**INFORMED PATRIOTISM AND PARTICIPATORY CIVICS**

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**LESSON SUMMARY**

| **CIVICS & GOVERNMENT STANDARDS CORRELATION** |
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| Thematically, this lesson aligns with standards addressing the following topics:   * Legislative Branch * Levels of Government * Public Policy * Citizen Responsibilities * Government Obligations & Services |
| **ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS CORRELATION** |
| Thematically, this lesson aligns with standards addressing the following topics:   * Central Idea: Informational Text * Author’s Purpose and Perspective: Informational Text * Argument * Paraphrase and Summarize * Comparative Reading * Writing * Researching and Using Information * Oral Presentation * Vocabulary * Context and Connotation |
| **GRADE LEVEL** |
| This lesson is intended for students in grades 6-12. Adjustments may be needed based on the unique needs of a classroom and where the population of students falls within the secondary range. |
| **OVERVIEW** |
| In this lesson, students will learn about the importance of an informed citizenry and investigate how citizens can shape local, state, and national policies. |
| **ESSENTIAL QUESTION** |
| What steps can citizens take to improve their communities, state, and/or nation? |
| **CIVICS & GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY** |
| * 1st Amendment, act, assembly, bill, citizenship, city commissioner/council member, civic, civic engagement, civic meeting, civic participation, civics, common good, constituent, constitutional republic, demonstration, elected official, federalism, government agency, government services, informed patriotism, law, legislation, legislative branch, legislature, levels of government, local government, national government, obligation, ordinance, peaceful protest, petition, public policy, responsibility, school board, state government, state legislator, U.S. Congress, U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator, vote |
| **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES** |
| Reading complex text, Collaborative discussion, Primary source analysis, Project-based learning |
| **MATERIALS** |
| * Student digital device * Civic Engagement Hook slide * Citizen Engagement in a Constitutional Republic primary source activity * Getting Started with Primary Sources (external link; optional) * Civic Knowledge and Skills Quotes * SOURCES Framework Analysis Sheet * Senator Bob Graham and Representative Lou Frey Overview slides * Civics Education Data slides * Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act reading * Primary Source Analysis Tool handout (external link) * Library of Congress Analyzing Primary Sources Teacher’s Guide (external link; optional) * Democracy at a Crossroads: Florida Success Story video (external link) * I’m Just a Bill video (external link) * A Tale of Participatory Civics reading * Public Policy Informed Action Plan handout |

