the state’s district attorneys announced a compromise package that is expected to reduce the prison population by 10 percent over the next 10 years, The Times-Picayune reported. The legislation, which passed both legislative chambers and was signed by Edwards on June 15, will save the state approximately $262 million, 70 percent of which will be redirected toward reinvestment programs such as prisoner rehabilitation, drug counseling and job training.
SMARTPHONE LICENSE
The Iowa Department of Transportation has been experimenting with a program that allows drivers to download their licenses onto smartphones. The department used a pilot program of about 100 state employees who used state-issued iPhones last year. The Des Moines Register reported that Iowa’s concept of a digital license has caught the attention of other states and countries.

SEX-ABUSE LAW
Illinois has approved legislation that eliminates the statute of limitations in child sex-abuse cases. The change was called for by prosecutors and a victim of former U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, who was imprisoned for violating bank laws while attempting to silence a student he abused decades ago, according to The State Journal-Register. Because of Illinois’ previous statute of limitations, Hastert was unable to be charged with sex abuse.

DRINKING DISTRICTS
Kansas has passed legislation that creates designated districts where patrons can move freely among venues with alcoholic beverages in hand. The law allows consumers to walk throughout the clearly marked districts with a drink in a marked cup, the Associated Press reports. Local governments would then pass their own ordinances to determine consumption areas and hours of operation.

WATER WELLS
Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker has signed legislation that approves farms and businesses to continue using their large-scale wells without added oversight from Wisconsin officials and regulators. According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, this move has become more controversial as the lakes and streams in that area lose large volumes over time. The proposal’s sponsor, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, called this “pro-farm” legislation.

ANONYMOUS TIPS
In South Dakota, a statewide program called Project Stand Up has been launched. This program allows people to anonymously report illegal drug use through texting. According to the Argus Leader, people can text “drugs” to 82257 and then will be asked for more information. Users may give as much information as they want, and will always remain anonymous. Law enforcement said to call 911 if someone is in immediate danger.

ANTHEM DROPPING OUT OF OHIO’S STATE-BASED HEALTH INSURANCE MARKET
Health insurance company Anthem will be leaving its ACA individual plan business in Ohio. Anthem currently sells ACA plans in 14 states. By leaving Ohio, there could be 18 counties left with no ACA insurers. Anthem said it will sell one plan in Pike County, Ohio, and that will not be available through Healthcare.gov.

CNBC reported the insurer’s decision was based on what Anthem called the continued “volatility” in the individual health insurance market. The decision was also based on uncertainty about whether President Donald Trump and the current Congress will continue to “provide insurers reimbursements for key subsidies” that lower out-of-pocket health costs.

Anthem said, “As the individual marketplace continues to evolve, Anthem will continue to advocate solutions that will stabilize the market to allow us to return … in the future.” The company will continue to sell small-group and large-group health plans in Ohio.

Chris Brock, spokesman for the state’s insurance department, said the Department of Insurance is searching for options for Ohioans who may not have an exchange plan after Anthem leaves. Alleigh Marré, spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, called Anthem’s decision “heartbreaking,” while U.S. Sen. Rob Portman from Ohio said in a statement that without true competition in the health care market, health care costs would not decrease.
MENTAL HEALTH
Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper recently signed into law a bill that prohibits the jailing of people picked up on mental health holds. Colorado was one of six states that allowed the placing of people who are suicidal or having mental health episodes behind bars, The Denver Post reported. When the law goes into effect on Aug. 9, the jailing of those who are a danger to themselves or others but have not committed a crime will be prohibited. The Denver Post reported that the law also increases funding for crisis-response teams, walk-in mental health treatment centers and transportation to treatment centers from rural areas.

EQUAL PAY
Oregon recently passed a law that takes steps to ensure equal pay between men and women. The new law bans certain practices that can induce unequal pay, such as looking at salary history when reviewing job applications. Oregon Public Broadcasting reported that this legislation also provides “legal remedies” for those workers who feel they are not paid fairly.

CONVERSION THERAPY
Nevada has made it illegal for licensed therapists to attempt to talk children out of being gay. The law prohibits psychologists, social workers, nurses and other clinical counselors from attempting anti-gay conversion therapy on minors. The Associated Press reported that this is a medical practice that has been scientifically disproven. The bill received bipartisan support in the Nevada Legislature.

DUI
Utah has a new law pertaining to drunk driving that contains a provision that makes it illegal for new immigrants to have even a drop of alcohol before driving. Will Carlson, a prosecutor from Salt Lake County, Utah, warned legislators that the law could become “constitutionally problematic,” The Salt Lake Tribune reported. Gov. Gary Herbert signed the bill but called for tweaks to be made before it goes into effect on Dec. 30.

RIDE SHARING
Uber and Lyft will now be allowed to operate throughout Alaska, thanks to a new law sponsored by state Rep. Adam Wool and signed by Gov. Bill Walker. The law does not allow for local governments to impose regulations on the companies, but allows them to collect local sales tax and pass traffic ordinances. For a short time, Uber operated in Anchorage but then left the state, according to the Daily News-Miner.

Wyoming Inmates Learning to Read English and Latin
Wyoming Department of Corrections officials are using a phonics-based teaching style to improve inmate literacy.

The Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, or IMSE, which is based in Michigan and offers Orton-Gillingham reading programs, trained more than a dozen corrections officials over the past year, the Casper Star-Tribune reported. Language is broken down to help students understand the composition of the words, rather than memorizing spelling and definitions. The program was originally designed for younger students with dyslexia.

Jean Rishel, the lead trainer for IMSE, told the Casper Star-Tribune, “Sixty to 70 percent of English is based on Latin and Greek. We trained the instructors in how to teach basically suffixes and prefixes and how to start.” She said they want the instructors to be able to help inmates with “not just single words, but with multi-syllabic words.”

Although one of the goals for this program is for inmates to learn basic literacy skills, Rishel also hopes it will help them successfully integrate into the workforce.

“We come to these young adults that are in these prison systems, and they may not have finished high school,” she said. “To be competitive today, you have to be literate.”

Betty Abbott, the manager for educational programs in the Department of Corrections, said she has received “nothing but positive feedback” about the program, from both instructors and inmates.
Justice Stephen Breyer observed that “the judiciary is, in at least some measure, dependent on the public’s fundamental acceptance of its legitimacy. And when a large segment of the population believes that judges are not deciding cases according to the rule of law, much is at stake.” An erosion of the public’s trust and confidence in the courts will undermine the judicial independence that is the bedrock of the rule of law.

For that reason, judges must do more than simply undertake to do their jobs deciding cases as best they can. Judges must also, in this day of speedy communication, find more effective ways to explain why a system of fair and impartial courts is important to the people the courts seek to serve.

For the past several years, the National Center for State Courts, or NCSC, has conducted an annual public opinion survey regarding “the state of state courts.” The 2016 survey, which is available online at www.ncsc.org/2016survey, shows some signs of positive momentum in public trust of judicial institutions. But there is still much work to be done, especially among minority populations.

The NCSC’s most recent survey confirmed that a significant segment of the public believes that the ethnicity of a judge will impact fairness in the courtroom. This reinforces previous findings that confirm the sad truth that minority communities have much less trust in our courts than the population as a whole.

State court leaders, working through the NCSC, recently developed the Minority Engagement Project to establish a strategy that bridges the gap between minority communities and courts. The project aims to accomplish this by developing a dialogue and collaborative efforts to improve public trust and confidence in the courts.

Unlike previous outreach efforts—which largely focused on educational outreach geared toward judges and attorneys—this engagement approach involves a two-way dialogue to generate outcomes that communities recognize as productive and helpful.

The project’s first phase included a series of videotaped judicial “listening tours,” sponsored by the State Justice Institute in partnership with PBS broadcaster Tavis Smiley. The “Courting Justice” series visited three cities—Los Angeles; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Cleveland, Ohio—with local judges and judicial branch leaders listening to representatives from each city’s minority communities.

The people talked, the judges listened, and the shows were broadcast nationally. These historic and enlightening conversations are archived on NCSC’s website, and I encourage you to watch them.

This is an important step toward engaging the public and ensuring all citizens have equal access to justice. The daily work of judges and lawyers puts our profession in a unique position to engage members of the public. We should embrace our roles as advocates for the judicial system by participating in activities designed to promote civic education. Whether it is speaking with a school group, participating in a mock trial competition, or conducting a jury orientation, it is imperative that we do our part to make the courts accessible to everyone and to break down barriers that lead to misperceptions regarding the fair and impartial administration of justice.
Civic Engagement

by John Mountjoy, director of policy & research

civics \si-viks\ noun (1886): the study of the rights and duties of citizenship

Americans have historically had great confidence in their institutions of government. However, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center report, over the last 50 years Americans’ attitudes toward their governments have shifted remarkably, having reached a sustained all-time low over the last decade. Only 19 percent say that they trust their federal government—down from a decade average of just less than 30 percent, per the study. Similarly, a 2016 Gallup poll showed just 37 percent of Americans have confidence in their states.

