

To: Honorable Members of the House Finance Committee

Re: Support for H 7036, Funding for Civic Education

As a member of the League of Women Voters, civic education is especially important to me. It was gratifying that the bill making the teaching of civics mandatory in our schools passed in the 2023 session. However, without funding for teacher training and for civics education materials, the mandate was rendered meaningless for school districts whose budgets are already strained by the many requirements to provide a quality basic education. In my view civics is a basic educational requirement in a democracy such as ours. This subject area must be funded just as all the other areas of a quality education are.

Many believe that civics education encompasses only knowledge of how our government works (disturbing that so many Americans do not have this knowledge!) and the mechanics of voting (more disturbing how many Americans do not vote!). But civics education teaches students that effective citizenship also means participating in local, state and federal initiatives that affect the lives of all Americans. It means becoming aware of all the many ways they can have influence in their local communities.

There are teachers who have great ideas on how to incorporate civics in the existing curriculum, but they need the planning time to collaborate and the materials to enhance student learning. Every school district, not just the wealthy ones, should have the means to provide an effective civics education.

Please support H 7036 and send it out of committee to the House floor for a vote.

Thank you,

Patricia A Cole

Narragansett

401-787-5710