

RESTORING DEMOCRACY THROUGH ACTIVE CIVIC LEARNING

BY SHIRLEY SAGAWA
JUNE 2021



EDUCATION REFORM NOW
WWW.EDREFORMNOW.ORG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
8	INTRODUCTION
10	A CRISIS FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY
12	FOUR KEY STRATEGIES
21	PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS
32	POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
37	CONCLUSION
38	ENDNOTES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Civic knowledge and participation remain unacceptably low in the United States. Half of Americans are unable to name the three branches of government. When it comes to engaging in civic activities, such as volunteering, donating to nonprofits, or joining a civic group, too many Americans choose to remain uninvolved. One might expect schools to take on greater responsibility to prepare America's youth to become active citizens, but in actuality very few schools prioritize civic learning and opportunities.

Weak civic education from kindergarten through college contributes to uninformed citizens especially from underrepresented populations, thereby increasing the power of privileged individuals who already yield disproportionate influence in our political system.

It doesn't have to be this way.

This paper examines **four key strategies to improve the quality and amount of civic learning and engagement in America** and offers recommendations for policymakers in each:



ACTIVE CIVIC EDUCATION



SERVICE-LEARNING



NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE



VOTING

FOUR KEY STRATEGIES



ACTIVE CIVIC EDUCATION –

Providing students traditional and interactive civics lessons. Students trained through active citizen education efforts score highest on civic knowledge and skill assessments;



SERVICE-LEARNING –

An instructional methodology that makes intentional links between the academic curriculum and student work that benefits the community by providing meaningful opportunities for students to apply what they learn to issues that matter to them. Compared to their peers, young adults who participate in K-12 service-learning are more likely to discuss politics or community issues and vote in an election year;



NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE –

Enabling young people to address local needs through hands-on experiences. Service experiences during youth tend to lead to a life-long habit of volunteering and other forms of civic participation; and



VOTING –

Engaging youth in voting, voter registration, and voter participation activities. Because voting is a habitual practice, people who vote when they are first eligible are likely to continue voting throughout their lives, while someone who does not may never pick up the habit. Leading first-time voters through key steps in the voting process – learning how to register to vote, how a ballot works, what's on a ballot, and where to go – increases participation.

CURRENT PRACTICES IN STRATEGIC CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AREAS



ACTIVE CIVIC EDUCATION: There are 42 states and Washington, DC that require at least one course related to civics education be completed in grades K-12. In 2018, Massachusetts, required all public schools to teach civic education and all public middle and high schools to incorporate student-led civic projects into their curricular programs.



SERVICE-LEARNING: Service-learning was funded by the federal Learn and Serve America program from 1991 through 2011. The field made impressive strides evolving from a curriculum in a few schools around the country to a national movement engaging millions of students each year.



NATIONAL & COMMUNITY SERVICE: According to the Current Population Survey, between 2013 and 2015, on average, nearly 3 million U.S. high schoolers volunteered almost 250 million hours annually. Community service stipends for youth as well as young adults help provide access to the kind of service internships and experiences that are often more readily available to students from affluent families.



VOTING: Several jurisdictions across the country are taking necessary steps to prepare future voters. Schools in Arkansas, Iowa, and Virginia have incorporated material about voter registration and the importance of voting into their required curricula.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several policies that should be enacted at the federal, state, or local level to ensure voting age adults are ready to carry out their civic responsibilities.

1. Require Active Civic Education at the K-12 Level.

State standards should include the expectation of active civic learning across all grade levels. States should utilize alternative forms of assessment such as group projects and activities or portfolio assessments, rather than relying exclusively on traditional testing.



2. Create an Election Day Holiday from Classes and Coursework Requirements.

To underscore the importance of voting and facilitate voter and other election day participation activities by eligible students, Election Day should be a holiday from classes and coursework requirements for high school and college students.

3. Make Voter Registration Part of the Graduation Process.

School boards and school districts have the power to increase voter registration and turnout by implementing policies that require high schools to offer registration opportunities to students. Requiring voter registration in order to participate in commencement ceremonies is a recommended option with a local school determined waiver. No state or local school district currently requires voter registration as a condition of commencement ceremony participation as far as we know, but they all could and should. Chicago, Illinois was among the first cities to require students complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to graduate from high school. Application rates soared. Illinois followed with a state law requiring the same. Other states, like Louisiana, have followed suit with similar results.

4. Register College Students to Vote through the Course Enrollment Process.

There are currently 19 states that enable individuals to check-a-box and automatically register to vote as they are applying for public services with other state agencies and entities in addition to the state Department of Motor Vehicles. New York State is the latest to facilitate automatic voter registration when enrolling for courses at state and local public colleges.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Revise and Reinvest Learn and Serve America.

While the Learn and Serve America legislation supporting service-learning for K-12 and higher education institutions is still on the books, it receives no funding and requires updating. Federal policymakers should amend this authorization to create a Service-Learning Fund at the Corporation for National and Community Service in order to allow grants to be made to state and local education agencies for service learning programs.

6. Support Community Service and Civic Engagement through the Federal Work Study Program.

The current required minimum seven percent of work study funds dedicated to service should be increased to twenty-five percent, as proposed by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) in the pending *Help Students Vote Act*, and those higher education institutions that exceed the minimum requirement should receive a greater share of federal work study funding. Thirty years ago, former Senator Harris Wofford (D-PA) proposed the dedicated percentage be half of all appropriated Federal Work Study funds.

7. Encourage Education Institutions to Partner with AmeriCorps.

Schools and institutions of higher education are currently eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding, but agency policy requires that they open any programs to the public rather than engaging only their own students. That policy should be altered to encourage institutions of higher education to develop programs on their own or in partnership with other organizations. In addition, schools and higher education institutions should encourage graduating students to participate in national service by making them aware of opportunities and engaging in other efforts to promote service pathways.



"If the events of January 6, 2021, at the U.S. Capitol taught us anything, it is that our democracy is fragile and country best served by constructive, community and civic engagement."

INTRODUCTION

As our nation struggles with deep divisions, it has become increasingly clear we need a well-functioning democracy to resolve our differences and find ways forward. Sadly, Americans are falling short in the skills they need to work through conflict, review media with a critical eye, and act for the common good. And without prepared civic participants, we may never secure an equitable, safe, and healthy future.