Civic education and civic engagement are increasingly gaining attention among state policymakers around the country—and with good reason. Absent sustained, quality civic education at all levels of education, students are not being provided the tools necessary to appreciate the role of government, nor to develop the capacities needed to engage civically. Further, hyperpartisanship at all levels of government combined with increasingly vitriolic elections makes the role of civics and civic education a key to ensuring that the tenets of democracy are understood and respected, and that the next generation of leaders can emerge.

In this issue of Capitol Ideas, we examine ways in which states are embracing the call for greater civic engagement and education, such as the resurgence in state-based civic education, increasing voter participation, using technology to promote civic engagement, how American democracy compares around the globe, and how today’s state leaders are seeking to embrace civility.

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38 – Acronym Soup
40 – The Do’s and Don’ts of Flag Etiquette
When all that the public sees is partisan bickering and partisanship, that overrides attention to efforts to accomplish good public policy," said Gerald Wright, a professor and chairman of the department of political science at Indiana University.

With that in mind, it’s critical for young people in America to see the rest of the story—how government actually can work to give them safer, healthier lives. A natural platform for addressing issues related to government with young people is the classroom. As we wrote last year in a paper for The Council of State Governments, “How, indeed, can anyone trust a powerful entity that they don’t understand? It’s a basic element of human nature that ignorance leads inexorably to mistrust.”

This is true for all three levels of government. In fact, according to a September 2016 Gallup poll about 37 percent of Americans surveyed indicated that they had little trust or confidence in their states. “If young people are unaware of how government works—and you combine that with a time in our history when there are record levels of disengagement, you have a huge distrust in our government processes,” said Ted McConnell, executive director of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.

McConnell makes an important differentiation between civic education and the kind of U.S. history courses that are
ubiquitous in the schools. “When we reduce instruction to names, dates and battles, we lose the essence of the American democratic republic experience,” he said.

Unfortunately, the nation’s schools have been generally unhelpful in providing the kind of information that can teach students how their governments actually work. Though more than 40 states require some kind of course in American government or civics, that doesn’t necessarily equate to the kind of classwork that provides young people with the background necessary for a true understanding of the way their city, state and federal governments function. The requirements for these courses can be rather lean and rarely focus on states and localities.

This phenomenon was well explained in a report done by the Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge. The authors stated that: “Civic Education courses and programs in high school (including extracurricular programs such as mock trial and modules like Kids Voting USA that are embedded in courses) have significant positive impacts on voting after graduation. These courses may boost voting by enhancing students’ knowledge, interest in politics and issues, habits of discussing politics, and sense of membership and obligation.”

The report makes special note of activities that take place outside of the classroom for good reason. Experts agree that means for giving students the opportunity to participate in, or observe, government in action can be more effective than a classroom lecture.

“We’re trying to bridge the gap by getting students more engaged themselves, more internships, and we expect that will increase civic commitment among students,” Wright said. “There is a lot of anecdotal evidence that works. When students spend time in a mayoral department or a police department it increases their sense of the efficacy of government.”

Sue Crawford is a state senator representing the Bellevue area of Nebraska, and is also a professor of political science at Creighton University. One exercise that she uses in her introductory classes is asking students to go visit a local meeting. “That’s important because they see that people in these government positions are ordinary people,” Crawford said. “They don’t see elected officials as some other kind of person, a selfish or corrupt person.”

We can certainly understand that. In our own lives, we frequently encounter well-educated men and women who automatically correlate “government worker” with “lazy.”

But when people attend town meetings, sessions of state legislatures or hearings about proposed projects, they begin to recognize the incredible amount of work that the people sitting behind the dais are putting in and they get a far different impression. They see dedicated—often passionate—people who are putting in nights and weekends reviewing budgets, talking to constituents, considering options for economic development and so on. The false stereotypes morph into more realistic portraits of people who are working on their behalf—often for very little in the way of compensation.

One message that needs to be communicated, however, is that whatever goes on in the meetings young people attend, it’s likely going to take a long while for anything to actually change. The recognition that a decision to build a new road can take years to come to reality can help immunize students from coming to the conclusion that government is all talk, and no action.

“When we study history in school, we talk about Rosa Parks for 15 minutes,” Crawford said. “But we often lose the part that she spent months preparing. It wasn’t that just one day she stood up and all of a sudden we have a civil rights movement.”

In fact, only 23 percent of eighth graders scored at or above proficiency in civics, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress’ 2014 research.

Of course, the ramifications of lack of trust in government tend to be largely anecdotal. But there’s little doubt that it has an impact on voter turnout in this country. The absence of sufficient civic education is clearly one of the reasons why the U.S. ranked 31 out of 35 countries for voter turnout among the nations that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, according to the Pew Research Center.

The absence of sufficient civic education is clearly one of the reasons why the U.S. ranked 31 out of 35 countries for voter turnout ...

About Barrett and Greene

CSG Senior Fellows Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene are experts on state government who work with Governing magazine, the Volcker Alliance, the National Academy of Public Administration and others. As CSG senior fellows, Barrett and Greene serve as advisers on state government policy and programming and assist in identifying emerging trends affecting states.
GOVERNORS FIGHT FOR CIVICS

by Shawntaye Hopkins

BEFORE GOV. DOUG DUCEY took the oath of office to become the governor of Arizona, he attended a dinner where he listened as speakers on opposite ends of the political spectrum championed the need for civic education in U.S. classrooms.

“There may be a lot of things that Democrats and Republicans disagree on, but educating our students about American civics is something almost everyone can agree is vital,” Ducey said.

Conversations about civic education and civic engagement have become more and more prevalent among teachers, legislators, secretaries of state, media and others. Governors—such as Ducey in Arizona, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell—have also voiced concern about the decline in civic knowledge among students and adults.

In February, Ducey spoke about civic education at a National Governors Association meeting. He encouraged other state leaders to follow Arizona’s lead. The first bill Ducey signed into law was the American Civics Act, passed in 2015 with bipartisan support, which requires all students in the state to pass a civics test before graduating from high school. Students are permitted to retake the test as many times as necessary. Arizona was the first state in the nation to pass such a law.

“This is the same test that new Americans take to gain citizenship,” Ducey said. “Shouldn’t our kids be able to answer the same questions?”

Ducey hopes increased civic knowledge will lead to increased civic participation.

“That might mean having more good people to represent our state in government,” he said. “It also might mean training the next generation of policy leaders who come up with new, exciting ideas to improve how government works from the outside. It might mean simply voting.”

WASHINGTON GOV. JAY INSLEE

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee is one of several sponsors of the Civic Learning Initiative launched by the state’s Council on Public Legal Education. Inslee said he would like more people to understand the importance of city councils and state legislative bodies on their individual lives.

Washington state’s Civic Learning Initiative was modeled after a California civics program, according to the Civic Learning Initiative’s website. The initiative aims to address gaps in civic learning among K-12 students.

Inslee said an increased knowledge about how state and local governments work would mean better policies because more of the population, including young people and people with low incomes, would vote and participate.

“People have tended to think that only the federal government has an impact on their lives because that’s what they see on TV and social media,” Inslee said.

THE RENDELL CENTER

When he was mayor of Philadelphia, former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell visited a private school where a third-grade classroom had been turned into a city. There were about 25
students in the class and every student had assumed an essential role, including mayor, fire commissioner, public works commissioner, city councilmember and so on.

“The kids were on fire,” Rendell said. “They loved what they did.”

Years later, The Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement would concentrate heavily on elementary school students.

“They really are capable of so much at an early age,” U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Marjorie Rendell said of the students she often hosts for mock trials in Philadelphia’s federal courthouse. “We just don’t give them credit.”

As a federal judge when Gov. Rendell took office, Judge Rendell had to make sure her role as first lady did not conflict with her judicial role. She took on civic education to help students understand the court system and started the Pennsylvania Coalition for Representative Democracy—The Rendell Center’s forerunner—in 2004. The Rendell Center creates tools for teachers and opportunities, including literature-based mock trials, for K-12 students to practice and discuss civic engagement.

Ted McConnell, executive director of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, said the civic learning community would welcome and applaud the involvement of more governors who wanted to take the lead in the improving civic education.

“The true champions in the effort to restore the civic mission of our schools have been state legislators and the state level judiciary along with the federal judiciary,” McConnell said.

No governor, “that we’re aware of, has ever said they’re against civic education,” he said. But there’s still plenty of room at the table for governors to get involved as interest in civic education increases.

Judge Rendell said a required civics test is a good start because it forces the issue into the schools and the information is important. But engaging students at an early age—before they become jaded teenagers—is crucial, she said.

And perhaps some of the young students playing make-believe—pretending to solve the problems of a fictional city and hearing made-up court cases—will grow up to become real mayors and judges.

“Every governor, every mayor knows that we need citizens to participate more in our democracy—to participate as voters, participate by running for office, participate in asking legislators to pass certain legislation,” Gov. Rendell said. “I would say to my fellow mayors and fellow governors, ‘This works; our kids just need to have the door opened.’”