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## **ACTIVITY SEQUENCE**

| **DAY 1** |
| --- |
| ***Teacher Note:*** *This lesson assumes that students have basic foundational knowledge of the relationship between citizens and government, as well as a general understanding of the structure and function of the legislative branch at both the state and national levels of government.*   1. Begin class by projecting the “[Civic Engagement Hook slide](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1iIhovWhVh6oNOjSfeW4kfmAzhNBAfAGJ3Jq5vOK8eos/edit?usp=sharing).” 2. Ask students to read the brief story and quote. 3. Ask students to brainstorm and respond to the prompts on the slide in their notebooks or on separate paper:  * What do you think Benjamin Franklin meant by this statement? * What things must citizens do for our constitutional republic to work? * What things should citizens do for the betterment of our constitutional republic?  1. Ask students to share out some of their responses. While responses will vary, lead students to an understanding that the Framers believed that in order for the constitutional republic they created to work and last, it would be up to each generation of Americans to participate in the political process and remain civically engaged. Citizens must/should do things like vote, serve on juries, engage with their elected officials, petition their government, and run for office (obligations and responsibilities). This message has been both demonstrated throughout history and reiterated by multiple leaders. 2. Distribute a “[Citizen Engagement in a Constitutional Republic primary source activity sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XUA6mL3_ym3RKdnScCcqHK2SbgQn7wk7s2fweSKA8gw/edit?usp=sharing)” to each student. 3. Read the Jefferson quote together as a class. Help students answer questions 1 and 2 on the activity sheet, modeling primary analysis techniques.   ***Teacher Note:*** *If you are new to working with primary sources and need assistance with modeling strategies, refer to the* [*Getting Started with Primary Sources*](https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/) *program from the Library of Congress*. *You can also use the answer key below to help guide the discussion.*   1. Next, work through the Noah Webster quote and questions 3 and 4, releasing some of the analysis responsibility to the class. 2. Have students complete the final question on the activity sheet independently. 3. Call on a few students to share their responses to question five. Connect this back to the Franklin slide by pointing out commonalities (the importance of civic knowledge, the need to be civically engaged). 4. Place students into pairs or small groups. 5. Provide each pair/small group a copy of the “[Civic Knowledge and Skills Quotes](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wO2JOlxKMhXA3LwL-Ijup8eoHp98BdOgN54uB3GrxIo/edit?usp=sharing)” and each student a copy of the “[SOURCES Framework Analysis Sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fch6xwHZqUl6zkEw1uyqLxPbIkwkpY_GOi7cbAOnpdg/edit?usp=sharing).” 6. Inform students that through these quotes today, they will be learning about the concepts of civic knowledge, civic skills, and informed patriotism. 7. Assign each pair/small group **one** of the quotes to be responsible for analyzing. 8. As a whole class, walk the students through the questions on the SOURCES analysis sheet to ensure they know what to be looking for when evaluating their primary source quote. Ensure they know to keep the essential question in mind and also to think about how the ideas expressed in these passages (civic knowledge, civic skills, and informed patriotism) might connect.   ***Teacher Note:*** *In order to ensure these connections are made, you could always add questions to the analysis sheet or ask students to summarize the connections on the back when they are finished.*   1. Provide pairs/small groups time to read and analyze their primary source quote. As students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and provide support. 2. When all pairs/small groups have completed the analysis sheet, end class by asking each pair/small group to share one thing they have learned about informed patriotism and how it connects to civic knowledge and skills. |
| **DAY 2** |
