



The Strengthening Civics Education Act

Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and John Cornyn (R-TX)

Background:

The majority of American students lack basic proficiency in civics and U.S. history. When last assessed in 2022, eighth grade civics scores [declined](#) after more than twenty years of stagnation. This is the result of a nationwide underinvestment in civics education. Only [six states](#) require a year-long civics course, and only [one in five](#) social studies teachers feel well prepared to support civic learning.

As our country celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, now is the time to reverse these trends. Expanding access to civics education is critical to give our students the knowledge required to understand our country's history, institutions, and system of government so that they have the skills to participate in civic life.

Bill Summary:

The Strengthening Civics Education Act promotes the study of American political thought and constitutional democracies while expanding opportunities for civics educators to collaborate with local education agencies to ensure better tools and information reaches students.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Reauthorize and amend the American History for Freedom program to require grantees to collaborate with local educational agencies to provide elementary and secondary teachers opportunities to deepen their knowledge of civics and history.
- Promote the development and use of open educational resources on American political thought and history and the impact of American representative democracy and constitutional democracies globally.
- Require a biennial National Assessment of Educational Progress assessment on civics and history in grades 4, 8, and 12.
- Create an America250 Civics website compiling all federal civics-related scholarship and fellowship opportunities.

Endorsements: This legislation is endorsed by the CivxNow coalition, the nation's largest cross-partisan coalition working to prioritize civics education, with [over 410 members](#).

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