OPENING DOORS FOR STUDENTS
PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—Former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell and Judge Marjorie Rendell started a civic education program while Gov. Rendell was in office that would eventually become The Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement. The Rendell Center engages K-12 students in discussions about civic engagement and activities such as mock trials. Photo Courtesy of The Rendell Center
Most state education leaders agree that civic education is a must for students. High-quality opportunities for civic education are necessary to turn students into productive, informed and engaged citizens. This list of online resources provides a good starting point for education leaders who want to strengthen civic education in their state.

Top Civic Education Resources for State Leaders

By Paul J. Baumann, director for the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement

Most state education leaders agree that civic education is a must for students. High-quality opportunities for civic education are necessary to turn students into productive, informed and engaged citizens. This list of online resources provides a good starting point for education leaders who want to strengthen civic education in their state.

Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools

Guardian of Democracy is a cornerstone document of the civic education field. This report provides research that confirms the decline of civic education in K–12 schools and makes a strong case for why a recommitment to robust civic education is needed for all students and for the sustainability of our democratic republic. The report describes six practices that are shown to produce growth in students’ civic learning and engagement, and provides recommendations for policymakers and education leaders on how to go about systemically strengthening civic education.


A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy’s Future

Another cornerstone document of the civic education field, A Crucible Moment makes a strong case for civic education in postsecondary institutions. Very much a call to action, the report stresses that postsecondary institutions need to reclaim their civic purposes. The report’s authors provide postsecondary leaders with five essential actions that are necessary to prepare all students for full participation in civic life.

Find this publication at aacu.org/crucible.

50-State Comparison: Civic Education

Education Commission of the States and the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement periodically review state statutes, administrative codes, standards and curricula to capture the status of civic learning across the United States. This December 2016 update comes as states prepare to implement the Every Student Succeeds Act and includes innovative opportunities to provide students with a well-rounded education.

Find this publication and the 50-state comparison database at ecs.org.
STATE CIVIC EDUCATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

Written with input from nearly 30 experts from across the civic education field, the State Civic Education Policy Framework provides a model for education, prekindergarten through post-secondary, or P–20, that identifies preparation for civic life as a core purpose of all state educational institutions and systems. This framework guides state policymakers as they address the complexities of preparing students for college, career and civic life. It allows for adaptation to state and site specific circumstances and may be adopted in whole or in piecemeal fashion, based on states’ individual circumstances. For each element of the framework, this document includes examples to demonstrate how current state efforts are leading to significant positive change in civic education for all students, P–20.

Find this publication at ecs.org.

STATE CIVIC EDUCATION POLICY: GAP ANALYSIS TOOL FOR EDUCATION LEADERS & POLICYMAKERS

The State Civic Education Policy: Gap Analysis Tool is a companion piece to the State Civic Education Policy Framework released by Education Commission of the States’ National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement. The seven steps prescribed by this gap analysis tool guide education leaders and policymakers in comparing their current state civic education policies and practices with established evidence-based best practices and competitive benchmarks, and in using this analysis to identify strategic priorities for civic education policy improvements.

Find this publication at ecs.org.

COLLEGE, CAREER, & CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

The College, Career and Civic Life, or C3, Framework for Social Studies State Standards provides a platform upon which states and districts can build their own standards and curricula. Written with broad input from across the social studies field, the C3 Framework emphasizes an inquiry arc through which students gain critical thinking, problem solving and participatory skills within the disciplines of the social studies, with the goal of developing each student as an active and informed citizen. The National Council for the Social Studies provides numerous supporting resources, including examples from states and districts that have used the C3 framework to develop their standards and curricula.

Find this publication and C3 framework resources at socialstudies.org.

ALL TOGETHER NOW: COLLABORATION & INNOVATION FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

This report makes the case that civic education must be a shared responsibility. Through thoughtful and easy-to-follow analysis of robust data, the report shows that parents and families, schools, peers, communities and the media all have significant influence on young people’s civic development. Based on these findings, the report provides a series of recommendations to strengthen the civic engagement of young people.

Find this publication at civicyouth.org.

GUIDEBOOK: SIX PROVEN PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE CIVIC LEARNING

The purpose of this guidebook is to serve as a resource—a what’s next? —for teachers, administrators, policymakers and other education leaders who want to put effective civic education practices in place but are not sure how to begin. This document highlights research that confirms these practices as proven strategies for implementing high-quality civic learning, provides practical suggestions for how to implement each practice in schools and classrooms, and gives examples of state-level policies that support these practices. This guidebook also outlines various programs that align with each practice.

Find this publication at ecs.org.

CIVIC EDUCATION: A KEY TO TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Authored by CSG senior fellows, Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene, this report provides a look at civic education through the lens of CSG’s Focus on Federalism initiative. The report’s authors identify challenges that education leaders and policymakers face when trying to strengthen civic education opportunities for students and make several suggestions for how to overcome these challenges. The report concludes with a lengthy list of civic education organizations, including those that focus on a specific state or that work specifically with state leaders.

Find this publication at knowledgecenter.csg.org.
Federal Education Policy Opens Door to Civic Engagement

by Elizabeth Whitehouse and Abbey Bowe

Without the knowledge needed to participate, American citizens are disengaging from the democratic process. According to data released by the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States ranks 28 out of 35 member nations of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, in regard to voter turnout.

Education is one of democracy’s greatest tools and investing in a strong education for every citizen is the best vanguard against this decline in public engagement. Civic education stands at the core of what it takes to equip citizens with the knowledge and willingness to become community, state and national leaders. Without such civic fundamentals, the youth of today may not vote or run for public office tomorrow, and the future participation of citizens in America’s great democratic experiment is at risk. Unfortunately, the state of civic education is declining. The Nation's Report Card released by the U.S. Department of Education in 2014 shows only 23 percent of eighth graders scored at or above proficient in civics.

States have the opportunity to renew their focus on civic education and civics through the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA. Signed into law in 2015, ESSA replaced the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA emphasizes college and career readiness, accountability, scaling back assessments, increasing access to preschool and the important role state and local communities play in making their schools successful. ESSA federal funding acts as an incentive package for innovation in America’s school systems.
Of the 19 states and the District of Columbia that have sent in their state plans for peer review; 11 states and D.C. have included civics in their ESSA state plans.

When looking at examples from the ESSA state plans, New York showed a strong commitment to civic education with the creation of the College, Career and Civic Readiness Index in their ESSA state plan. The plan will focus on civic engagement as a part of a more holistic approach to accountability.

Looking ahead at how states can increase their resources and attention to civics, the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, or NCLCE, provides an in-depth analysis of ways that states can use ESSA state plans to provide a greater focus on civics through the ESSA: Mapping Opportunities for Civic Education report.

“There is significant opportunity to strengthen civic education under ESSA, leveraging civics’ intrinsic value as part of a well-rounded education and civics’ instrumental value to advance academic achievement and non-academic outcomes such as college and workforce readiness skills,” said Jan Brennan, project leader at the NCLCE.

Civic education in the United States should be a major concern for not only educators and policymakers, but for the nation as a whole. Weak civic education leads to more than a simple lack of knowledge. A report conducted by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, or CIRCLE, found that civically engaged students attained higher levels of education than their otherwise similar peers.

“CIRCLE is a national, nonpartisan applied research center focused on increasing, deepening and making more equitable young people’s opportunities for civic learning and engagement,” said Abby Kiesa, director of impact at CIRCLE. “CIRCLE has a long-time focus on school civic education, and CIRCLE’s website provides new research and research summaries on the topic.”

Kiesa served an advisor to the recently convened Civics Education Leadership Team jointly established by CSG and the National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement, where she shared ideas on civic engagement and learning strategies with the leadership team.

The knowledge and skills obtained through civic education are critical to participating in the democratic system. Our states and economy will be greatly impacted by the choice to invest—or not invest—in civic education. Civic education must become a priority for the sake of the next generation of Americans and, particularly, for those most vulnerable to having their voices lost within the political process.

Speaking on the importance of civics, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said, “Civic education plays a critical role in preparing our youth to be active and informed community members, participate in our democracy, and make a difference in the world.”

Like in California and New York, there have been initiatives to improve civic education across the nation, but more support and greater awareness of its importance is needed. At least 40 states require a course in American government or civics, but many of these requirements lack strict quality standards or research-based curricula. The ESSA provides an opportunity for a greater emphasis on civics in accountability systems and funding as states build out their plans.

For more information about CIRCLE, visit civicyouth.org. 

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States that Include Civics in their ESSA State Plans

![Map of the United States highlighting states that include civics in their ESSA state plans. States highlighted include OR, CO, ND, MI, CT, MA, NJ, DE, ME, TN.](https://civicsyouth.org/map)
INCREASING VOTER TURNOUT: WHAT WORKS?

Voter turnout varies greatly by state. From early voting to polling place accessibility, what practices influence voter turnout in the states?

by Jennifer Burnett

THE “STATES” OF VOTER TURNOUT

In the most recent nationwide elections for the 35 countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, or OECD, the United States placed 27th in voter turnout.

Since 1972, turnout has been, on average,

17 POINTS HIGHER FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS THAN FOR MIDTERM ELECTIONS

The percentage of the voting-eligible population that voted was

58 PERCENT in 2012 / 36 PERCENT in 2014

The percentage of the voting population that is not allowed to vote, due either to being an ineligible felon or otherwise non-citizen, has more than doubled since 1980.