The good news — the last few years of turmoil and conflict have offered a crash course in American democracy, and civic knowledge has increased, particularly in the areas of First Amendment Rights, the electoral process, and roles of the different branches of government. Voting in the last presidential election was up, especially among young people.¹ Americans are demonstrating high levels of awareness of political campaigns and salient issues, even as they express news fatigue and gravitate to media outlets that align with their own ideologies.² One in five Americans attended a protest in 2020, 19 percent for the first time.³



The bad news — despite these gains, both civic knowledge and civic participation remain unacceptably low. Half of all Americans are still unable to name the three branches of government.⁴ One in three adults would fail the citizenship test if they had to take it; among those under 45, just one in five would pass.⁵ In an election year with dramatic differences between the two main Presidential candidates, one-third of Americans stayed home.⁶ Even fewer voters turnout for midterm elections, and fewer still for off-year elections when neither a Presidential nor Congressional contest is on the ballot.⁷ Most Americans surround themselves with others who share their points of view, even if they sometimes disagree on specific issues.⁸ And when it comes to engaging in non-political ways — volunteering, donating to charity, or joining civic groups — too many Americans are sitting on the sidelines, failing to engage at any level.⁹



"Americans are falling short in the skills they need to work through conflict, review media with a critical eye, and act for the common good."



We can't rely on political conflict and social media consumption to generate the civic problem solvers we need. So how do we get there? In the past, the nation has turned to the education system to lay the important foundations students need to become informed, productive adults. The historical purpose of public education has encompassed not just preparing the nation's future workforce, but also readying Americans to do the hard work that a strong democracy demands. Sadly, this second purpose has been sorely neglected in the nation's public schools, particularly those that educate low-income communities of color.¹⁰ The result not only weakens our democracy, but also widens the political power gap.

This paper calls upon schools and higher education institutions to rise to this challenge by making the preparation of active citizens a preeminent purpose. Active citizenship means more than civic knowledge. It means listening, learning, engaging, understanding, speaking out, and solving problems. It means actively embracing the responsibilities of citizenship -- voting, serving on juries, and serving the community and the country. From today's students, will come the leaders who will chart our future.

Research tells us that to develop active civic participants, education must combine classroom learning with practice from the earliest grades through higher education.¹¹ Much as job skills are not solely learned in a classroom, neither are the skills of active citizenship. You don't learn to bake from a book, program from a PowerPoint, weld by writing about it, or litigate based on a lecture. Similarly, developing civic skills demands practice, not simply passive learning.

This paper examines the ways that schools and institutions of higher education are blazing the trail of integrating the practice of civic engagement into education programs. It shows how policy can inspire more powerful preparation of active citizens. And it calls on today's leaders to embrace policy changes that ensure future voting age adults are ready to carry out their civic responsibilities and the leaders of tomorrow come from communities that represent the full spectrum of America.

A CRISIS FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

In recent decades, every major population subgroup of Americans has demonstrated low levels of civic knowledge. One might expect schools to impart required knowledge, and in fact, 42 states and the District of Columbia do require at least one course related to civics.¹² However, according to the 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education, few schools prioritize the topic.¹³ While reading and particularly math scores have improved in recent years, civic knowledge has not, with less than 25 percent of students deemed proficient in the subject.¹⁴ At the same time, the civic knowledge gap between white and Black students has widened.¹⁵ At the higher education level, virtually no institutions require civics classes, although many students arrive on campus without basic knowledge.¹⁶

Nor does our education system sufficiently support practice of the skills Americans need to participate in civic life. For example, 70 percent of 12th graders say they have never written a letter to an elected official to give an opinion and 30 percent say they have never taken part in a political debate.¹⁷ Here, too, inequities exist: white youth are twice as likely as Black youth and three times as likely as Latinx youth to contact a public official; students from low-income families are 30 percent less likely to report having experiences with debates or panel discussions in their social studies classes.¹⁸

This weak foundation correlates with a similarly poor track record in adulthood. Even with recent spikes in participation, the United States has a lower voting rate than 30 of the 35 OECD nations.¹⁹ Of the 32 million Americans summoned for jury duty in a year, just one in four appears.²⁰ Only two percent of Americans have ever run for office, with white, educated men far more likely to take this step than other demographic groups.²¹




"The United States has a lower voting rate than 30 of the 35 OECD nations."



Source: Desilver, Drew. "In past elections, U.S. trailed most developed countries in voter turnout." Pew Research Center, 3 Nov. 2020.





Given historic levels of distrust in government, one might theorize that Americans are turning to other types of civic participation, such as volunteering, joining community organizations, and organizing others to address local challenges.²² However, these types of engagement are similarly limited, with white, educated professionals far more likely to participate than any other group. For example, two out of three Americans don't volunteer even once a year and those who do are disproportionately educated, white, and female.²³ Most states have seen a significant decline in volunteering since 2001, and the rate of Americans volunteering has dropped to an all-time low. Not a single state has seen a significant increase in volunteering since 2001.²⁴ High school and college study volunteering has similarly declined since the early 2000s and have been stagnant for the last decade.²⁵

The costs of civic disengagement are high, contributing to both an inability to come together to address serious problems and heightened power for the privileged who yield disproportionate influence in our broken system.

It doesn't have to be this way.

"It's time to infuse our education system at every level with civic learning that incorporates experiences to deepen understanding and foster civic engagement."



SOLUTIONS

Effective civics education involves going beyond the structures and functions of government.²⁶ A *high-quality* civic education program builds knowledge about how a civil society works, develops awareness of how to participate, motivates students to make a difference, and, ideally, includes or at least facilitates participation in structured opportunities to put that knowledge, awareness, and motivation into practice.²⁷

It's time to infuse our education system at every level with civic learning that incorporates experiences to deepen understanding and foster lifelong civic engagement. Evidence confirms the importance of adding experiential dimensions to civic education as a strategy to equip young people with the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that prepare them for democratic citizenship.²⁸ Neuroscience adds additional validation, confirming that approaches used in experiential education are consistent with what we know about effective teaching and learning.²⁹

This section explores four important approaches to make effective civic learning the norm: (1) active civic education, (2) service-learning, (3) community service, and (4) authentic engagement in the democratic process through voting.





Active Civic Education

Since 2003, there has been a consensus in the field of civic learning that courses on civics, government, and law incorporating deliberations of current issues and simulations of adult civic roles are effective practices to inculcate knowledge and assure skill attainment.³⁰ Students who receive both traditional and interactive civics lessons score highest on related assessments and demonstrate high levels of twenty-first century skills such as critical thinking, news comprehension, and work ethic.³¹

An analysis of data from 2,500 ninth graders who were tested in the IEA Civic Education Study, for example, found that students whose classrooms combined traditional and interactive teaching scored higher levels of achievement on twelve key civic competencies, such as knowledge of democratic principles, awareness of civic responsibilities, and ability to discern fact from opinion-based media, as compared to those who learned only through lecturing and use of a textbook.³²



"...there has been a consensus in the field of civic learning that courses on civics, government, and law incorporating deliberations of current issues and simulations of adult civic roles are effective practices..."