| 1. Begin class by projecting slide 1 of the “[Senator Bob Graham and Representative Lou Frey Overview slides.](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/17fzRkJGd82ffg9QyHeyjENifIzV6OP79EJzzWgQ5E-0/edit?usp=sharing)” 2. Provide students time to read the two quotes, keeping in mind the discussion question at the top. 3. Solicit responses and allow students to share their thoughts and opinions on civic knowledge and engagement in the country today. 4. Engage students in a whole-class discussion about how the Graham and Frey quotes connect back to what they read/learned yesterday regarding involved citizenry and informed patriotism. 5. Using slides 2-6, briefly share a little more with students about these two legislators from Florida. 6. Project the “[Civics Education Data slides](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1yxRrPLJNKan89rpN5AFlQDn-kT43KhLVCLzy0kRGHfw/edit?usp=sharing)” to share with students. Review the data on slide 2. 7. Conduct a whole-class discussion around the data. Ask students: What does the data suggest about civics education? Why should citizens care about civics education? What should civics education look like? What has been your experience with civics education? 8. Explain to students that it was data such as this, combined with the knowledge of the Framers’ visions, and their experience in Congress, that led Senator Bob Graham and Representative Lou Frey to work on advancing informed patriotism through civics education policy reform. To accomplish that policy goal, they pursued passage of groundbreaking legislation in Florida. 9. Provide each student a copy of the “[Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act reading](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dhtm75nBFoajU5IPlzSRY_B6hedBB1vZPmS1twr4XGc/edit?usp=sharing)” and a “[Primary Source Analysis Tool handout.](https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Primary_Source_Analysis_Tool_LOC.pdf)” 10. Instruct students to read and analyze the document, recording thoughts and answers on their analysis handout.   ***Teacher Note:*** *If students need more scaffolding with document analysis, you could pose specific questions using the* [*Library of Congress Analyzing Primary Sources Teacher’s Guide*](https://www.loc.gov/static/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/documents/Analyzing_Primary_Sources.pdf)*.*   1. Once students have individually completed their analysis, have them pair up with another student to review, encouraging them to add to their initial interpretations. As students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and provide support. 2. Bring the whole class back together to review responses. Ask students: How did the Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act align with the goals of involved citizenry and informed patriotism?   ***Teacher Note:*** *Use the answer key provided to help guide the discussion.*   1. Play for students the “[Democracy at a Crossroads: Florida Success Story video](https://safeshare.tv/x/bdqKOXcCb8w).” Have students jot down and then share out where they see evidence of informed patriotism in the video.   ***Teacher Note:*** *Answers may vary, but evidence includes: increased knowledge of how government works, enthusiasm about civics learning, increased attention and resources, required instruction in civics, increased student results on tests, increased teacher knowledge, sense of empowerment, and voice in government.*   1. Return to the “Civics Education Data slides.” Using slides 3-5, review the more recent data regarding civics education with students. Ask students: What does this data suggest about civics education? What do you think some of the individuals we have studied so far (Jefferson, Madison, Webster, Roosevelt, Reagan, Graham, Frey, etc.) would say about this data? 2. As an exit ticket, have students individually respond to the following reflection prompt: What is the difference between an informed spectator (or informed patriot) and a civic participant? |
| **DAY 3+** |
| ***Teacher Note****: The dynamics of your class, combined with the depth you choose to take this next portion of the lesson activity sequence, will determine how many class days are necessary.*   1. Begin class by creating a two-column chart that the entire class can contribute to. This can be done on a classroom whiteboard, digital slide, large poster paper, etc. Label one side ‘informed spectator/patriot’ and the other ‘civic participant.’ 2. As a bellwork activity, have students contribute descriptive words and phrases to both sides in order to best define these terms, using their exit ticket reflection from the previous day as inspiration. 3. Review some of the answers together. Remind students that in order to ‘keep the Republic’ as Franklin put it, civic knowledge is essential, but we must be able to use that knowledge and patriotism to engage with competence and confidence. 