315 PERCENT

801,977 INELIGIBLE FELONS IN 1980

3,329,718 INELIGIBLE FELONS IN 2012

*National law makes voting compulsory. Also, one Swiss canton has compulsory voting.
Of the top seven states that had the highest turnout among eligible voters in the 2012 presidential election, six allowed election day registration. Every state that allows election day registration had a higher turnout than the U.S. average in 2012.

According to *Convenience Voting* by Paul Gronke, Eva Galanes-Rosenbaum, Peter A. Miller, and Daniel Toffey, efforts to increase convenience for voters have the most impact in low intensity elections. They found that, “Convenience voting has a small but statistically significant impact on turnout, with most estimates of the increase in the 2–4 percent range.” Convenience voting across the country is made up mostly of various types of early voting, a practice allowed in 34 states.

According to *Engaging the Unengaged Voter: Vote Centers and Voter Turnout* by Robert M. Stein and Greg Vonnahme of Rice University, voting centers “increase voter turnout generally, and among infrequent voters in particular.” Voting centers are “centrally located to major population centers (rather than distributed among residential locations)” and allow any individual from the county to vote regardless of if they know their precinct. This contrasts from precinct-voting stations, where individuals are required to know which one applies to them before voting.

In *Voting by Mail: Turnout and Institutional Reform in Oregon*, Sean Richey of Georgia State University found that “… Oregon’s turnout increases by around 10 percentage points of registered voters in both presidential and midterm elections due to voting-by-mail reform.” He went on to conclude that “these results suggest one of the reasons that the United States has comparatively low turnout is due to its more onerous voting procedures.” Infographics Data Source: Pew, United States Election Project
The Pew Charitable Trusts has worked over the years to provide voter information tools. Now, Pew also analyzes election performance data from the states. The data show how states have performed in the past four national elections and changes in performance indicators.

When it comes to elections, comparing your state’s performance to other states can be difficult. That’s why, in 2013, The Pew Charitable Trusts released the Elections Performance Index, or EPI, which offers policymakers the first comprehensive assessment of election administration across all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The Elections Performance Index tracks 17 indicators of election administration effectiveness—everything from voting wait time and the availability of online registration to voter turnout and registration rates. Data are available for elections held in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 and users can access those data in an easy-to-use, interactive database for free on Pew’s website.

Pew’s analysis of the 2014 data reveal some good news: States continued to improve in 2014, performing better than in 2010. And, despite the lowest turnout rate in a midterm election since 1942, fewer military and overseas ballots were rejected, and more online tools were designed to help residents find information such as where to vote and who was on the ballot. In addition, more states allowed voters to register online in 2014 than in previous elections.

Eight states improved their rankings dramatically—by 10 or more places—when compared with 2010:

- Illinois
- Maryland
- Nebraska
- Ohio
- South Carolina
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia

Visit the Pew Charitable Trusts’ election performance index at pewtrusts.org.
TOP OF THE CLASS IN 2014

**VOTING WAIT TIME**
The average amount of time spent waiting to vote at the polls (in minutes)

1. **WA** 0.4 min
2. **OR** 0.5 min
3. **CO** 1.4 min

**TURNOUT RATE**
Number of people who cast a ballot divided by the eligible voting population

- **ME** 59%
- **CO** 87%
- **WI** 57%
- **MI** 86%
- **DC** 85%

**REGISTRATION RATE**
Percentage of people registered to vote

- **NH** 0%
- **MD** .011%
- **MO** .028%

**REGISTRATIONS REJECTED**
Percentage of total registrations that were rejected in each state

- **CO** 0%
- **MD** .011%
- **MO** .028%

**20 STATES**
and the District of Columbia offered online registration in 2014; these states allowed voters to complete a voter registration application or update their information entirely online, without requiring that a form be printed out, mailed or scanned

**BEST OVERALL: ELECTIONS PERFORMANCE INDEX (EPI)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 Rank</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>EPI score in 2014</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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“States that offer more convenient and efficient ways for voters to register and update their registrations minimize many common issues, such as rejected registrations, use of provisional ballots, and nonvoting due to registrations problems.”

*Assessing the 2014 Election, The Pew Charitable Trusts*
1. Oregon was the first state in the nation to enact automatic voter registration laws. How do you feel this strengthens the democratic process in your state?

"Oregon Motor Voter, or OMV, makes voter registration easier and engages people who otherwise would not have access to the ballot. With every voice added to the voter rolls, our government becomes more reflective of the communities it represents. A Center for American Progress study showed that OMV improved turnout in ethnic minority groups and younger, low-income and rural citizens. These groups are traditionally disenfranchised from this fundamental right, and OMV is allowing them to become empowered in the democratic process. Voter registration is too often used as a barrier to the democratic process. No one should have to prove they are worthy of being a registered voter. We are continuing forward down this path. I will soon be signing a bill allowing 16-year-olds to register to vote when they first get their driver’s license."

2. In your preceding role as secretary of state, what initiatives did you implement that furthered civic involvement?

"Civic engagement is so important to our country, our state and our communities. Yet, it is taught less and less in our school systems. That means we, as elected officials, must engage young people in our system of government. The most important initiative I championed as secretary of state was Oregon’s first in the nation automatic voter registration system. Making voter registration this easy and accessible is something that may seem revolutionary to those of us who have voted for a long time. But it is actually quite intuitive to more youthful generations who are comfortable with innovation and technology making our lives easier and more secure. And the beauty of this law is that it allows for groups that do civic outreach to focus less on voter registration and more on engagement with real issues."

3. You previously served 17 years in the state Legislature. Now in the executive branch, how has your approach to policy evolved?

"The lessons I learned over those 17 years were vital. My perspective today is still very much informed by being in the minority for so many years and transitioning from that dynamic to serve as the Senate majority leader. This taught me a lot about what it’s like to be on both sides of the legislative process. While our system is built on parties, often it’s the relationships we have that supersede party lines. Understanding one another is the key to being able to work together."

4. How can civic education in the classroom be used as a tool to increase engagement in the legislative process?

"Civic education is a great way to empower our students. Knowing how our government works, how laws are made and how to be heard by our representatives is critical in understanding how to participate in and build up our democracy. We all have our causes and stories. The question is how can you harness those tools to create change? A civic education can be beneficial in illustrating that road map to our young people. I regularly see young people engaged at the capitol. Most recently, I met with a group of fifth graders who delivered more than 10,000 petitions advocating for the Clean Energy Jobs Bill. They totally get it. They know exactly how many votes they need in each chamber of the Legislature and are working hard to make their voice heard."
“My top priority is creating an Oregon where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. This means fighting for equity and lowering barriers that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. It means building a strong education system that ensures children can learn in a safe, caring environment and come out prepared to take on their futures. It also means that entrepreneurs and small businesses have the tools they need to compete in the global economy and help grow Oregon’s economy. I’m fighting for access to health care for all and ensuring our system doesn’t discriminate based on gender identity, sexual orientation, pre-existing conditions, or income. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be healthy, and in turn contribute to the health of our society. Finally, we need to care for our environment so that our future generations have clean air, clean water and beautiful landscapes to work and recreate in. That’s why I’m working with other governors around the country to stay committed to the Paris Agreement.”

“Civic education is a great way to empower our students. Knowing how our government works, how laws are made, and how to be heard by our representatives is critical in understanding how to participate in and build up our democracy.”

“Women are still achieving ‘firsts’ in Oregon, and across the country. I am proud to have held the position as the first female majority leader. But, frankly, it means more to me that I am only the second female governor in Oregon. Firsts are great and they are necessary, but equality is a long game and we have a long way to go. Promoting diversity in politics, and in all of our places of work, is a battle I have been a part of my entire life. I have seen the obstacles lessen in my lifetime but they are far from gone. It is a mantle I take up daily in my administration.”

“In this sharply divided political climate, how do you work to bring your state together on important issues?

“I like to believe that regardless of where we stand on the political spectrum, we all want excellent schools and educators for our students. We all want our children to grow up to be healthy, independent and happy. And we want jobs and support systems that allow families to make ends meet and properly care for one another. I believe that in order to get to where we need to be as a state, we need to listen. We need to genuinely be curious about others’ beliefs and stances and challenge ourselves to understand one another in good faith. That’s why I spend so much time traveling to communities across Oregon. I listened to the business community, educators, local officials and advocates, and they have really informed how my office has approached policy. At the end of the day, this isn’t about who wins. It’s about making Oregon a great place to live, work and play.”

“Do you believe that bringing more women and minorities into government will increase citizen involvement in the political process?

“By bringing diverse voices to the table, we all benefit. However, when working to elevate women, we must think more broadly and inclusively. We know that women of color, LGBTQ women, and women with disabilities face additional barriers to thriving. Their wage gap is greater. They’re at higher risk of becoming victims of violence. And they face greater challenges accessing health care. These barriers start in childhood, when they are more likely to be bullied by classmates and dismissed by educators. It is no wonder why diverse women are so scarce in our corporate boardrooms, capitol buildings and city halls. While many of us have benefited from the feminist movement, many more of us have been left behind. Now, more than ever, we must be intentional about including women of all backgrounds in our collective voice.”

