



NEWSLETTER

April 2025 ISSUE#: HV014

Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley is a steady source of news to heal the accelerating erosion of our fundamental freedoms nationally and locally.

Embrace our First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Source: <https://billofrightsintstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Kind regards,
Publius Bonhomme Richard, Publisher & Co-Editors

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Email us at: info@mercervethepeople.com

Please email us to be included for future newsletters.

Printed copies of the newsletter will be made available at Rosedale Mills and local library. Any other suggested location(s) please let us know.

Call for Contributors!

MercerWe the People of Hopewell Valley is looking for contributors to write articles, especially informing the community about what is happening at local meetings. If you're interested in writing for us about that or any other topic, whether it is monthly or as needed, please reach out to us at info@mercervethepeople.com

In This Issue:

- Education
 - Local Feature (By The Wall of Ed): What's Happening in HVRSD Schools?
- Local News
 - Local Feature (By John Galt): Hopewell Residents Need Transparency On Issues Facing The Township
- Election 2025
- Election Integrity
 - Local Feature (By Mark Demo): New Jersey Removes 236,000 Plus Voters From Its Voter Rolls In February
 - Local Feature (By Mark Demo): Reconciling Trump's Executive Order On Election Integrity With NJ Title 19
- Public Corner
- TruthBTold
- At the Movies, Bookstores
 - Local Feature (By Sylvia Kocses): Book Review: How To Raise A Citizen (And Why It's Up To You To Do It)
- We the People of Interest

Education

What's Happening In HVRSD Schools?

HVRSD Board Of Education Meeting March 17, 2025 At Stony Brook Elementary School

By The Wall of Ed

Agenda: <https://go.boarddocs.com/nj/hvrsd/Board.nsf/Public#tab-meetings>

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/live/a0Giy1UG_-A?si=VVd_u3ISqy6lbMWc

Hate Incident at Timberlane Middle School (TMS) Dominates the Conversation

After several swastikas were found drawn on the walls and desks at TMS, several parents and members of the community shared stories about how their children have been victims of bias incidents at school and called for greater action by our school district to address these issues. These issues are occurring at all of our schools, including elementary, middle, and high school.

Dr Treece condemned these acts of incivility and verbal attacks at our schools and on social media as unproductive, unsafe, and hostile, noting that teachers and students are unable to be their best in this kind of environment. In response, the district plans to explore several options, including getting parents and community members more involved.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Treece said "This kind of destructive discourse is a cancer and it's already beginning to erode the very fabric of our community and that's why I'm calling on the entire community, everyone here, whether you have children in our district or not, our teachers, all adults in the community to help share and recommit to our mission of making our schools safe welcoming and respectful places for all." She went on to urge everyone to consider how they can contribute to this effort of positivity and reinforce this at home to actively foster an environment of respect.

Dr. Treece said, "Our male white Christian students are struggling and need role models to teach them how to do that (behave) without toxicity. The role models that they see online are not helpful. We need men of all walks of life to help these boys grow into men."

She believes that these kids are mirroring what they see in video games, such as Call of Duty. She called on parents to be just as outraged as the school district is and reinforce this at home. The punishment for a hate incident in our district includes suspension and police involvement.

The district initially scheduled a parent meeting for April 23 to address these issues but had to reschedule as it falls on Holocaust Remembrance Day. A new date has not yet been announced.

Tentative Budget Approved

Taxes are increasing, plus the district will implement fees for participation in sports, band, and other extracurricular activities. Courtesy busing is being eliminated or cost will increase.

The tentative budget was approved and it included several budget reductions including elimination or charging the full cost of courtesy busing, reinstating fees for extra curricular activities, such as band and sports, and the elimination or consolidation of non-instructional staff positions. Even with all of these cuts and changes, our taxes will be increasing \$280 to \$340 per year on average depending on your municipality. NJ already has some of the highest property taxes in the country, on average we pay about \$9,000 a year for our property taxes compared to the national average of \$2,300.

These cuts have been discussed several times in the past year and are unrelated to the failed \$87M failed bond referendum in September. The board plans to try again with a reduced bond referendum of \$85M on the November ballot. The turf fields and concession stands were removed from the bond referendum.

One board member voted no on the budget and another hesitated, but voted yes anyway, stating that they are not quite comfortable with budget cuts coupled with the high tax increase. **The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 28th at Hopewell Elementary School (HES). Tour of HES will begin at 5:30 and meeting scheduled for 6:30. This meeting will be to finalize and adopt the 2025/26 Budget.**

Here is a full list of the budget reductions:

Budget Reductions

Reductions made over the past several years were designed to limit cuts to programming as much as possible. To balance this year's budget, the District will implement the following strategies:

- Increase class size
- Elimination of, or charging the full cost for, courtesy busing
- Reinstatement of Athletic and Extracurricular Fees
- Restructuring of K-12 Exploratory offerings
- Further reductions of Supplies
- Elimination of Auto Shop due to the inability to secure an instructor
- Reduction of District funded field trips
- Elimination and/or consolidation of non-instructional staff positions

When And Why Did America Stop Teaching Civics?

A Policy Brief from the Sandra Day O'Connor Institute for American Democracy (September 2024)

The research is clear: study after study shows that we Americans don't know civics. This is especially the case for younger Americans, who data reveal to be less informed about civics than their older counterparts. Obviously there is a need for more and better civic education in schools, a proposition that consistently receives strong bipartisan support. Yet American public schools are not as a rule prioritizing civic education. Why is this so?