4. Ask students to silently reflect on the following: It may seem easy for legislators like Bob Graham and Lou Frey to be informed and engaged patriots for change. But what role does the average American citizen play in the process? 5. As a class, watch the “[I’m Just a Bill video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ8psP4S6BQ)” from Schoolhouse Rock. 6. After the video, discuss in which moments in the legislative process citizens play a role. Replay if necessary.   ***Teacher Note:*** *The Schoolhouse Rock video mentions citizens coming up with the original idea for the bill. They reached out to their elected official about a concern. However, you could also dialogue with students about other moments in the legislative process in which citizens can/should be involved.*   1. Project or distribute the "[A Tale of Participatory Civics reading](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J-TraB7qcXRzleg3cbqZsU1Ppe53dxmyuloRPhiyWlo/edit?usp=sharing).” Either read the anecdote together as a class, or have students read individually. 2. Have students complete the two questions at the bottom of the reading and then discuss.   ***Teacher Note:*** *Use the answer key provided to help guide the discussion.*   1. Explain to students that the final activity/piece of this lesson will ensure that they have the tools, skills, and perspective on how to get informed (besides taking and excelling in a civics/government class) and be active in public life. 2. Place students into pairs or small groups. 3. Distribute a “[Public Policy Informed Action Plan handout](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bq_LwDkehcXIzBmaJbw8ySQ2QbMJ_RDlH6sX8Zkz6y0/edit?usp=sharing)” to each pair/group. 4. Explain to students that with their partner/small group, they will work through the steps a citizen would take to address a local or state public policy issue. 5. Instruct students to brainstorm a list of local and/or state issues that they find important. Their list should be recorded in box 1 of their “Public Policy Informed Action Plan handout.”   ***Teacher Note***: *If students struggle to brainstorm problems, you could have them examine local and state online news publications for ideas. It is often helpful to also remind students that their school is a community they may examine for issues. You may also just assign a predetermined local/state problem if preferred.*   1. Once a set amount of brainstorming time has passed, instruct pairs/groups that they must now choose ONE problem/issue from their list for the remainder of the activity. Provide students a few moments to do so, having them record their choice in box 2. 2. Once all pairs/groups have selected one issue/problem, instruct them to work on boxes 3 and 4. They will explain why this is an issue/problem worth addressing in box 3, and they will use their digital device to begin researching what rules/policies/laws already exist surrounding their chosen topic for box 4.   ***Teacher Note***: *You will want to provide them with a list of recommended government websites to use for research. Ensure they record their research sources in box 15.*   1. While students work, circulate the room to monitor for engagement and understanding, checking in with each pair/group at least once to understand the issue they have chosen and help ensure they are researching in the right areas. 2. Once pairs/groups have completed the first four boxes, they will continue to work on the activity by examining possible solutions to address their chosen problem. They will need to figure out appropriate government agencies to involve, as well as analyze limitations, challenges, and opportunities around their proposed policy plan. 3. Continue to have students research in their pairs/groups, recording sources and completing the remaining boxes. 4. Once all pairs/groups have completed their “Public Policy Informed Action Plan,” either collect them to conclude the lesson or choose one of the enrichment extensions below. |
| **ENRICHMENT EXTENSIONS** |
| In order for the students’ “Public Policy Informed Action Plan” to have an impact beyond a classroom assignment/application of standards, consider organizing a way for the plans to be shared or acted upon.   * Have students turn their plan into a presentation that can be made to the class and possibly invited guests * Host a school-wide civics fair similar to existing science or history fairs * Vote as a class on one informed action plan to attempt to execute as a class |
| **ANSWER KEYS** |
