

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2016



*NCSS's mission is to
provide leadership,
service, and support for
all social studies
educators.*

**SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION PROMOTES THE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE,
INTELLECTUAL SKILLS, AND CIVIC PRACTICES STUDENTS NEED TO FULFILL THE
DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP IN A PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY.**

Restore Investments

- Social studies education suffered years of chronic underinvestment when earmarks were eliminated and NCLB pushed schools to invest in other subjects. It is past time to restore federal investments in social studies education.

Support Effective Instruction in ESSA

- ESSA established state grants and teacher/student academies for history and civics, and grants to develop a voluntary menu of innovative, engaging approaches to teaching civics, history and geography, particularly for underserved rural and urban students.

Measure Progress in Student Learning

- Results for the National Assessments of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests in the social studies should be disaggregated by state so that educators and policymakers can measure the extent of students' knowledge and respond with improvements.

Social Studies is Critical to American Education

School-based social studies expose students to critical thinking, civic learning, economics and financial literacy, global awareness, and historical reasoning, and yield crucial preparation for college, career, and civic life. Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act, 44% of districts surveyed reduced time for social studies. The outcome of this reduction is that at every grade level, understanding of American democracy is far below adequate.

Restore Investments in Social Studies Education

- The House LHHS bill funds all three social studies provisions authorized in ESSA:
 - \$1 Billion for Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants
 - \$6.5 million for National Activities (grants to non-profits)
 - \$1.8 million for National Academies
- The Senate LHHS bill includes less for SSAEG and the Academies, and nothing at all for the National Activities
- **Support funding at the House level**

Social Studies in ESSA

- Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grants in Title IV can be used to support traditional American history, civics, economics, geography, and government education
- Title II establishes National Academies for teachers and students to learn more about history and civics
- Title II also establishes competitive grants to non-profit organizations for the development of innovative, engaging instruction in history, civics, and geography, particularly for underserved students

The 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress test in civics showed that three-quarters of 8th graders tested could not correctly identify the purpose of the Declaration of Independence.

Due to sequester, the 2014 NAEP for fourth and twelfth graders was cancelled. The eighth grade NAEP showed no improvement in content knowledge.

An Iowa Council for the Social Studies survey of social studies teachers in elementary, middle and high school showed that more than half had not been offered a single opportunity for professional development in social studies in two years. And Iowa is a leader in social studies education!

Is it any wonder that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor says that our country has a crisis in civic education?

www.socialstudies.org



**“TODAY’S SOCIAL STUDIES:
CREATING EFFECTIVE CITIZENS.”**

Enact the Sandra Day O’Connor Civic Learning Act

- This Act authorizes \$30 million for competitive grants to develop and disseminate innovative approaches to civic learning. These grants would fund effective, cost-efficient and scalable approaches to civic learning.
- Currently, the NAEP tests in civics, economics, geography and history once every 4 years to a very limited number of students.
- The implementation of this Act would encourage larger sample sizes so that states can receive the information they need to assess student progress on a state-by-state basis.

Enact the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act

- Geography is the only one of nine core subjects recognized under No Child Left Behind not to have received any dedicated federal funding since 2002.
- The bipartisan Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act would expand geographic literacy among students by authorizing \$15 million/year, for the next 5 fiscal years to make grants to universities and nonprofit organizations to fund professional development, research, and assessments that will improve geography instruction in K-12.



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