



February 10, 2025

A Response to the Executive Order “Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schools.”

Civic education is about more than our history and the structure and function of government (as important as those topics are). Civic education requires a free exchange of ideas. In high-quality civic education, students learn to respect those with differing opinions. Students learn to support their claims with evidence, to modify their ideas when the evidence is compelling, and to respect the rights of others to express opinions they might find offensive.

Executive Order [“Ending Radical Indoctrination in K-12 Schools”](#) works against high-quality civic education. The order requires “patriotic education” and narrowly defines patriotism, suggesting that a reasoned critique of our nation is unpatriotic. And the order threatens to withdraw federal funding from schools or districts that do not comply. The impact of such an order is to place teachers in untenable positions, stifling free speech and the free exchange of ideas.

Parents are featured prominently in this Executive Order. We ask parents to recognize that a classroom where their children hear only the opinions held in their homes is not a place conducive to high-quality civic education. School is the place where student experiences are expanded to understand a wide variety of beliefs and opinions. It is impossible to learn to respect the opinions of others with whom you disagree if no one is allowed to disagree with you. Parents and guardians must be free to share their opinions with their children while being careful to respect the opinions of others.

We call on parents, the public, and educators and administrators in K-12 schools to keep the civic health of our nation and the civic learning of our students foremost in their minds as we move forward. Teachers must be free to help their students consider a range of ideas and perspectives. We must all help students to examine their own biases, weigh evidence when forming their opinions, and recognize that good people can hold a variety of differing opinions.

Our students must receive a high-quality civic education today if they are to participate effectively in the future. We must all do what we can to make this a reality.