Too often, however, civics is simply embedded in the social studies curriculum as one of many topics that must be covered in the allotted time, making it hard to build in active engagement. Even worse, only one in five social studies teachers in public schools report feeling very well prepared to support students' civic learning, according to a RAND Corporation survey.³³ In fact, high school social studies teachers are some of the least supported teachers in schools and report teaching larger numbers of students and taking on more non-teaching responsibilities like coaching school sports than other teachers.³⁴

The good news is that in recent years, experiential civic learning programs have increasingly become widely available to schools. Innovators have begun teaching the Advanced Placement Government course through five, month-long simulations with positive effects. These and other evidence-based programs make active civic learning accessible to public school students, provided space is made available in the academic program.





Service-Learning

"Service-learning leads to deeper, more nuanced understanding of subject matter."



Service-learning is slightly different; it is an “instructional methodology that makes intentional links between the academic curriculum and student work that benefits the community by providing meaningful opportunities for students to apply what they learn to issues that matter to them.”³⁵ Typically the service-learning cycle includes student planning, action, reflection, and celebration. In high quality service-learning projects, students have considerable voice in determining activities, and teachers facilitate knowledge and skill acquisition.³⁶ These experiences help students make the content of their learning more relevant to their lives, better understand the importance of civic participation, and increase their civic engagement throughout their lives.³⁷

Research confirms the positive impact of service-learning on both academic and civic outcomes. For example, one study used a national sample of classrooms of students that participated in service-learning matched with classrooms of students of similar demographic and achievement background to investigate the effect of service-learning participation on students' civic knowledge, skills, dispositions, and activities.³⁸ Service-learning students not only experienced greater satisfaction with school, but were significantly more likely to say that they intended to vote.³⁹



A nationally representative survey examined the ways in which service-learning involvement affected youths' development of attributes associated with adulthood. Compared to their peers, young adults who had participated in K-12 service-learning were more likely to discuss politics or community issues and vote in an election year, more politically and socially connected to their communities, both as leaders and role models, and more active members of society.⁴⁰

Similar results occur at the higher education level according to numerous studies.⁴¹ For example, a study of Tennessee students studying political science that combined classwork with internships in the state legislature found that they did equally well on a traditional test of facts as a similar group that did not intern. However, when they were challenged to develop a strategy for enacting policy, the interns incorporated the need to engage powerful and well-placed legislators and to organize support, while the classroom-based students drew on the formal steps about how a bill becomes a law.⁴²

Similarly with respect to depth of understanding, a national study of college students demonstrated that those involved in intensive, highly reflective service-learning courses show significant increases in reflective judgment over the course of their study as compared to those in less-intensive service-learning courses and those with no service-learning experience at all.⁴³ Subsequent work by others has been consistent with this finding, confirming that service-learning leads to deeper, more nuanced understanding of subject matter in the civic space.⁴⁴





National & Community Service



National and community service experiences may or may not be directly linked to immediate academic coursework, but they enable young people to participate in addressing local needs through hands-on experiences. Opportunities to serve may be full-time after high school or college, or part-time during out-of-school time. They may be volunteer experiences or supported through stipends (such as those provided with Federal Work Study program and AmeriCorps support).

Research confirms that when community service experiences incorporate quality practices, they have powerful civic outcomes. Early volunteer experiences tend to lead to a life-long habit of volunteering, likely because “because volunteering helps to shape adolescents’ identities; that is, as adolescents volunteer and understand the scope of social problems, ‘they come to see themselves as persons capable of contributing to the common good.’”⁴⁵ High school community service participation, whether voluntary or school-required, is a strong predictor of adult volunteering and voting.⁴⁶

An eight-year longitudinal study following AmeriCorps alumni as well as a comparison group of individuals who applied to AmeriCorps but did not serve found that AmeriCorps alumni are more likely than their comparison group to be active in community activities such as public meetings and are more likely to publicly express their opinions. These outcomes are consistent with results from a recent study comparing survey results for cohorts of AmeriCorps alumni who completed their service in 2012, 2009, and 2004 (two, five, and 10 years before the survey project began).⁴⁷ More than half of alumni noted that their service experience had made them more likely to engage in civic activities such as volunteering for or donating money to a cause about which they care.



Voting

Research similarly shows that voting is habitual. A person who votes in the first election in which they are eligible is likely to continue voting consistently, while someone who doesn't will take several years to pick up the habit.⁴⁸

Traditionally, young adults have voted at lower rates than older adults. Research also shows that apathy is not the reason for this disparity. Rather, studies indicate that young people do not consistently receive the information they need to vote when they become eligible, such as registration deadlines, experience conflict with work or class schedules, suffer from confusion regarding absentee voting rules, and confront other barriers, including voter identification requirements.⁴⁹ While these challenges affect voters of all ages, they are especially problematic for young voters, who may live away from home and move frequently or lack a driver's license to use to meet voter identification requirements. Research also shows that many of these barriers are even more significant for youth of color and other marginalized young people.

Research confirms, however, that leading first-time voters through key steps in the voting process works well — such as how to register to vote and by what date; how a ballot works, what's on a ballot and how to fill it out; where to go to cast a vote and what to do when you get there.⁵⁰ So do efforts to reduce systemic barriers, especially to registration. In one study, youth turnout increased 5.7 percentage points after students were provided with an applied voting demonstration and given the chance to cast a practice ballot. Permitting future voters to pre-register at age 16 or 17, making them automatically registered on their 18th birthday, also increases both registration and turnout by 2.1 percentage points.

Solutions

"Leading first-time voters through key steps in the voting process works to increase participation."



COMMISSIONS ON THE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

A series of bipartisan commissions have called for improvements in civic education. For example, a two-year bipartisan Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship was launched in 2018 to explore how best to respond to the weaknesses and vulnerabilities in our political and civic life.⁵¹ The Commission recognized that the political culture of the United States and the makeup of its population have both changed dramatically in recent decades. From “fake news” to partisan polarization to the rise of social media, the environment in which citizens gather information and engage with one another and with their government is entirely different from what it was just two decades ago.

