

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

I am writing as a constituent to ask for your support for competitive federal funding to help local schools improve the teaching of history, civics, economics, and geography. Specifically, I am requesting that the FY 2017 and FY 2018 Labor, HHS and Education bills fund the following programs authorized in the Every Student Succeeds Act at the level included in Chairman Cole's FY 2017 House-version of the appropriations bill:

- American History and Civics National Activities: \$6.5 million;
- American History and Civics Academies: \$1.815 million;
- Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants: \$1 billion. The four subjects noted above are eligible for funding under these grants.

These voluntary grants will help local schools and teachers in our state that wish to strengthen instruction in our country's history, geography, economy and/or government. This support for teacher preparation and effective approaches is needed.

Over the past decades, the need to support local school districts in offering effective, engaging approaches to teaching American history, civics, economics and geography has increased significantly. The National Assessment of Educational Progress demonstrates that barely a quarter of American eighth and twelfth graders achieve even basic proficiency in core concepts and facts related to American history and government.

Funding these grants will help local school districts by offering intensive learning opportunities to students and teachers, and by supporting the development of a range of innovative, effective approaches to civic learning that engage students from different backgrounds and different approaches to learning. Research shows that far too many rural and inner city students are not learning the concepts and practices needed to become engaged and informed citizens. Through these grants, school districts will have access to a menu of validated approaches for their voluntary use, and can implement the instructional methods that best meet the needs of their students and communities.

It is vital to the future of our republic that students graduate prepared for informed citizenship. We urge you to support funding to help local schools improve the instruction of civics, economics, geography and history.