| Sample Answers: [Citizen Engagement in a Constitutional Republic primary source activity sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m3BOgq7lcvO-DaACbuGwcugbHJk7dEwBImY2tJdTrHM/edit?usp=sharing)  Sample Answers: [SOURCES Framework Analysis Sheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nBBF-z3iGPP-YkTuxVsWYuSjuU4pBt9HqWcU1BE4DnQ/edit?usp=sharing)  Sample Answers: [Primary Source Analysis Tool handout](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1401FuIbawB2CbntefRhlAaXGlnVkdlEd/view?usp=sharing)  Sample Answers: [A Tale of Participatory Civics reading](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LG7urOOIYptqAWGWHcUThk0EpyLkxVwMBPdylDMxC24/edit?usp=sharing)  Sample Answers: [Public Policy Informed Action Plan Rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SGXOPsotPSYYPks9-yCWDQECs2z6rAKEMX1H4yMhN6E/edit?usp=sharing) |
| **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** |
| [The Florida Joint Center For Citizenship](https://floridacitizen.org/)  [Civics360](https://civics360.org/)  [The Lou Frey Institute at UCF](https://loufreyinstitute.org/)  [The Bob Graham Center at UF](https://bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu/)  [The Hamilton School of Classical and Civic Education at UF](https://hamilton.center.ufl.edu/)  [United States Capitol Historical Society](https://capitolhistory.org/)  [Library of Congress](https://www.loc.gov/)  [Be The Leaders You Want to See: A Civic Learning Week Conversation with Congressman Dennis Ross](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqTasz3byF0)  Learn More about Lou Frey   * [Representative Lou Frey’s Papers at UCF](https://scua.library.ucf.edu/repositories/4/resources/123) * [Lou Frey Talks with a Child Interviewer About Politics and Civics](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0RRSQpEbqw) * [Targeting Voters in Congressional Elections](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-YWDpUafKc) * [Lou Frey on C-SPAN](https://www.c-span.org/person/lou-frey-jr/47546/)   Learn More about Bob Graham   * [Senator Bob Graham’s Papers at UF](https://findingaids.uflib.ufl.edu/repositories/2/resources/166) * [Bob Graham’s Workdays at Florida Memory](https://www.floridamemory.com/learn/exhibits/photo_exhibits/bobgraham/) * [World at Risk: The Report of the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism (Senator Bob Graham, chair)](https://www.loc.gov/item/2009373884/) * [Bob Graham: A Life in Service](https://vimeo.com/384828905?share=copy#t=0) * [Bob Graham on C-SPAN](https://www.c-span.org/person/bob-graham/1373/)   Recommended Reading   * *America The Owner’s Manual: You Can Fight City Hall– And Win* by Senator Bob Graham and Chris Hand * *Political Rules of the Road: Representatives, Senators and Presidents Share their Rules for Success in Congress, Politics and Life* by Representative Lou Frey * *Reaching Across the Aisle: Reflections On My Experiences In Politics* by Congressman Dennis Ross * *Integrating Primary and Secondary Sources Into Teaching: The SOURCES Framework for Authentic Investigation* by Dr. Scott M. Waring |
| **SOURCES** |
| Franklin Story: <https://blogs.loc.gov/manuscripts/2022/01/a-republic-if-you-can-keep-it-elizabeth-willing-powel-benjamin-franklin-and-the-james-mchenry-journal/>  Thomas Jefferson To Joseph C. Cabell, 2 February 1816: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-09-02-0286>  A Citizen of America: An Examination Into the Leading Principles of America by Noah Webster, October 17, 1787: <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/a-citizen-of-america-an-examination-into-the-leading-principles-of-america/>  Civics Advocacy Resources: Inspirational Quotes: <https://www.civicsrenewalnetwork.org/featured/civics-advocacy-resources-inspirational-quotes/>  President Ronald Reagan’s Farewell Address from the Reagan Presidential Library:  <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/farewell-address-nation>  *America The Owner’s Manual: You Can Fight City Hall– And Win* by Senator Bob Graham and Chris Hand  *Integrating Primary and Secondary Sources Into Teaching: The SOURCES Framework for Authentic Investigation* by Dr. Scott M. Waring  Senator Bob Graham and Representative Lou Frey quote sources contained within slides  Civics Education Data sources contained within slides  Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civics Education Act: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2010/105/BillText/er/PDF>  Library of Congress Primary Source Resources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/>  Democracy at a Crossroads video from CivxNow: <https://civxnow.org/>  Schoolhouse Rock “I’m Just a Bill”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ8psP4S6BQ>  Constitutional Rights Foundation: <https://www.crfcap.org/> |