“What obstacles—if any—did you face when you were elected the first woman in Oregon history to serve as senate majority leader?

“Women are still achieving ‘firsts’ in Oregon, and across the country. I am proud to have held the position as the first female majority leader. But, frankly, it means more to me that I am only the second female governor in Oregon. Firsts are great and they are necessary, but equality is a long game and we have a long way to go. Promoting diversity in politics, and in all of our places of work, is a battle I have been a part of my entire life. I have seen the obstacles lessen in my lifetime but they are far from gone. It is a mantle I take up daily in my administration.”

“How do you think technology has impacted the ability of lawmakers to engage with constituents, and likewise, citizens to engage with lawmakers?

“Never in our history have citizens had a greater level of direct access to elected officials, and vice versa. This dialogue, an ongoing back and forth between the people and their representatives, has the potential to strengthen our democracy when used responsibly. There’s no better way to reflect the values and beliefs of one’s constituents than knowing exactly where they stand on the issues they find most important.”

“Oregon has had great success with increasing voter participation. In your opinion, what policies should other states be looking at to get more people to the polls?

“I’m very proud of the leadership role Oregon has taken in creating a more open, ultimately a more equal, voting system. We get more people to the polls because, well, we don’t have polls. We have envelopes and mailboxes and ballot drop boxes. This means no one has to take time off of work, find a babysitter, drive across town, take public transit out of their way, or wait in long lines to exercise their right to vote. In many states, voters have to endure all of the above. In Oregon, we encourage voters to look over their pamphlets, engage in conversations with their friends and family in the comfort of their homes, and thoughtfully make their choices before sending off their ballot. This has immensely lowered the barrier to participation. And now we have automatic voter registration, which makes our open voting system yet even more powerful.”

“6 5
As governor, what are your priorities for Oregon?

7 10
Do you believe that bringing more women and minorities into government will increase citizen involvement in the political process?

8 What obstacles—if any—did you face when you were elected the first woman in Oregon history to serve as senate majority leader?

9 How do you think technology has impacted the ability of lawmakers to engage with constituents, and likewise, citizens to engage with lawmakers?

10 Oregon has had great success with increasing voter participation. In your opinion, what policies should other states be looking at to get more people to the polls?”
Knowledge of our system of government, our rights and responsibilities as citizens, is not handed down through the gene pool... it must be taught and we have much work to do!"

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

Sources: NAEP 2014 Civics Assessment, Gallup, Annenberg Public Policy Center

WHY IS CIVIC EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

• It is fundamental to effective government and citizen engagement. Civic education equips citizens with the knowledge and capabilities to become community, state, national and international leaders.

• People don’t trust what they don’t understand. Functional democracy requires trust between citizens and their elected officials, which is more important than ever in today’s highly polarized society.

• Public schools serve an important role in helping young people gain the skills and knowledge they need to participate in civic activities.

• Today’s students may not vote or run for public office without understanding civic education fundamentals, putting future participation of citizens at risk.

• Civic education can help build skills needed in the workforce, such as understanding the perspectives of others, cooperation in groups and concern for other countries.

Only 19% of Americans agree that they trust the federal government all or most of the time.

37% Had little trust or confidence in their states.
Why is Civics Being Ignored?

Education reforms, testing requirements and teacher incentives emphasize STEM curriculum.

With a limited number of hours in a school day, priorities are being placed elsewhere.

WHAT SHOULD COMPREHENSIVE CIVICS KNOWLEDGE INCLUDE?

1. Role/importance of state and local governments.
2. Key aspects of state policymaking (budgeting, state spending, etc).
3. The role of the executive branch and the courts.
4. How state and local government impacts the lives of students.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES from The Civic Mission of Schools

- Classroom instruction in government, history, economics, law, geography.
- Discussion of current events and controversial issues important to the lives of the students.
- Service-learning linked to formal curriculum and classroom instruction to promote public policy solutions to real world problems.
- Extracurricular activities that involve students in school/community projects outside of the classroom.
- School governance that involves student participation.
- Simulations of the democratic process.

CHALLENGES FACING STATES

ABSENCE OF COMPETENT TEACHERS
Teachers often only receive one single American government course that is federally focused. Teachers aren’t taught about state governments.

POLITICAL DIVISIONS
The growing partisan divide in the country has lead teachers to avoid talking about political issues and controversial topics with their students.

LACK OF ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS
It is difficult to write a textbook about 50 different entities operating separately. It is also more difficult to sift through today’s news to find up-to-date, non-partisan coverage of state government.

SCARCE RESOURCES
There is a need for greater assessment, teacher training and materials for students, but these all cost time and money that schools find difficult to allocate to civics.
Technology has changed everything. We ask Siri for directions instead of looking at a map, we Instagram instead of making photo albums, and we open Twitter instead of the newspaper. Now, technology is reshaping the civic landscape, and elected officials are harnessing these changes to increase engagement with their constituents.

by Courtney Daniel
Technology, such as smartphones and social media platforms, is playing an increasingly significant role in how citizens receive information. According to the Pew Research Center, 69 percent of Americans use some type of social media. That’s up from just 5 percent in 2005.

“My constituents like the instant access that social media provides to connect directly with their legislator,” Tennessee state Rep. Raumesh Akbari said. “Social media is evolving and moving and the interactions are organic.”

Akbari represents Tennessee’s 91st district, which encompasses part of Shelby County, the state’s largest county by population and geographic area. According to her, only 1 percent of 18 to 24-year-old’s in her district vote, and that’s a problem.

“That demographic is so hard to reach and get them to vote and be participants in the legislative process,” Akbari said. “The legislature can seem so big, but social media makes what we do more accessible.”

Social media is presenting itself—at least in part—as a solution to this hurdle of accessibility. Eighty-six percent of people 18 to 24 use at least one social media site, and according to a Pew Research Center report, Civic Engagement in the Digital Age, social media involvement frequently spills over into other online and offline spaces.

“It is so important for people—young people specifically—to be involved not only at the national level, but also in state and local governments,” Akbari said. “Those are the governing bodies that actually have the most influence on your daily life.”

And it’s not just young people who are flocking to the internet. Sixty-four percent of people 50–64 years of age use at least one social media site. Akbari said she uses technology in a variety of ways to reach different demographics, including livestreaming from the House floor, asking for ideas about legislation through email and sharing updates on social media about accomplishments during the legislative session.

Akbari has also used social media as a tool to gain support for legislation and bring her constituents into the legislative process.

“I worked on a bill to ban suspensions of pre-kindergartners and kindergartners,” Akbari said. “I was able to get feedback from teachers and educators on Facebook, [and] workshop a bill and garner support for it right on Facebook.”

Americans who take part in political activities on social networking sites also tend to be highly active in other areas of political or civic life. According to the Pew Research Center, 60 percent of people who engage in political activity on social media have sent an email to a government official or signed an online
petition. The national average is 34 percent. Fifty-three percent of those who use social media to engage politically have expressed their opinion about a political or social issue by sending a letter to a government official or signing a paper petition. The national average is 39 percent.

But social media is still just one tool with which to engage voters. Akbari doesn’t only sit behind a desk and write online posts; she continues to engage in person with her community.

“We are planning a series of town halls, and social media will help us reach people who won’t actually be able to be there,” Akbari said. “We’re going to livestream the town halls and accept questions online and allow people to give us feedback.”

Akbari said social media doesn’t have to be polarizing, it can be a source of information and a way to bring more people into the legislative process.

Social media isn’t the only online resource that’s increased civic engagement. Platforms such as icitizen are working to connect constituents to their elected officials and organizations. Bruce Starr, vice president of government relations at icitizen, said the platform provides elected officials with quantitative feedback on policy initiatives and new ideas so they are armed with hard data to back up their decisions.

“Citizens feel satisfied and part of the political process [by] making their voices heard voting in polls, and electeds use that insight to inform their campaigns or policies, while also showing their district they are listening to and engaged with constituents,” Starr said.

On icitizen’s website, users vote in polls about trending issues, and elected officials can gauge public opinion to inform decisions and test new ideas. It’s also a place to access nonpartisan news and track trending polls and issues within communities. This platform works on national, state and local projects.

“We’ve helped numerous elected officials and organizations,” Starr said. “While they might not have had the budget to incorporate a ‘luxury’ item like public opinion polling in the past, we’ve helped lower that barrier and make it more accessible.”

Starr said icitizen has had more than 135,000 users since last year, with the number continuing to grow.

“We’re seeing more people actively voting in our polls and weighing in on national news, policy issues and surveys from their representatives. This shows that people are eager to connect with their representatives and get involved in the political process. We just need to make it easy for them to do so,” Starr said.

Pew’s Voting information Project, or VIP, also aims to increase civic engagement. VIP provides voters with information about where to vote.
and what’s on their ballots, ensuring all eligible Americans have the information they need before they cast a ballot.

