



## Legislation Text

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Clerk 02/04/2014

A MOTION in support of the Civics for All Initiative.

WHEREAS, a basic understanding of the rights and duties of citizenship are essential to sustaining democracy and civic life, both nationally and in King County, and

WHEREAS, a national and local "civics gap" has formed and is disenfranchising minority and at-risk students, especially in low-income elementary schools where math and literacy test-prep pressures have made civics scarce, and

WHEREAS, the civics gap follows students from K-12 school into voting age adulthood so that only twenty-one percent of eighteen-through-twenty-nine-year-olds voted in federal elections in 2010 and far, far fewer vote in local elections, and

WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative is an independent effort, originated with a group of high school students, their teacher and broad community support, that proposes a specific K-12 curriculum for Seattle Public Schools, comprised of six elements:

1. Voting and elections: hold mock elections in all schools every November, with the assistance of the King County department of elections and the Secretary of State, and encourage students to register family members to vote;
2. Social studies: require three civics classroom based assessments for each grade level in order to spark civics education revitalization;
3. Media-literacy: promote and embed media literacy in curriculum lessons, primarily in social-studies and language arts classrooms that include electoral politics and current events;

4. Civics across the curriculum/civics across the core: promote and infuse interdisciplinary civics awareness lessons and civics texts that support common core literacy standards into all academic disciplines and grades when possible;

5. Civics website: establish and maintain a central website containing civics across the curriculum where teachers can share methods and lessons that incorporate civics lessons into curricula; and

6. Professional development: provide instructors professional development training days during implementation that is dedicated to teaching civics across the K-12 curriculum and developing a common instructional language and framework that can connect all grades, teachers and other employees to civics learning, and

WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative leadership, comprised by the executive director and the board of advisors, seeks to have the six elements of the initiative formally adopted by the Seattle Public school district, and

WHEREAS, the executive-director of the Civics for All Initiative was inspired to write this initiative when the 11th graders of his winter 2011 U.S. History class returned from a trip to the state capitol in Olympia and the students wrote district administrators of their unforgettable experience, urging that future high school students be provided with the same civic learning opportunity, and

WHEREAS, the Civics for All Initiative has been vetted by experts from the University of Washington, Seattle University, Stanford University and the venerable Center for Civics Education, and

WHEREAS, the Seattle city council is considering legislation to express its support for the Civics for All Initiative;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council approves of and endorses the Civics for All Initiative for its potential to enhance academic achievement, civic knowledge and engagement for nearly fifty thousand K-12 students in the Seattle school district by motivating and empowering students with lessons that help them receive information in civic,

ethical and political frameworks in all academic disciplines.

B. The council commends King County department of elections for its interest in the Civics for All Initiative and commitment to partner with the Initiative and other election partners and resources, including the Secretary of State's Office in Olympia, to support mock elections in public schools, which will teach children about the elections

process and how to vote, thus promoting civic participation in order to increase citizenship involvement and aptitude for life.