**CIVICS & GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY**

| **TERM** | **DEFINITION** |
| --- | --- |
| **1st Amendment** | an amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion, press, assembly, speech, and the right to petition the government (1791) |
| **act** | legislation that has passed both houses of Congress, has been signed into law by the president, or passed despite their veto, and therefore becomes law |
| **assembly** | a gathering together as a group for a common purpose |
| **bill** | formally introduced legislation |
| **citizenship** | being a member of a particular country and having the rights, obligations, and responsibilities that come with it |
| **city commissioner/council member** | a member of the governing body of a city (local government) |
| **civic** | of or relating to a citizen, a city, citizenship, or community affairs |
| **civic engagement** | participation in issues of public concern; also known as civic participation |
| **civic meeting** | a meeting that is held for the people to share their opinions with government officials |
| **civic participation** | participation in issues of public concern; also known as civic engagement |
| **civics** | the study of the rights and duties of citizens and of how government works |
| **common good** | beliefs or actions that are seen as a benefit to the community rather than individual interests |
| **constituent** | a person that an elected official represents |
| **constitutional republic** | a form of government in which there is democratic voting, but governmental power is limited by the existence of a constitution that protects the rights of citizens |
| **demonstration** | a mass gathering to raise awareness about an issue of public concern |
| **elected official** | a person holding public office by virtue of election to that office or through constitutional succession |
| **federalism** | the division of power between the national government and state governments |
| **government agency** | a permanent or semi-permanent organization within a national, state, or local government |
| **government services** | something such as health care, transportation, or the removal of waste, which is organized by the government or an official body in order to benefit all the people in a particular society or community; sometimes called public services or social services |
| **informed patriotism** | a dedication to the country and the system it stands for combined with knowledge of history and the work that is necessary to achieve its promise |
| **law** | a rule established by government or other source of authority to regulate people’s conduct or activities |
| **legislation** | a law or a set of laws |
| **legislative branch** | the branch of government that makes the laws |
| **legislature** | governing body responsible for making laws |
| **levels of government** | the division of governmental power and responsibilities between different layers: national/federal, state, and local |
| **local government** | the governing body at any level below that of state or territory, usually overseeing a county, city, municipality, town, or similar |
| **national government** | the federal level of government; the government of the United States |
| **obligation** | a requirement or duty, something a person or government has to do |
| **ordinance** | a law enacted by a city or county affecting local affairs (ex. traffic, noise, animal control) |
| **peaceful protest** | nonviolent resistance or action for the purpose of achieving social or political change |
| **petition** | a formal written request, typically one signed by many people, appealing to authority with respect to a particular cause |
| **public policy** | what the government chooses to do or not do about a particular issue or problem |
| **responsibility** | something a person should do |
| **school board** | the group of persons elected to manage local public schools |
| **state government** | the government of an individual state |
| **state legislator** | an elected member of a state’s legislative body responsible for making state laws; usually classified as state representatives and state senators |
| **U.S. Congress** | the national legislative body of the U.S., consisting of the Senate (upper house), and the House of Representatives (lower house) |
| **U.S. Representative** | a member of the U.S. House of Representatives elected to represent a district within a state; there are 435 elected officials, proportionally representing the 50 states in the U.S. House of Representatives |
| **U.S. Senator** | a member of the U.S. Senate elected to represent an entire state; there are 100 elected officials, two from each state in the U.S. Senate |
| **vote** | to formally record one's choice or opinion in an election or on a specific question |

**CONTENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

[*Teacher Content, Not Intended For Student Use*]

**1. Informed Patriotism and Founders' Vision**

In his 1988 farewell address, President Ronald Reagan stressed the importance of a concept he termed “informed patriotism.” To him, this referred to a national pride rooted in understanding the nation’s ideals and principles, emphasizing knowledge of history, and recognizing the importance of civic engagement. Like the Framers, President Reagan understood the fragility of freedom and believed informed patriotism was essential for the survival of the constitutional republic.

According to a journal entry by Maryland delegate to the Constitutional Convention, James McHenry, on the last day of the convention, a woman approached Dr. Benjamin Franklin and asked, “Well, Doctor, what have we got? A republic or a monarchy?” Franklin answered, “A republic if you can keep it.” The Framers understood that this newly created nation truly was a “great experiment.” Everything hinged on “We the People.” While these first three words of the U.S. Constitution reflect the concept that the people grant the government its power, these words also reflect the idea that democracy is a process. Individuals and groups must hold the nation and its government accountable to the ideals expressed in the founding documents and remain engaged in the quest for a “more perfect union.”

At times, the Framers were weary of this revolutionary design: a government where political power rests with the people and not a monarch or parliament. They knew that just the framework laid out on paper was not enough to ensure liberty. In writing about “the only point on which [Washington] and I ever differed in opinion,” Jefferson wrote, “was, that I had more confidence than he had in the natural integrity and discretion of the people.” However, Jefferson also recognized that civic education and historical knowledge were key to fostering democracy and preventing tyranny. In a 1789 letter, Jefferson wrote, “Wherever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.”