The Commission’s recommendations included:

- Establishing, through state legislation, the pre-voter registration of 16 and 17 year-olds and providing educational opportunities for them to practice voting as part of the pre-registration process.
- Establishing a universal expectation of a year of national service and dramatically expanding funding for service programs or fellowships that would offer young people paid service opportunities.
- Investing in civic educators and civic education for all ages and in all communities through curricula, ongoing program evaluations, professional development for teachers, and a federal award program that recognizes civic-learning achievements.

The Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge, a bipartisan group of scholars, was convened in 2012 by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE) to investigate exclusive data collected during and after the 2012 election on issues such as civic knowledge, voting behavior, and the educational experiences of Americans ages 25 and under. Its report is based on data collected from more than 6,000 young adults and 720 high school civics or government teachers.⁵²

Among that Commission's primary recommendations:

- Lower the voting age to 17 in municipal or state elections so that students can be encouraged to vote while they are taking a required civics class.
- Increase the scale and quality of national and community service programs that involve elements of deliberation, collaboration, and work on social issues, and make sure they are open to youth who do not attend college.
- Implement high school course requirements with valid assessments that measure higher-order skills and the application of knowledge. Courses should teach the registration and voting process explicitly and engage students in following the news and deliberating about issues.
- Teach in detail the current voting laws that apply in the state, as many young people do not know the specifics of the laws that govern voting in their own jurisdictions.
- Provide standards, curricular materials, and professional development that ensure students discuss the root causes of social problems when they participate in service-learning and ensure that student groups address social issues.

Finally, there is also the Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, authorized as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, that was charged with “consider(ing) methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service in order to address national security and other public service needs of the Nation.”⁵³ The eleven Commissioners appointed by the President and bipartisan congressional leadership, proposed both revitalizing civic education and expanding service learning and expanding opportunities for civilian national service.

PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

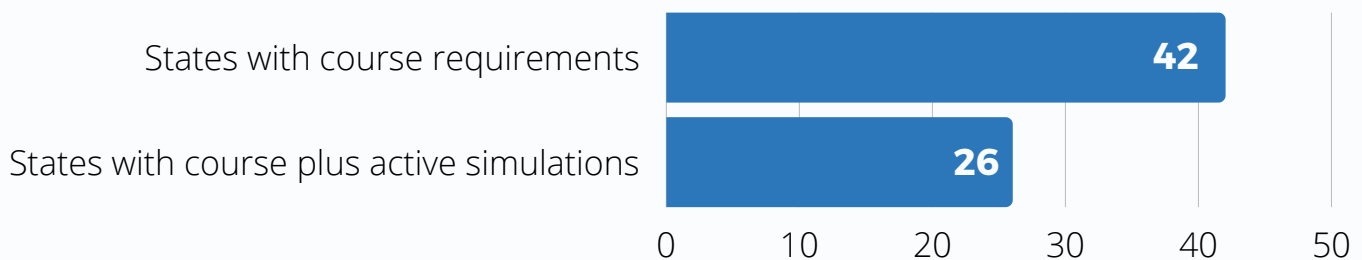
The last several decades have seen promising developments supporting practices aimed at increasing civic knowledge and engagement.



Active Civic Education

A recent review of state standards found that 42 states and Washington, D.C. require at least one course related to civics education, with most requiring two or three.⁵⁴ Every state mentions discussion of current events in its standards or curriculum frameworks, and 39 states and Washington, D.C., mention news media literacy. However, fewer states have incorporated participatory elements of learning or community engagement into their standards and curriculum frameworks. Just over half of states (26, plus Washington, D.C.) mention simulations of democratic processes or procedures.

Survey: Civics Education in the U.S.



Source: Hansen, Levesque, Valant, Quintero. *The 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well are American Students Learning?* Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings, June 2018.

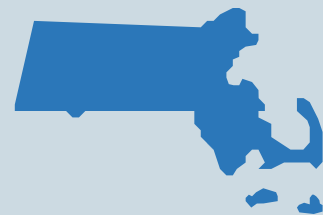
Three states — Florida, Illinois, and Massachusetts — have incorporated an experiential component to their civic education requirement. In 2010, **Florida's** Sandra Day O'Connor Act required all grade levels to include civic education in their language arts curricula, successful completion of at least one semester civic education course for all middle schoolers addressing the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments and functions of the three branches of government, along with an end-of-course assessment in civics education at the middle school level.

Promising Developments

In 2015, **Illinois** passed legislation requiring that future Illinois high school students complete a semester-long civics course centered on government institutions and including current and controversial issue discussions, service-learning, and simulations of democratic processes. Support for teachers in the form of professional development and resources were central to the strategy. Corporations and foundations in the state created a public-private partnership committing at least \$1 million annually for a three-year implementation period, and colleges, universities, and offices of education have served as hosts for professional development workshops. Chicago-based non-profit organizations that specialize in the content specified in the new course requirement have provided expertise and resources.

Most recently, **Massachusetts**, in 2018, required all public schools to teach civic education while requiring public middle and high schools to incorporate student-led civics projects. These projects can be individual, small group, or class wide and they must be designed to promote student abilities related to the analysis of complex issues; consideration of different perspectives; logical reasoning with supportive evidence; engagement in civil discourse; and understanding of the connections between federal, state, and local policies, including those that may impact the student's school or community. Massachusetts also created a Civics Project Trust Fund, used to assist communities with implementing history and civics education state requirements, particularly in underserved communities. In addition, the State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Secretary of State, formed a non-partisan high school voter challenge program to raise awareness for eligible students to register or pre-register to vote.

STATE SPOTLIGHT: MASSACHUSETTS



Massachusetts, in 2018, **required all public schools to teach civic education and all public middle and high schools to undertake student-led civics projects.**

Promising Developments



Although no funding is attached, Congress passed legislation designating September 17 as National Constitution Day to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution with instruction of citizens in their responsibilities and opportunities as citizens of the United States and of the State and locality in which they reside.”⁵⁵

In 2004 at Senator Robert Byrd's urging, Congress changed the designation of this day to "Constitution Day and Citizenship Day" and added requirements that the head of every federal agency provide each employee with educational and training materials concerning the U.S. Constitution, and that each educational institution that receives Federal funds carryout educational programming on the history of the U.S. Constitution every September 17th.



