Restoring civics education and ensuring that all high school graduates are ready for active, engaged citizenship.

The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires high school students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of U.S. history and civics taken from the United States Citizenship Civics Test - the test all immigrants applying for U.S. citizenship must pass. Yet, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 24 percent of U.S. high school students are proficient in civics, and studies by the Annenberg Foundation show that a third of U.S. citizens can't name even one branch of our federal government. That's why the Joe Foss Institute created the Civics Education Initiative.

The Civics Education Initiative legislation allows individual schools to administer the test in a way the school deems as adequate to ensure the requirements are followed. Students may take the test any time during their high school careers and may take the test as many times as necessary to pass. By using this well-established test and the study materials that are already easily available online and for free, CEI legislation has next to no implementation costs.

The Civics Education Initiative National Board of Advisors

The Hon. Rudolph W. Giuliani
Former Mayor of New York City

Carl Bernstein
Pulitzer Prize-Winning Journalist and Author

Richard Riley
Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Joe Mantegna
Award-Winning Actor

Kirsten Baesler
North Dakota Superintendent of Public Instruction

(Continued over)
The Civics Education Initiative is sponsored by the Civics Proficiency Institute, an affiliate of the Joe Foss Institute. The goal is to pass legislation in all 50 states by September 17, 2017 - the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution.

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CIVICS EDUCATION INITIATIVE
100 Facts Every High School Student Should Know
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JOE FOSS INSTITUTE
Advancing Civics Education

The Civics Education Initiative is an affiliate of the Joe Foss Institute, a non-profit 501(c)(3)
Civics Education Statistics and Surveys

National Assessments & Test Results
2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
• Representative sample comprised of 29,000 eighth graders across the country, in both public and private schools
• Only 18% of students scored at or above proficient in U.S. History.
• Only 27% scored at or above proficient in Geography.
• Only 23% scored at or above proficient in Civics.
• Unfortunately, there has been no significant improvement in test scores in each of the three subjects over the four year period of the study, highlighting the crisis in civics education nationwide.

National Studies & Surveys
Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania – 2014
(telephone survey of 1,416 adults)
• Only 36% of respondents could name all three branches of the U.S. government. Just as many (35%) could not name a single one.
• Only 27% of Americans know it takes a two-thirds vote of the House and Senate to override a presidential veto.
• One in five Americans (21 percent) incorrectly think that a 5-4 Supreme Court decision is sent back to Congress for reconsideration.
• Asked which party has the most members in the House of Representatives, 38 percent said they knew the Republicans are the majority, but 17 percent responded the Democrats, and 44 percent reported that they did not know (up from 27 percent who said they did not know in 2011).
• Asked which party controls the Senate, 38 percent correctly said the Democrats, 20 percent said the Republicans, and 42 percent said they did not know (also up from 27 percent who said they did not know in 2011).

Center for the Study of the American Dream at Xavier University in Cincinnati – 2012
(telephone survey of 1,023 native-born Americans that asked 10 questions from the citizenship test)
• 85 percent could not define "the rule of law."
• 75 percent did not know function of the judicial branch.
• 71 percent were unable to identify the Constitution as the "supreme law of the land."
• 63 percent could not name one of their state’s U.S. Senators.
• 62 percent did not know the name the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.
• 62 percent could not identify the Governor of their state.
• 57 percent could not define an "amendment."
• Only 44% of those with a high school education or less passed the test

NEWSWEEK—2011
(Asked 1,000 U.S. citizens to take the citizenship test)
• 29% couldn’t name the vice president
• 73% couldn’t correctly say why we fought the Cold War
• 44% were unable to define the Bill of Rights
• And 6% couldn’t even circle Independence Day on a calendar
Q. **What problem is addressed by the Civics Education Initiative?**
A. Too few citizens know and understand basic American civics, how our government works, and who we are as a nation. For example, according to the Pew Research Center, only about one-third of Americans can name the three branches of government, much less say what each does.

Q. **What is the impact of this lack of civics knowledge?**
A. If you don’t know how our government works, you’re not likely to be an active and engaged citizen. It’s no wonder so few citizens vote, given this lack of basic civics knowledge.