INTRODUCTION

The headlines tell the same story: Americans' civic knowledge is at a woeful level.

A 2024 study from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that more than 70% of Americans failed a basic U.S. civic literacy quiz; one in three respondents did not even know that there exist three branches of government, much less what those branches are and what they do. The latest Constitution Day civics survey from the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center found that a mere 5% of the U.S. adults surveyed could name all five First Amendment rights, and 20% could not name any. The 2022 National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the "Nation's Report Card," showed that for the first time the civics scores of U.S. eighth graders had declined.

Frustration over such sad results is frequently directed at American public schools. Schools, the popular complaint goes, just don't teach civics like they used to.

This complaint turns out to be true: it is indeed correct that American schools once prioritized civics instruction and no longer do. But to consequent questions—specifically, when did American schools stop teaching civics, and why?—the answers are perhaps less clear. They deserve inspection. The O'Connor Institute raises a magnifying glass.

AMERICAN CIVIC EDUCATION: A (VERY) BRIEF HISTORY

The political scientist David Campbell, whose research focuses on civics, emphasizes that in America "civics is not superfluous or even secondary to the primary purpose of public schooling. It is the primary purpose." He goes on to write that the "irony of inattention to civic education is that U.S. public schools were actually created for the express purpose of forming democratic citizens."

Public education was a priority for early Americans; indeed, "it was first religion and next education that engaged the attention of the early settlers," according to the scholars Carl H. Gross and Charles C. Chandler. But let us hear from the source, a certain George Washington:

... the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen by the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter well deserves attention. The more homogenous our citizens can be made in these particulars the greater will be our prospect of permanent union; and a primary object of such a national institution should be the education of our youth in the sciences of government.

This charge—"the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen" and "the education of our youth in the sciences of government"—became even more crucial in the late nineteenth century, when waves of immigrants to the United States began arriving daily. For these newcomers, having journeyed from a heterogeneity of places, American public schools were among the chief teachers of their new country's civic values and patriotism. This was true even for immigrant parents, who learned much about American ideals from their school-aged children.

As immigration to America dwindled, relatively, into the mid-twentieth century, civic education in public schools evolved, shifting closer to its initial purpose, which a Detroit superintendent at the time called "the Americanization of the American"—that is, educating each new generation by transmitting knowledge of the broader culture and inculcating the ideals, norms, and values necessary for life in a democratic society.

BETWEEN CIVICS AND A HARD PLACE

Beginning in the 1960s, however, things changed. At the same time that first the Vietnam War and then the Watergate scandal eroded the public's faith in government, the notion of assimilative civic education came under attack. Its initial foes saw American civic education as a form of cultural imperialism that ignored the diversity within American communities and public schools. Civic education based on a common culture was not appropriate, they said, given the variety of experiences and backgrounds that students brought to the classroom. The word "assimilation," once trumpeted as civic education's purpose, became objectionable. One critic, for instance, wrote that "the pressure that schools place on students to assimilate is itself an example of educational inequality (*italics in original*)."

As the twentieth century went on these early critics were joined by other groups, including those of religious motivation, that were for one reason or another hostile to American civic education in its more foundational form. Education professor Jeffrey Mirel writes of that time:

Regardless of whether one opposed Eurocentrism or secular humanism, there appeared to be widespread agreement that the civic mission of public schools was a form of oppression. From that perspective, the old nonpartisan policy of preparing future citizens by educating them in the kinds of knowledge, skills, ideals, and values that had been traditionally taught in public schools had to be either radically redesigned or abandoned.

Here it is worth acknowledging the difficult situation in which American public schools found themselves then and find themselves now. On the one hand they seek to be welcoming, innocuous purveyors of important and commonly accepted knowledge and skills to students from a multiplicity of backgrounds.

On the other hand, in teaching civics these schools have, as we have seen, historically attempted to convey not only the undisputed mechanics of American government but also the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the shared values of a nation. These goals are certainly in tension. Schools face a challenge.

Rather than take up the gauntlet, though, American public schools have historically tended to avoid all gloves tossed in their vicinity. “When in doubt,” goes the mantra of the caricature state-education department or school-district leader, “leave it out.” So civics is left out. Especially in times when civics and civic education have themselves become controversial—our current time is surely among these—public schools have tended to teach less civics, thereby transmitting to students neither the hard facts of government nor the skills and values of citizenship.

Thus, whereas until the 1960s American public high-school students were typically required to take three courses in civics—Civics, Problems of Democracy, and U.S. Government—today most get by with a single semester-long class. Even when civics is taught many teachers avoid teaching it robustly. For example, in the 2023 State of the American Teacher Survey 65 percent of respondents answered yes to the question, “Have you ever decided on your own, without being directed by school or district leaders, to limit discussions about political and social issues in class?” When this 65 percent was asked why they had made such a decision, the most common first-choice response was, “I am not sure that my school or district leaders would support me if parents expressed concerns.”

OTHER PRIORITIES

It is not only controversy that has led to the decline of American civic education. The country’s instructional priorities have clearly shifted.

Take, for instance, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2002, the major legislation that tied school funding to test scores in math and reading. Civics was not an NCLB consideration, yet the law had massive unintended consequences for American civic education. The Center on Education Policy published a report in 2007 which found that school districts had increased their study time of English language arts and math by an average of 43 percent, and they had cut social studies (i.e., the broad subject under which civics is classified) instructional time by an average of 32 percent, with some schools cutting social studies teaching time by more than half.