Service-Learning

Service-learning was funded by the federal program Learn and Serve America from 1991 through 2011. As a result, the field made impressive strides evolving from a pedagogy in a few schools around the country to a national movement engaging millions of students each year. In 2011, the National Center for Learning and Citizenship at the Education Commission of the States conducted state policy scans on service-learning to determine the degree in which service-learning had been institutionalized in the states. It found that almost every state had either passed legislation or adopted a state board of education policy that encourages local schools to use service-learning.⁵⁶ The scan found that: 18 states awarded credit toward graduation for service-learning; 21 states had adopted policy stating that student engagement is positively affected by participation in service-learning; six states allowed schools to offer a stand-alone, credit-bearing service-learning course; 18 states tied service-learning/community service to student achievement; nine states included service-learning as a valuable strategy for at-risk students; and many states include service-learning/community service in benchmarks and instructional strategies in state standards and/or frameworks.

Promising Developments

Maryland was the first, and remains the only state to make service-learning a graduation requirement.⁵⁷ (It is also required in the District of Columbia.) Passed in 1992, the requirement mandates that public school students engage in a minimum of 75 hours of service-learning prior to graduation. Maryland provided broad state guidelines for the requirement, but then left it up to each school district to adopt their own programs, which often integrate service with academic subjects.



STATE SPOTLIGHT: MARYLAND



Maryland mandates that public school students engage in a **minimum of 75 hours of service-learning** prior to graduation

Minnesota is the only state where the state legislature has passed legislation authorizing local school districts to levy one dollar per capita for community-based youth development and youth service programs including service-learning.⁵⁸ Many districts have used this levy to employ a district service-learning coordinator. The legislation permits school districts to adopt a service requirement for high school graduation. State policy also identifies service-learning as an instructional strategy to increase student achievement; names service-learning as a strategy to increase civic engagement; identifies service-learning as a means of preparing students for the workplace; and supports service-learning professional development for teachers.





Promising Developments

Individual schools and school districts provide a picture of what service-learning looks like when infused across an education system. For example, Guilford County Schools, a district of 71,000 students in **North Carolina**, has been recognized as a model for rigorous service-learning practice. The district's Character Development Initiative includes as one of the district's strategic plan goals providing students "the tools and motivation necessary to positively impact [the] world." Administrators and educators have committed to service-learning as an instructional strategy. In the first year of the program, the 2010-11 school year, nearly 100 teachers, at least one in every school, received two days of professional development in service-learning. Guilford County public schools offer a service learning certification when students graduate from high school if they complete 250 hours of work and address a pressing community problem, which together has the effect of rewarding students who go beyond the regular high school curriculum. Thanks in part to the character education program, student achievement and graduation rates have risen and discipline problems and out-of-school suspensions have declined.⁵⁹

At the higher education level, service-learning was one of the ten experiences listed as a high-impact practice identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in 2007. Thousands of higher education institutions received funding from the now defunct federal Learn and Serve America (LSAHE) program. Between 1995 and 1997, about one in every eight higher education institutions nationwide participated in LSAHE by developing service-learning courses and programs.⁶⁰ Today, a majority of postsecondary education students participate in at least one service-learning course, according to the National Survey of Student Engagement. Engineering and students majoring in physical sciences, as well as older, non-residential and part-time students, have the lowest levels of participation.⁶¹

Individual institutions offer powerful examples of service-learning integrated into a broader commitment to engaged learning. For example, **Miami Dade College** has long viewed its mission as preserving democracy.⁶² With eight campuses, Miami Dade has the largest undergraduate enrollment in the country, as well as a student body that is 75 percent Hispanic and 15 percent Black non-Hispanic with an average age of 24. It has long been a model for community colleges concerned with student engagement and degree completion.

Promising Developments



Today, Miami Dade's Institute for Civic Engagement and Democracy (iCED) leads the college's effort to "transform learning, strengthen democracy, and contribute meaningfully to the common good by awakening and empowering students for lifelong civic engagement." These efforts include both service-learning and individual community service, along with efforts to promote democratic engagement. It offers a "civic action scorecard" that enables students to build a portfolio of their volunteer and democratic engagement in order to earn points and rewards; some faculty members have incorporated the Civic Action Scorecard into their course syllabi.

For more than a century, Harvard College students have engaged in meaningful community service through programs at Phillips Brooks House. Today, Phillips Brooks House, now a Center for Public Service and Engaged Scholarship, is a vibrant and growing department offering curricular and co-curricular programs to prepare Harvard College students to become citizens and citizen leaders.⁶³ To elevate service and strengthen linkages with the academic program, the Center is now led by a faculty director as well as an assistant dean of civic engagement and service. The Center's programs include a new Service Starts with Summer Program for incoming first-year students, which provides participants a \$1500 scholarship to enable them to work with nonprofits in their own communities.



National & Community Service

According to the Current Population Survey, each year, millions of students provide volunteer service to community organizations: between 2013 and 2015, on average, nearly 3 million U.S. high schoolers ages 15 and over annually volunteered almost 250 million volunteer hours, and over 3 million college students annually volunteered close to 330 million volunteer hours.⁶⁴ However, the percentage of college students who actually volunteer is far lower than those who would like to serve, as indicated by the Higher Education Research Institute's Freshman Survey. While the percentage of first-year college students who said "helping others who are in difficulty" was a very important or essential personal objective reached a 51-year high, only 26 percent actually volunteered during college, far lower than the years right after 9/11. According to Robert Grimm, director of the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy, "youth's historically high interest in doing good will not automatically translate into action without the right opportunities."⁶⁵

While higher education institutions such as those discussed in other sections do support community service, barriers exist for many students. One commonly cited challenge is the need to earn money during college. Community service stipends help "level the playing field" by providing access to the kind of service internships and experiences that are often more readily available to students from affluent families.

Two federal programs provide financial support to students who want to engage in service: the Federal Work Study and AmeriCorps programs.

"Youth's historically high interest in doing good will not automatically translate into action without the right opportunities."

Robert Grimm,
Director -
Do Good Institute,
University of
Maryland School of
Public Policy



Promising Developments

Work Study

More than 3,000 institutions of higher education participate in the Federal Work Study program, a work-based financial aid program that supports a wide-range of student jobs, both on and off-campus. Since 1999, grantees have been required to use seven percent of their allocations for community service.⁶⁶ In the most recent year prior to COVID-19, out of over 800,000 Federal Work Study participants, in excess of 100,000 students engaged in paid community service work. The U.S. Department of Education's last major report on the program found another some 100,000 students were not even aware they could do paid community service work.⁶⁷ An additional near 60,000 students reported they would have done paid community service if they could find an opportunity to do so.