“Voters need to know where to vote, and what will be on their ballot,” said Alexis Schuler, senior director for Pew Charitable Trusts. “Historically, that specific information has been difficult to find online. Since 2009, we have been delivering actionable information online about where to cast a ballot, on or before Election Day.”

The Pew Charitable Trusts’ 2008 report, Being Online is Not Enough, revealed that a standardized, reliable online source for voters to obtain basic Election Day information did not exist, even though millions search online for such answers. VIP was created as a joint effort of state and local officials, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Google to bring official voting information to voters via the internet.

In order for search engines, social media websites, online retailers and others to share relevant voting information, they need an aggregated source that stretches across jurisdictions. That’s where VIP comes in. VIP received official voting information from 44 state election offices and the District of Columbia, and saw more than 123 million impressions of VIP information during the 2016 election cycle. That’s compared to 31 million in the 2014 election cycle.

“Voters are used to doing everything online, and finding out where to vote and what’s on their ballot is becoming routine,” Schuler said. VIP is often much easier to use than sometimes cumbersome government websites. Users enter an address on VIP, and voting information for that address pops up. Additionally, VIP’s information has powered lookup tools across a multitude of platforms.

“If you looked up where to vote through a Google search, or reacted to a Facebook push notification, or found a prompt in your Twitter feed, you used information provided by VIP. If you checked a forecast on Weather Underground, ordered dinner delivery from DoorDash, or shopped on Etsy, you came across links to VIP’s voting information in each of these places,” Schuler said. “Our goal in 2016 was to give voters the opportunity to find accurate, official voting information during their regular, daily online activities.”

Countless other organizations, like Code for America, a network of people who have worked with thousands of tech industry professionals to help local governments better serve their communities, and Change.org, an online petition platform that has been used by more than 100 million people in 196 countries, are working to engage more citizens in the legislative process.

Town halls and traditional media still have a place within the civic arena, but increasingly organizations, leaders and decision makers are meeting the people where there are—online.
Throughout the United States’ history, civic education has been viewed as a safeguard to democratic values. In a 1787 letter to James Madison, Thomas Jefferson stated, “Above all things I hope the education of the common people will be attended to, convinced that on their good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.”

The federal government has long regarded an understanding of the functions of government, the duties of citizenship and American history as an essential part of the naturalization process. To complete this process and qualify for U.S. citizenship today, lawful permanent residents must successfully complete an interview and test administered by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS.

Included in the citizenship screening process is a civics test comprised of questions about U.S. government and history. The purpose of this test is to prepare immigrants for integration, the duties of American citizenship and attachment to the country. The test consists of 10 questions taken from a list of 100 possible questions. These questions are presented orally to applicants during their personal interview. To pass the test, they must answer six of the 10 questions correctly. According to USCIS, the overall national pass rate as of September 2016 is 91 percent.

These tests were not always administered in such a standardized manner. There is little record of civics exams prior to 1906, when the federal Bureau of Naturalization began to manage the process. Before this time, naturalization procedures were under the jurisdiction of local courts and the exams were conducted orally by judges and varied widely.

Establishing a standardized method of testing was thought to promote efficiency, increase a minimum competency of democratic values and encourage immigrant participation. However, as seen with other methods of education where the curriculum is focused on “teaching to the test,” concerns have arisen about promoting test preparation over actual education.

While there is no doubt that the standardization of the civics test has increased accessibility for would-be citizens, it remains unclear if they are better prepared for civic engagement. The test’s 100 possible questions are listed below. How many of these questions can you answer correctly? Do you think these questions about civics and the Constitution further an understanding of the purposes, values and principles of American democracy and prepare immigrants for citizenship?
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"?

Section A Key: 1.) the Constitution; 2.) Sets up the government, Defines the government, Protects basic rights of Americans; 3.) We the People; 4.) A change (to the Constitution) or an addition (to the Constitution); 5.) The Bill of Rights; 6.) Any of the following: speech, religion, assembly, press, petition the government; 7.) 27; 8.) Any of the following: announced our independence (from Great Britain), declared our independence (from Great Britain), said that the United States is free (from Great Britain); 9.) Any two of the following: life, liberty, pursuit of happiness; 10.) You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion; 11.) Capitalist economy or market economy; 12.) Everyone must follow the law; Leaders must obey the law, Government must obey the law, No one is above the law.

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?

Section B Key: 13.) Any of the following: Congress, legislative, president, executive, the courts, judicial; 14.) Checks and balances or separation of powers; 15.) the President; 16.) Congress, Senate and House (of Representatives) or (U.S. or national) legislature; 17.) the Senate and House (of Representatives); 18.) 100; 19.) six; 20.) Answers will vary. [District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S. territories should answer that D.C. (or the territory where the applicant lives) has no U.S. Senators; 21.) 435; 22.) two; 23.) Answers will vary. [Residents of territories with nonvoting Delegates or Resident Commissioners may provide the name of that Delegate or Commissioner. Also acceptable is any statement that the territory has no (voting) Representatives in Congress.]; 24.) all people of the state; 25.) Acceptable answers include: because of the states population, because they have more people, because some states have more people; 26.) four; 27.) November; 28.) Acceptable answers include: Donald J. Trump, Donald Trump or Trump; 29.) Acceptable answers include: Michael R. Pence, Mike Pence or Pence; 30.) the Vice President; 31.) the Speaker of the House; 32.) the President; 33.) the President; 34.) the President; 35.) advises the President; 36.) Any two of the following: Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Education, Secretary of Energy, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Labor, Secretary of State, Secretary of Transportation, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Attorney General, or Vice President; 37.) Acceptable answers include: reviews laws, explains laws, resolves disputes...
50. Name one right only for United States citizens.
51. Any one of the following: vote in a federal election, run for federal office; 52. Any two of the following: freedom, political liberty, religious freedom, the right to bear arms; 53.) Acceptable answers include: American Indians, Native Americans; 54.) Acceptable answers include: Egyptians, people from Africa; 55.) Because of high taxes (taxation without representation), because the British army stayed in their houses (boarding, quartering), because they didn’t have self-government; 56.) Thomas Jefferson; 57.) July 4, 1776; 58.) Any three of the following: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia; 59.) Acceptable answers include: The Constitution was written, the Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution; 60.) George Washington.

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?

Section C Key: 48.) Any one of the following: Citizens 18 and older (can vote), You don’t have to pay (a poll tax) to vote, Any citizen can vote (Women and men can vote), A male citizen of any race (can vote), 49.) Any one of the following: serve on a jury, vote in a federal election; 50.) Any one of the following: serve on a jury, vote in a federal election; 51.) Any two of the following: freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to petition the government, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms; 52.) Acceptable answers include: The United States, the flag; 53.) Any one of the following: give up loyalty to other countries, defend the Constitution and laws of the United States, obey the laws of the United States, serve in the U.S. military (if needed), serve (do important work for) the nation (if needed), be loyal to the United States; 54.) 18 and older; 55.) Any two of the following: vote, join a political party, help with a campaign, join a civic group, join a community group, give an elected official your opinion on an issue, call Senators and Representatives; publicly support or oppose an issue or policy, run for office, write to a newspaper; 56.) April 15; 57.) Acceptable answers include: at age 18, between 18 and 26.
Section C: Recent American History & Other 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.

Section C Key: 78. Any one of the following: World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, (Persian Gulf War; 79.) Woodrow Wilson; 80.) Franklin Roosevelt; 81.) Japan, Germany, Italy; 82.) World War II; 83.) Communism; 84.) Civil rights (movement); 85.) Fought for civil rights, worked for equality for all Americans; 86.) Terrorists attacked the United States; 87.) Any one of the following: Cherokee, Navajo, Sioux, Chippewa, Choctaw, Pueblo, Apache, Iroquois, Creek, Blackfeet, Seminole, Cheyenne, Arapah, Shownee, Mohagham, Huron, Oneida, Lakota, Crow, Teton, Hopi, Inui

Section 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.

Section 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?

Section B Key: 96.) Any one of the following: Missouri (River), Mississippi (River); 89.) Pacific (Ocean); 90.) Atlantic (Ocean); 91.) Any one of the following: Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam; 92.) Any one of the following: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington, Alaska; 93.) Any one of the following: California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas; 94.) Washington, D.C.; 95.) Acceptable answers include: New York (Harbor), Liberty Island, New Jersey, near New York City, on the Hudson (River).
Democracy around the world is on the decline, including in the United States, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit’s 2016 Democracy Index. For the first time, the index downgraded the U.S. from a “full democracy” to a “flawed democracy,” citing concerns about trust in government, elected officials and the dynamics of political parties. The report also showed 72 other countries experienced a decline in democracy in 2016.

Measuring democracy in today’s political environment is not simple. The Economist Intelligence Unit’s, or EIU’s, Democracy Index measures democracy based on the electoral process, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation and political culture of a government. The index measures 172 countries and classifies them in four different categories, including full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes and authoritarian regimes. The index is based on a scale of 1 to 10, ranging from authoritarian regimes (0-4) to full democracies (8-10).

Norway ranked No. 1 on the Index, scoring a 9.93 out of 10 and classified as a full democracy. Iceland (9.50), Sweden (9.39), New Zealand (9.26), and Denmark (9.20) rounded out the top five.