Another study found that from 1993 to 2008, the time allotted to social studies instruction dropped by 56 minutes per week in third- through fifth-grade classes in the U.S. Over the same period, math and English language arts instruction increased.

The United States also recently went through a phase that could safely be called “STEM obsessed.” (We refer here to the STEM—that is, science, technology, engineering, and math—focus that began in the aughts, not that which occurred in America after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik into orbit in 1957.) It takes nothing away from the importance of STEM to point out that as federal monies for STEM education skyrocketed, the same funding for civic education plummeted, falling from around \$150 million per year in 2010 to less than \$5 million in 2020 (in 2024, it was increased to \$23 million per year).

States, too, have not recently prioritized civic education, though that is beginning to change. Still, many state requirements for civic education remain low by historical standards. Most states mandate only a one semester course in high school, as aforementioned, and civics requirements in elementary and middle schools are sparse. Only eight states, for example, currently have any civics requirements for middle-school students.

WHAT TO TEACH, AND WHO TO TEACH IT?

Surveys show broad, bipartisan support for the proposition that more time and money should be devoted to American civic education. But on what kind of civic education should that time and money be spent? We have yet to reach consensus about what today’s American civic education should be.

It is thus unsurprising that teachers feel unready to teach civics courses. A RAND Corporation survey found that 80 percent of American social studies teachers—the teachers most often called upon to teach civics—do not feel well-prepared to support students’ civic learning, saying they require “additional aid with instructional materials, professional development, and training.”

Another survey from RAND found that only 23 percent of teachers agreed that one of the top three aims of civic education is “promoting knowledge of social, political, and civic institutions.” And a mere 40 percent of educators said a top-three aim was “promoting knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities”; the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is literally the definition of civics.

Writing in *Education Next* about a series of off-the-record, bipartisan symposia conducted at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) think tank, where he is a senior fellow, Frederick Hess concluded “that there is widespread agreement on many—but not all—of the goals of civics education but little agreement on how to get there.” Hess continues:

We all want students to embrace ideals of liberty and equality, to know how American government works, and to be invested in making their nation a better place. We are less decided on whether to cultivate patriotism, how much content students need to learn, whether schools are honest brokers when it comes to sensitive questions of history or ideology, and what it means to teach students about liberty and equality. Unfortunately, even for those goals we do agree about, there is sharp disagreement, frequently along ideological lines, on how to achieve them.

Such significant disagreement over the essence of civic education—among, it should be noted, the sort of people who are invited to attend D.C. think tank symposia—is certainly an obstacle to civic education’s expansion.

THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT

Let it be stated clearly: teaching less civics has had real effects on post–baby boomer Americans.

Multiple studies have shown that older Americans are significantly better informed about civics than their relatively younger counterparts. A Pew Research Center survey from 2023 found this to be true, as did a prior study from the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, which reported that 74 percent of those over 65 could answer 6 of 10 citizenship test questions correctly while a mere 19 percent of those under 45 could do so. A study from the mid-1990s revealed that the civics knowledge of high-school graduates at that time was comparable to that of high-school dropouts in the late 1940s.

Consider: in June 2024 the American Council of Trustees and Alumni surveyed some 3,000 college and university students on basic knowledge of American history and government. Among the findings: almost one-third of students think senators serve a four-year term; one-third are not sure who is the chief justice of the Supreme Court; and a plurality of respondents thought Joe Biden was president of the Senate.

The young Americans surveyed above are, again, attaining university educations.

It is also worth emphasizing that declines in civic literacy have corresponded with a decline in trust in government, a topic that Pew has studied since 1958. At that time, when Pew began examining the subject, about three quarters of Americans “trusted the federal government to do the right thing almost always or most of the time.” As of April 2024 that figure had declined to 24 percent.

Pew’s results have been replicated elsewhere. Since the 1970s the Gallup Poll, NORC’s General Social Survey, and the Harris Poll have asked a series of questions about the public’s confidence in the “people in charge of running institutions” or in those institutions themselves. Analyzing these data in 2022, scholars Henry E. Brady and Thomas B. Kent found that “Between the period of 1972 to 1979 and the period of 2010 to 2021, confidence in Congress declined by 45 percent . . . These changes mirror the drop in trust in ‘government’ of about 40 percent found over the same period on another set of surveys, the American National Election Studies.”

Unfortunately, a lack of civics knowledge goes hand-in-hand with a lack of trust in government institutions—research has shown that these states reinforce each other. A dearth of civics knowledge is also correlated with other undesirable outcomes for individuals and thus societies, including declines in civic engagement and in what the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and James Coleman defined as “social capital”—i.e., the value derived from one’s social networks (physical networks, not virtual ones). In the bestselling book *Bowling Alone*, and in subsequent writings, the sociologist Robert Putnam has argued that social capital in the United States has been falling for decades. Young Americans currently report being less happy than older Americans, which is a historical aberration; in fact, the data suggest that levels of anxiety, dissatisfaction, and hopelessness among young Americans are at the highest levels ever.

A WAY FORWARD

In 2011, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor published an essay in which she’d written that “civic education must be understood, at its root, as education for informed participation in government and society.” She continued: “The goal is for students to have the knowledge to understand the political history of our nation, appreciate different perspectives, craft their own informed opinions, and gain the skills to persuasively advocate their views in the public sphere.”

How do we achieve this multifaceted goal?