Q. **Why isn’t civics being better taught in our schools today?**
A. Education funding is increasingly tied to high stakes testing on reading, math and science, with a particular focus on STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering, math. While important, this emphasis is leaving civics as a secondary subject or in some cases, not being taught at all together.

Q. **How does the Civics Education Initiative address this problem?**
A. The Civics Education Initiative is simple in concept. It requires High School students, as a condition for graduation, to pass a test on 100 basic facts of US history and civics taken from the United States Citizenship Civics Test – the test all immigrants applying for US citizenship must pass.

Q. **How do immigrants taking the test compare to our own High School students?**
A. According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), 92% of immigrants who take the required civics test for citizenship pass. Yet a recent study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center show that nearly 4 in 10 (39 percent) incorrectly said that the Constitution gives the president the power to declare war.

Q. **Why use this specific USCIS US Citizenship Civics test?**
A. We already require by Federal law that new citizens must learn these 100 facts so they can be prepared to be active and engaged citizens. By using this well-established test, there is no cost to develop a new test, next to no cost involved to administer the test, and a myriad of study materials for this test already exist.

Q. **What does the Civics Education Initiative legislative language specifically say?**
A. All (State) High School students, attending any public or charter school, or a student seeking a general educational development (GED) equivalency, shall, as a condition of High School graduation or its equivalency, take and receive a passing grade on the United States Citizenship Civics Test, produced by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The test shall be the specific 100 questions used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) and administered to all applicants for US citizenship. High School students shall be tested on all 100 questions, with a minimum score of 60% being required for passage. High School Students may take the test as many times as necessary for passage, but must pass the test prior to receiving a certificate of High School graduation or a GED equivalency. All (State) schools shall certify that a student has taken the test and received a passing grade on the test, in a way it deems as adequate to ensure the requirements of this Act are followed.

Q. **Is the Civics Education Initiative a popular idea?**
A. Overwhelmingly so! A recent national survey showed 74 percent of likely voters support or strongly support the Civics Education Initiative, including overwhelming support among Men – 78%, Women – 71%, Republicans – 94%, Independents – 75%, and Democrats – 68%.

Q. **Who is promoting the Civics Education Initiative effort?**
A. The Civics Initiative www.CivicsEducationInitiative.com is project of the Joe Foss Institute www.JoeFossInstitute.org as part of its continuing efforts to promote patriotism for America’s freedoms, public service, patriotism and integrity. The Civics Education Initiative National Board of Advisors includes former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, Pulitzer winning journalist Carl Bernstein and award winning actor Joe Mantegna.
Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What other states have passed this initiative?
A. Fourteen states have passed the Civics Education Initiative in some form as of July, 7 2016 (AZ, ND, SD, UT, ID, TN, SC, LA, WI, MN, MO, VA, NH, and KS). The initiative has targeted nearly two dozen additional states for the 2017 legislative session.

Q. How much will the test cost to implement?
A. By using this well-established test and study materials that are already easily available online, as well as the online test portal provided by the Joe Foss Institute, several states have estimated little to no fiscal impact.

Additionally, by promoting local control and maximum flexibility for individual school districts, costs can be minimal. Several states have controlled costs by allowing local school districts to determine how best to implement the test. By simply avoiding state-mandated reporting requirements the vast majority of costs associated with taking and passing the test can be eliminated.
The Civics Proficiency Initiative will set as a requirement for High School graduation that students must pass the United States Citizenship Civics Test. Passage of this test - in English - is required for all new American Citizens. A score of 60% or greater is required for passage.

As of December 2013, 92% of immigrants applying for United States citizenship passed the test.

For native-born citizens the results are less than stellar. According to the 2014 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAPE), only 23 percent of 8th graders are proficient in civics, and only 14 percent of High School Seniors can identify Thomas Jefferson as the author of the Declaration of Independence.

Shouldn’t our High School graduates know as much about basic American civics as we require immigrants applying for United States citizenship to know about America?

Can you pass the test?

United States Citizenship Civics Test
100 Questions in Three Parts

PART ONE: AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

A: Principles of American Democracy
1. What is the supreme law of the land?
2. What does the Constitution do?
3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
4. What is an amendment?
5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?
8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?
9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
10. What is freedom of religion?
11. What is the economic system in the United States?
12. What is the “rule of law”?