**2. The Role of Citizens in Addressing Issues at Various Levels of Government**

Citizens play a central role in setting public policy at all levels of government. *Consent of the governed* in a constitutional republic requires active and consistent participation of citizens. The thoughts, feelings, and priorities of constituents must be made known to the representatives elected to govern. Oftentimes, citizens pay more attention to national government policies and participate in elections for national offices. However, as a result of the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and federalist system, large amounts of authority for public policy setting rests with state and local governments.

While the enumerated powers of the national government impact some areas of public policy, the policies that most directly affect the day-to-day lives of citizens are mostly directed by the government at the state and local levels. These policies may be in the areas of education, emergency services, infrastructure, parks and recreation, taxes, and more. Various local and state agencies are tasked with identifying issues/problems, developing solutions, and setting policies for implementation. While voting is perhaps the most basic and central act of citizenship, the voting booth is simply where citizen participation begins rather than ends. Active citizenship requires that citizens continually work to stay informed and involved. Our constitutional republic relies on citizens to engage in civil discourse with their elected representatives, providing feedback and ideas on how to best address issues of importance to them. To do that, it is essential for citizens to understand the powers and responsibilities of every level of government to ensure they are interacting with the correct level to address an issue. They must also have knowledge of the structure, function, and processes of the branches of government.

**3. Tools of Political and Civic Engagement**

Remaining politically and civically engaged is a central tenet of citizenship. While citizenship carries with it certain obligations, such as obeying laws, paying taxes, and defending the nation if called upon, it also comes with responsibilities to participate and contribute to the common good. Civic engagement is a key component to preserving or reforming institutions within our constitutional republic. Civic engagement occurs when individuals or groups work to address a public concern in order to benefit their community, state, and/or nation. Through civic engagement, citizens may advocate for change or advocate to prevent a change from occurring. Within the structures of our governmental system and the rights afforded to citizens in the U.S. Constitution, there are numerous legal methods that can be used to promote social and political change. They are outlined in the table below.

| **Voting** | Citizens have a responsibility for selecting public officials who will represent their interests in government. Through voting, elected officials may get a sense of what issues/causes have support to initiate change and what institutions the population wants to preserve. |
| --- | --- |
| **Peaceable assembly** | Citizens in the United States have the right to come together with others and collectively express, promote, pursue, and defend common interests. This includes the right to assemble in public places and the right to join an association. The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld laws requiring general permits, as well as prosecutions for illegal demonstrations under certain circumstances. The right of individuals to express themselves must be balanced against the need to maintain public order. People are protected when they bring to the government’s attention their unresolved concerns, provide information to political leaders about unpopular policies and issues, and expose government misconduct. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that regulation of assembly may not be used to stifle dissent; unpopular groups may not be prevented from gathering based on the nature of the group’s message. Addressing public issues by marching, attending rallies, participating in sit-ins, initiating boycotts, writing letters, or other forms of peaceful protest can bring the need for change to light and encourage more people to support a cause. |
| **Petitioning** | A petition is an official request to the government or a political official to institute change. A petition must then be signed by people who are in support of the cause and agree to what has been proposed. Petitioning was a cherished right in eighteenth-century America, and while not as popular today, still an important method to impact change. Petitions may be political in nature, legal, or public. Since the rise of the Internet, many citizens have started online petitions to raise awareness for a variety of causes. |
| **Attending civic meetings** | Civic meetings are ways for citizens to be engaged participants in their government. Interest groups, political parties, candidates for public office, religious organizations, the media, and public officials hold civic meetings in order to inform and learn from the public. |
| **Political campaigns** | Citizens may run for or be appointed to serve in public office. Individuals not interested in service can still participate by volunteering time to a campaign, wearing a shirt or button endorsing a candidate, contributing money to a campaign, or engaging in civil discourse with potential voters. |
| **Volunteering** | Contributing to the common good is an essential component of citizenship in a constitutional republic. Coming together with friends, neighbors, or organizations to accomplish goals is an important foundation for a democratic society. |
| **Staying informed and communicating with public officials** | Being an informed citizen allows individuals to engage in other civic responsibilities more effectively. Knowledge of political candidates and their stances on issues, for example, would result in a more well-informed voter. It also allows citizens to more effectively communicate concerns and/or support for something to elected public officials. Being informed also comes with the responsibility of finding trusted sources, examining all sides of an issue, and practicing good media literacy. |

