

EDUCATING FOR AMERICAN ★ DEMOCRACY

INITIATIVE SUMMARY FOR LEGISLATORS

The U.S. faces significant internal threats from political polarization and misinformation, but our electorate is poorly trained to meet the challenges of self-governing in a constitutional democracy.

We currently spend roughly 5 cents per student per year on civic education, a mere 1% of what we spend per year on STEM¹. This is dangerously little support, especially recognizing that excellence in K–12 history and civics is foundational to our shared civic strength.

A healthy constitutional democracy requires a rising generation that desires to live in a democracy, and has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed for effective participation.

Success in renewing history and civic education will require clear guidance on what should be learned coupled with local adaptation, state-level accountability strategies for continuous improvement, and public and private investment in developing a corps of history and civics educators.

The Educating for American Democracy initiative

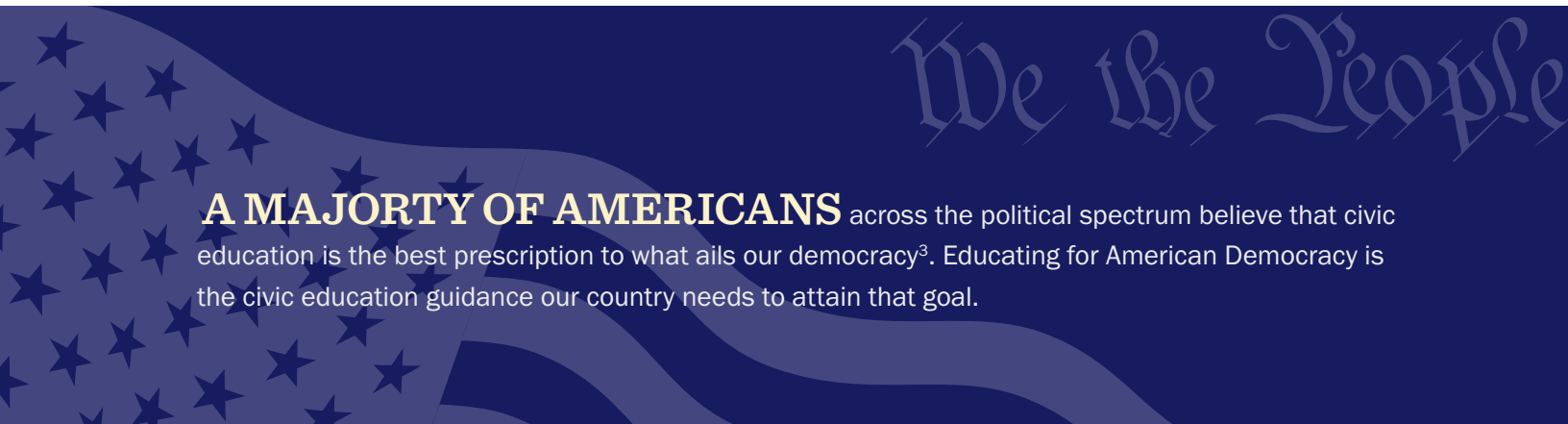
- ▶ **was first proposed in July 2019**, gathering an ideologically and demographically diverse national network of scholars, educators, and practitioners to synthesize expert judgment from the fields of history, political science, law, and education about the content and instructional strategies needed for excellent history and civics for all learners;
- ▶ **draws on student input** about civic learning experiences²;



VISIT
www.educatingforamericandemocracy.org
to download a copy of the Roadmap.

For more specific information about what you can do, click on “Take Action,” and look for the stakeholder brief that best matches your role. For comments or questions, please contact us at EAD@iCivics.org.

- ▶ **uses inquiry as a framework** to lay out the most important content of a braided education in history and civics. The *Roadmap* lays out a series of questions to be explored over the course of a K–12 education, organized around a set of design challenges for educators;
- ▶ **recommends approaches to learning** that: (1) motivate agency to sustain the republic; (2) narrate America’s plural yet shared story; (3) simultaneously celebrate and critique compromise; (4) cultivate civic honesty and reflective patriotism; and (5) balance the chronological and the thematic;
- ▶ **supplements recommendations** on content and instructional strategy with implementation guidance that lays out responsibilities for each level of our federal system—local, tribal, state, and national—, and for both private and public sectors, seeking to harmonize efforts across jurisdictions toward the shared goal of excellence in Educating for American Democracy for all learners;
- ▶ **maintains a consistent commitment to all learners** in content and instructional guidance, and implementation recommendations to ensure that excellent history and civic learning opportunities are delivered equitably throughout the country.



A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS across the political spectrum believe that civic education is the best prescription to what ails our democracy³. Educating for American Democracy is the civic education guidance our country needs to attain that goal.

The Educating for American Democracy project is a cross-ideological effort, grounded in scholarship, that empowers local educational agencies to implement successful history and civic learning for all learners, and that helps rebuild America’s foundations for a healthy constitutional democracy.

¹ US DOE. Fiscal Year 2019 Budget: Summary and Background Information; GAO-18-290 (on STEM Education); NCES Fast Facts.

² Student input from a representative 600+ student survey and a listening session with the iCivics Youth As Civic Experts Fellows.

³ Frank Luntz, Data from a representative sample of 1,000 likely voters in a nationwide survey of policy priorities, conducted June 2020.



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