

**Statement of Louise Dubè  
Executive Director, iCivics, Inc.  
Lead Partner, CivXNow Coalition**

**National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service  
Staff Memorandum: Civic Education | June 20, 2019**

To the Members of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service,

On behalf of iCivics, which leads the CivXNow Coalition - the nation's largest and leading civic education advocacy entity including 100 organizations – it is a pleasure to provide the following testimony regarding the Commission Staff Recommendations on Civic Education.

iCivics, founded by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, and CivXNow strongly supports the Staff Recommendations on Civic Education.

The recommendations for local and state education policymakers offer a meaningful roadmap for significant improvement of civic education. We particularly welcome the call for more civic education in the elementary grades. Civic education can and should be integrated throughout the K-12 experience, and the erosion of civic education opportunities at the elementary school level has been significant and harmful.

Adoption of the Staff Recommendations for middle and high school, including student opportunities to experience student designed civics projects, would improve each state's and each school district's approach to civic education. The Commission Staff Recommendations on Civic Education closely mirror many of the policy recommendations contained in the CivXNow Coalition's Policy Menu for state and local policymakers, available at: <https://www.civxnow.org/policy>

The Staff Recommendations for Federal level investments and new opportunities are welcome additions to the policy landscape in civic education. While the majority of actions needed to strengthen and improve civic education will appropriately happen at the state and local levels, the Federal government has an important role to play in stimulating innovation and ensuring equity of opportunities in education.

As the Staff Recommendations Memo notes, Federal level investment in civic education is negligible and in no way matches the scale of the problem. While the CivXNow Coalition has not weighed in on federal policy recommendations yet, we at iCivics support the establishment of the two recommended grant programs at the US Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service. Establishment of these grant programs would significantly help local school districts improve their approach to civic education and would promote reinvestment in relevant and engaging civic education to prepare students to be informed and active participants of democracy in the digital age.

The Recommendations concerning the National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics are particularly important and supported by our community. Provision of state level (disaggregated) data, would have forcing function on the states to improve their approach to civic education and would generally provide some of the infrastructure for decision making. Ensuring the administration of the NAEP Civics & Government test is administered every two years would provide the states with timely measurements of the effectiveness of their approach to civic education.

We support the creation of a Federal institutional home for civic education within the US Department of Education. We suggest that the proposed School Recognition and “Mobile Constitution Center” could be housed within such an institutional home. We suggest that this institutional home or the National Center for Education Statistics could be empowered to conduct needed research on civic education. We also suggest that Congress create civic education “allowability” or preferences (where appropriate) in all applicable education competitive grant programs.

Civic Education would benefit from the strong and vibrant marketplace of ideas envisioned by the Staff Recommendations. The Recommendations respect the American tradition of local control of education policy, with an appropriate role for the Federal government in spurring innovation and ensuring equity of opportunity.

I thank the Commission for the opportunity of providing feedback from the civic education community on the Staff Recommendations. I also thank the Commission Staff for these thoughtful recommendations designed to significantly strengthen and improve civic education.

Respectfully submitted,

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