The United States ranked No. 21 with a score of 7.98 and classified as a flawed democracy due to concerns about the trust in government and political participation. Other flawed democracies include Japan (7.99), South Korea (7.92), Israel (7.85), and Panama (7.13).

The bottom five of the index includes Equatorial Guinea (1.70), Central African Republic (1.61), Chad (1.50), Syria (1.43), and North Korea (1.08). These nations are classified as authoritarian regimes and have limited or no electoral process in place.

The following chart takes a closer look at democracies and voting practices around the world, including Norway, India, South Africa, Australia and Chile.

MEASURING DEMOCRACIES

by Andy Karellas
**Norway**
Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy

**POPULATION** 5.27 million  
**CAPITAL** Oslo

**ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACY**
Norway transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy on May 17, 1814. May 17 is also Constitution Day, a national holiday. In Norway, 1814 is known as “The Year of Miracles” due to massive political changes.

**TYPE OF ELECTIONS**
Norway has national and local elections, both taking place every second year. The national level has 169 members of parliament, and elected for four-year terms. Local elections are for both the 19 counties and municipalities.

**SPECIAL NOTES OF INTEREST**
Only Norwegian citizens can vote in Parliamentary elections, but foreign citizens who have lived in Norway for three consecutive years can vote in local elections.

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**Australia**
Parliamentary Democracy

**POPULATION** 23 million  
**CAPITAL** Canberra

**ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACY**
Australia became a democratic nation on Jan. 1, 1901 with the adoption of their new constitution and federal government.

**TYPE OF ELECTIONS**
Australia has elections at the national, state and local levels and follows an electoral system. National elections are held at least every three years for elected officials, including Senate members who serve six-year terms, and House members who serve three-year terms. Elections in Australia's states and territories are held every four years.

**SPECIAL NOTES OF INTEREST**
Australian citizens over 18 are mandated to register to vote. Individuals have an eight-week grace period after turning 18 to vote or could face a penalty of $20.

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**Chile**
Presidential Republic

**POPULATION** 17.6 million  
**CAPITAL** Santiago

**ORIGIN OF DEMOCRACY**
Chile's transition to democracy is symbolized by the end of Augusto Pinochet's military regime in 1990. Chile adopted several laws to their constitution reducing the role of the military and strengthening the role of the people.

**TYPE OF ELECTIONS**
Chile has elections nationwide for the presidential office and parliament seats. It also has regional and municipal elections. Chile has an electoral process that is independent from the government. The president is elected by popular vote for a four-year term. The 19 Senatorial positions are elected by majority vote for eight-year terms. The 60 districts are elected by majority vote for four-year terms.

**SPECIAL NOTES OF INTEREST**
The visit of St. John Paul II to Chile in April 1987 is recognized as a key moment in Chile's transition to democracy. The pope criticized Pinochet's military regime and urged Chile's 31 Catholic bishops to campaign for free elections and to transfer power back to the citizens. Currently, 67 percent of Chileans are considered Roman Catholic.
Lingo can be daunting for the uninitiated in any industry. Here, we untangle some of the acronyms, abbreviations and organizations you’ll find in this issue.

ACRONYM SOUP

NCSC  National Center for State Courts

NCLCE  National Center for Learning and Civic Engagement

OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

EIU  The Economist Intelligence Unit

C3  College, Career, and Civic Life Framework for Social Studies State Standards

ESSA  Every Student Succeeds Act
The Do’s and Don’t’s of Flag Etiquette
Do keep other surrounding flags lower than the U.S. flag as a show of respect and honor.

Do always allow the flag to fall free, not in folds.

Do display, use and store the flag in a way that will keep it from being easily damaged.

Do keep the flag free of any additional marks, insignia, words or pictures.

Do wear lapel flag pins on the left lapel next to the heart.

Do wear a flag patch on a uniform if you are military personnel, a firefighter, a police officer or a member of a patriotic organization.

Do properly illuminate the flag if it is displayed at night.

Do not dip the flag to any person or thing.

Do not let the flag touch anything below it. This includes the ground, the floor and other objects.

Do not use the flag as apparel or wear as a costume or athletic uniform.

Do not use the flag to cover or drape a speaker’s stand or platform.

Do not use the flag to hold or carry anything.

Do not display the flag upside down. (This is only used as a signal of extreme distress.)

Do not destroy the flag in an undignified manner when it is no longer in fitting condition to display.

Source: usflag.org.
As the first flurry of legislative activity winds down and summer recess begins, legislators are returning to their hometowns and looking forward to time with family and constituents. In this CSG continuing series, we explore how our four freshman legislators will spend their summer and their reflections on the first few session months.

What did you learn from your first legislative budgeting/appropriations process?

**CASKEY** “I’ve learned the state budget is a lot like life, at least as Forrest Gump described it: ‘Life is like a box of chocolates, you never know what you’re going to get.’ By that I mean that our current budget process is outmoded. … Systemically, I think we need more rigorous analyses of budget requests; South Carolina needs to implement a rolling, zero-based budgeting model that puts the onus of funding on the requesting agency. But, as a #freshman, I’ve also learned big changes take a long time.”

**NIOU** “We called our budget ‘The Big Ugly’ since it was such an arduous process. This was one of the rare times that our budget was late getting passed, and many members who had been here for decades said it was one of the most difficult budget negotiations we have had in a very long time. It was truly like a crash course in how our budget gets done. It was very interesting to learn about the negotiations, and in the end, we accomplished some very important things like raising New York’s age of criminal responsibility in this year’s budget.”

**SYMS** “In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, ‘It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.’ What I mean by that is the budget is a long negotiation where one day you may think there is little support for your priorities and then suddenly, seemingly without warning, the tide turns. The lesson learned from this experience is one that has served me well throughout my career—no matter how challenging things may appear, stick to your principles and do what is in the best interest of the people you serve.”

What do you see as your biggest accomplishment from January to May?

**CASKEY** “I serve as chairman of the Freshman Caucus and we have delivered a balanced series of professional development programs that have empowered our members to embrace their new roles as legislators. From the budget process to parliamentary procedure to ethics laws and more, the Freshman Caucus has done a great job of regularly getting subject matter experts in front of our members to discuss aspects of being a legislator that can be intimidating or complex.”

**MAH** “I have had a productive first session because I took to heart the need to negotiate and compromise, work closely with stakeholders and hear people out. I was able to pass five bills through both chambers and onto the governor’s desk. … And throughout the process, it was clear that to be a successful legislator, one must be in constant communication all the time—with stakeholders, colleagues, opponents, staff, everyone.”

by Kelley Arnold
In district, some of my biggest accomplishments are how many constituent cases we have taken on. My staff are just amazing with the cases they have taken on, and I am proud of some the results that we are getting. In the budget, I was particularly proud of my advocacy to restore and increase funding for our Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities. I was also one of the main advocates who fought to increase funding for our New York City Housing Authority. Another major accomplishment is that we made history by forming the new Asian Pacific American Staff Association. … I often say that leaders are only as good as the feedback we receive from the people we represent. By taking the time to listen to members of my community, I can formulate more impactful policy proposals for the next session. I will continue to build on our success this year in growing jobs, improving efficiency of state government, and developing along the waterfront. … I am hoping to make sure that my constituents get to have many opportunities to be at the table for the issues that affect them. … I also need to make sure my constituents’ voices are being heard by the many developers coming in.”

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“On the legislative end, I’m hoping to put together a package of financial services and asset building bills for the consideration of our body. I am also working to make sure that the Rivington Act, a bill … to increase transparency around nursing home closures, passes the Assembly. … In district, I am hoping to make sure that my constituents get to have many opportunities to be at the table for the issues that affect them. … I also need to make sure my constituents’ voices are being heard by the many developers coming in and developing along the waterfront.”

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“I will be spending my summer ‘recess’ back in my district meeting constituents and listening to the needs of the people I represent. I live in a diverse, vibrant area and represent neighborhoods with an active summer calendar in terms of neighborhood festivals, block parties, community meetings and events. I plan to be all over the district getting to know more and more of my constituents. I am planning several neighborhood meet-and-greets hosted by my office. I will also be working with interns and volunteers on policy ideas for next session.”

“We don’t get the same kind of ‘summer recess’ that some other state legislatures have! We are just as busy as members return to their districts after six months in Albany. We will be continuing to hold our mobile district offices and working on local issues that our constituents need us to consider. For example, we are holding a town hall with ConEd (an energy utility company) and the state’s Department of Environmental Conservation in late June about a recent oil spill in the East River. We also have significant storm resiliency needs in my district and the discussions are ongoing as we fight for flood protection resources.”

“I am hoping to finish work on a series of government modernization initiatives that, if adopted next year, will help deliver a more responsive, more efficient state government.”

“Our legislature will be called into special session this year so that we can work out a budget. My hope is that I will be able to count passing a budget as one of my accomplishments. I will be monitoring the progress of my bills that are on the governor’s desk. I will also be planning and hosting several meetings on bills that may yet need to be worked out and possibly considered during the veto session. My hope is that I’ll be able to pass one or two more bills before the end of the year and have a plan ready for a productive legislative session next year.”