First, in order for students to “have the knowledge,” as Justice O’Connor wrote, they must be taught the knowledge, which means that schools must return to devoting more time to civic education. This is, as we have seen, easier said than done—but we might at least start with the saying. Our nation would do well to reprioritize civic instruction, beginning in the early grades. In not a few states and districts and schools this reprioritization is already underway.

Second, Justice’s O’Connor’s prescription of learning to “appreciate different perspectives” is sound advice not only for students but also for adults—all adults, certainly, which ipso facto includes the policymakers, school leaders, teachers, and parents who are directly involved in civic education in American schools. These adults especially would do well to work to ratchet down rancor where it exists and invite compromise, particularly around the teaching of civics. Doing so entails identifying, appreciating, and enhancing that which was best about earlier flavors of American civic education while also taking seriously the serious present-day critiques. “Our civics and history courses of the past may have been sufficiently extensive,” Justice O’Connor wrote in the aforementioned essay, “but they often provided a one-sided view, failing to

adequately address the kinds of controversy and conflict that citizens must understand and effectively confront.” Corollary to dialing down the animosity is providing educators with effective training in how to teach civics, which includes setting out expectations and limits, and then committing to support teachers in their good-faith classroom efforts.

Can this be done? Is it possible today to reach consensus about the content and skills that should be included, and how they should be taught, in an American public-school civics class?

We submit that it can be done because it is already being done. We have seen, for example, state legislatures across the nation pass bills to enhance civic education in one way or another. We have read countless stories about district, school, and classroom leaders who are pushing to revive civics in their jurisdictions. We have watched sprout at colleges from coast to coast programs and entire schools devoted to study of the history and future of civics.

In 2021 the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, an education think tank, published a review of state standards for U.S. history and civics. The group determined that sixteen jurisdictions—fifteen states and the District of Columbia—deserved recognition for crafting standards documents that avoided both partisanship and vagueness, that settled for neither convenient culture-war narratives nor tepid abstraction.

The College Board’s Advanced Placement U.S. Government and Politics (U.S. GoPo) course provides, according to the Board, “a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, policies, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States.” Well over 300,000 students enroll each year in this challenging class, the content of which has been backed by manifold conservative and liberal scholars, endorsed by groups including the National Constitution Center, and is taught with relish in both the reddest and bluest of

American districts. Students who receive qualifying scores on the AP U.S. GoPo exam can receive college credit at institutions as diverse in perspective as Oberlin College and Conservatory, Wesleyan University, Liberty University, and Hillsdale College.

It can be done because it is being done. And the O’Connor Institute, through our Civics for Life community, Civics 101 Micro-lessons for lifelong learners, and O’Connor Institute Ambassadors club for high-school students, is proud to contribute to this progress.

After denoting the challenges he identified through the AEI symposia, Hess concluded, “Tackling civic education will require educators, advocates, policymakers, and parents to practice the very virtues we want to teach our children. It will be difficult, but the civil and constructive tone of our conversations—even as they grew heated and emotional—leaves us confident that we are more than up to the task.”

We agree. Let us adults practice the civics that we preach. “At times,” Justice O’Connor said, “we have to give up some of our individual interests so we don’t compromise our collective future. The resulting ‘common ground’ should be treated as ‘some kind of sacred ground,’ because that’s where we’re going to find the promised land.”

Access the policy brief: https://oconnorinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/When-and-Why-Did-America-Stop-Teaching-Civics_.pdf

SPECIAL EDITION: The End Of D.O.E.?!

This is one of the biggest moves Trump will advance during his term.

By Chris Stigall originally published in The Harrumph Society (March 20, 2025)

From The Chairman’s Desk

Dearest Harrumphers,

Donald Trump campaigned on a promise to shutter the Department of Education and hand control back to the states. Today, he’s taking a massive step, issuing an Executive Order to gut this broken bureaucracy’s scope and influence.

Jimmy Carter pushed for the department in 1979, but Congress created it through the Department of Education Organization Act. Carter vowed it would improve our schools. It didn’t. Test scores have slid ever since—NAEP data shows a 10% drop in reading and math for 17-year-olds since 1980. The department’s mission was to educate our children.

It has failed.

Worse, it’s morphed into a Department of Indoctrination. Teachers’ unions like the NEA care more about woke dogma—DEI over ABCs—than teaching kids to read. We’re 38th in math globally, trailing Estonia, per PISA. Meanwhile, the department burns through \$190 billion a year, with 70% going to DC bureaucrats, not classrooms.

States can do far better with our tax dollars-- especially Red States.

Governors and mayors, answerable to voters, can better design programs to teach their States’ kids without federal overreach. Trump’s order slashes the department’s reach, keeping that money local, where it belongs.

In some ways—all negative—COVID brought this issue to a head with parents across the country.

COVID laid bare the disaster. Democrats eagerly deserted our children, forcing them into Zoom school while pushing unneeded experimental vaccines

It was a bizarre, destructive, Orwellian power grab.

The Department of Education stood idle as math scores fell 13%, drug use surged 20%, and teen suicides climbed 30% after lockdowns. Kids didn't learn—they regressed, abandoned by a system more bent on control than education. It was a disgrace, and it was on purpose.

Trump is saving our children from this destructive indoctrination machine.

The department received an F grade for 45 years, and President Trump is gutting it. He's the first President with the courage to stare down Washington's entrenched teachers' unions. Those unions fight for power, not pupils; taking them on is no small feat. But that's Trump. He's honoring his word, delivering what Americans demanded: a common-sense fix parents know is right.