B: System of Government
13. Name one branch or part of the government.
14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?
16. Who makes federal laws?
17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?
18. How many U.S. Senators are there?
19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?
20. Who is one of your state’s U.S. Senators now?
21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?
22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?
23. Name your U.S. Representative.
24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?
25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?
26. We elect a President for how many years?
27. In what month do we vote for President?
28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?
29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?
30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?
33. Who signs bills to become laws?
34. Who vetoes bills?
35. What does the President’s Cabinet do?
36. What are two Cabinet: level positions?
37. What does the judicial branch do?
38. What is the highest court in the United States?
39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?
41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to
the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?
42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?
43. Who is the Governor of your state now?
44. What is the capital of your state?
45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?
46. What is the political party of the President now?
47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

C: Rights and Responsibilities

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.
49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?
50. Name one right only for United States citizens.
51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?
52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?
55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?
57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?

PART TWO: AMERICAN HISTORY

A: Colonial Period and Independence

58. What is one reason colonists came to America?
59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?
61. Why did the colonists fight the British?
62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
64. There were 13 original states. Name three.
65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
66. When was the Constitution written?
67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
68. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
69. Who is the "Father of Our Country?"
70. Who was the first President?

B: The 1800's

71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?
72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.
73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.
74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.
75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?
76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

C: Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information

78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.
79. Who was President during World War I?
80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?
82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?
86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?
87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

PART THREE: INTEGRATED CIVICS

A: Geography

88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.
89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
91. Name one U.S. territory.
92. Name one state that borders Canada.
93. Name one state that borders Mexico.
94. What is the capital of the United States?
95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

B: Symbols

96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?
98. What is the name of the national anthem?

C: Holidays

99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?
100. Name two national U.S. holidays.
More than 92 percent of Fargo, W. Fargo students passing state-mandated civics tests on first try


FARGO — The civics test now required to graduate from North Dakota high schools appears to be not much more than a speed bump for most Fargo and West Fargo public school students who have taken the exams so far.

The 100-question tests are based on the questions and answers supplied by the Department of Public Instruction, which refers the state’s school districts to material put together by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. That material is used to determine if applicants for naturalization have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government to be granted citizenship.

For example: What do we call the first 10 amendments to the Constitution? How many amendments does the Constitution have? What is the name of the President?

In the Fargo School District, 1,484 students in grades eight and 11 took the civics test as of January, spokeswoman AnnMarie Campbell. Of those students, 1,443 passed, for a 97 percent success rate.

Grades eight and 11 are “a good place to do that test,” Campbell said, because that’s where U.S. history and the Constitution are studied in Fargo.

West Fargo administered its first round of civics tests in December, spokeswoman Heather Konschak said.

At Sheyenne High School, 188 juniors took the exam, with 181 passing, for a 96 percent success rate. Another 47 students must still take the exam.

At West Fargo High School, 369 juniors took the exam, with 341 passing, for a 92 percent success rate. Another 16 students still need to take the exam.

Make-up tests and re-takes will be administered in the near future, Konschak said.

By state law, seniors in the 2016-17 school year must correctly answer 60 percent or more of the 100 questions on the state-mandated civics test to pass. Future test takers will have to answer 70 percent or more questions correct.

Students have until the end of their senior year to pass the tests.

“We did not fear that test,” said Kathy Fisher, a retired government teacher who acts as Fargo’s social studies administrator.
“This did not redirect our teaching,” she said. “This was a natural fit to what we were already teaching and felt confident in.”

Fargo officials declined to release sample questions from the test, though Fisher said the test includes multiple choice and short-answer questions.

The West Fargo district used a “test-maker” tool to create a multiple-choice test, said Allen Burgad, assistant superintendent for secondary schools.

“Our teachers were positive that our students would be successful,” Burgad said. “They feel they are hitting it pretty well. If you take it again, there’s a high probability that you are going to pass.”

Burgad said West Fargo will stick to giving the test to seniors in the future.

“That will eliminate some of the challenges in tracking,” he said.

The Minnesota Legislature is considering a bill offered by Rep Dean Urdahl, R-Grove City, and Sen. LeRoy Stumpf, DFL-Plummer, requiring students to pass a civics test before they can graduate from high school.

In addition to North Dakota, eight other states, including South Dakota and Wisconsin, have civics testing requirements.