Promising Developments

AmeriCorps

Created in 1994, AmeriCorps supports programs that enable adults to serve part-time or full-time in exchange for money for higher education or to pay back student loans. Full-time members receive modest living allowances and other benefits. AmeriCorps members may serve before, during, or after college, or as a way for unemployed Americans to find a pathway to a career. While originally envisioned as a universally available opportunity, AmeriCorps has operated for decades as a subscale program, enabling only 75,000 to serve annually.⁶⁸

Innovative programs have found ways to combine Federal Work Study and AmeriCorps funding to engage college students in high-impact service to communities. For example, Jumpstart engages more than 4,000 corps members from 80 higher education institutions in nearly 300 preschools nationwide. Corps members, who typically receive Federal Work Study funding together with AmeriCorps education awards, work with low-income preschoolers twice a week to develop their oral language and social emotional skills. Results from a recent comparison study found that Jumpstart children make 50 percent greater gains in important literacy skills as compared to those who did not receive Jumpstart services. Three out of four Jumpstart corps members report planning to pursue a career related to their experience in the program.⁶⁹

In addition to partnering with programs like Jumpstart, institutions of higher education have found ways to support the participation of their students in AmeriCorps and other service year programs. For example, through **Virginia's** Higher Ed Challenge, led by then-First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, more than 50 institutions of higher education, including all Virginia public colleges and community colleges, committed to encouraging students to do a service year, including creating service year opportunities for students and linking service to academic credit. These tactics were outlined in a playbook, developed by Service Year Alliance and Campus Compact, and include efforts to promote service to prospective students (for example, formalizing deferrals for a service year and enhancing financial aid; supporting enrolled students in completing a service year by hosting a program or connecting service to academic credit; and encouraging service year participation through career services).⁷⁰



Voting

According to the Center for Popular Democracy, many educational agencies across the country have expressly and explicitly begun to embrace the challenge of preparing future voters. Schools in Arkansas, Iowa, and Virginia have formally incorporated material about voter registration and the importance of voting into the required curriculum for students.⁷¹ In Maryland and Louisiana, schools have dedicated assemblies to register students to vote; some have invited local election officials to explain the process to students and demonstrate how a voting machine works.⁷² Other schools have engaged students in the process, such as training “student registrars” to run the voter registration programs at schools, or recruiting student leaders from community-based organizations to lead voter registration drives and conduct peer-to-peer outreach to convey the importance and impact of voting to their classmates.⁷³ The Center’s toolkit provides information regarding voter registration of high school students, including a model high school voter registration policy and model regulations, best practices for building comprehensive high school voter registration programs, including considerations for how to effectively engage community groups, student leaders, and students in the design of a successful voter registration program; and communications materials to help local elected officials and advocates communicate effectively about the importance of student voter registration.⁷⁴



Promising Developments

At the higher education level, the *All in Democracy Challenge* developed by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, calls on the United States to reclaim higher education's civic mission and encourages colleges and universities to make civic learning and engagement more pervasive on their campuses.⁷⁵ Designed to encourage collaboration, increase the use of data in planning, and enhance intentionality in meeting goals, the Challenge, now part of the nonprofit Civic Nation, today engages more than 800 colleges with 1,500 campuses committed to making democratic participation a core value and institutionalizing democratic engagement activities and programs on college campuses. By joining the Challenge, campuses commit to:

- **Increase student voting rates**, help students form the habits of active and informed citizenship, and make democratic participation a core value on their campus;
- **Convene a campus-wide committee** that includes members from academic affairs, student affairs, and the student body, as well as any other relevant stakeholders;
- **Develop and implement an action plan** to improve democratic engagement.
- **Participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement** in order to measure student voter participation rates; and
- **Share their campus' action plan and results** with the Challenge in order to be eligible for a recognition seal and/or awards.

"The All In Democracy Challenge today engages more than 800 colleges committed to make democratic participation a core value and institutionalizing democratic engagement."



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following **policy recommendations** for federal, state, and local government could dramatically increase the number of students, particularly those from under-resourced communities, who experience high quality, engaged civic learning experiences. Given the power of experiences in youth to foster lifelong civic participation, these recommendations represent a cost effective way to scale engagement over time.



1 *Require active civic education at the K-12 level.*

State standards should require active civic learning across all grade levels. States would be wise to utilize alternative forms of assessment such as group projects and activities or portfolio assessments, rather than relying solely on traditional testing. The standards should be supported by high-quality, ongoing professional development for all social studies and civic education teachers.

This effort should be supported by a competitive grant program for civic learning within the U.S. Department of Education that funds innovation in civic education, provides research on effective civic learning strategies, allows for the replication of successful programs that are proven by research, and develops programs to serve currently underserved school populations.

2 *Make voter registration part of the high school graduation process.*



POLICY SPOTLIGHT:

Voter registration should be a high school commencement ceremony participation



requirement akin to how states and school districts have mandated the completion of student financial aid (FAFSA) forms.

Many school boards and school districts have the power to increase voter registration and turnout by implementing policies that require high schools to offer registration opportunities to students. In states that allow for pre-registration, eligible students under the age of 18 can pre-register to vote so they are automatically added to the registration rolls when they turn 18.

Voter registration should be a high school commencement ceremony participation requirement akin to how states and school districts have mandated the completion of student financial aid (FAFSA) forms. Rather than making registration a barrier to graduation and diploma conferral, better would be for schools to take steps to promote civic participation. Such steps could include dedicated voter registration opportunities and support to students through assemblies, classroom registration drives, distributing and collecting registration forms, making the electronic registration equivalent available, and conditioning commencement ceremony participation on voter registration absent a local school determined waiver.

3 *Register college students to vote through the course enrollment process.*

Building on the success of the federal Motor Voter Law, 19 states now enable individuals to check-a-box and automatically register to vote as they are applying for public services with other state agencies and entities in addition to the state Department of Motor Vehicles. In December 2020, New York State was the latest state to pass an automatic voter registration law that included a check-the-box voter registration option for citizens interacting with, among other state entities, New York State public colleges.⁷⁶

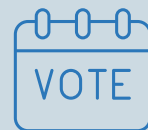
Section 487(a)(23) of the Higher Education Act requires institutions of higher education to demonstrate a good faith effort in support of voter registration.⁷⁷ Rather than a passive paper or electronic message from colleges encouraging voter registration, which is enough to pass muster under current law, institutions of higher education should make the option to register to vote part of an experience in which all enrolled students participate. Federal policy should make clear that institutions will be found compliant if they make check-the-box automatic voter registration an option for students upon course registration or student identification application if permitted under state and local law.