“How do you hope to spend your summer recess?"  "I’m hoping to finish work on a series of government modernization initiatives that, if adopted next year, will help deliver a more responsive, more efficient state government.”

“Quality time with my husband and three young children is the order of the day this summer. After a long campaign and first session, this is the first real vacation we are taking together in a while. We will be exploring the beauty of our great state of Arizona and fulfilling a bucket list item by white water rafting for a week in the Grand Canyon. … I invite everyone reading this to visit and experience the wonder of the natural beauty of Arizona—it is a national treasure.”

Keep following our freshman legislators’ journey in the September/October issue of Capitol Ideas!
In an age of increased polarization, many state leaders, political experts and constituents themselves are advocating for a “return to civility.” Civility at its core is the idea that people with opposing and sometimes radically different viewpoints can disagree with integrity, but civility alone is not enough. Seeking to truly understand differing points of view in the governing process not only opens the door to collaboration, but sets the standard within our communities that people come first.

To really demonstrate a commitment to decreased polarization, we need to move beyond the baseline behavior of civility and move toward listening, understanding and respect. Understanding doesn’t mean abandoning your deeply held beliefs, but it does require us to give everyone the space to hold and express their equally deeply held beliefs. It also requires each of us to ask “why” from a place of sincerity. Why do people believe what they believe? What personal life experiences have shaped their worldview?

While not always the easiest path forward, making sound and informed decisions that improve the lives of constituents without divisive rhetoric is possible. Powerful discourse is an important part of the fabric of our democracy; however, equally important, is having open hearts and minds to the many perspectives that compose our state houses and communities. By actively seeking understanding, we not only better serve our constituents and communities, we also become catalysts for stronger governance and, ultimately, a stronger union.

As the new chair of the House Appropriations Committee, it was a priority to develop the fiscal year 2018 Vermont State Budget using an open and inclusive process. Too often, debate regarding legislation can be limited to a few individuals or contained within the walls of the committee of jurisdiction. Encouraging Vermonters to voice concerns at public hearings was key in crafting this year’s budget. In addition, legislators were invited to actively participate in open dialogue to present ideas; each Appropriations Committee member was expected to reach out to colleagues and committees of jurisdiction. Partisan politics were set aside and work focused on the needs of Vermonters. These efforts moved us beyond civility to understanding.

Most notably, the budget contains critical investments, reserves are filled above statutory levels, and provisions are included to help prepare for future uncertainties. Of importance for members of all political stripes is the fact that the total growth rate of 1.3 percent is far below the official revenue forecast of 3.7 percent. This document was not constructed by a small partisan group behind closed doors, but rather it was truly a budget of the whole. Many proposals were incorporated in the final product as evidenced by a strong bipartisan vote. On the budget’s first trip through the House and Senate, it passed on votes of 143-1 and 30-0 respectively. News outlets reported the budget to be highly successful. However, just a few days prior to adjournment, the budget bill was targeted as a vehicle to carry a controversial initiative proposed by the administration and the budget is now the subject of a veto. While it was an unfortunate end to a highly collaborative effort, the exercise of promoting listening and understanding between ourselves and our constituents allowed for a stronger political process.
As legislators, we are accustomed to dealing with disagreements. In fact, the legislative process, as it has developed over the centuries, is intended to limit and channel disagreements and move a deliberative body toward a decision. The legislative process places a high value on civility, which makes democratic governance possible.

But the legislative process has its limitations. It does not explicitly provide for deeper exploration of our differences. We listen to each other’s points of view, buttressed by arguments and evidence, but we do not actually explore the origins of our differing opinions.

If we want to move beyond mere civility and toward understanding, we must know where other participants in the legislative process are coming from. We need to listen not just to their points of view, but to their story. Everyone has a narrative identity, an internal, evolving story that gives life a sense of purpose and unity. This story has characters, episodes, plots and themes. It has villains and heroes. Our narrative identity is shaped by our life experiences and the meaning that we give to them. It is also shaped by the experiences of our ancestors and the history of the ethnic, religious or cultural groups to which we belong.

Understanding this narrative identity will enable us to connect with other participants in the legislative process in a deeper, more satisfying way and to craft more fruitful public policies.

It took a recent near tragedy on a baseball field in Alexandria, Virginia, to give me hope that civility was not dead, but rather, buried under the political rhetoric of both American political parties. The poet Samuel Johnson wrote in the 1700s, “Once the forms of civility are violated, there remains little hope of return to kindness or decency.” What Johnson could not foresee is the uniqueness of Americans to come together regardless of party affiliation in times of heartbreak. The space shuttle tragedies, an assassination attempt on a president, the 911 terrorist attacks, the Orlando nightclub shootings and most recently the assassination attempts on members of Congress are all examples of how tragedies unite us as a people. It’s times like these that give us an opportunity to unite, inspire and accomplish great things as Americans and for our constituents.

John F. Kennedy once pleaded for us to hit the “reset button” regarding civility. He said, “So let us begin anew—remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate. Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.”

I firmly believe that in American politics today, the biggest communication problems we face with one another are created because we don’t listen to understand, we listen to reply. We must move toward not only hearing what others say when they speak, but also listening to what is being said. Hearing is easy; listening requires us all to put in effort and sincerity.

Those best at listening, engage others with an open mind and seek to understand opposing views, different perspectives, ideas and concepts; they do not see those with different views as “the enemy.” I was inspired by the amount of unity, civility and understanding that took place after the near-tragedy on the baseball field in Alexandria and it reminded me that civility in America is not dead—it just takes some understanding to keep it alive. I challenge all of us to seek out someone that rarely agrees with our point of view and build a relationship with them. There is always something to learn.

Assemblyman
Tyrone Thompson
Nevada
CSG 2016 Toll Fellow

Rep. Rob Taylor
Iowa
CSG 2016 Toll Fellow
POLICYMAKERS TEST AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE AT CSG POLICY ACADEMY

State policymakers attending the CSG Autonomous and Connected Vehicle Policy Academy in Detroit on June 14 had the opportunity to tour Mcity, the world’s first purpose-built proving ground for testing autonomous and connected vehicles and technologies. The group toured the 32-acre site on the University of Michigan’s north campus in Ann Arbor in a fully autonomous electric shuttle.

CAPITOL HILL EVENT SHOWCASES PROGRESS IN RE-ENTRY AND RECIDIVISM REDUCTION

At a June 8 event on Capitol Hill, the National Reentry Resource Center and The Council of State Governments’ Justice Center released two briefs highlighting efforts to reduce recidivism in communities throughout the country. Making People’s Transition from Prison and Jail to the Community Safe and Successful: A Snapshot of National Progress in Reentry features advancements made in state and local governments’ approaches to re-entry and recidivism reduction since the passage of the Second Chance Act in 2008. Reducing Recidivism: States Deliver Results highlights new data showing recidivism reduction in a number of states.
CSG REPORT DETAILS FEDERAL SPENDING IN THE STATES

The Council of State Governments published a report that outlines how trillions of dollars in federal money flow through the states. This data breaks up federal spending across five categories: retirement benefits, non-retirement benefits, salaries and wages, grants, and contracts. Formerly published by the U.S. Census Bureau, the federal spending report changed hands over the decades and was nearly lost. CSG now plans to publish the report annually.

SOUTHERN OFFICE CONTINUES TRADITION OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

The Southern Office of The Council of State Governments is pleased to announce that voting for the 2017 State Transformation in Action Recognition, or STAR, award, a regional award for outstanding and innovative state government programs, will be conducted on tablet computers. The 2017 STAR Judges Panel, comprised of state legislators and policy experts, will convene on Aug. 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. during the 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. The STAR Judges Panel joins the Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills, of CALS, the Southern Office’s premier governmental leadership program, which has been paperless since 2014. Use of tablets by the CALS program enables state leaders to digitally access all programmatic and evaluative components of the program.

NICK BOWMAN, research and publications associate (right), displays the tablets.
Capitol buildings in state capitals across the country buzz with the official business of state leaders. While they are all home to important work being done by elected and appointed officials, each capitol is unique, both in design and history.

**A Capitol Workplace**

The initial design for the Ohio Statehouse came from a design competition.

The chandelier weighs 4,000 pounds.

Before each governor’s inauguration, it is lowered to the ground to be cleaned.

The New York capitol has 17 steps to its western entrance and 77 steps to its eastern entrance in honor of the year 1777, when its current state government replaced the colonial government.

The Washington State Capitol has survived three major earthquakes since completion of its construction in 1928.

Almost all the materials that make up the Georgia Capitol come from Georgia, including the marble, wood, cast-iron and gold.

During the California Capitol restoration in the 1970s, the thousands of marble pieces that make up the floor mosaic were completely disassembled, cleaned and replaced.

1777

The North Dakota capitol is known as the Skyscraper on the Prairie and is the tallest building in the state.

Kentucky’s capitol building is the fourth the commonwealth has had. The first two were destroyed by fire from candles and the third is still standing in Frankfort today.

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**Final Facts**

**In West Virginia’s Capitol Dome**

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