



The Educating for Democracy Act *Senators Chris Coons (DE) and John Cornyn (TX)*

Authorizes federal grants for educators, nonprofits, and resources to improve strengthen civics education from early childhood to higher education

Background: The Center for American Progress reports that, as of 2018, only nine states and the District of Columbia require a full year of civics or government studies while 31 require a half-year of studies and fully ten states have no civics requirements at all. That lack of emphasis is reflected in low achievement levels on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and, for those students who take advanced placement U.S. government assessments, among the lowest achievement scores among the several dozen tested subject areas. The federal government, too, has chronically underinvested in support for civics education. Civics education can empower students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and mindsets to engage effectively in in the civic and political life of their communities. In today's contentious civil environment, it is more important than ever that students are equipped with knowledge of our institutions and confronted with the enduring questions of civic life and political change. The *Educating for Democracy Act* represents a bipartisan commitment to strengthening civics education, from K-12 through higher education.

Legislation:

- Authorizes \$1 billion annually for six years across four new federal civics education grant programs for:
 - State education agencies, which would be awarded by formula; passed on to districts to support civics and history education programs, especially with a lens to closing civics achievement gaps; and authorized at \$600 million per year;
 - Nonprofit organizations, which would be awarded competitively, used to develop and provide access to evidence-based civics and history curricula and programs, and authorized at \$200 million per year;
 - Institutions of higher education, which would be awarded competitively, used to support civics and history educator preparation, and authorized at \$150 million per year; and
 - Researchers, which would be awarded competitively, used to assess and evaluate civics and history education programs and identify best instructional practices, and authorized at \$50 million per year.
- Requires the administration every two years of the NAEP in civics and history to students in grades 4, 8, and 12.

Endorsements: CivXNow Coalition, American Bar Association, YMCA Youth and Government, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Youth Leadership Council, among others.

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