4 *Create an Election Day holiday from college classes and coursework requirements.*

To underscore the importance of voting and facilitate voter and other election day participation by eligible students, Election Day should be a holiday from classes and coursework requirements for high school and college students. The NCAA gives Division I athletes the day off on Election Day to vote. What about Division II, III athletes? What about simply giving all students the day off to vote? An Election Day holiday from classes should be required of all colleges receiving federal funds. Unlike Constitution Day, it can't be said to infringe on academic freedom. It *creates* freedom for students to participate in civic life.



POLICY SPOTLIGHT:



The NCAA gives Division I athletes the **day off on Election Day to vote**. What about simply giving all students the day off to vote?

5 *Revise and Reinvest Learn and Serve America.*

While the Learn and Serve America legislation supporting service-learning for K-12 and higher education institutions is still on the books, it receives no funding and requires updating.⁷⁸ Federal policymakers should amend the authorization to create a Service-Learning Fund at the Corporation for National and Community Service that finances grants to state and local education agencies, state service commissions, higher education institutions, and nonprofits to carry out service-learning programs for K-12 and postsecondary students with priority for projects that would engage students from under-resourced communities.

In addition, states should update education standards to incorporate service learning across the curriculum and provide educator professional development to support its implementation.



POLICY SPOTLIGHT:

Federal work study funds dedicated to community service and civic participation work should be increased to 25% as proposed by Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and others in S. 992, *The Help Students Vote Act*.



6 *Further support community service and civic engagement through the Federal Work Study program.*

To support and encourage low-income students to engage in community service, the current minimum 7% of federal work study funds dedicated to community service and civic participation work should be increased to 25% as proposed by Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and others, and those higher education institutions that exceed the minimum requirement should receive a greater share of federal work study funding.⁷⁹ Further, U.S. Department of Education regulations should specify voter registration, non-partisan voter education, and voter participation work (such as serving as a poll worker) qualify as allowable service activities. In 1992, the late Senator Harris Wofford (D-PA) first proposed the minimum community service commitment be 50%.⁸⁰



Policy Recommendations

7

Encourage education institutions to partner with AmeriCorps and enable more students to pursue national service.

Schools and institutions of higher education are currently eligible to apply for AmeriCorps funding, but agency policy is ambiguous regarding whether they must open such programs to the public rather than engaging only their own students. That policy should be clarified to encourage institutions of higher education to develop programs for their students, on their own or in partnership with other organizations. In addition, schools and higher education institutions should encourage graduating students to participate in national service by making them aware of opportunities and engaging in other efforts to promote service pathways.



CONCLUSION

At this pivotal moment in our democracy, we need all Americans to be active participants in our democratic form of government. Schools and institutions of higher education have a foundational role to play in preparing and inspiring all students to become civically engaged as youth and throughout their lives. Policies to advance this goal are needed now to secure our democracy in the future. Inertia should not be an option.



ENDNOTES

1. Annenberg Public Policy Center of The University of Pennsylvania. *Amid Pandemic and Protests, Civics Survey Finds Americans Know More of Their Rights*. 14 Sept. 2020. See also: Desilver, Drew. "Turnout Soared in 2020 as Nearly Two-Thirds of Eligible U.S. Voters Cast Ballots for President." *Pew Research Center*, 28 Jan. 2021. See also: Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement. *Half of Youth Voted in 2020, An 11-Point Increase from 2016*. 29 April. 2021.
2. Gottfried, Jeffery. "Americans' news fatigue isn't going away-about two-thirds still feel worn out." *Pew Research Center*, 26 Feb. 2020. See also: Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, Matsa. *Political Polarization & Media Habits*. *Pew Research Center*, 21 Oct. 2014.
3. Jordan, Clement. "Rallying Nation: In reaction to Trump, millions of Americans are joining protests and getting political." *The Washington Post*, 6 April. 2018.
4. See note 1. *Annenberg Public Policy Center*.
5. Riccards, Patrick. *National Survey Finds Just 1 in 3 Americans Would Pass Citizenship Test*. The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, 3 Oct. 2018.
6. See Desilver, Drew. *Pew Research Center*. 28 Jan. 2021.
7. Desilver, Drew. "Voter turnout always drops off for midterm elections, but why?" *Pew Research Center*, 24 Jul. 2014. See also: Braun, Barton, Hernandez, Paviour, Noe-Payne, Squires. "Why These 5 States Hold Odd-Year Elections, Bucking the Trend." *NPR National*, 4 Nov. 2019.
8. See Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, Matsa. *Pew Research Center*, 21 Oct. 2014.
9. Atwell, Bridgeland, Levine. *Civic Deserts: America's Civic Health Challenge*. National Conference on Citizenship, 2017.
10. Jeffrey, Sargrad. "Strengthening Democracy With a Modern Civics Education." *Center for American Progress*, 14 Dec. 2019.
11. Gould, Jonathan. *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, 2011.
12. Shapiro, Brown. "The State of Civics Education." *Center for American Progress*, 21 Feb. 2018.
13. Hansen, Levesque, Valant, Quintero. *The 2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: How Well are American Students Learning?* Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings, June 2018.
14. See Shapiro. *Center for American Progress*, 21 Feb. 2018.
15. See Hansen, June 2018.
16. Anft, Michael. "How Colleges Ignite Civic Engagement." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 7 Jan. 2018.
17. Winthrop, Rebecca. "The need for civic education in 21st-century schools." *Brookings*, 4 June. 2020.
18. See Jeffrey, Sargrad. 14 Dec. 2019.
19. Desilver, Drew. "In past elections, U.S. trailed most developed countries in voter turnout." *Pew Research Center*, 3 Nov. 2020.