**4. Senator Bob Graham, Representative Lou Frey, and Civic Education**

In 2010, Florida implemented a comprehensive reform effort targeting civic education in the state through the Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civic Education Act. For many years before that landmark effort, former Florida congressional leaders Bob Graham (a Democrat) and Lou Frey (a Republican) collaborated in a patriotic, bipartisan push to help Floridians understand the importance of civic education and informed patriotism. This bipartisan effort was important. Both Graham and Frey consistently argued that civics was not a Republican or Democratic issue, but an American issue. As Americans, they felt that we had a responsibility to ensure that every generation got a practical, informative, and engaging experience in school that helped them develop into passionate participants in civic life. Both Bob Graham and Lou Frey sought to model what they believed.

Lou Frey’s career was dedicated to the youth of America. Throughout his time in Congress (1969-1979), he sought to involve future citizens in government. Indeed, his co-authored 1969 report, *Youth of America: Congress Looks at the Campus*, supported what would become the 16th Amendment. This granted 18-year-olds the right to vote; the report also supported draft reform, expansion of various student loan programs, opposition to repressive legislation against colleges where protests against the Vietnam War took place, and establishment of a Commission on Higher Education. Representative Frey also established a high school intern program where more than 300 students from his district, who were elected by their peers, came to Washington for seven days to learn firsthand about their government. After his time in Congress, Lou Frey remained committed to engaging with students and teachers about government, through speaking engagements, collaborations with institutions and colleagues, and multiple symposia hosted through his namesake Lou Frey Institute at the University of Central Florida.

Like Lou Frey, Bob Graham was dedicated to the importance of youth civic engagement and civic education in general. As a state legislator, Florida’s 38th governor, and later as a United States Senator (1987-2005), Graham followed a path of leadership and engagement as a civic role model. He believed wholeheartedly in the importance of bipartisanship, willing to work with members of both political parties to ensure progress for the nation. His ‘Workdays’ became a popular aspect of his campaigns at multiple levels of government. These workdays, where he would work a job that connected him more closely to the lives of the typical Florida citizen, garnered him a great deal of support and demonstrated to us all how engaging with one’s neighbors and fellow citizens can help us understand each other. Ultimately, Bob Graham worked more than 900 different jobs, ranging from factory worker to tomato picker, in 109 cities and across five states during his political career. Prior to retiring from the U.S. Senate, he led the investigation into the causes of the attacks of September 11th, 2001. Following his retirement, he established the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. The Graham Center provides opportunities for active civic engagement for college students across Florida and beyond. This fulfills Senator Graham’s vision of active civic engagement for every generation of citizen.

To help with the passage of what would become the Justice Sandra Day O’Connor Civic Education Act, Representative Frey and Senator Graham drew on their strong legacy in bipartisan collaboration and civic engagement. With one shared voice, and with the support of educators and leaders across the state, they convinced the Florida legislature that civic education mattered. This bipartisan push culminated in the two men leading the effort to bring retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor to Florida to speak to a joint session of the state legislature on why this bill mattered, and on the effort of Bob Graham and Lou Frey needed to make a difference. The bill passed overwhelmingly in both houses of the Florida Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Charlie Crist. And with that, Florida became one of the first states in the nation to mandate high-quality civic education in middle school, along with the high-stakes assessment that accompanies it. All because two men worked together to address a problem they saw, and drew on their experience as advocates of bipartisanship and informed patriotism to make it happen.