Our kids aren't ready to compete for jobs. Bringing their education closer to home will give them a far better chance.

Trump's order cripples a system that's dulled our kids' minds, but to fully close the department, Republicans in Congress must act—pass a bill to end this Carter-era flop for good. Democrats will raise holy hell, but the court of public opinion will declare Trump the victor. The 2026 midterms will prove me right—voters will hand Republicans bigger majorities for decisions like this—just like getting men out of women's sports and locker rooms.

Reagan envisioned this, and Trump is making it real.

As you know I've personally put my money where my mouth is with this mission. The only true way to save the country is to end the indoctrination of its young citizens.

Trump is putting America's children first.

We're with him all the way.

Local News

Hopewell Residents Need Transparency On Issues Facing The Township

By John Galt

As I drive around Hopewell, I'm constantly reminded of how the rural nature of the township seems to be slipping away to all the new development. I wonder how many people are as concerned as I am about all the changes taking place and looking for answers to unanswered questions like...

- Why are all the trees being cleared on the property below the circle on route 31?
- Why do my taxes keep going up as the services being provided are dwindling?
- If the Twp and Arc, a nonprofit, form a partnership to fulfill the affordable housing requirements with a group home, will they have to pay property taxes?
- With Arc purchasing 130 acres, how much non-preserved farmland remains in the Twp?
- Are you unhappy with the Scotch Rd development?
- Are you unhappy with the burden this is going to place on our schools and services?
- If the 30-year terms of the 144 affordable units in Brandon Farms that are set to expire are extended, does this mean they will pay less taxes?
- Was the obscene security fencing and extreme lighting at the BeiGene entrance at Elm Ridge Rd within our zoning guidelines?
- Did you know that BMS had an offer to purchase the campus property on Pennington Rocky Hill Rd for \$23M more than BeiGene paid for it?
- Are you concerned that the ordinance change that would allow manufacturing on the old BMS campus also permits the storage of possibly toxic waste or contaminants?

To get answers to these questions from the Township Committee, we need you to voice your concerns. The next two scheduled meetings are Monday April 14th and Monday April 21st at 7pm at the municipal building. We, the people of Hopewell Twp deserve transparency from our elected officials. I urge you to come to a Township Committee meeting and ask your questions and voice your opinions.

Please direct any questions to info@hvragop.org



Reserve Seats Here: <https://fcanj.org/celebration-dinner>

Election 2025

Bill Spadea's Easter Reception Monday, April 21 - 6-9 pm

Mercer County Spadea for Governor Supporters invite you to join us for a festive Easter Reception fundraiser on Monday, April 21st beginning at 6pm hosted at Needle Creek Brewery. Be sure to buy your ticket online through this link <https://secure.winred.com/spadea-for-governor-inc/4-21-25> or complete the attached form. If you need to pay by check, follow the directions on the contribution form. We look forward to seeing you!

\$55 - per person

Host Committee - \$250

Supporting Sponsor - \$500

Event Sponsor - \$1,000

RSVP & Information:

Theresa Mondella

732-904-0257

tmondella@gmail.com

Easter Reception
honoring
Bill Spadea
2025 Gubernatorial Candidate

Event Sponsors
Byrne Brothers Construction
Robert Pluta, Leonardo's Restaurant
Needlecreek Brewery

Let's gather together for a feast filled with good food and friends

Monday, April 21, 2025
6:00pm - 9:00pm
Needle Creek Brewery
91 Titus Mill Road
Pennington, New Jersey

\$1,000 Event Sponsors
\$500 Supporting Sponsors
\$250 Host Committee
\$55 per person

[Click here to donate online](#)

RSVP & Information:
Theresa Mondella
732-904-0257/tmondella@gmail.com

Paid for by Spadea for Governor,
PO Box 307, Bayville, NJ 08721

Election Integrity

New Jersey removes 236,000 Plus Voters From Its Voter Rolls In February

By Mark Demo

Most removals (over 95%) were from the Inactive Confirmation category, which typically includes voters who have not participated in recent elections and failed to respond to address confirmation notices. Under New Jersey's Title 19 statutes, a voter may be removed from the rolls if they request removal, move out of state, or fail to respond to a confirmation notice and do not vote in two consecutive federal elections.

Removals by Voter Status

Inactive Confirmation: 227,120
Active: 9,589
Pending: 48
Active Federal Election Only: 42
Active State & Federal Elections: 11
Pending-17: 8

Removals by Party Affiliation

Unaffiliated: 102,916
Democratic: 86,173
Republican: 44,811
Other: 2,918

This confirms that the largest number of removals came from **Unaffiliated voters** (about 43% of all removals), followed by **Democrats** (36%), **Republicans** (19%), and Other party affiliations (1.2%).

Removals by Age Group

30s: 52,861	90s: 8,680
40s: 39,741	NA (Unknown Age): 2,141
60s: 35,986	100s: 1,660
50s: 32,736	110 and Older: 126
70s: 24,622	18-19: 100
20s: 24,417	17: 7
80s: 13,741	

The largest number of removals were among voters in their **30s (52,861)**, followed by those in their **40s (39,741)** and **60s (35,986)**. The smallest groups removed were those aged **110 and older (126)**, **18-19 (100)**, and **17 (7)**.

This data provides a clearer picture of how voter roll maintenance in New Jersey impacted different demographics.

Note: Mercer County removed a total of 9,146 voters. Of that total, Hopewell Twp removed 451. 188 from Independent, 97 from Republican and 165 from Democrats.



Reconciling Trump's Executive Order On Election Integrity With NJ Title 19

By Mark Demo

The recent executive order (EO) introduces several federal mandates aimed at standardizing and securing election processes across the United States. A comparison with New Jersey's Title 19 election regulations reveals specific areas where state practices may not align with the new federal directives.

Voter Registration and Proof of Citizenship

- **Executive Order:** Mandates that all voter registration forms require documentary proof of U.S. citizenship.
- **New Jersey Title 19:** Currently, New Jersey does not require documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration. Applicants affirm their eligibility under penalty of perjury but are not mandated to provide citizenship documents.



Mail-In Ballots (Vote-by-Mail)

- **Executive Order:** Requires that all mail-in ballots be received by election officials no later than Election Day to be counted.
- **New Jersey Title 19:** Allows mail-in ballots to be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day and received within six days after the election. New Jersey State Website

Voting Systems and Paper Records

- **Executive Order:** Stipulates that voting systems must produce voter-verifiable paper records and prohibits the use of barcodes or QR codes in vote recording, except as necessary to accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- **New Jersey Title 19:** While New Jersey has implemented voter-verifiable paper records, some counties may still use voting systems that incorporate barcodes or QR codes, which could conflict with the new federal standards.
 - 14 counties in NJ use ES&S. Every ES&S XL voting machine uses bar codes to tally votes.
 - NJ self-certified their voting machines via the NJ Gaming Commission. The current federal voting machine standards are voluntary.

Maintenance of Voter Rolls

- **Executive Order:** Directs states to regularly update and verify voter registration lists using federal databases, including those from the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.
- **New Jersey Title 19:** Requires counties to maintain and update voter rolls but does not explicitly mandate cross-referencing with federal databases as specified in the EO.

Enforcement and Compliance

- **Executive Order:** Empowers federal agencies to withhold funding from states that do not comply with the outlined election integrity measures.
- **New Jersey Title 19:** Does not address the potential withholding of federal funds based on compliance with federal election mandates.

Implications for New Jersey

To align with the executive order, New Jersey would need to amend its election laws to:

- **Implement Citizenship Verification:** Require documentary proof of citizenship during voter registration.
- **Adjust Mail-In Ballot Deadlines:** Ensure all mail-in ballots are received by Election Day to be counted.
- **Update Voting Systems:** Eliminate the use of barcodes or QR codes in vote recording and ensure all systems produce voter-verifiable paper records.
- **Enhance Voter Roll Maintenance:** Establish protocols for regular cross-referencing of voter registration data with federal databases.

Failure to implement these changes could result in the loss of federal election funding and potential legal challenges.

Legal Considerations

It's important to note that election administration has traditionally been under state jurisdiction. The executive order's mandates may face legal challenges on grounds of federal overreach, and the balance of power between state and federal authorities in election administration could be a point of contention.

Conclusion

New Jersey's current election laws under Title 19 differ in several respects from the provisions of the recent executive order. To ensure compliance and avoid potential penalties, the state may need to undertake significant legislative and procedural changes to its election processes.

Citizens For NJ Election Integrity Hosts Second Annual Conference - Overview

By Mark Demo

Hamilton, NJ: 65 concerned citizens, former legislators, candidates for election and county election workers from across the state of New Jersey attended the second Citizens for NJ Election Integrity (C4NJEI) conference on March 7th at the Hilton Garden Inn in Hamilton NJ.

Welcome

C4NJEI founders Lynne Lippincott and Mark Demo welcomed the group and summarized the group's activities over the past

year, outlined the goals for the upcoming year, challenged the participants to become involved in their local elections process and honored two former members Piera Accumanno and Dave Carver.

Ballot Initiative & Referendum Process in New Jersey

The primary focus on the March 7th Election Integrity Conference was to teach attendees how to get a question on the ballot such as "Should New Jersey registered voters be required to show picture ID to vote in person during Early Voting or Election Day?"

Attorney Matt Moench from King, Moench & Collins, LLC discussed the general steps and timings for citizen-initiated ballot measures. Matt also reviewed the Faulkner Act. Under the Faulkner Act, citizens in certain NJ municipalities governed by the Faulkner Act have the power to propose ordinances through initiative and referendum. For more information on the Faulkner Act and a list of New Jersey Municipalities that are organized under the Faulkner Act, [click here](#).

To view Matt's presentation [click here](#) or for more information email info@citizens4njei.org.

Federal Elections Law Update

Attorney Cleta Mitchell joined the conference via Zoom for a discussion on the U.S. Citizens Election Bill of Rights (www.vote4fair2026.com). Cleta gave an update on the status of federal election integrity legislation.

To view Cleta's presentation, [click here](#) or for more information email info@citizens4njei.org.

Getting Involved in your local Elections Process

Attorney Dottie Bolinsky shares unique insights into the different ways to become involved in your local election process. Dottie has worked as a poll worker, a poll challenger, a volunteer election day attorney and most recently in leading Curtis Bashaws election day "war room".

To view Dottie's presentation, [click here](#) or for more information email info@citizens4njei.org.

State Elections Law Update

Bill Eames of Working Together New Jersey (WTNJelections.org) took the group through key State elections laws as well as those that have been proposed and then led a discussion on the impact of each of the proposed laws.

To view Bill's presentation, [click here](#) or for more information email info@citizens4njei.org.

About Citizens for NJ Election Integrity

Citizens for NJ Election Integrity is a non-partisan organization dedicated to ensuring fair and transparent elections in New Jersey. The group advocates for electoral reforms, improved voter verification processes, and public education on election integrity. For more information, please visit <http://www.citizens4njei.org/>.

Media Contact

Mark Flaherty
Communications Director
Citizens for NJ Election Integrity
914-473-2038
Mark.Flaherty@citizens4njei.org

For further inquiries or to schedule an interview, please contact C4NJEI at the information provided above.

Public Corner

Public Local Meetings

Interested in attending public meetings? Here are a few in your area for this month.

<https://www.mercercounty.org/i-want-to/calendar-meeting-list>

HVRSD School Board Meeting

Monday - April 28, 2025 at Hopewell Elementary School, tour at 5:30pm followed by meeting at 6:30pm
35 Princeton Ave, Hopewell, NJ 08525
Or Livestream on YouTube

Municipal Township Meetings

<https://www.hopewelltpw.org/calendar.aspx?CID=32>

Monday, April 14, 6:30pm

Monday, April 21, 6:30pm

Meetings are in hybrid format - Township Municipal Building & Zoom

Township meetings will be held at HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL SERVICES BUILDING 201 Washington Crossing - Pennington Road, Titusville, NJ 08560

Board of Elections Meeting

Tuesday - April 8, 2025 12:00 p.m. Regular

Board of Elections Meetings will be at 930 Spruce St., Lawrence, NJ 08648

Mercer County Board of County Commissioners

Meeting Schedule -- April 2025

Tuesday April 8, 2025 6:00pm Agenda

Thursday April 10, 2025 6:00pm Formal Meeting

Tuesday April 22, 2025 6:00pm Agenda Meeting

Thursday April 24, 2025 6:00pm Formal Meeting

Agenda and Formal Meetings will take place at the Mercer County Administration Building, Room 211, 640 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ unless otherwise stated.

In order to encourage full participation of these meetings, please submit any requests for accommodations of people with disabilities to the Clerk to the Board, Mercer County Administration Building, PO Box 8068, Trenton, NJ 08650

(609) 989-6584 {V/TTY}

{Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 101-336}

TruthBTold



At the Movies, Bookstores

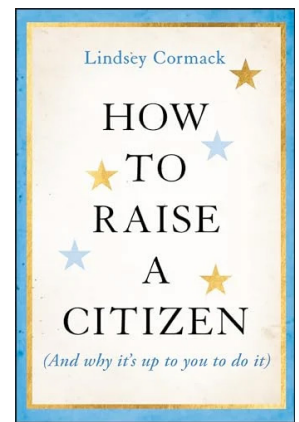
Parents As Agents Of Change For Civics Education

Book Review: How To Raise A Citizen (And Why It's Up To You To Do It)

By Lindsey Cormack (Author)

Hardcover: 304 pages • Publisher: Jossey-Bass • 1st edition (August 13, 2024)

Burning Tesla's, swastika drawn in bathrooms at public schools, and claims that our democracy is threatened and our country is in the throes of a constitutional crisis make us wonder if there is hope for our nation, our political system and our future. As our country prepares to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Declaration of Independence, how can we reverse the notable decline in knowledge about our government, stem the fear and avoidance of political discussions and encourage civil discourse while holding firmly to our strongly held beliefs?



Professor Lindsey Cormack believes there is hope and she wrote **How to Raise a Citizen** to help parents and caregivers “tackle the often overlooked aspect of parenting - preparing our children to be informed and active citizens in our democracy through on-going and open dialogue.” Her book provides a practical and readable guide on how to do it and “in a way that feels fun and connective”. Her approach is non-partisan and the book “is not about raising children to align with a particular political party but to raise children who can think critically and form their own conclusions”.

Civics education was at one time the primary purpose of public education but today schools face many issues that challenge their ability to make it a priority. She boldly and passionately believes that parents can become effective educators and guides to fill this need - the agents of change that will prepare the next generation of voters, policymakers and political leaders.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One describes two problems we face (the bad news) and provides two solutions (the good news). The bad news is we face a severe deficit of government and political knowledge and our public schools are unable to deliver adequate civics education.

In 2022, the Annenberg Public Policy Center at University of Pennsylvania found that fewer than half - just 47% of U.S. adults - could name the three branches of government: legislative, executive, judicial. Advanced Placement U.S. Government scores ranked the fourth lowest among AP subjects for average scores (out of 45 subjects tested) in 2019. As an “elective course taken by motivated students these scores suggest even lower civics proficiency” among those not taking the class or test.

Professor Cormack believes the second problem we face is a “misplaced reliance on schools to teach political knowledge”. According to Cormack schools can’t do this work because civics education is often side-lined as these classes get crowded out in favor of those subjects that are included in standardized test scores. Teachers also report a lack of resources, a reluctance to tackle controversial issues in the classroom and the scrutiny that schools can face in promoting patriotism and civic engagement.

The good news is Professor Cormack believes that: “As parents, we can engage in years of meaningful conversations with our children. We must provide our children with the tools and knowledge to talk about politics confidently and navigate our complex systems. Leaving this void unfilled and allowing others to shape their views is not a promising approach. Just like discussing important topics such as drugs and sex, having a trusted guiding hand when it comes to politics is necessary. And that’s where parents step in. It may feel daunting at first but it is a responsibility we should embrace.”

Her book contains two solutions or strategies: guidance on how to have conversations about government and politics with our children and, in Part Two, the essential civics information and knowledge they should learn so they are prepared for participating in our democracy.

Part Two (chapters 6 through 8) provides a review of our Constitution to help children understand how the rules of our country work. It serves as a refresher course for parents so you can be a better resource for your family. Also included are conversation prompts to kick-start talk and suggestions for extra materials for those who want to learn more. There are quick guides that explain voting and navigating elections, democratic republicanism, separation of powers, and the concept of federalism which explains how power is shared between federal, state and local governments.

While knowledge about our government is important, parents also need to model and teach how to engage in civil discourse when discussing politics. In March Dr. Treece spoke about the rise of incivility in our community: in our schools, at board meetings, in slanderous and hateful posts on social media and in hate symbols and racial slurs. She said “destructive discourse is a cancer” and she called on the entire community to contribute to creating an environment where differing opinions and disagreements do not lead to hostility.

Cormack has some thoughtful observations and practical suggestions in Part One to help parents achieve this positive approach.

1. Recognize your pivotal role in shaping your children’s perspective on politics and government. Acknowledge that political

issues are complex and show them you are open to these kinds of conversations. Consider restraint in your negative assessment. "Using insults and slurs to describe politicians - even those you disagree with - does not make for better or more functional politics."

2. Don't demonize elected officials, appointed civil servants and others who perform the governing roles in our communities (police, borough council officials, school board members) but instead help children recognize and appreciate the positive contributions made by politicians and government in our everyday lives.
3. Be open to their questions with age-appropriate explanations. Child-proofing them from discussing difficult topics for too long hinders their ability to "think and develop their own methods for processing and coping with new information".

Cormack uses a four step model when having in-class discussions that is easily adapted for talks in the home. It encourages curiosity, involves active listening (not when distracted by your phone) and gets conversations going. It also leaves out the question "why" so that the focus is on exploration rather than interrogation. For example, if your child asked about swastika at the middle school you could:

Ask Question 1. What have you HEARD about this issue? This gets the conversation going, explains their information sources and helps you understand their current knowledge.

Ask Question 2. What do you THINK about this issue? This focuses on their perspective and acknowledges their opinions as they are.

Ask Question 3. What do you KNOW about this issue? This will separate knowledge from opinion so they learn to value information alongside their feelings.

Ask Question 4. What MORE DO YOU WANT TO KNOW about this issue? This encourages them to think deeply and seek further information, a key element in developing critical thinking skills.

I was very grateful I had this model to use last month when my grandchild had questions about a lesson in fourth grade social studies on the difficult topic of the rape of female slaves in our American history.

Prior to reading this book, my husband and I challenged each other to take the U.S. Government Immigration and Naturalization Citizenship Test to determine our current knowledge. The test consists of 100 questions and we used the flash card version available from our county library. The scores were sobering but hopeful and using these flashcards was a fun way to learn. Other suggestions and resources to explore are:

- The Constitution Decoded by Katie Kennedy
- We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution by David Catrow
- The Interactive Constitution by David Miles
- What Is the Bill of Rights? by M.J. Slade

Professor Cormack is convinced there is hope for our nation if parents and families prioritize civics education in our homes. Yuval Levin in his recent book *American Covenant: How the Constitution Unified our Nation-And Could Again* (June 2024) strongly believes:

"Our Constitution has remarkable power to repair our broken civic culture, rescue our malfunctioning politics and unify a fractious America."

The book is available on Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop, and anywhere else you find books.

About author: <https://howtoraiseacitizen.com/>

We the People of Interest

National Medal of Honor Museum

Ordinary Americans Extraordinary Actions

New Museum Opens To The Public March 25 2025

Over 40 million Americans have served in the US Armed Forces since the Civil War. Fewer than 4,000 have received the Medal of Honor. Before they were national heroes, they were neighbors, newlyweds, parents, students, and friends. What made them go above and beyond the call of duty?

These are true stories. This is the Medal of Honor. A celebration of the human spirit, the National Medal of Honor Museum honors the inspiring lives and legacies of ordinary Americans who took extraordinary action in the service of others.



Inspiring America the values behind the valor. The Medal of Honor is a symbol of courage & sacrifice, commitment & integrity, citizenship & patriotism.

On a mission to inspire America. The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation is a 501(c)(3) educational organization dedicated to safeguarding and celebrating the legacy of the Medal of Honor and its Recipients.

Guided by the Medal's core values—Courage, Sacrifice, Commitment, Integrity, Citizenship, and Patriotism—we fund, build, and sustain three landmark tributes:

- The National Medal of Honor Museum, Arlington, Texas
- The National Medal of Honor Monument, Washington, D.C.
- The National Medal of Honor Griffin Institute, Arlington, Texas

Through education, leadership, and immersive spaces, we inspire every visitor to awaken the extraordinary by exploring what's possible in the service of others.

See it for yourself Visit the Museum

Stand in the presence of our nation's heroes and experience their stories of honor and valor firsthand. Legacies.

1861 AT&T Way, Arlington, TX 76011

<https://mohmuseum.org/plan-your-visit>

The Recipients: Leading and Living With Honor

Click on each Recipient to learn about courage and commitment in action.

<https://mohmuseum.org/medal-recipients>



Mercer We the People of Hopewell Valley Newsletters:

Access previous issues at: <https://hvragop.org/merceroe-the-people/>

To report a correction or share feedback, please email us at info@merceroethepeople.com

Mercer We the People

PO Box 332, Titusville NJ 08560
United States of America