20. Chalabi, Mona. ["What Are The Chances of Serving on a Jury?"](#) *FiveThirtyEight*, 5 Jun. 2015.
21. Motel, Seth. ["Who runs for office? A profile of the 2%."](#) *Pew Research Center*, 3 Sept. 2014.
22. ["Public Trust in Government: 1958-2021."](#) *Pew Research Center*, 17 May. 2021.
23. ["Volunteering in America: States."](#) *AmeriCorps*, 2020.
24. Grimm, Robert. [Testimony before the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service](#). 21 Feb. 2021.
25. [*Good Intentions, Gap in Action: The Challenge of Translating Youth's High Interest in Doing Good into Civic Engagement*](#). School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, March. 2018.
26. Lin, Alex Romeo. [*Citizenship education in American schools and its role in developing civic engagement: a review of the research*](#). UC Irvine, 23 July. 2013.
27. [*Equity in Civic Education Project \(2020\)*](#). Equity in civic education [White paper]. J. C. Lo (Ed.). Generation Citizen and iCivics.
28. Eyler, Janet. ["The Power of Experiential Education."](#) *Association of American Colleges and Universities*, 2009.
29. Glisczinski, Daniel. ["Lighting Up the Mind: Transforming Learning Through The Applied Scholarship of Cognitive Neuroscience."](#) *University of Minnesota Duluth*, 2011. See also: ["The Possibilities and Limitations of Experiential Learning Research in Higher Education."](#) *Journal of Experiential Education*, 2018, Vol. 41(1) 3-7.
30. Peter Levine and Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg, ["The Republic is \(Still\) at Risk—and Civics is Part of the Solution."](#) (Medford, MA: Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University, 2017).
31. See, Gould, Jonathan. 2011.
32. See, Gould, Jonathan. 2011.
33. Hamilton, Laura S., Julia H. Kaufman, and Lynn Hu. [*Preparing Children and Youth for Civic Life in the Era of Truth Decay: Insights from the American Teacher Panel*](#). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020.
34. Hansen, Levesque, Valant, Quintero. ["2018 Brown Center Report on American Education: Understanding the social studies teacher workforce."](#) *Brookings*, 27 Jan. 2018.
35. See, Gould, Jonathan. 2011.
36. Dary, Teri. [*Engaging Students Through Academic Service-Learning*](#). National Guide to Implementing Quality Academic Service-Learning, Sept. 2016.
37. Billig, Root, Jesse. [*The Impact of Participation in Service-Learning on High School Students' Civic Engagement*](#). The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, May. 2005.
38. [RMC Research Corporation](#), December 2002.
39. See Billig, Root, Jesse. May. 2005.
40. Kielsmeier, Neal, Crossley. [*Growing to Greatness: The State of Service-Learning Project*](#). National Youth Leadership Council, 2006.

41. Celio, Durlak, Dymnicki. "A Meta-analysis of the Impact of Service-Learning on Students." *Journal of Experiential Education*, 2011, Volume 34, No. 2.
42. Eyler, Janet & Halteman, Beth. The Impact of a Legislative Internship on Students' Political Skill and Sophistication. Teaching Political Science. 1981.
43. See Eyler, Janet & Halteman, Beth.
44. Eyler, Janet. "The Power of Experiential Education." *Association of American Colleges & Universities*, 2009.
45. Hart, D. et al. "High School Community Service as a Predictor of Adult Voting and Volunteering." *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 197 - 219.
46. Hart, D., Thomas Donnelly, J. Youniss and R. Atkins. "High School Community Service as a Predictor of Adult Voting and Volunteering." *American Educational Research Journal* 44 (2007): 197 - 219.
47. AmeriCorps, Survey Results, 2021.
48. Aldrich, Montgomery, Wood. Turnout as a Habit. Political Behavior, 30 Dec. 2010. See also: Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green & Ron Shachar (2003) "Voting May be Habit Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science*.
49. "Broadening Youth Voting." *Center For Information & Research On Civic Learning And Engagement*, 2020.
50. Symonds, Alexandria. "Why Don't Young People Vote?" *The New York Times*, 8 Oct. 2020.
51. American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century (Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2020).
52. Commission on Youth Voting and Civic Knowledge, *Center For Information & Research On Civic Learning And Engagement*.
53. The Final Report of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service, March 2020.
54. See Hansen, Levesque, Valant, Quintero, *Brookings*, 27 Jan. 2018.
55. National Archives News, Celebrating Constitution Day.
56. Ryan, Molly. "Service-Learning After Learn and Serve America: How Five States Are Moving Forward." Education Commission of the States, June 2012.
57. See Jeffrey, Sargrad. 14 Dec. 2019.
58. See Ryan, Molly. June 2012.
59. Granados, Alex. "Guilford County: Transforming students into citizens." EdNC, 20 May. 2015.
60. Gray, Ondaatje, Fricker, Greschwind, Goldman, Kaganoff, Robyn, Sundt, Vogelgesang, Klein. Combining Service and Learning in Higher Education: Education of the Learn and Serve America, Higher Education Program, Rand Education, 1999.
61. Engagement Insights: Survey Findings on the Quality of Undergraduate Education. National Survey of Student Engagement Annual Results 2019.

62. Exley, Robert J., "[Commitment to Community: Service Learning at Miami-Dade Community College](#)" Service-Learning, General. 177. 1996
63. See [Center for Public Service & Engaged Scholarship Harvard College](#).
64. [Volunteering in the United States--2015](#). Bureau of Labor Statistics U.S. Department of Labor, 25 Feb. 2016.
65. See Grimm, Robert. 21 Feb. 2019.
66. Baum, Sandy. "Rethinking Federal Work-Study. Incremental Reform is Not Enough." Urban Institute, March. 2019.
67. Troppe, Patricia, "National Study of the Operation of the Federal Work Study Program: Summary Findings from Student and Institutional Surveys," Westat, U.S. Department of Education 2000.
68. See [AmeriCorps Study](#), 2019.
69. See [Jumpstart, Children First](#).
70. [Service Year + Higher Education Engagement Opportunities](#).
71. [Expanding Voter Registration in High Schools: A Toolkit for Local Leaders](#), The Center for Popular Democracy, Feb. 2019.
72. *Id.*
73. *Id.*
74. *Id.*
75. See [All In: Campus Democracy Challenge](#).
76. "[Governor Cuomo Signs New York Automatic Voter Registration Act of 2020 into Law](#)." New York State, 22 Dec. 2020.
77. "[Voter Registration](#)." American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, 2019.
78. "[Policy Guide: Learn and Serve America](#)." *Democracy Collaborative*, 2019.
79. Sagawa, Shirley. "[Harris Wofford's service legacy](#)." *The Hill*, 23 Jan. 19.
80. [Federal Work Study \(FWS\) Program](#). The U.S. Department of Education, 17 Apr. 2014.

*A special thank you to [AmeriCorps](#) for sharing their photos for use in this report.



EDUCATION REFORM NOW IS A NON-PROFIT THINK TANK
AFFILIATED WITH DEMOCRATS FOR EDUCATION REFORM



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

A national expert on education and national service policy, **Shirley Sagawa** has served as the founding CEO of Service Year Alliance, the founding Executive Director of Learning First Alliance, Deputy Chief of Staff to First Lady Hillary Clinton, and Chief Counsel for Youth Policy for the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee.